T. H. GREEN AND THE ETHICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE VICTORIAN "LITERARY"

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation recovers the place of T. H. Green's ethical and cultural thinking in a range of Victorian literature by articulating the ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism and arguing for the place of these presuppositions in the work of Arthur Hugh Clough, George Eliot, Mary Arnold Ward, and May Sinclair.

Chapter I recovers Green's metaphysical foundations. His innovative reformulation of Manchester liberalism is grounded on the conclusions of his neo-Kantian analysis of knowledge and the defense of free-will it occasions. In Chapter II I discuss the ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism and relate them to contemporary work in liberal cultural theory, specifically, John Rawls, and John McGowan.

Chapter III treats Arthur Hugh Clough's poetry in the context of the Arnoldean post-Romantic poetics that deprecated it. Arnold's poetic and cultural theory is grounded in a kind of moral intuitionism that never gets beyond dogmatic moralism. Conversely, Clough's "ethical poetry" hypothesizes a more speculative and modern ethical

self-consciousness which anticipates foundational features of Green's ethical and cultural theory.

In Chapter IV I examine a discontinuity between George Eliot's self-avowed philosophical realism and the model of subjectivity she invokes as a resolution to Daniel Deronda. Eliot's conception of the self's immersion in society functions on principles very similar to those of Green's positive-freedom liberalism. That version of liberalism is radically different from the liberalism associated with the Victorian realists Eliot admired: Mill, Spencer, and Lewes.

Chapter V charts the transmission of Green's religious philosophy into English cultural thinking. Green's distillation of F. C. Baur's Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche provides the intellectual and spiritual example for Mary Arnold Ward's Robert Elsmere, the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century.

Finally, in Chapter VI I trace in May Sinclair's novels the commitments registered in her In Defence of Idealism, The New Idealism, and her exposition of Green's ethics in "The Ethical and Religious Impact of Idealism." Sinclair's novels represent important late century formulations of Green's ethical and cultural theory.

To my father,

the philosopher who taught me to think about the world;

To my mother,

the potter who taught me to look at it.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....1

CHAPTER I
T. H. GREEN AND VICTORIAN ETHICAL DISCOURSE.....15

CHAPTER II
FROM ETHICS TO POSITIVE-FREEDOM LIBERALISM.....35

CHAPTER III
FROM POETIC MORALISM TO ETHICAL POETRY:
MATTHEW ARNOLD, ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, AND T. H.
GREEN.....65

CHAPTER VI
AESTHETIC GEMEINSCHAFT AND THE SOCIALLY-CONSTITUTED
SELF: GEORGE ELIOT AND T. H. GREEN.....114

CHAPTER V
FROM CRITICAL THEOLOGY TO CULTURAL THEORY:
MARY ARNOLD WARD AND T. H. GREEN.....153

CHAPTER VI
MORAL SELF-REALIZATION AS THE RECONCILATION OF
IDEAL AND REAL: MAY SINCLAIR AND T. H. GREEN.....289

CONCLUSION
BEYOND "PERPLEXED PERSISTENCE".....220

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....234

INTRODUCTION

In an essay entitled "Thoughts on Poetry and its Varieties," John Stuart Mill answers the question "What is poetry?" by distinguishing poetry from fiction according to the nature of the truths with which each deals:

> Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly; the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of life. The two kinds of knowledge are different, and come by different ways,--come mostly to different persons. 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. (6)

Embedded in Mill's distinction between poetry and fiction is a correlative distinction between the truths of the "human soul" and the truths of "life." The nature of poetry, Mill is saying here, is grounded in a separation of private and public experience. Poetry is the discourse of the private, fiction the discourse of the public sphere.

The distinction between public and private spheres corresponds with the general instrumental tendency of Mill's cultural thinking. His Utilitarianism is essentially consequentialist. It makes determinations on the basis of

anticipated results or effects in social space. Thus the formula of utilitarian thinking: the greatest good for the greatest number. The impetus to separate public and private spheres, to regard the private as the realm of emotion, and to view it in opposition to "life" comes from the inability of Mill's instrumental logic to incorporate private experience. His strategy is to seclude feeling in its own domain--the poetic--and leave it unincorporated into the real world of the ultimate good.

Mill's treatment of poetry and its objects is indicative of correlative problems in the liberalism now associated with his name. The basis of Mill's "deontological" liberalism can be found in the reasons behind his separation of public and private spheres:

> There is, in fact, no recognized principle by which the propriety or impropriety of government interference is customarily tested. People decide according to their personal preferences . . . . And it seems to me that, in consequence of this absence of rule or principle, one side is at present as often wrong as the other; the interference of government is, with about equal frequency, improperly invoked and improperly condemned. ("On Liberty" 134)

Because there is no rational principle specifying the conditions of society's interference with individual freedoms, government intervention should be kept to an absolute minimum. "The only purpose for which power can be rightly exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others" ("On Liberty" 135). This minimization of interference, and its

correlative maximization of individual freedom, constitutes a "negative" description of freedom. On the model of deontological liberalism, agents are free only by absence of restraint. "On Liberty," with its component of negative freedom, became the archetypal formulation of liberalism in the nineteenth century. Mill's essay codified a culture of liberalism that has remained influential ever since.

The role of negative freedom in deontological liberalism continues to be an issue for contemporary cultural theory.[1] John Rawls's 1993 book, Political Liberalism, marks perhaps the most recent and substantial attempt to formulate an alternative to negative-freedom liberalism. Rawls's concept of "political liberalism" sets out to correct a mistaken view of society in his earlier Theory of Justice: "A modern democratic society is characterized not simply by a pluralism of comprehensive religious, philosophical and moral doctrines but by a pluralism of incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines" (Political Liberalism xvi). Rawls's "political liberalism" is an attempt to specify a politics respectful of these unresolvable differences.

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[1]Most recent attention has come from political scientists. Avital Simhony has two recent articles on positive freedom, "Beyond Negative and Positive Freedom: T. H. Green's View of Freedom" (1993) and "On Forcing Individuals to be Free: T. H. Green's Liberal Theory of Positive Freedom" (1992). See also, John Christman's 1991 essay "Liberalism and Individual Positive Freedom."

Although Rawls does not depend upon the term, his "political liberalism" is recognizably a positive-freedom liberalism. One indication of this can be found among the fundamental principles of justice Rawls adduces: "social and economic inequalities . . . are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society" (PL 6). This condition of justice represents a recognition that social institutions condition agents' lives in important ways, and that, therefore, they can and should be purposefully adjusted to maximize all agents' potentials.

John McGowan has also recently given extended treatment to the problems of negative-freedom liberalism and the formation of a politics of difference in his 1991 book, Postmodernism and its Critics. The concept of freedom is central to McGowan's consideration of the viability of postmodern theory as a model for contemporary political action. On McGowan's reading postmodern theory combines a fear that contemporary life is shaped by a monolithic social order with a hope that that totalizing order can somehow be resisted (x). Such resistance, conceived as "freedom" from the monolithic order, has typically been sought in the construction of a critical distance from the social order. Postmodern theorists have tended to regard the individual as constituted by social relations while viewing its freedom in terms of independence from society. Postmodern theory has for the most part adopted a negative description of freedom like that espoused by Mill. McGowan's main criticism of

postmodern cultural theory is that "the association of freedom with difference is too flimsy a notion on which to build a just society" (x).

According to McGowan, positive freedom has everything to do with the building of a just society, and postmodern cultural theorists have not yet taken this point to heart in their efforts to articulate a model of political action. He contends, finally:

> The social adoption of the specific goal of democracy contrasts with deontological liberalism and points toward the insistence that positive action, not just the negative removal of constraints, is required to create and sustain a democratic society. I argue that the best ways to promote a more democratic society lie along holistic paths that postmodernism and liberalism have spurned. (Postmodernism 213)

McGowan is not quite correct if he means, as he seems to, that all versions of liberalism have spurned positive models of freedom.

One nineteenth-century liberal cultural theorist McGowan does not consider is Thomas Hill Green. Green was Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford from 1878 until his death in 1882. He is perhaps best known as the founder of British Idealism, a philosophical tendency that enjoyed a brief celebrity in England from around the 1870s until Word War I. Green also played an important role in the transmission of German critical theology to England in his own day. Most important for this study, however, is that Green is the foundational figure in the regrounding of

British Victorian liberalism on a model of positive freedom.[2]

Green received fairly constant attention from the time of his death until World War I. Virtually all of it concerned technical issues of his metaphysics and epistemology, and some of it treated his relation to German antecedents.[3] Since then, there have historically been three constructions of Green.

Melvin Richter, Green's most famous expositor, views Green primarily as a religious or theological philosopher responding to the "great crisis of faith precipitated by science and scholarship" (15). In religion, Richter sees Green as attempting to reformulate Christian truth in the language of philosophical idealism thereby putting it on a

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[2]There is some controversy about the origin of positive freedom. Avital Simhony points out that, following Isaiah Berlin's account of Benjamin Constant in "Two Concepts of Liberty" (1970), conventional wisdom regards Constant as the originator of the positive/negative freedom distinction. On the other hand, Simhony argues that Constant distinguished between two kinds of positive liberty, not between positive and negative liberty. See Simhony's "Beyond Negative and Positive Freedom: T. H. Green's View of Freedom." Simhony treats Berlin's criticism of Green in "On Forcing Individuals to be Free: T. H. Green's Liberal Theory of Positive Freedom."

[3]Balfour (1884), Grieve (1896), Creighton (1897), Laurie (1897), R. B. C. Johnson (1900), and McGilvary (1901) all explicate aspects of Green's metaphysics and epistemology. Later, attention was turned to questions of influence, both antecedents and inheritors: see Günther (1915), Smith (1931), Muirhead (1927), Cunningham (1933), A. D. Lindsay (1933). In addition, there is May Sinclair's 1906 exposition of Green's metaphysical ethics, "The Ethical and Religious Import of Idealism."

firmer foundation than dogmatic religion. In philosophy, Richter views Green in terms of his attempt to ground moral philosophy on a firmer basis than utilitarianism and other materialist accounts of ethics were able to do. According to Richter, then, Green's political thought developed from these theological and philosophical concerns. On this construction, Green's politics serve mainly to realize in social space those conditions necessary for moral development he uncovered in his analysis of morality. Through moral philosophy, then, Green transformed Christianity into christian citizenship.

I. M. Greengarten takes a different view of Green in his Thomas Hill Green and the Development of Liberal-Democratic Thought (1981), constructing him instead as primarily a political thinker. Greengarten admits that Green's religion made him more sensitive to certain problems of his time, and that although it led him to "cloak his social and political philosophy in terminology more appropriate to theology," one of the fundamental aims of Green's thought was "to justify the industrial-capitalist basis of [Victorian] society" (7). Greengarten asserts, finally, that "the definite political elements in Green's thought cannot be understood as aspects of a theology" (7).

Against both Richter and Greengarten, there is Geoffrey Thomas's The Moral Philosophy of T. H. Green (1987), which constructs Green as principally and fully a moral philosopher. Thomas's main effort is to repudiate that

critical construction of Green "which sees a total prefiguration of Green's philosophy in his personal concerns--religious, political, and moral" (1). His construction of Green as, first, a moral philosopher rests upon four claims: "that Green is principally a philosopher, that he is an independent thinker, that his ethical theory and moral psychology yield a coherent body of moral philosophy, that his moral philosophy raises important problems neglected in contemporary discussions" (1). Thomas's book is a sustained attempt to make Green's ethics per se available for modern consumption by determining how much of it is independent of metaphysical foundations.

Neither Green's metaphysics nor his epistemology survived the antifoundationalism of twentieth-century philosophy. His ethics have fared only slightly better. And the religious battles he fought have long since been decided, mostly in his favor. However, Rawls's and McGowan's call for a cultural theory of positive freedom occasions another look at Green, this time not as a religious thinker, nor as a political theorist, nor even as a strictly moral philosopher, but as a cultural theorist whose work has important implications for English Victorian literary culture.

To date there has been no substantial precedent for attention to Green in literary connections. In The Moment of Scrutiny (1979), Francis Mulhern briefly mention Green's role in the cultural developments shortly before World War

I. He sees Green's work mainly as an "attempt to confront and resolve the twin crises of Victorian culture: the erosion of traditional Christian belief . . . and the contradiction within Liberal ideology between the received principle of individual freedom and the manifest need for legislated social reform" (11). Mulhern discusses Green in the context of the events leading up to the cultural crisis of the 1920s. He does not give any attention to Green's literary inheritors.

Geoffrey Hill uses the difficulties and unreconciled commitments of Green's work to exemplify a pervasive tension in nineteenth-century cultural thinking between (quoting Coleridge) "'fealty to the Reason under the servitude to an accepted article of Belief . . ." ("Perplexed Persistence" 105). According to Hill, Green's language frequently elides problems of "Bona fide perplexity . . . having its origin really in intellectual difficulties, not in any selfish interest" (108). Hill's essay tells us much about how nineteenth-century uses of language respond to intellectual problems. It does not make Green available beyond indicating how he struggled with unresolvable difficulties.

What this dissertation undertakes, then, is to posit a new critical construction of T. H. Green. My view situates Green's ethical and cultural thinking in a tradition of English cultural theorists in the line of Coleridge, Arnold, and Richards, and finding its latest incarnation in some aspects of the contemporary Cultural Studies movement--

efforts such as Patrick Brantlinger's, which try to appropriate for contemporary thinking elements of past (literary) cultures. If Richter's is the theological Green, and Greengarten's is the political Green, and Thomas's is the philosophical Green, then my construction might be described as the ethico-literary Green. For as I shall argue in the following chapters, Green's ethical critique intervened in a number of important ways in a variety of literary treatments of Victorian cultural problems. In this way, this dissertation recovers "moments" of a literary culture of Victorian positive-freedom Liberalism. To do so is to rebuild our sense of the Victorian "literary" to include previously unrecognized lines of ethical and cultural thinking--lines which closely approximate contemporary patterns of cultural theory.

In each of the following chapters I have selected a novel or set of poems and reconstructed around it a constellation of epiphenomenal--primarily ethical--texts in which its signification was originally implicated. My effort, then, is to articulate the intertexual relations within these textual constellations in order to make a case for the ethical character of their literary "centers." Throughout this project my interest in so doing has been to recover and reconstruct a Victorian conception of "the literary" so as to include "the ethical." This is the sense of my title: T. H. Green and the Ethical Reconstruction of the Victorian "Literary".

Chapter I is an account of Green's metaphysics. Here I treat mainly Book I of Prolegomena to Ethics in which Green constructs a defence of free will by arguing that the activity of a self-conscious principle must be the condition of there being for us a single, stable set of relations we call Nature.

In Chapter II I discuss the ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism. Green argues that a self-conscious principle is the condition of agents being able to distinguish themselves from their several desires and to choose which ones to realize. This describes a process by which agents make themselves into the kinds of agents who habitually seek permanent satisfaction where it can actually be found. This chapter sets the metaphysical and moral philosophical background necessary to recognize and understand analogues of Green's thinking as they appear in the work of his literary inheritors. For it is these ethical presuppositions of positive-freedom liberalism, not some fully-formed political platform, that we find in the work of Green's literary inheritors.

Chapter III first considers the generally deprecatory reception history of Arthur Hugh Clough's poetry at the hands of an "Arnoldean" post-Romantic poetics. Turning the tables, I re-examine Arnoldean poetics against the ethical background and implications of Clough's poetry. Whereas Arnoldean poetics never gets beyond outdated moral intuitionism, Clough's poetry recommends a structure of

ethical discourse which preserves the dialogic character of moral problems, situates them in the context of the individual ethical consciousness, and insists that they be resolved there. Clough's construction of ethical consciousness and his reliance on social roles as advocated in his poetry anticipate important features of the positive-freedom liberalism that Green espoused.

In Chapter IV I examine the compatibility between George Eliot's self-proclaimed realist foundations and the kinds of resolutions she invokes in her fiction. I am specifically interested in the models of self Eliot invokes in her novels and compare these to the philosophical realist foundations of her broader cultural thinking. It is my contention that there is a severe discontinuity between Eliot's realist predilections and the socially-constituted models of self she invokes as a mechanism to a renewed sense of community. In this connection, I read Daniel Deronda as a critique of the possibilities for social cohesion occasioned by the realist construction of subjectivity. The model of subjectivity in Daniel Deronda is that of a fully socially-constructed self closely analogous to the model of subjectivity articulated in Green's ethics.

Chapter V reconstructs the intertexual relations among several texts surrounding Mary Augusta Ward's Robert Elsmere, a novel dedicated to Green, containing a thinly disguised portrait of him, and making use of passages from his theological writing. In this chapter I attempt to show

that Ward made use of Green's lay sermons and his reading of German critical theology to model the protagonist's critique of Anglican orthodoxy, and, more importantly, to configure the cultural politics that replaces it. The lay sermons Ward cites in her novel are a distillation of Green's unpublished translation of F. C. Baur's Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche. Ward's recurrence to Green's religious writing represents a laboratory case of the translation of German critical theology into English cultural theory.

Finally, in Chapter VI, I work out the relationships between May Sinclair's philosophical writings and her "idealist" novel, The Divine Fire. Sinclair's philosophical writings display a sustained preoccupation with the problem of reconciling the ideal with the real. Although a philosophical idealist, she attempted in her last work on philosophy to reformulate idealism to take more serious account of the realities of space and time. Her most idealist novel, The Divine Fire, uses the reconciliation of ideal and real to pattern the protagonist's moral development. Sinclair's understanding of idealism in general and idealist ethics in particular is represented in an early essay she wrote on Green: "The Ethical and Religious Import of Idealism." The model of moral development in The Divine Fire bears distinct relation to Green's ethics, and, consequently, her novel can be read as a literary effort to reconceptualize them. The Divine Fire stands as a late-century representation of some of the most

important ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism.

Finally, my recovery of Green's place in Victorian cultural theory occasions two possibilities for literary studies. First, by articulating Green's place in the literary treatment of these problems in Victorian cultural theory, my reconstruction of Green's cultural moment makes available a genealogy of ethical thinking eclipsed in previous formations of the Victorian "literary." Secondly, and to my mind more importantly, by recovering the linkages between an ascendent ethical theory and its contemporary literary representation, I make an historically situated case for the appropriation of literature as specifically ethical discourse. Such a construction allows us to draw upon literary texts as a resource for contemporary cultural theory.

Chapter I

GREEN'S METAPHYSICS AND VICTORIAN ETHICAL DISCOURSE

The goal of this dissertation is to read T. H. Green back into our sense of the Victorian "literary." The recovery of Green's liberalism and its literary analogues I am proposing here broadens our sense of Victorian liberalism. It also expands our sense of Victorian literature by recovering textual "moments" in a literary culture of positive-freedom liberalism that have not yet been recognized in critical constructions of Victorianism. In order to manage this recovery, it is first necessary to understand how Green's search for cultural foundations differed from contemporaneous alternatives.

I

The landscape of Victorian moral discourse is a labyrinth of conflicting motives. Religious conservatism, several degrees of religious liberalism, natural science, and poetic moralism were all competing for supremacy as foundations of Victorian moral and cultural thinking. Green well understood the claims of these discourses on Victorian sensibilities, though he found them all inadequate articulations of moral understanding.

Poetry and religion, Green admitted, have their own sorts of truth: the first based upon feeling, the second on revelation. Green saw Victorian religion as being reduced to dogma or, worse, feeling. He sharply differentiated between religion and theology, regarding the first as intuition and the second as merely epiphenomenal dogma. In neither form did religion give adequate insight into the origin and nature of morality.

Poetry Green held to be similarly inadequate. Although he conceded that poetry did give expression to deep (i.e. moral) convictions, these frequently conflicted with "the inferences of popularized science" (PE §1). The cultural significance and momentum of British poetry, however, led many Victorians to overlook such contradictions. Green's desire for a rational and systematic account of moral understanding could not admit this inconsistency. Instead, his effort was to reinvigorate traditional moral philosophy. Its foundations, however, were not as deeply implicated in British culture and history as those of either poetry or religion. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Green admits, moral philosophy had fallen into ill repute.

> 'Poetry we feel, science we understand;' --such will be the reflection, spoken or unspoken, of most cultivated men. . . . 'Better trust poetry and religion to the hold which, however illusive, they will always have on the human heart, than seek to explain and vindicate them, as against science, by help of a philosophy which is itself not only an illusion but a dull and pretentious

> one, with no interest for the imagination and no power over the heart." (PE §2)[1]

J. B. Schneewind has pointed out some historical reasons for the low status of philosophy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Up to the end of the eighteenth century traditional speculative philosophy was being pursued, though almost exclusively in Scottish universities, Edinburgh especially. This was the so-called Common Sense school led by Thomas Reid. In England the situation was quite different. From the beginning of the 1790s until the middle of the 1820s the social and political conflict on the continent led the English government to repressive measures toward all sorts of efforts at "reform." Intellectual attention turned to more pressing social and political issues than speculation about morality.

During this period the Church of England controlled both English universities, and what philosophy was being taught at Oxford and Cambridge was aimed at educating an Anglican clergy. This narrowed the range of religious and moral speculation considerably. When Church of England hegemony at Oxbridge began to wane in the 1830s and 1840s, intellectual debate at Oxford was dominated by the religious controversies of the Oxford Movement. Discussion of morality was reduced to doctrinal disputes. During this time there was, however, slight and gradual growth of

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[1]The numbers I give for Green's quotations are to section numbers, not page numbers, of the 1890 Oxford edition of the Prolegomena.

philosophy under the leadership of William Whewell at Cambridge. These political and religious conditions pushed ethical speculation into new provinces. By the middle of the nineteenth century, what remained of any tendency to systematize morality was assimilated to the natural sciences. Green concedes from the start that

> The questions raised for us by the Moral Philosophy which in England we have inherited, are just such as to invite a physical treatment. If it is the chief business of the moralist to distinguish the nature and origin of the pleasures and pains which are supposed to be the sole objects of human desire and aversion, to trace the effect upon conduct of the impulses so constituted, and to ascertain the several degrees in which different courses of action, determined by anticipation of pleasure and pain, are actually productive of the desired result; then the sooner the methods of scientific experiment and observation are substituted for vague guessing and an arbitrary interpretation by each man of his own consciousness, the better it will be. (PE §2)

Green has in mind here Hume's treatment of moral sense and, more specifically, Hobbes's hypothesis that virtue is "whatever mental action or quality gives to a spectator the pleasing sentiment of approbation; and vice the contrary" (Essay Concerning the Principles of Morals 265). The tendency of English moral philosophers had been to treat moral issues as matters of physical sensation.

Green's characterization of the Victorian ethical mainstream as an effort to "distinguish the nature and origin of the pleasures and pains which are supposed to be the sole objects of human desire and aversion" (PE §2) describes the theoretical underpinnings of Victorian

utilitarianism. We can turn to Green's criticism of utilitarianism in order to understand what he took to be the inadequacies of scientific explanations of morals.

According to Green, English ethical discourse, assimilated into natural science and supported by evolutionary theory, attempted to produce a "natural history" of morality--an account, modeled on the natural sciences, of the personal and social development of moral sentiments. Green sets the question of the possibility of such an inquiry thus:

> Can we find any scientific warrant for believing in a process by which, out of susceptibility to pleasures incidental to the merely animal life, there have grown those capacities for enjoyment which we consider essential to general well-being, and those social interests which not only make the contemplation of general well-being an independent source of pleasure, but also make the pleasure of exciting this pleasure--the pleasure of satisfying the moral sentiment of others--an object of desire so strong as in many cases to determine action? If we can, it would seem that we have given to our national system of ethics--the ethics of moral sentiment--the solid foundation in a natural science. (PE §4)

Green concedes that it may be possible to arrive at a natural history of moral sentiment by looking at the cultural artifacts (literature, legislation, and social institutions) of human history. He also admits that the evolutionary theory of descent holds out the promise of being able to reach beyond the beginnings of human history to link human moral sentiments with merely animal instincts. In principle, natural science could give a description of

human moral sentiment, and perhaps even give an account of the origins of those sentiments.

Green points out, however, that it is commonly agreed that moral inquiry must not only describe the moral assumptions existent in a community, but make some prescriptive determination about what those assumptions should be. He finds the possibility of a prescriptive morality based on the methods of natural sciences severely problematic. It can only be managed with a central contradiction.

The whole tendency of the Victorian scientific treatment of moral sentiments was to view them in terms of natural laws. To do so, however, raises serious problems of free will.

> Now it is obvious that to a being who is simply a result of natural forces an injunction to conform to their laws is unmeaning. It implies that there is something in him independent of those forces, which may determine the relation in which he shall stand to them. (PE §7)

Regardless of this "obvious" contradiction, the utilitarians did pursue a prescriptive ethics based upon the assumption that man was a product of--determined by--natural laws. Green admits that much social reform was carried out under the banner of utilitarianism, but this is due, he contends, more to the character of its proponents than to the nature of its doctrines. In fact, Green rejects the idea that utilitarianism itself could provide any real inducement to

moral improvement. It is more likely to interfere with the desire for improvement:

> The Utilitarian theory of ultimate good, if founded upon the Hedonist theory of motives, we have found to be 'intrinsically unavailable for supplying motive or guidance to a man who wishes to make his life better,' because that theory of motives, when argued out, appears to exclude . . . the belief that it can rest with [the agent] to exercise any initiative, whether in the way of resistance to inclination or of painful interference with usage, which may affect the result. (PE §356)

Utilitarianism--like all materialist accounts of morality--has other difficulties as well. By locating the origin of motive for action in such a subjective sphere as individual feeling, utilitarianism makes it difficult to transcend individual desires. Consequently, an individualism resistant to a sense of obligation is likely to develop. Utilitarianism does regard the summum bonum as the greatest good for the greatest number, and in that way does acknowledge the importance of considering other agents' interests. However, a speculative hedonist considering the notion of duty must answer in only one way, according to Green:

> He must conclude that he has no duty in the world, according to the sense in which he naturally uses the word--no duty other than a necessity of following the inclination for that which from time to time presents itself to him as his greatest pleasure, or the aversion from what presents itself as his greatest pain. (PE §347)

Without both a belief in the efficacy of one's will to improve one's own situation and a sense of responsibility toward others, real moral development of any kind is not

likely to take place. According to Green, the gradual moral improvement of the world is hardly likely to proceed under the influence of utilitarianism as the popular understanding of morality.

Green's complaint is not strictly with utilitarianism per se but with all attempts to provide "natural" explanations for human moral sentiments. By "natural" he means the linking of human choice to causal laws of nature. The possibility of a systematic account of morality depends therefore upon severing the origins of human action from determination by "natural" forces. This issue leads Green to investigate the degree of independence of the human mind from Nature. He concludes his survey of Victorian modes of moral discourse with the observation that the grounds of systematic moral thinking are to be found through the use of critical philosophy:

> We have to return once more to that analysis of the conditions of knowledge, which forms the basis of all Critical Philosophy whether called by the name of Kant or no, and to ask whether the experience of connected matters of fact, which in its methodical expression we call science, does not presuppose a principle which is not itself any one or number of such matters of fact, or their result. (PE §8)

Moral philosophy and cultural theory begin for Green in determining whether mind is independent of nature or simply an effect of natural laws.

To review, Green's chief concern is to establish a systematic theory of morality for those people who, due to conflicts with science, could no longer accept that offered

by traditional religion. In order for this to be possible, he must first establish that human action is not determined by causal laws of nature as the utilitarians and other materialists claimed. In the following section I take up Green's appropriation of Kantian transcendental critique as a defence of free will.

II

Without free will moral responsibility is meaningless and moral inquiry has nothing to contribute by way of securing the foundations for culture. As we have seen, a large part of Green's dissatisfaction with utilitarianism has to do with its attempt to link human choices to causes in nature. Green's cultural theory begins with the defence of free will he mounts in Prolegomena to Ethics. That defence grounds his analysis of the conditions of moral development. Green's political theory--particularly the argument for positive freedom--serves to realize in social space the conditions of moral development he uncovers in his ethical investigations. Because so much depends upon Green's treatment of free will, the issue warrants careful attention.

Utilitarianism is only one of several versions of Victorian materialist accounts of human action. In his recent book-length exposition of Green's ethical theory, Geoffrey Thomas has identified two specific versions of materialism against which Green posed his defence of free will: reductive materialism and one-way physicalism.

Reductive materialism Thomas defines in the following way: "Nature is wholly physical. Mental events are identical to physical events, mental states to physical states of the brain or central nervous system" (Thomas 125). According to Thomas, one-way physicalism holds that "there are mental events which are non-physical but physical events cause mental events, mental events are causally inert and never cause physical events" (Thomas 125). The distinction between them comes down to this: reductive materialism reduces all mental events to physical events; one-way physicalism allows the distinction but denies that mental events can cause physical events.

The general pattern of Green's defence takes the form of arguing against physical determinism that rather than the mind being determined by the laws of nature, the laws of nature are determined by the mind. Green's own defence runs generally parallel to Kant's. Kant's dictum that the understanding (Verstand) makes (machen) Nature, but out of matter it does not create (schaffen) is an explicit rejection of these kinds of determinism.

Green's defence of free will can be divided into two parts. In the first part Green tries to establish that the synthetic activity of consciousness is the condition of our having knowledge of the world as a single, unalterable system of relations. In the second part Green adds that the

same consciousness is responsible for making those relations we come to know as Nature.[2]

I begin with the first part. Green starts by asking what is implied in determining that a thing is real. The question, "does an impression represent anything real?" Green takes to mean: "is the impression related to its determining conditions as it appears to be?" A number of important things are implied in the judgment of reality:

> When we analyse our idea of matter of fact, can we express it except as an idea of a relation which is always the same between the same objects; or our idea of an object except as that which is always the same in the same relations? And does not each expression imply the idea of a world as a single and eternal system of related elements, which may be related with endless diversity but must <u>be</u> related still? (<u>PE</u> §14)

The system of relations to which the impression is related must be single and unalterable. If there were more than one system, then there could be no such thing as reality since the sensation could be compared to any one of several systems of relations. If the system were always changing, it would be impossible to say whether it was related as it appears to be--sometimes it might be related as it appears, sometimes not.

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[2]Thomas's analysis of Green's defence is much more complicated than is necessary here. He distinguishes between two aspects of Green's defence, a "free-mind" argument directed toward one-way physicalism, and an "ontological" argument leveled against "reductive materialism." For present purposes it is sufficient to consider both together under the name "physical determinism." My discussion of the two parts in Green's defence correspond roughly to what Thomas calls Green's "free mind" and "ontological" argument.

In addition to the idea of a single, unalterable system of relations, the judgment of a thing's reality implies the activity of something capable of comparing the impression to that system of relations. This something Green terms alternately "a principle of consciousness," "a self-conscious principle" or just "consciousness."

The derivation of a principle of consciousness as a condition of knowledge goes some way to Green's defence of free will. It is a first step in demonstrating that the human mind is not merely passive with respect to nature. It might be objected, Green recognizes, that this activity of comparison could be carried out in some way by nature itself. If that were so, then the mind would still be determined by nature and free will would be an illusion. It is a possibility Green must reject if he is to sustain his defence of free will.

Green's reply to this objection is that consciousness of change (the most basic kind of knowledge of the natural world) cannot be identical to any of the events constituting that process of change. Similarly, consciousness of succession cannot itself be identical to any single event in a sequence of natural events.

> All the relations under which we know [nature] are relations in the way of change or by which change is determined. But neither can any process of change yield a consciousness of itself, which, in order to be a consciousness of the change, must be equally present to all stages of the change; nor can any consciousness of change, since the whole of it must be present at once, be itself a process of change. (PE §18)

Green's point here, as I understand it, has really to do with temporality. Any process of change is made up of a series of successive events which are "in time" in the sense that they occur and then are "gone": they have a beginning and an end. To be aware of change, however, is to be aware that the present state of affairs is not the same as it was previously. In order for this kind of awareness to be possible, all of the several events constituting the process of change must be simultaneously presented to a single consciousness so that they can be compared.

Consciousness of a process therefore involves a kind of unification or synthesis of the several events. Without such a synthesis, any single event would remain an unrelated, single event. Nature would be static. Thus, there must be something, "external" to the events of the process, which objectifies them and holds them "out of time." Because no single event has this "a-temporality" no single event can be identical to the consciousness of change. Conversely, events of the mind are in a sense separate from events in nature--able to step outside of temporality, and perform a synthetic function. This is what Thomas has called Green's "free mind" argument:

> A form of consciousness, <u>which we cannot explain as of a natural origin</u>, is necessary to our conceiving an order of nature, an objective world of fact from which illusion may be distinguished. (<u>PE</u> §19, emphasis added)

As Green would have it, then, consciousness is necessary for there being <u>for us</u> an objective world. It makes possible

our knowledge of the single system of relations of which that world is constituted. Moreover, the origin of consciousness of nature cannot itself be a part of nature: it is not identical with a natural event, nor can it be the product of a succession of natural events. It must reside outside of nature, in some sense against it. This part of Green's argument breaks the notion that mental events are identical to physical events as reductive materialism would suppose. It does not preclude that mental events are caused by physical events. For that Green needs another argument, the so-called "ontological" argument.

Green begins the second part of his defence of free will by asking: "Whether understanding can be held to 'make nature' in the further sense that it is the source, or at any rate a condition of there being these relations?" (PE §19). His answer is that "the derivation of knowledge from an experience of unalterably related phenomena is its derivation from objects unalterably related in consciousness" (PE §31). Consciousness itself supplies the relations which constitute that system of relations that we call nature.

The relations that constitute nature exist between terms. The terms between which relations exist for consciousness are sensations, what Green sometimes calls "feelings." Thus, if one is going to fully account for relations which constitute our experience of nature, one must explain how a succession of "feelings" (sensations)

becomes a system of unalterable relations in consciousness. Once again there must be a unifying principle which takes successive objects and holds them together:

> Thus, in order that successive feelings may be related objects of experience, even objects related in the way of succession, there must be in consciousness an agent which distinguishes itself from the feelings, uniting them in their severalty, making them equally present in their succession. (PE §32)

There is, then, a principle of unity within consciousness which unites feelings into related objects. Green's point is that the relations themselves that form possible objects for consciousness are the product of that same unifying principle (in consciousness) which makes possible our knowledge of those relations:

> It is such a principle that Kant speaks of sometimes as the 'synthetic unity of apperception,' sometimes simply as 'understanding.' For the reasons stated, there seems no way of escape from the admission that it is, as he says, 'the basis of the necessary regularity of all phenomena in an experience:' the basis, that is to say, not merely of our knowledge of uniform relations between phenomena, but of there being those uniform relations. The source of these relations, and the source of our knowledge of them, is one and the same. (PE §33)

With the argument that consciousness itself produces the relations we call nature, Green has completed the break of consciousness from nature. He has shown that the mind is not identical with natural events, and he has shown that mental events are not caused by natural events.

Green is not completely out of the woods yet, however. He himself points out that to oppose the "real" to "work of

the mind," and to recognize the necessity of the work of the mind in the constitution of all relations, is to distinguish between a reality of "things-in-themselves" and a reality which is merely "empirical." This is essentially Kant's phenomenal/noumenal distinction.

Green's grounds for denying the dualism have to do with his definition of the "real" as a single, unalterable system of relations against which appearances may be compared. On the one hand, he has tried to show that the uniform order of nature and our knowledge of that order have a common source in a synthesizing principle existing in consciousness. To admit, then, on the other hand, that there are really two worlds independent of one another, both of which determine the character of phenomena would be lead to a damaging contradiction. Green takes Kant's point that the "understanding makes nature" to mean that

> understanding, as the unifying principle which is the source of relations, acts formatively upon feelings as upon a material given to it from an opposite source called 'things-in-themselves,' rendering them into one system of phenomena called 'nature,' which is the sole object of experience, and to which all judgments as to matters of fact relate. (PE §51)

Therefore:

> there arises the antithesis between the known or knowable world and the subject capable of knowing it, as between two existences independent of each other, or of which the former is at any rate independent of the latter. . . . [This view] renders knowledge, as of fact or reality, inexplicable. (PE §34)

This Kantian dualism is based, Green thinks, upon the idea of an "unaccountable residuum" arrived at when one reflects upon the process by which knowledge is acquired. In so reflecting, we find that any stage of knowledge "consists in a further qualification of a given material by the consideration of the material under relations hitherto unconsidered" (PE §43). In other words, reflection upon the acquisition of knowledge leads to an infinite regress, or to the assumption of a mere "material" of sensation void of any qualification.

Green argues that this residuum can exist neither in the consciousness implied by a world of facts, nor in the world of facts itself. The first would be to imply we could feel without thinking, which cannot be the case because feeling without thought could not produce a world of facts for us--it would be a collection of unrelated elements. The second thesis, that the residuum exists in the world of facts, is equally untenable. A sensation unqualified by any relation is no fact, and the minimum qualification of a relation implies thought. Thus, thought and sensation are inseparable. And Green takes their inseparability as a refutation of the dualism which is based upon the idea of a mere "material" of sensation unqualified by any thought:

> Feeling and thought are inseparable and mutually dependent in the consciousness for which the world of experience exists, inseparable and mutually dependent in the constitution of the facts which form the object of that consciousness. (PE §50)

Supposing Green to have been successful in showing the mind to be independent of nature, we might ask finally, "of what mind is he speaking?" To put the issue in another way: the existence of nature implies a self-distinguishing principle in consciousness, but it is not yet altogether clear whose consciousness that is. Green has yet to specify the individual's relation to this unifying principle. The real problem for this part of Green's metaphysics is the threat of slipping into a subjective idealism.

It is undeniable that any individual's knowledge of the world undergoes development. Individuals learn things about the world and forget them. But if this is so, it might be objected, the mind-dependent relations which constitute nature would come into being and pass out of being as each individual came to know these relations and later forgot them. This hardly admits the possibility of a single, unalterable system of relations. For if reality is a single system of relations, and that reality is dependent upon consciousness, then it cannot be that every individual makes reality for itself, since that would result in a multiplicity of realities.

Green's answer is that like any living organism, consciousness has two aspects: its end--the particular form realized in its body; and its body--the complex of its material conditions. Knowledge is no different. There is on the one hand the set of possible objects of knowledge. These might be considered the "end" of knowledge. On the

other hand, there are the particular material conditions which consist in any individual having knowledge of those objects. This is the "embodiment" of that end.

> [W]e cannot suppose that those relations of facts or objects in consciousness, which constitute any piece of knowledge of which a man becomes master, first come into being when he attains that knowledge; that they pass through the process by which he laboriously learns, or gradually cease to be as he forgets or becomes confused. They must exist as part of an eternal universe . . . during all the changes of the individual's attitude towards them, whether he is asleep or awake, distracted or attentive, ignorant or informed. . . . We must hold then that there is a consciousness for which the relations of fact, that form the object of our gradually attained knowledge, already and eternally exist; and that the growing knowledge of the individual is a progress towards this consciousness. (PE §69)

This distinction results in the hypothesis of an eternal consciousness which is the end of finite human consciousness.

Green concludes his analysis of the conditions of knowledge with the following summary observations:

> If by nature we mean the object of possible experience . . . then nature implies something other than itself, as the condition of its being what it is. Of that something else we are entitled to say, positively, that it is a self-distinguishing consciousness; because the function which it must fulfill in order to render the relations of phenomena, and with them nature, possible, is one which, in however limited a scale, we ourselves exercise in the acquisition of experience, and exercise only means of such a consciousness. (PE §52)

To review, Green sets out in the first book of the Prolegomena to refute materialist arguments that would make human behavior subject to causal determination by natural

laws. His approach is to show that the mind is not, in fact, determined by nature--quite the opposite: that nature is determined by the mind. He takes up a Kantian transcendental analysis of knowledge to argue that the condition of our having knowledge of nature as a single system of unalterably related objects is the action of a unifying principle which must exist in consciousness. Without such a principle, individual sensations would remain characterless because unrelated, and experience would be inexplicable. Moreover, because the relations which constitute the single system of unalterable relations we call nature are likewise dependent upon the action of a unifying principle in consciousness, this same self-distinguishing consciousness is also the condition for there being a nature at all. Nature and our knowledge of it have a common source in a self-distinguishing activity of consciousness.

Green's metaphysics is important for two reasons. First, it secures the possibility of free will, making moral responsibility meaningful, and making moral inquiry at least potentially useful in identifying moral foundations of culture. More importantly, however, it specifies the existence and nature of a spiritual principle of consciousness that figures importantly in Green's ethics, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Chapter II

FROM ETHICS TO POSITIVE-FREEDOM LIBERALISM

So far we have seen that the metaphysical beginning of Green's Prolegomena to Ethics establishes self-consciousness as a condition of knowledge and of there being the related system of objects of knowledge we call Nature. Green is interested in self-consciousness because it grounds free will by making human agents independent of determination by natural causes. Free will is a condition of the possibility of ethical theory in the sense that an agent without it has no choice in performing or not preforming an action. Under such conditions it is meaningless to talk about moral responsibility or to give rational reasons for acting in certain ways. Thus, Green's metaphysical arguments for the necessity of a self-conscious principle serve to establish the very possibility of a moral philosophical account of human action. Elsewhere in Green's ethics, self-consciousness is an even more immediate condition of an agent's morality. In books II and III of the Prolegomena Green explains how self-consciousness is the means by which agents seek satisfaction. It is also the condition of their ability to make moral discriminations--to become moral agents.

Green is mostly read today for what he has to tell us about liberalism. It should be noted that Green's self-stated purpose in his political lectures is "to consider the moral function or object served by law, or by the system of rights and obligations which the state enforces" (Principles of Political Obligation §1). In Green's view, government's primary responsibility is to implement in social space the conditions necessary for moral development. His ethics are important, then, because they specify the presuppositions of his positive-freedom liberalism.

To recognize this is not to diminish the importance of Green's political thinking. Rather it is to be aware that an understanding of Green's liberalism requires a prior understanding of his ethics and the role of a spiritual principle of self-consciousness in it. Green's ethics tell us not only "where he's coming from," but why he took the trip in the first place.

Liberalism is not best thought of as a fully-formed monolithic political strategy. There has been, of course, a body of assumptions and priorities associated with the name, but Green's reformation of liberalism considerably altered its look.

Green's liberalism, and that of his inheritors, is best recognized by its ethical presuppositions, for this is where Green's impact was felt--in the reestablishment of English liberalism on newly articulated ethical foundations.

What I want to do in the present chapter, then, is to elucidate the ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism, explain the form they took in his political philosophy, and to compare them to two contemporary versions of liberal cultural theory. For it is the ethical presuppositions that are the tokens by which a literary culture of positive-freedom liberalism will be recognized in the work of Green's inheritors.

I

Green approaches the problems of moral philosophy from the side of moral psychology. He tries to provide an account of the way agents undergo a process of development with respect to the objects in which they seek satisfaction. The ability of agents to develop in this way is dependent upon the reproduction in them of the divine or spiritual principle of self-consciousness.

Human agents, like all animals, have desires, but they, unlike animals, can present the possible objects of their desires to themselves and take active steps to realize them. (Animals, conversely, might be said to act on impulse or according to stimulus response, in which case there is no self-conscious presentation of the object of desire to a self.) The transition from mere desire to consciousness of the desired object implies the presentation of the desired object to a subject which distinguishes itself from its desires (PE §85). This for Green is "to will": the effort

on the part of an agent to satisfy itself through the presentation and realization of objects of desire. Human agents are able to do this by virtue of the reproduction in them of the same self-conscious principle deduced and described in Book I of the Prolegomena:

> It is in virtue of this self-objectifying principle that [an agent] is determined, not simply by natural wants according to natural laws, but by the thought of himself as existing under conditions, and as having ends that may be attained and capabilities that may be realised under those conditions. It is thus that he not merely desires but seeks to satisfy himself in gaining the objects of his desire; presents to himself a certain possible state of himself, which in the gratification of the desire he seeks to reach; in short, wills. (PE §175)

Self-consciousness makes it possible for an agent to be motivated to action by a desire for some thing or state of affairs that would make it more happy than at present. Whatever satisfies that desire is (at that moment) a personal good. However, all acts of willing are not equally satisfying, equally good.

An agent experiences a potentially infinite sequence of individual desires, so many that all of them can never be satisfied. Whatever satisfaction the agent experiences passes with the passing of each desire and is immediately superseded by a new desire. As long as an agent identifies its own good with an infinite series of objects of desire, it can only experience momentary satisfactions.

Green points out that sooner or later an agent (may) discover that it will never satisfy its infinite individual

desires. At this point it (may) begin to seek a satisfaction "on the whole," what Green also calls "an abiding satisfaction of an abiding self."

> At the same time as the reflecting subject traverses the series of wants, which it distinguishes from itself while it presents their filling as its object, there arises the idea of a satisfaction on the whole--an idea never realisable, but for ever striving to realise itself in the attainment of a greater command over means to the satisfaction of particular wants. (PE §85)

When it makes this realization, the self-conscious agent moves from being determined by the conditions of its existence to having crucial control over them. One of those conditions is the desire for immediate gratification. This movement breaks the dependence of the agent on natural forces and sets them on the road to freedom and morality.

The transition from seeking satisfaction in immediate gratification to seeking satisfaction "on the whole" thus involves substantially changing the object in which satisfaction is sought from an idea of a possible pleasure to the idea of a possible self. That is, an agent oriented in this way no longer seeks gratification per se, but seeks to realize an idea of a character that habitually seeks satisfaction where it really can be found. Thus Green's formulation: "an abiding satisfaction in an abiding self."

If a personal good is that which satisfies an agent's particular desire, then a truer or broader or more complete "moral" good must be that which satisfies the moral agent as such--that which satisfies all its desires or that which

satisfies it permanently. It is in this sense that morality for Green is a matter of self-realization--realizing an idea of a possible self.

The individual's moral self-realization is accomplished through the activities of will and reason. As such, they are internal conditions of moral development. As we have seen, will is the ability of a self-conscious agent to satisfy itself through the presentation and realization of an idea of a possible self. In short, to will is to desire a better state of affairs. The activity of the reason is slightly more complicated. Green explains reason as the ability to conceive of a possible self as an end to be attained by action. What the reason does, in effect, is to perceive a connection between the idea of a possible self and the means necessary to realize it. In short, to reason (in this context) is to organize one's desires into a plan for action which will lead to a certain kind of life-- a certain kind of character and a certain idea of satisfaction:

> That a man should seek an object as 'part of his happiness,' or as one without which in his then state he cannot satisfy himself,--and this is to will--implies that he presents himself to himself as in a better state with the object attained than he is without it; and this is to exercise reason. (PE §178)

The point here is that the object in which the agent is seeking satisfaction is an idea of itself as existing in new conditions--conditions that provide a lasting satisfaction

on the whole. Thus, Green explains elsewhere, that the union of the will and the reason "consists in so living that the objects in which self-satisfaction is habitually sought contribute to the realization of a true idea of what is best for man" (PE §177).

In so far as Green conceives of morality and the moral good in terms of the individual's quest for permanent satisfaction, the individual is for Green the primary unit of value. This is the first ethical presupposition of Green's liberalism. It is, in fact, what makes him a liberal, if by liberalism is understood a prioritizing of the claims of the individual over those of society. Prioritizing the individual over society does not exhaust the definition of liberty, of course. Negative-freedom or deontological liberalism leaves it there, however. Insisting that the individual's claims are supreme, it stakes its claim on the idea that the individual should be as little restricted as possible in its search for ultimate satisfaction.

Green's positive-freedom liberalism moves beyond simply recognizing the fundamental value of the individual to specify further conditions of liberty and morality. For Green, the process of moral self-realization takes place in terms of the development of what he calls an agent's moral capabilities. We have already seen that for Green a personal good is whatever satisfies the agent, whereas the moral good is whatever satisfies the agent on the whole. If

an agent seeks satisfaction by virtue of the capabilities invested in it through the reproduction of the spiritual principle of self-consciousness, then an agent's fullest satisfaction must come about through the fullest realization of those capabilities.

On the one hand, Green points out, we can never fully know the nature of a capability until it has completely revealed itself. (This fact can be--and has been--taken by deontological liberalism as grounds for maximizing the individual's freedom to realize its potential for self-satisfaction in whatever way it can.) On the other hand, the moral capability has at least partially revealed itself in the course of human history. We are, therefore, not at a complete loss regarding knowledge concerning its nature or the objects in which agents have found lasting satisfaction:

> In the broad result it is not hard to understand how man has bettered himself through institutions and habits which tend to make the welfare of the all the welfare of each, and through the arts which make nature, both as used and as contemplated, the friend of man. And just so far as this is plain, we know enough of ultimate moral good to guide our conduct; enough to judge whether the prevailing interests which make our character are or are not in the direction which tends further to realise the capabilities of the human spirit. (PE §172)

The point here is that we know the moral good only as that which satisfies the moral agent, and the moral agent has historically sought to satisfy itself (and, in fact, has actually satisfied itself in part) through the establishment of institutions which tend "to make the welfare of all the

welfare of each." This, then, is the direction in which the moral good lies, and, in so far as it is, it offers some indication of the direction in which human "moral capabilities" ought to be developed. This is a crucial point for positive-freedom liberalism: because there is some indication of the way in which agents have realized their moral capabilities, Green is able to put limits on the maximization of individual freedom.

The establishment of institutions "which tend to make the welfare of the all the welfare of each" is predicated on or implies an act of what Green terms social identification. Making the welfare of all the welfare of each amounts to bringing about the social conditions in which the individual's personal good is realized when the common good is realized. In such a condition, the individual identifies its interests with the interests of others. Green maintains that social identification is an

> ultimate fact of human history--a fact without which there would not be such a history, and which is not in turn deducible from any other history--that out of sympathies of animal origin, through their presence in a self-conscious soul, there arise interests as of a person in persons. (PE §201)

Green uses "persons" here in the sense of "subjects." Personality for him means self-conscious subjectivity--the capacity for a self-conscious agent to present itself to itself as an end to be realized by action. By "interests as of a person in persons" Green means a mutual recognition

among members of a community of each other as a potential moral end in themselves.

Social identification is highly important to positive-freedom liberalism. It is the moral psychological basis of the idea of a common good. As such it makes possible a sense of positive obligation among members of a community. As we shall later see in Green's discussion of rights, a freedom is extended to all members of a society and secured as a right only when that freedom is mutually recognized as contributory to the good of all individuals. A network of mutually respected freedoms makes up the moral infrastructure of a society.

The identification of individual and common good is the crux of Green's ethics. It is precisely the goal of moral philosophy in general to give rational reasons for taking other agents' interests into account. Whether Green has actually provided such logical connection between individual and common good is certainly open to question. Geoffrey Thomas, Green's most recent and thorough philosophical expositor, thinks he has. Thomas has divided Green's treatment of the rationality of moral action into two aspects: a "minimal argument" and a "more ambitions argument." The minimal argument asserts that agents are capable of taking interest in others for their own sakes. According to Thomas, typically "this interest will mean providing for the maintenance of a family" (Thomas 279). He points out, however, that this argument does not really go

far enough: "it requires in principle only the cellular units of individual, friends, and family" (Thomas 282). Tribal communities might consist of only such narrowly defined groups, but modern industrial and post-industrial society require a more extensive means of connecting its members.

According to Thomas, Green's "more ambitious argument" for social identification holds that "the moral life is a dimension of the entire network of social institutions" (Thomas 282). The idea here is that social roles are the mechanism that converts an agent's desires into activities that lead to the realization of its idea of a possible self. To the extent that social roles order an agent's interests, the self that gets realized is the product of social forces and relations. The agent is, really, a socially-constituted self. (As we shall see later, the socially-constructed self is integral to a cultural theory of positive freedom because it serves as a principle of social cohesion.)

According to Green, an important principle of social cohesion is the reciprocal recognition of persons <u>as persons</u>, that is, the recognition of others as agents who present to themselves objects of their desires and seek satisfaction in the realization of them. This kind of social identification is necessary, Green argues, in order to counteract the tendency to treat all other agents as means to one's own personal satisfaction. To do so would be

to defeat one's own attempts at self-realization and self-satisfaction:

> human society presupposes persons in capacity--subjects capable each of conceiving himself and the bettering of his life as an end to himself--but it is only in the intercourse of men, each recognized by each as an end, not merely as a means, and thus as having reciprocal claims, that the capacity is actualized and that we really live as persons. (PE §183)

Unless an agent recognizes other agents as ends in themselves, it not likely to be able to exercise its own self-realizing capabilities. Thus, according to Green, the impulse to seek a permanent satisfaction can only be realized both "in persons, through society." Even though the self-conscious principle must realize itself in individuals, it is only in the context of society that the individual can come to embody the divine idea.

It will be useful to review the ethical presuppositions of Green's liberalism before going on to examine the form they take in Green's explicitly political work. Green's view of morality as a process of individual development and his idea that the true moral good is a realization of human potential are important presuppositions of a positive-freedom liberalism. The quarrel between negative and positive freedom is in one sense the quarrel over the boundary between private and public space. It is also the question of the range of individual freedom within society. Green's choice to view morality in terms of individual self-

realization means that he takes the individual's well-being to be the focus of thinking about the good. Viewing the moral or true good as the fullest development of the individual's human potential suggests further that the individual needs maximum freedom to realize its potential in whatever direction it can be realized. For to realize potential in some directions but not others is not to realize full potential. However, the internal logic of self-realization and the history of that realization indicate the conditions under which self-realization is possible.

The next part of Green's cultural thinking--his political philosophy--considers these and advocates a conception of political action that seeks to provide and secure them.

II

Just as Green's ethics are predicated on the conclusions of his metaphysics, so too is his political thinking largely conditioned by his ethical investigations. In fact, it is clear that Green viewed his political philosophy as the practical realization of his theory of morality. Green opens his lectures on The Principles of Political Obligation with a review of the conclusion from his ethics that the condition of a moral life is the joint possession and exercise of will and reason.

> The condition of a moral life is the possession of will and reason. Will is the capacity in a man of being determined to action by the idea of a possible satisfaction of himself. An act of will is an action so determined. A state of will is the capacity as determined by the particular objects in which the man seeks self-satisfaction; and it becomes a character in so far as the self-satisfaction is habitually sought in objects of a particular kind. Practical reason is the capacity in a man of conceiving the perfection of his nature as an object to be attained by action. All moral ideas have their origin in reason, i.e. in the idea of a possible self-perfection to be attained by the moral agent. (PPO §6)

It will be recalled from the foregoing discussion of Green's ethics that the conditions of moral development can only be realized "in persons, through society." The fact that social participation is a necessary condition of the agent's seeking self-satisfaction provides for the complementarity of Green's ethics and his political philosophy. Whereas Green's ethical theory provides presuppositions regarding the nature of the individual and its search for the moral good, the political theory provides for the conditions necessary to turn those presuppositions into social reality, social opportunity. Green's political thinking is always carried out with this moral telos in mind:

> The value then of the institutions of civil life lies in their operation as giving reality to these capacities of will and reason, and enabling them to be really exercised. In their general effect, apart from particular aberrations, they render it possible for a man to be freely determined by the idea of a possible satisfaction of himself, instead of being driven this way and that by external forces, and thus they give a reality to the capacity called will: and they enable him to realise his reason, i.e. his idea of self-perfection, by acting as a member of a social organization in which each contributes to the

> better-being of all the rest. So far as they do in fact thus operate they are morally justified . . . . (PPO §7)

This moral telos is the foundation of the most important things Green has to say about political and social institutions. Melvin Richter has viewed Green's political thinking as an attempt to rework problematic features of traditional Liberalism. He reports that

> Green saw himself as following in the succession of the 'radical' tradition of the Manchester School, but correcting its class bias and adding to the groups loyal to it those persons from other classes who acknowledged the obligation to improve their countrymen's lot. He led a reaction against that aspect of radicalism which made no demand for a personal contribution to the social good. (269-270)

Green belongs in the tradition of English Liberalism in the sense that he continued to view the individual as the unit of ultimate value and worked to develop that value. In other words, what makes Green a liberal is his notion that individuals should have free exercise to determine the most important spheres of their lives as they choose.

The traditional liberal view of the individual tended to maximize its independence from society by maximizing its freedoms and minimizing its responsibilities to others. J. S. Mill's was the most influential formulation of traditional English liberalism in the nineteenth century. This passage from "On Liberty" indicates the extent to which traditional liberalism separated freedoms from responsibilities.

> The object of this Essay is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control . . . . That principle is, that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. (135)

The real force of this passage lies in the assertion that the individual ought to be free to do as it likes so long as it does no harm to others. Green's reconceptualization of individuality and freedom responds to the rather narrow conception of "harm" in the above passage. That conception holds that whatever does not directly impede another's pursuit of pleasure does not harm him or her. In this way, traditional liberalism regards absence of direct interference not only as a necessary but also a <u>sufficient</u> condition of the pursuit of happiness. On this description an agent's freedom is "negative" in the sense that it is free by virtue of the <u>absence</u> of restraint. Its freedom is "negative" in the further sense that any intervention on the part of society is viewed as impinging on the individual's personal good. The only allowance made for intervention is to prevent one individual's good from directly preventing another's.

It is chiefly this view of individualism that Green's political theory addresses. His positive-freedom liberalism is grounded in the recognition that mere absence of

restraint is not a sufficient condition to allow all individuals to realize their moral capacity. Green states quite explicitly that "the mere removal of compulsion, the mere enabling of a man to do as he likes, is itself no contribution to true freedom" ("Liberal Legislation" 371). This statement is one of the clearest formulations of Green's positive freedom--the idea that true freedom requires the presence of certain abilities and opportunities.

Avital Simhony has recently viewed Green's positive-freedom liberalism as an argument that negative freedom liberalism actually restricts, not multiplies, social opportunities. Simhony rightly points out that Green's idea of positive freedom holds that "as many opportunities as possible must be secured for all in order to enable the exercise of their capacities of will and reason" ("On Forcing Individuals" 315). This observation has been the basis of his correcting a common misinterpretation of Green's positive freedom.

Simhony argues that Green's notion of positive freedom does not simply reverse (deny) the traditional liberal notion that absence of constraint is a sufficient condition of self-realization. It goes beyond it in a way important to new formulations of liberalism. Simhony finds a distinction within Green's positive freedom between internal and external conditions of self-realization. The internal conditions of self-realization are the moral capabilities of

will and reason discussed above. The possibility of exercising these abilities requires more than the absence of external constraint. It requires--in addition--external conditions that must also be regarded as positive abilities. Simhony points out that for Green, "[o]pportunities have to be secured for the internal power to be effective" ("Beyond Negative and Positive Freedom" 38). Those opportunities come in the form of social institutions constructed in such a way that all members of a community have equal possibility to exercise their moral capabilities.

In Green's political thinking, the positive external conditions of self-realization are provided for by civil rights. Rights supply the external conditions necessary for self-realization in the following way. For Green, a freedom to act in a certain way only becomes a right when it is recognized by the members of a community as contributory to the common good.

> A power on the part of anyone is so recognized [i.e. as a right] by others, as one which should be exercised, when these others regard it as in some way a means to that ideal good of themselves which they alike conceive: and the possessor of the power comes to regard it as a right through consciousness of its being thus recognized as contributory to a good in which he too is interested. (PPO §25)

When a freedom to act in a certain way becomes a right, it is (theoretically) secured to all members of a society. Because only those freedoms contributory to the common good (in which all individuals share) become rights, rights serve as social institutions that actively promote the

individual's self-realization. That is, a system of rights is part of the internal workings of a society. And the society thus founded on civil rights works to promote the self-realization of its members.

The whole point of Green's discussion of rights is that rights secure the external conditions necessary for self-realization. From the view of positive-freedom liberalism, the basic right of deontological liberalism--the right to be left alone--does not necessarily provide all citizens with the external conditions necessary for the exercise of their internal moral capacities. Conversely, Green's positive freedom liberalism recognizes the necessity of securing these external conditions.

III

To further contextualize the recovery of Green's cultural theory, I want to examine briefly some ways in which Green's positive-freedom liberalism corresponds to two contemporary versions of liberal cultural theory.

One way to understand Green's political theory is as a realization that because we cannot precisely specify the content of the moral idea, sufficient freedom must be secured for individuals to realize their moral potential as they see fit. The internal logic of self-realization and the history of that self-realization do allow Green to set boundaries within which moral capabilities should be exercised. Rights serve to secure to the individual the

external conditions necessary for it to exercise its moral capabilities.

With these basic features of Green's political thinking in mind, his liberalism should be viewed as very much in line with recent versions of liberalism specifically designed to protect a diversity of notions of the ultimate or moral good. Two notable instances are John McGowan's articulation of a "postliberal democracy" and John Rawls's concept of "political liberalism." First McGowan, then Rawls.

McGowan's Postmodernism and its Critics is an examination of the viability of postmodernist critical theory as a model for contemporary political action. According to McGowan one of the defining characteristics of postmodernist thought is the tendency to refer the meaning of individual units to an encompassing system of relations in which those units exist. For Derrida that system of relations is a system of differences that make meaning possible, for postmodern Marxists that system is the economic conditions that organize all aspects of society, for Foucault that system is an inevitable network of power relations. In all these cases and more, the meaning of an individual unit is made possible by its location within a system of relations. Postmodernist cultural theorists tend to regard the nature and significance of the human individual in the same way. That is, the model of human subjectivity endorsed by postmodernist theorists is what

might be termed a socially-constituted self. Just as a unit has no meaning apart from its location in a system, the individual has no status or power apart from its position within the social totality that confers its meaning.

This view of the subject leads to a limitation of the individual's freedom. If the social monolith is as inescapable as the postmodernist theorists claim, then there seems no way for an individual to take a critical position against the logic or interests of that monolith. In other words, if the individual is completely determined by society, then its interests and goals must also be so determined. Whatever freedom there could be would have to come from being able to escape determination by the social monolith. The individual would have to be a position outside society itself.

The possibility of postmodern freedom is thus formulated along the lines of negative freedom, since freedom can only come via escape, separation, or independence. Paradoxically, a subject capable of such freedom would be a deontological subject--it would have to have an existence and character apart from its location in society. Both of these conditions are denied by the postmodernist doctrine that the social monolith is inescapable.

This, for McGowan is the paradoxical crux of postmodern cultural theory. McGowan's fundamental polemical point is that "the association of freedom with difference is too

flimsy a notion on which to build a just society" (Postmodernism x). What McGowan is looking for is a model of social cohesion that respects difference and makes it possible. In other words, some version of positive freedom must be incorporated into contemporary cultural theory.

> What we need is an account of the self's inevitable immersion in the social that also explains how selves can experience themselves as integral agents capable of dissenting from or choosing alternative paths among the options social situations present. (Postmodernism 211)

McGowan himself proposes such an account, though he does not specifically use the term "positive freedom" to name it. Instead, he advocates the concepts of "recognition" and "semiautonomy" to explain how agents can be the products of socialization and yet retain some independence from a totalizing social monolith.

McGowan replaces the postmodernist notion of a one-way socialization with a more dynamic view of social membership. His concept of "recognition" recovers the fact that an individual's position in society is not always a completely powerless one. Normally a group recognizes an individual as a member when the individual gives consent to the prevailing social structure, thereby legitimizing it. There are, however, social positions in which membership is conferred before consent is given. (Nationality is perhaps the most obvious and important of these.) The individual's ability to withhold consent is the source of a power it has against the society. The individual may not have much power, but it

does have some, and it is a product of a position within society.

> Thus, while recognition enhances the hold of social power over selves in some ways, it confers at the same time a greater potential for effective action on the part of the recognized within the community of which they are members. (Postmodernism 221)

McGowan's notion of "recognition" does explain how an individual immersed in a social whole can have freedom against that whole.

McGowan admits that some would argue that all identity, because it is conferred by society, is oppressive and serves only to reinforce the existing social structure. To argue this is to deny the possibility of freedom and criticism. McGowan's concept of "semiautomony" addresses this objection. He points out that recognition of an individual as a member is not negotiated once and for all. It is conferred many times and at a variety of locations within the society. "Semiautonomy" divides the social whole into overlapping spheres of interest and activity that are partially--but only partially--autonomous from one another. The concept of semiautonomy thus denies any single monolithic conception of society or social recognition. More importantly, the separation of spheres allows the possibility of viewing society's interests and goals from different perspectives within the social whole. The possibility of critical freedom results from this multiperspectival view of society.

The concept of semiautonomy allows McGowan to view the democratic state and the interests of its capitalist economics as independent of one another. He rejects the notion common among postmodern theorists that the state is only oppressive: "What these visions deny is that the state and its legal apparatus could ever possibly serve as a legitimate form of authority that serves to protect liberty against encroachments by other types of power" (Postmodernism 227). A state that is established to protect liberty against other types of power is one grounded in a notion of positive freedom.

There is significant general correspondence between Green and McGowan that pertains to the cultural conditions to which each responds. McGowan's general concern about the possibility of critical distance is essentially an updated version of Green's concern for free will. Whereas Green was defending human freedom from assimilation by the forces of nature, McGowan is defending human freedom from determination by similarly mechanical social forces. The goals of the two defenses are virtually identical. For Green, denial of free will renders the idea of morality itself meaningless and moral philosophy pointless. If there were no way of fighting inclination there would be no use talking about it. The implication of postmodern unfreedom is the same. Without the possibility of a position outside the perpetuating interests of the social monolith, the idea

of criticism is meaningless and a model of political action pointless.

In effect, the move from Green to McGowan is the move from moral philosophy to political philosophy, though always within the boundaries of positive freedom. A similar move has been made by another important figure in contemporary liberal theory, John Rawls. His 1993 Political Liberalism represents a reconfiguration of moral concerns in political form. Political Liberalism corrects a serious deficiency of the earlier A Theory of Justice by adjusting the notion of "justice as fairness" to allow for a plurality of irreconcilable though reasonable comprehensive religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines within a single society. In the introduction to the later work Rawls explains that in A Theory of Justice "no distinction is drawn between moral and political philosophy" but that in Political Liberalism "these distinctions and related ideas are fundamental" (PL xv).

As we have seen, the general aim of Green's liberalism is to provide the conditions necessary for all agents to realize their ideas of self-satisfaction. Because the content of the idea of the moral good is not precisely specifiable, agents should have some latitude to realize their moral potential as they choose. The internal logic of self-realization and the way self-realization has manifested itself in the past indicate limits to that latitude in the form of necessary positive conditions.

John Rawls's goal in Political Liberalism is very much the same. He too wants to specify the (social) conditions necessary for free and equal agents to pursue various conceptions of the good laid out by irreconcilable though reasonable comprehensive doctrines. His concept of "political liberalism" is designed to answer the question: "how is it possible for there to exist over time a just and stable society of free and equal citizens, who remain profoundly divided by reasonable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines?" (PL 4).

Rawls's goal is to articulate an organizing principle or structure of society that preserves differences. His political liberalism should be seen as a positive-freedom liberalism in the sense that it views society's function as the creation and protection of institutions that allow agents to realize their various ideas of the good. While it does not seek to specify the content of these ideas of the good, it does seek to make certain that the conditions of their realization are in place and available to all members.

Rawls's political liberalism is grounded in the notion of "justice as fairness"--this idea serves as the organizational principle by which freedom is secured. The content of the liberal political conception of justice is given by three main features :

> first, a specification of certain basic rights, liberties, and opportunities . . . second, an assignment of special priority to those rights, liberties, and opportunities, especially with respect to claims of the general good and of

> perfectionist values; and third, measures assuring to all citizens adequate all-purpose means to make effective use of their liberties and opportunities. (PL 6)

The first feature of justice as fairness amounts to a view of the individual as de facto having certain rights attached to it. The second feature provides that the individual remains the unit of ultimate value in society. The third feature specifies that social institutions must take active steps to realize the conditions specified by the first two features.

We have already seen that Green regards the faculties of will and reason as the (internal) conditions of moral self-realization. The exercise of these moral capabilities makes possible a lifeplan that organizes an agent's desires leading to permanent self-satisfaction. Additionally, will and reason make agents free by allowing them to be determined by a self-generated idea of themselves as a possible end to be attained by action. Green's main point about freedom is that it is the exercise of these faculties that determines human action, not natural forces.

Rawls's conception of freedom with respect to human agency is quite analogous. Among the assumptions underpinning "the idea of society as a fair system of cooperation" (PL 15) is the conception of "free and equal" persons who can be fully cooperating members of society.

> The basic idea is that in virtue of their two moral powers (a capacity for a sense of justice and for a conception of the good) and the powers of reason (of judgment, thought, and inference

> connected with these powers), people are free. Their having these powers to the requisite minimum degree to be fully cooperating members of the society makes persons equal. (PL 19)

Rawls has cut up the moral capabilities differently than Green, but they remain virtually the same. The internal conditions of human freedom are a sense of justice and a sense of one's own good. We can read Rawls's "sense of justice" as corresponding to Green's notion of a common good--a personal interest in which the interests of others are included. A sense of justice comprehends this very consideration of other agents' interests.

Rawls explains that the capacity for a conception of the good "is the capacity to form, to revise, and rationally to pursue a conception of one's rational advantage or good" (PL 19). This corresponds more or less directly with Green's notion of the will: the effort on the part of an agent to satisfy itself through the presentation and realization of objects of desire. Also necessary is the power of reason to operate on these senses of justice and good. For Green, reason was the ability to conceive of a possible satisfaction as an end to be attained by action.

That Green's positive-freedom liberalism anticipates important features of both McGowan's and Rawls's cultural theories indicates something quite significant about the role of positive freedom in contemporary cultural thinking. McGowan and Rawls arrived at their interests in positive freedom by different paths. McGowan situates himself in

response to postmodernist theory, which is in the "continental" tradition of philosophy of consciousness. Rawls's on the other hand is working within the Anglo-American "analytical" tradition of philosophy of language. That both come to advocate positive freedom suggests that Green is an important historical resource for a variety of contemporary ways of thinking about culture.

IV

I have tried to make the case that Green's positive-freedom liberalism is congruent with contemporary versions of liberal cultural theory. My first purpose in doing this has been to fill in gaps in the genealogy of contemporary cultural theory. Green is not mentioned at all by either McGowan or Rawls, and yet there is a strong case to be made that Green was the first to associate positive freedom with liberalism.

My greater purpose has been to specify grounds for regarding Green as a resource for contemporary thinking about Victorian cultural theory. One troubling aspect of Green's cultural theory for present purposes is the degree to which his ethical and political thinking rely on metaphysical arguments. Geoffrey Thomas has tried to pry the ethics off the metaphysics, and I shall leave it to professional philosophers to judge the result. There may be other avenues open, however, to recovering Green.

Whereas Green's positive-freedom liberalism is grounded in transcendental foundations (the eternal consciousness), these metaphysical foundations may not be always present in the literary analogues of Green's inheritors. Geoffrey Hill has noted the extent of Green's commitments to the world of material experience and the difficulties he had in reconciling it with his metaphysical inclinations. Many of Green ethical and political commitments have been more successfully captured and more fully resolved in what I shall call "moments" of a literary culture of Victorian positive-freedom liberalism.

The remaining chapters are an attempt to recover some of those moments in order to extend our sense of the Victorian "literary" to include a line of positive-freedom liberalism. This is one example of what cultural theory has to gain from its "literary" expression.

Chapter III

FROM POETIC MORALISM TO ETHICAL POETRY: MATTHEW ARNOLD, ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH, AND T. H. GREEN

From the time of his poems's first appearance through the latest full-scale re-evaluations of his work, the reception of Clough's poetry has been preoccupied with the issue of his failure, even doubt that he was really an artist. Until relatively recently, when Clough was mentioned at all, it was as a minor Victorian poet, usually as a kind of "junior" Arnold.

What I want to argue here is that despite its historically limited reception, when examined in terms of its ethical background and implications, Clough's poetry affords a generally more viable model of cultural theory than the post-Romantic poetics which depreciated it. Moreover, I would like to suggest that a kind of moral intuitionism served as the domestic model for cultural theory when Arnoldean poetics became the prototype for literary study in English and American universities. Because of its dehistoricized view of ethical understanding and because it gives very little attention to material and social experience, Arnold's post-Romantic poetics was eventually replaced in Anglo-American universities by

Marxist or leftist versions of cultural critique. There were, however, alternative versions of cultural theory circulating in Victorian England which would have served better than the Arnoldianism which managed to become institutionalized as literary studies in England and America. Clough's was one of these.

I

The early reviews of Clough's poetry combined praise with denigration. While reviewers were friendly to Clough's sincerity and conception, they uniformly complain about the formal achievement of his poetry. In his 1849 review of The Bothie for Frazier's Magazine, Charles Kingsley, for example, acknowledged Clough's freedom and intent to criticize the conventional privileging of meter over thought. Nevertheless, Kingsley did charge Clough with failing to make his verse sufficiently beautiful when he had the talent and opportunity (Thorpe 42). John Conington's 1849 review of Ambarvalia in Frazer's Magazine is favorable of the poetry generally, but it complains about "an obscurity of thought, and a careless roughness of form, which more time spent in polishing, and more exertion given to throwing [Clough's] thoughts into a concrete and truly imaginative form, might easily have remedied" (Thorpe 88). Conington also misses in Clough's work "that rhythmic inspiration, that instinctive melodiousness, which throws all thoughts of the lyric poet into the form of a song"

(Thorpe 89). And while Conington thinks Clough "is meant to be something higher than a third-rate versifier," that something is "an earnest thinker and prose writer upon some of the deepest questions of the day" (Thorpe 90).

In his longish 1862 Atlantic Monthly memoir, Francis Turner Palgrave comments that

> Clough's work is wanting in art; the language and thought are often unequal and incomplete; the poetic fusion into a harmonious whole, imperfect. [In The Bothie] and in his other writings, one feels doubt whether in verse he chose the right vehicle, the truly natural mode of utterance. (Thorpe 112)

And although Palgrave concedes Clough's poetry "truly belongs to a very uncommon class," he adds that "the matter almost everywhere much outruns the workmanship," and the poetry finally "should be judged by the thoughts awakened, rather than by the mode of expressing them" (Thorpe 112). Palgrave's equivocal praise is perhaps best summed up in his comment that "it might be truly said that [Clough] rather lived than wrote his poems," a comment that praises the moral vocation at the expense of the poetic achievement (Thorpe, 118).

Mixed reviews are common enough, especially when they register a discrepancy between quality of conception and quality of execution in the work of a young poet. But the pattern of Clough's reception indicates something more. It was the formal achievement of Clough's work which was disliked. Walter Houghton accounts for this uniformity by contextualizing Clough's reception within Victorian,

essentially post-Romantic, poetic expectations, which associated "poetry" with "sensuous diction and imagery, an affective rhythm that was melodic, and a syntax sufficiently straightforward to make the verse understandable at one reading" (9). According to Houghton, it was against the background of post-Romantic poetics that Clough's poetry appeared inadequate. More recently, Robindra Biswas, too, accounts for Clough's presumed failure as an "Eminent Victorian" by explaining that "we have learnt to recognize other kinds of success" (5).

That we do now recognize other kinds of success has been the occasion of recent renewed interest in Clough. In his 1992 review of the past ten years of Clough scholarship, Patrick Scott points out that only Tennyson and Browning receive more space than Clough in Christopher Rick's 1987 New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse. Clough's Amour de Voyage is one of only four longer poems reprinted in their entirety in Rick's anthology. There are more literary and historical references to Clough than to Arnold in Bernard Richard's 1988 English Poetry of the Victorian Period. This expansion of Clough's profile in the Victorian canon has been accompanied by an increase in critical attention. Scott reports that "the surprise of the last ten years has been the widespread renewal of interest in Clough as a religious writer" (297) and that "a second focus of interest

has been the literary-historical issue of Clough's relation to his Romantic predecessors" (299).[1]

Contemporary constructions of Clough have attempted to recover him as a positive cultural theorist, one who critically evaluated the viability of Romantic responses to Victorian problems. In a review of a relatively recent book treating Clough's poetry in connection with Victorian religious thought, Terry Eagleton has similarly recognized Clough as a cultural theorist, noting the interdependence of Clough's poetry, his cultural thinking, and existing Victorian religious and political debates.[2] Clough's response to Victorian religious problems has a great deal to do with the legacy of the Romantics, especially as it was

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[1]In connection with Clough as a religious writer, Scott mentions, most significantly, Paul Dean and Jacqueline Moore's treatment of Clough's "historical dilemma" in "'To Own the Positive and Present': Clough's Historical Dilemma"; Anthony Kenny's God and Two Poets; and three very interesting essays by R. A Forsythe: "Trudging Service--Secularization and the "devotional religion" [sic] of Arthur Hugh Clough"; "The 'Inmost I'--Clough's Response to Culture and 'Mental Anarchy'"; and "Clough's 'Adam and Eve'--A Debating Tract for the Times."

On the topic of Clough's relation to the Romantics, Scott cites Robert Johnson's "Modern Mr. Clough"; Michael Timko's "Wordsworth and Clough: Divine Reflections and Obvious Facts"; William B. Thessing's "Harvesting the Past: Arthur Hugh Clough's Estimates of his Romantic Predecessors."

[2]Eagleton contends that "Clough's agnosticism, like his radical politics, is not easily separable from his ironic, open-ended, boldly 'foregrounded' poetic forms, or from a polymorphous play of discourses which decenters any singular, assured viewpoint. His mixture of tentativeness and prosaic Enlightenment lucidity is a strategy for resisting the "aesthetic," a category already firmly on one side of Victorian religious and political debates." (725)

transmitted by such eminent post-Romantic Victorians as Matthew Arnold. It is, therefore, possible and instructive to read Victorian post-Romantic poetics against the background of newly revived interest in Clough's poetry as cultural theory. For to juxtapose Clough's poetry and the ethical implications of the post-Romantic poetics that disparaged it reveals a great deal about dominant Victorian assumptions concerning literature and culture.

Matthew Arnold is the prototypical Victorian post-Romantic critic, and because of the place he occupied at the intersection of poetic and explicitly cultural theory, his response to Clough's work affords a good place to begin this examination of one dominant Victorian mediation of poetry and morality.

Arnold's criticism of Clough is not completely negative: he does praise Clough for his sincerity and for a few other qualities (Thorpe 73). When it comes to articulating Clough's deficiencies, Arnold confesses that he does not have complete confidence in his judgments. Even so, it is the grounds upon which Arnold--and others--explicitly rejected Clough's poetry that are most revealing about Arnoldean poetics.

Having made some few minor praises and disparagements in previous letters, Arnold writes to Clough: "If I were to say the real truth as to your poems in general, as they impress me--it would be this--that they are not <u>natural</u>"

(Thorpe 73).[3] This criterion of naturalness Arnold applies specifically to Clough's expression. For although Arnold admits that Clough's expression is congruent with the content of his poems, there remains some doubt that the mode of expression was not "arbitrarily adopted." (By way of illustrative contrast, Arnold thought that when Wordsworth was at his best, his poetry was "as inevitable as Nature herself" ("Wordsworth" 343).) Arnold's employment of the concepts of "naturalness" and "inevitability" indicate a fairly typical Victorian post-Romantic notion of the relation between form and content as "organic." Elsewhere there is strong evidence that Arnold gave priority to form.

Arnold says, for example, that less talented poets, with less valuable content than Clough, still find a natural mode of expression which satisfies "the world's general appreciation for naturalness--i.e.--an absolute propriety--of form, as the sole necessary of Poetry as such" (Thorpe 73). "Wealth and depth of matter," Arnold adds, "is merely a superfluity in the Poet as such." The distinction between "Poetry as such" and the "Poet as such" complicates the issue. But it is clear that the sine qua non of poetry for Arnold is form or expression. This leads him to encourage Clough to consider "whether you attain the beautiful, and

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[3]Most of Arnold's thinking about Clough's poetry is revealed in letters they exchanged. Although correspondence is not as reliable a guide to a critic's thinking as published work, Arnold's judgments there do correspond with his later, published, literary thinking.

whether your product gives PLEASURE, not excites curiosity and reflection" (Thorpe 74). In fact, Arnold found "irritating" what he derided as Clough's attempt to "solve the Universe" (Thorpe 72).

> The trying to go into and to the bottom of an object instead of grouping objects is as fatal to the sensuousness of poetry as the mere painting, (for in Poetry, this is not grouping) is to its airy and rapidly moving life. (Thorpe 74)

Clough's analytical tendencies led Arnold to express concern about "a growing sense of the deficiency of the beautiful in [Clough's] poems, and of this alone being properly poetical as distinguished from rhetorical, devotional, or metaphysical" (Thorpe 72). Arnold did not, of course, completely dismiss the content of poetry as irrelevant.[4] He himself lamented how "unpoetical the age and all one's surroundings are" (Super 281) and insisted that poetry had to become "a complete magister vitae as the poetry of the ancients did" (Super 286). For poetry to become such a guide to life meant that it had mainly to take over the moral duties of such discourses as religion, philosophy, and moral theory. Arnold thought their broadly moral function could be accomplished by the formal character of poetry. On Arnold's (early) model, formal features were capable of creating at least some of the desired moral effects:

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[4]Leon Gottfried has well pointed out that Arnold's general devaluation of Romantic poetics was based on the judgement that the Romantics did not know enough. See Gottfried, 49.

> . . . there are two offices of poetry--one to add to one's store of thoughts and feelings--another to compose and elevate the mind by sustained tone, numerous allusions, and a grand style. . . for the style is the expression of the nobility of the poet's character, as the matter is the expression of the richness of his mind: but on men character produces as great an effect as mind. (Super 282)

Arnold's method, here at least, calls for the poet to lead by moral self-example, rather than by inculcating or developing analytical moral thinking.

Many of these comments appear in early letters--circa 1848--and most refer to Clough's Ambarvalia. Yet there is compelling correspondence between these relatively early responses and Arnold's later, more fully developed poetic (and cultural) theory. Arnold's 1879 essay on Wordsworth is a good place to see more clearly the ethical background and implications of this line of critical response.

Arnold conceived of poetry as a kind of moral discourse. In fact, Arnold thought the essence of Wordsworth's greatness lay in his treatment of moral ideas. In his "Wordsworth" essay, Arnold tells us that poetry "is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,--to the question: How to live" (46). This is the same thing, Arnold tells us, as what Voltaire means by "treating in poetry moral ideas" (45). "The question, how to live is itself a moral idea" (45). Arnold, however, is careful to differentiate between the treatment in poetry of moral ideas on the one hand and "morals . . . treated in a

narrow and false fashion . . . bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day" on the other (46). More concretely, in the "Wordsworth" essay Arnold rejects Leslie Stephen's effort to find in Wordsworth's poetry an "ethical system" "as distinctive and capable of exposition as Bishop Butler's" (48). The rejection is significant because it registers Arnold's belief that moral ideas are susceptible to treatment other than as "scientific systems of thought."

Against the view of the poetic treatment of morality as a system, Arnold's own conception ought to be recognized as an aesthetic construction of morality. Put more simply, Arnoldean poetics makes morality a matter of feeling. For example, Arnold ranks Wordsworth among the greatest English poets

> because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share in it. ("Wordsworth" 51)

Precisely because Arnold does not regard poetic treatment of moral ideas as systematic, there is the problem of how systematic an account can be given of his own poetic moralism. On the face of it, the passage seems to assert that emotional comfort can be derived from moral ideas, and this is probably what Arnold meant. But it is not at all easy to keep these terms distinct. Leon Gottfried, for example, pointed out long ago that "joy" and "consolation"

were for Arnold not simply emotional indulgences but primarily moral ideas themselves--practical ways of coping with the exigencies of modern crisis (56).[5] Thus, both the emotional comfort afforded by the "primary affections and duties" and as well as those "affections and duties" themselves are equally susceptible to being regarded as "moral ideas."

Arnold is not a systematic thinker, something for which he has been frequently criticized.[6] As we shall see, Arnold gives no detailed account of how emotions and moral ideas are linked. Nevertheless, it is clear that his poetics relies heavily on just such a linkage. The association of emotional experience and moral idea Arnold has in mind is evident in poems Arnold lists as representative of Wordsworth's moral achievement: "The Fountain," "The Highland Reaper," and "Michael." In fact, "Michael" so closely fits the pattern of Arnold's praise

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[5]Gottfried's evidence for this concerns several instances of Arnold's "personal attempt to make use of Wordsworth's consolatory powers" (9).

[6]T. S. Eliot said of Arnold that "Arnold had little gift for consistency or for definition. Nor had he the power of connected reasoning at any length: his flights are either short flights or circular flights. Nothing in his prose work, therefore, will stand very close analysis . . . " (346). Leavis, too, denies Arnold any status as a rigorous thinker, contending that "Arnold as a theological or philosophical thinker had better be abandoned explicitly at once." And F. H. Bradley calls Arnold "an intellectual butterfly."

that it is easy to imagine the above passage as a gloss on these lines from Wordsworth's poem:

> There is a comfort in the strength of love;
> 'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
> Would break the heart:--Old Michael found it so.
> (457-459)

Again, Arnold's chief praise of Wordsworth is for his ability to show the emotional comfort afforded by moral ideas. The title character in "Michael" is able to endure his son's departing as well as the hard-laboring life he leads because of the strength of his love for his son. This love is based on the father's oft repeated "hopes" that he will live on through his son, one of several references in the poem to family continuity. Love binds the family together, and it is family continuity that gives meaning to Michael's work--and life--by transforming it into something greater than the mere struggle for existence. Thus, when Michael learns that Luke will not return to the farm, he ceases to work on the sheep fold even though it is still needed. He stops because with this rupture of family continuity Michael's life's work has lost its meaning and purpose, and without these the work cannot be endured. The poem essentially asserts that love (and work) are valid moral ideas because of their capacity to produce comfort by making life meaningful and therefore tolerable. In effect, the emotional sustenance derived from love and work is proof of their validity as moral ideas.

This pattern of validation of moral idea by emotional experience serves as the foundation of another equally important aspect of Arnold's cultural theory. It constitutes the basis of Arnold's attempt to recover the Bible as a primary locus of moral authority. Under the dual pressure of a positivist ethos (which demanded "verification") and German critical theology (which destroyed the historical veracity of Biblical miracles) Arnold's effort in Literature and Dogma was to find for the Bible some new, unassailable basis. According to Lionel Trilling,

> Arnold felt that by taking the emphasis off theology, off the cognitive and intellectual, and by putting it on the emotional and imaginative, he was taking religion off its apex where it had been standing and putting it on its base where it belonged . . . . (305)

Arnold rejects dogma as epiphenomenal and instead proffers personal experience as verification that the morality recorded in the Bible is true. The verification Arnold finds for the Bible is in the personal experience of the necessity of righteousness:

> The idea of God, as it is given us in the Bible, rests, we say, not on metaphysical conceptions of the necessity of certain deductions for our ideas of cause, existence, identity, and the like; but on a moral perception of a rule of conduct not of our own making, into which we are born, and which exists whether we will or no; of awe at its grandeur and necessity, and of gratitude at its beneficence. (Literature and Dogma 242)

That Arnold should use imagination and emotional experience as a basis on which to assert the moral authority of the

Bible is not at all surprising given his view that "the strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry" ("Study of Poetry, 306).

Here again, in Literature and Dogma, emotional experience is invoked as a reliable guide to moral insight. However, in neither the poetics nor the Biblical criticism is the exact mechanism of the linkage between emotional experience and moral idea ever specified by Arnold. Nor is it, I submit, precisely intelligible. As with his notorious touchstones, Arnold was never able to account for the qualities and relationships which were ultimately foundational for these aspects of his critical thinking. Both in the case of the touchstones and in his notion of the poetic treatment of morality, Arnold relied finally upon a leap of faith. In the case of the touchstones, Arnold was counting on the uniformity of public school and Oxbridge education to supply what he could not quite articulate. The touchstone fragments were to invoke whole--though unspecified--systems of associated belief and value. Each fragment was designed, in effect, to take the reader back to the lecture room where consensus about literary greatness existed only through dogmatic assertion.

The rhetorical logic of Arnold's poetics works in much the same way. Arnold invokes emotional experience as a validation of moral ideas, but the connection between those experiences and the ideas is as arbitrary as that between the touchstones and the "greatness" of the literature from

which they are excerpted. In both cases, Arnold treats enculturated associations as if they were somehow essential or necessary. This "essentialist" attitude toward the association of emotion and moral insight makes Arnoldean poetics a kind of moral intuitionism. The rhetorical logic of Arnoldean poetics replicates the essential structure of the moral intuitionism of, for example, Thomas Reid and William Whewell. Lionel Trilling, in fact, has found a kind of innate moral sense argument in Arnold's St. Paul and Protestantism:

> There is in us, says Arnold, "a central moral tendency," a "central clue in our moral being which unites us to the universal order." But not only is this central moral tendency our link with the universal order, it is also bound to be right: moral knowledge (though not moral performance) is perfectly easy for it. (Trilling 311)

In Arnoldean poetics, this innate moral sense finds its expression through the invocation of the emotions as guides to moral insights.

As a foundation for cultural theory, there is an especially important feature of this poetic moralism. In the same way that Arnold's touchstones reach back to essentially arbitrary standards, the moral insights to which the poetry leads via emotional experiences are of a local, particularized kind. Certainly, the moral ideas Wordsworth draws upon are in some sense "primary," and, by his own admission in the preface to the Lyrical Ballads, that is his reason for representing "low and rustic" life. Nevertheless, the moral insights invoked by Arnold's poetics

are always the moral insights of a particular people living in a particular context, despite what Wordsworth--and Arnold--imply about the universality of "primary affections and duties." The foundation upon which individual moral insights are universalized is the infallibility of emotional experience. Consequently, Arnold's aesthetic construction of morality never really gets beyond a kind of moral provincialism.

Arnold's cultural theory makes final appeals to personal experience in a number of ways. I have tried to show that Arnold's poetics and his Biblical criticism both operate on the assumption that personal emotional experience validates moral ideas. However, because these appeals at bottom function much like moral intuitionism, they are no less foundational and dogmatic than the orthodoxy Arnold was trying to replace.

II

The key to the recovery of Clough's poetry I am proposing is the recognition that Clough's poetry represents and recommends a treatment of moral problems which avoids the moral provincialism and arbitrary foundationalism of Arnold's poetic and cultural theory. Arnold simply took for granted that there was an essential link between emotional experience and moral insight. His was a dehistoricized vision of moral understanding, one which implies a belief in

the permanence of moral truth and the immutability of moral consciousness to recognize it under ideal conditions. In short, Arnold failed to recognize that the character of ethical understanding itself was changing, and that what was needed was a new way to understand morality, not simply new reasons for thinking about traditional morality in the old way. Conversely, in Clough's poetry and prose there are indications that Clough was becoming aware of the need to reconfigure ethical understanding.

Clough's poetry treats moral ideas in ways fundamentally different from Arnold's. Like Arnold, Clough was concerned about foundations of morality, but, unlike Arnold, Clough abandons foundational questions and directs attention to <u>individual</u> moral insight. It is the dialogic character of Clough's poetry that distinguishes his treatment of moral problems from Arnold's. This dialogic character makes an object of the structure of moral dilemma, situates moral dilemmas within the context of the individual (ethical) consciousness, and implies the preclusion of appeal to traditional foundational discourses. It constitutes a new configuration of moral understanding represented by a modern religious and ethical consciousness.

R. A. Forsythe has most recently characterized Clough's response to the Victorian religious crisis in terms of a process of spiritualized identity-formation. He sees Clough's response to the "Receding Sea of Faith" in terms of

God's disappearance from the world and reappearance in the individual human heart. According to Forsyth, for Clough the only way of regaining sight of God "was to avoid the clutter of customary doctrine and historical event by looking within the individual human soul" ("Trudging Service" 32).

> By thus seeking out God, the modern individual is not, in the usual Biblical sense of the term, finding Him. Rather, he is finding himself. For what he is really doing in offering "trudging Service" is nothing less than the simultaneous creation and discovery of that true identity which Clough calls the "inmost I." ("Trudging Service" 33)

Forsyth gleans the "inmost I" from Clough's "Adam and Eve," a poem in which Clough uses the myth of the Fall to characterize the Victorian loss of faith. Clough's "inmost I" forms the core of the individual's spiritual and human identity. This turn inward is not simply a repeat of the Romantic withdrawal to solipsism. Forsyth argues that Clough took a deliberate stance of ambivalence as the only possible position given the limits of knowledge and the inadequacy of historical narratives to supply grounds for knowledge. "The only appropriate response was "silence," in Clough's particular sense of the word, meaning to hold matters poised in a state of open-minded and self-assured abeyance . . ." ("Trudging Service," 30). Forsyth argues for this feature of Clough's thinking on the basis Clough's

"Dipsychus" and "Amours de Voyage."[7] It is available in the shorter poems as well. In fact, "poised open-minded and self-assured abeyance" is a structural feature of Clough's poetics in general.

Many of Clough's poems juxtapose moral alternatives. Although these alternatives are of various (usually competing) kinds, they generally represent foundational anchors of morality, either traditional moral discourses or ideas of possible satisfactions. Orthodox religion and morality, desire to preserve spiritual purity, the necessity of worldly activity, duty, and self-interest are the most common. It is generally the case in Clough's poems that single characters or speakers comprehend a duality or multiplicity of "voices," each one representing competing claims in a moral dilemma. This dialogism serves first of all to objectify and dramatize the structure of moral dilemma.

In Clough's poetry, the fundamental crisis of Victorian culture is represented as a discontinuity of ethical experience--as a slippage between moral principle and the

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[7]Paul Dean and Jacqueline Moore also have recognized a balancing tendency in several of Clough's longer poems. They have articulated Clough's juxtaposition of nostalgia for the lost security of pre-lapsarian orthodoxy and trepidation for the dangers of free thought in Clough's "Adam and Eve." See Paul Dean and Jacqueline Johnson, "'Paradise Come Back': Clough in Search of Eden." In another essay Dean and Moore suggest that in "Dipsychus" and "Amours de Voyage" Clough moves beyond trepidation about the balancing of these two forces to a "Stoical acceptance" of the situation. See Dean and Moore, "To Own the Positive and Present: Clough's Historical Dilemma."

needs of material and social experience.[8] This very slippage becomes the primary object of representation in "The Latest Decalogue," where traditional Mosaic morality is juxtaposed with modern instrumental pragmatism. The poem represents the satirical voice of a speaker endorsing the propriety of the ten commandments for his own instrumental reasons. One voice is that of the modern, worldly instrumentalist, while the other represents the moral authority of the ten commandments--literally the prototype of orthodox Christian morality. Both voices, however, are expressed by a single speaker, and in a way that privileges neither:

> THOU shalt have one God only, who
> Would be at the expense of two?
> No graven images may be
> Worshipped, except the currency:
> Swear not at all; for for thy curse
> Thine enemy is none the worse:
> At church on Sunday to attend
> Will serve to keep they world thy friend:
> Honour thy parents; that is, all
> From whom advancement may befall:
> Thou shalt not kill; but needst not strive
> Officiously to keep alive:
> Do not adultery commit;
> Advantage rarely comes of it:

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[8]In his review of Newman's The Soul, Clough rejects devotion as a foundation for religion, on the grounds that devotional habits have little to offer in the way of a solution to the problem of "reconciling the world and the Spirit" (Poems and Prose Remains 300). Similarly, in his "Lecture on the Development of English Literature From Chaucer to Wordsworth," Clough writes about the late seventeenth-century repudiation of Puritanism: "it is impossible not to sympathize with the joy and exaltation of people at throwing off the yoke of an iron system of morals, proven by experience not co-extensive with facts, not true to the necessary exigencies and experiences of life" (Poems and Prose Remains 350).

> Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
> When it's so lucrative to cheat:
> Bear not false witness; let the lie
> Have time on its own wings to fly:
> Though shalt not covet; but tradition
> Approves all forms of competition.
>
> The sum of all is, thou shalt love,
> If anybody, God above,
> At any rate shall never labour
> More than thyself to love thy neighbor.
>
> (1-24)[9]

There is a kind of reciprocating irony at work here which simultaneously undermines the authority of both voices, both positions. The instrumentalist's running gloss on each of the commandments indicates his own moral corruption despite his expressed compliance with the letter of the law. As compared against the moral standard of the Ten Commandments, his instrumental motivation betrays this corruption. On the other hand, because such an individual can exactly comply with each of the commandments and yet be so obviously corrupt, the authority of the commandments themselves is compromised.

By creating a dialogical "balance" between the voice of orthodox morality on the one hand, and the voice of cynical compliance on the other, Clough achieves a double critique which undermines both traditional morality and at the same time--in the same breath--criticizes the modern, instrumentalist's movements between the letters of the law. The poem, then, settles into a kind of moral stand-off in

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[9]All references to Clough's poetry are from the Lowry, Norrington, and Mulhauser edition, 1951.

the sense that no moral center is discernable within the poem. Viewed structurally, the essence of the Victorian cultural crisis is just this inability to reconcile traditional moral foundations with the exigencies of modern social experience.

In "Jacob's Wives," a similar dialogic balance between the voices of two characters becomes a symbolic representation of the structure and psychology of moral dilemma. Here the two voices represented are those of the Biblical characters Rachel and Leah, and once again the balancing precludes authorization of either one. Each character asserts the grounds of her claim for Jacob's exclusive attention. Rachel invokes the authority of emotional attachment, and Leah invokes the authority of performing one's duty, in this case God's command. Yet, neither can be wholly satisfied; neither can experience the fullness of the position for which both are struggling. Jacob's affections lie inevitably with Rachel even though she cannot provide him sons. Conversely, even though Leah can provide sons, she will never enjoy the attention and privileges of being his wife. Each speaker's final lines registers disappointment and resignation:

> And Rachel wept and ended, Ah, my life!
> Though Leah bear thee sons on sons, methought
> The Child of love, late born, were worth them
> all. (107-109)

and:

> And Leah ended, Father of my sons,

> Come, thou shalt dream of Rachel if thou wilt,
> So Leah fold thee in a wife's embrace. (119-121)

Although he remains voiceless, Jacob is present in the poem from the first stanza to the last. It is only he who could finally decide the dilemma by recognizing one woman's claims over the other's and directing his attentions appropriately, yet he remains silent. His silent presence sites the dilemma within a single consciousness while maintaining the dialogic balance. Within the drama of the poem, the competing voices of Rachel and Leah dramatize the frustration, incompleteness, and dissatisfaction of compromise, while Jacob's silence dramatizes the inertia of true dilemma.

It is this inertia that maintains the balance between Rachel's and Leah's claims upon him. It suspends resolution of the dilemma by not privileging one or the other alternative. More significantly, just as Jacob remains silent through the poem, neither does Clough intrude to "authorize" one or the other alternative. By maintaining the dialogical balance and not authorizing either perspective, Clough preserves the <u>particularity</u> of the individual ethical consciousness in which moral dilemmas appear, and in which it must be resolved. He does not make the decision for Jacob, and so he does not make the decision for the reader.

The specific dilemma represented in "Jacob's Wives" was, of course, not a common experience of the Victorian cultural crisis. Consequently, the general irrelevance of the content per se shifts significance onto the poem's structural features. In this way, "Jacob's Wives" illustrates an essential feature of Clough's poetic treatment of moral problems: Clough's poetry generally situates moral dilemma in the context of the particularity of the individual ethical consciousness.

Much like "Jacob's Wives," "Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne" represents the moral dilemma in structural terms. It, however, is not quite so schematic, dramatizing more directly the psychology of moral dilemma and representing that psychology in greater particularity. "Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne" is a dramatic monologue representing the frustration of a single consciousness simultaneously committed to spiritual purity and compelled to worldly activity. In the course of sacramental confession, the speaker admits to "Sins, which yet I see not how I should have shunned" (116-117). The fact that the speaker is a king heightens the necessity and urgency of acting in the world, yet action entails spiritual compromise:

> You drive us into action as our duty.
> Then action persecutes and tortures us.
> To pleasures and to loving soft delights
> We fly for solace and for peace; and gain
> Vexation, Persecution also here. (104-108)

Some reservation is required in sympathizing entirely with the king's implication that he has no choice: the slope may

not be as slippery as he indicates. Nevertheless, the poem does assert--from the king's perspective--a discontinuity of ethical experience. His moral ideas do not correspond in a meaningful way to his worldly experiences.

Once again, Clough's representation of moral conflict refrains from authorizing any perspective which would serve as grounds for choice between the alternatives. This authorial neutrality is achieved first by the inevitability of the King's predicament and secondly by the careful closure of all means of escape. The king imagines that the priest's life of contemplation offers the kind of spiritual repose he desires: "Ah, holy father, would I were as you" (96). But the very next line closes this gate of escape:

> But you, no less, have trials you say;
> Inaction vexes you, and action tempts,
> And the bad prickings of the animal heats,
> As in the palace, to the cell will come. (97-100)

Similarly, heterodoxy and skepticism prove unsatisfactory alternatives to the king's dilemma:

> [I am] Most thankful I am not, as other men,
> A lonely Lutheran English Heretic;
> If I had so by God's despite been born,
> Alas, methinks I had but passed my life
> In sitting motionless beside the fire,
> Not daring to remove the once-placed chair,
> Nor stir my foot for fear it should be sin.
> Thank God indeed,
> Thank God for his infallible certain creed.
> (81-89)

The final lines are not convincing, yet the king clings to them because they are all he has. By his own admission,

orthodox religious sacrament--confession--is a remedy, but not the cure:

> Without the appointed,
> Without the sweet confessional relief,
> Without the welcome all-absolving words,
> The mystic rite, the solemn soothing forms,
> Our human life were miserable indeed.
> And yet methinks our holy Mother Church
> Deals hardly, very, with her eldest born,
> Her chosen, sacred, and most Christian Kings.
> To younger pets, the blind, the halt, the sick,
> The outcast child, the sinners of the street,
> Her doors are open and her precinct free:
> The beggar finds nest, the slave a home,
> Even thy alters, O my Mother Church--
> O templa quam dilecta. We, the while,
> Poor Kings, must forth into action, as you say;
> Action, that slaves us, drives us, fretted, worn,
> To pleasure, which anon enslaves us too . . . . (41-57)

The primary object of representation in "Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne" is the king's mind as it works its way around and through the conditions and alternatives of his dilemma. The overall mode of representation in "Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne" is still symbolic to a degree: the dilemma represented is again not one common to representations of the Victorian cultural crisis. Consequently, the structure of dilemma is what is (schematically) most significant.

In "Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne" Clough utilizes the authorial distance featured by the dramatic monologue to achieve and maintain dialogic balance which preserves the dilemma rather than allowing it to be resolved simply by reference to a traditional moral foundation of some sort. The poem has carefully closed off appeals to such

foundations. It situates and fixes the dilemma in the individual's awareness of competing claims and the inadequacy of traditional means of resolution.

Because the nature of moral consciousness changes, moral insights must continually be reevaluated in the context of that changing moral consciousness. By achieving a dialogical balance between the alternatives, Clough represents the competing claims of a moral problem divorced from traditional moral discourses.
He is thus able to situate them in the modern ethical consciousness and provide a situation in which they can be reevaluated in that context. It is this ethical consciousness or ethical self-consciousness which constitutes the nucleus of Clough's poetic treatment of morality.

In his longer poems, Amours De Voyage and, particularly, Dipsychus, Clough achieves a greater particularization of individual ethical consciousness and a more detailed conception of it as a response to a discontinuity of ethical experience. Dipsychus registers a discontinuity of ethical consciousness like that of "Sa Majeste Tres Chretienne" and "The Latest Decalogue." Here, however, the poem goes beyond merely representing the structure or psychology of moral dilemma to deal more directly with the problematical nature of resolution and possibilities of overcoming those problems.

Dipsychus's voice is that of the young intellectual faced with the question of what line to take in life. His is the essential problem of morality broadly conceived. It is perhaps rendered most directly by Arnold's phrase: "How to live life." For Dipsychus, that essential problem might be better formulated as "by which principle(s) ought one live life?" The dramatic action of the poem records Dipsychus's primarily cognitive responses to a series of encounters with material and social reality. In these encounters, Dipsychus is faced with the claims of his animal (sexual) impulses, the attraction of sensuous pleasure, claims of personal honor, and the necessity of participating in the social world. In each instance, Dipsychus recoils from the baseness of the material claims upon him, appealing instead to ideal principles and idealized conceptions of human purpose and gratification. The habit of his cognitive response is to try to comprehend material experience within an ideal or spiritual framework and then reject it for falling short of that ideal standard.

For example, when confronted with his own sexual urges, Dipsychus initially recoils and tries to suppress the claims of his animal nature. Finally, he tries to comprehend the oscillation of his consciousness between desire and conscience by situating that oscillation in a divine or spiritual context:

Or could I think that it had been for nought

> That from my boyhood until now, in spite
> Of most misguided theories, at the moment
> Somewhat has ever stepped in to arrest
> My ingress at the fatal-door,
> That many and many a time my foolish foot
> O'ertreading the dim sill, spite of itself
> And spite of me, instinctively fell back. . .
> .
> --Could I think,
> In spite of carnal understanding's sneers,
> All this fortuitous only--all a chance?
> (IIa, 59-74)

What he is describing here is nothing more mystical than the ordinary workings of a conscience inculcated in boyhood--an indoctrinated categorical fear of sin.

Spirit's gloss of Dipsychus's idealized conception of sin is the more reliable explanation of the two:

> I know it's mainly your temptation
> To think the thing a revelation,
> A mystic mouthful that will give
> Knowledge and death--none know and live!
> I tell you plainly that it brings
> Some ease; but the emptiness of things
> (That one old sermon Earth still preaches
> Until we practise what she teaches)
> Is the sole lesson you'll learn by it (IIa, 20-28)

Finally, Dipsychus tries to control his sexual self by literally domesticating it. In a movement which partially recognizes the necessity of participation in material social reality, Dipsychus "descends" to matrimonially-sanctioned procreative sex:

> O welcome then, the sweet domestic bonds
> The matrimonial sanctities; the hopes
> And cares of wedded life; parental thoughts,
> The prattle of young children, the good word
> Of fellow men, the sanction of the law,
> And permanence of habit, that transmute
> Grossness itself into crystal. (IIa, 79-85)

Even here, despite the partial descent to social reality, there remains an effort to idealize experience.

Clough is careful to manage the appeal to ideality so that the problem of how to live does not degenerate into manichean simplicity. Dipsychus is not simply taking the highest (traditional) moral ground on the horizon. Instead, he is rejecting all non-idealized principles of organizing life. There is, for example, nothing specifically morally appealing about the ideal sensuousness of the gondola ride, yet Dipsychus is initially eager to have life like the effortless glide of the gondola:

> How lightly it moves, how softly! Ah,
> Could life, as does our gondola,
> Unvext with quarrels, aims, and cares
> And moral duties and affairs,
> Unswaying, noiseless, swift, and strong,
> For ever thus--thus glide along! (IV, 11-16)

The ideality of perfection is what appeals here, and its sensuousness is replaced only by another equally idealized claim: social conscience.

The gondola is a choice image for it comes by its fluidity only from the ever-present, ever-working, though ever-silent gondolier:

> Our gaieties, our luxuries,
> Our pleasures and our glee,
> Mere insolence and wantonries,
> Alas, they feel to me.
>
> How shall I laugh and sing and dance?
> My very heart recoils,
> While here to give my mirth a chance

A hungry brother toils.

The joy that does not spring from joy
Which I in others see,
How can I venture to employ,
Or find it joy for me? (43-54)

Dipsychus's encounters with the material and social world constitute the ground of a critical examination of the prevailing evangelical understanding of morality. In fact, a case can be made that a modern age of ethical understanding begins with the Victorians. It was then that moral philosophy first separated itself from explicit theological allegiances.[10]

Recent readers of Clough's longer poems (especially "Adam and Eve" and Dipsychus) have noted that Clough understood the crisis of Victorian morality in historical terms. Dean and Moore point to Clough's historical vision in his use of the Fall in "Adam and Eve" as an "objective correlative" for theories of the historical process. In a later essay, Dean and Johnson extend this argument to Dipsychus and Amour de Voyage where "the deracination of the present from any historical continuum is ultimately presented as a matter for Stoical acceptance" (59). Forsyth echoes this reading as well, commenting that in "Adam and Eve"

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[10]This is true in several senses. As J. B. Schneewind points out, T. H. Green at Oxford, Henry Sidgwick at Cambridge, and Alexander Bain in Scotland were among the first "professional" philosophers (6). That is, they were independent of formal allegiances to religious creeds, and they worked out moral philosophies not dependent upon theological claims.

> the Fall becomes a paradigm for the decline of orthodox Christian belief among the Victorians, so that Adam is translated by swift historical process from Edenic perfection to a world of revolutionary transition which is expansionist, and increasingly scientific and secular in temper. ("'Inmost I'" 261)

In Dipsychus the discontinuity of ethical experience is represented as the result of historically developing moral understanding. In the poem's epilogue, characters representing Clough and his uncle rehearse the poem's central concern: the relative health of modern ethical consciousness. Clough's uncle registers what might be termed a modern or pragmatist's view of education and morality:

> What is the true purpose of education? Simply to make plain to the young understanding the laws of the life they will have to enter. For example--that lying won't do, thieving still less; that idleness will get punished; that if they are cowards, the whole world will be against them; that if they will have their own way they will have to fight for it. Etc. etc. (Epilogue)

This is ethical demystification. What might have been conceived in earlier ages as offenses against God are regarded here in terms of their effect on the chances of success and happiness for the transgressor and the general health of the society.

Clough's uncle agrees that "consciences are often much too tender in [Clough's] generation," and attributes the defect to Thomas Arnold:

> Why, my dear boy, how often have I not heard from you, how [Thomas Arnold] used to attack offenses, not as offenses--the right view--against discipline, but as sin, heinous guilt, I don't

> know what beside! Why didn't he flog them and hold his tongue? Flog them he did, but why preach? (Epilogue)

The uncle doesn't have it quite right. Clough's fictive self in the dialogue alternately traces the origin of the over-sensitive conscience to "the religious movement of the last century, beginning with Wesleyanism, and culminating at last in Puseyism" (Epilogue). Although Thomas Arnold's reputation was indeed chiefly for instilling moral seriousness into the public schools, his reform was not predicated on the spiritualized conception of transgression typified by Tractarian orthodoxy. According to Clough's own character, the Evangelical priority of spiritualism and faith over the pragmatism of good works led to a fear and rejection of material experience summed up in the traditional Evangelical formula: "in the world but not of it." Growing sympathy with the contradiction of this conception of ethical experience constitutes the central ethical problem of Victorian England, and the poem's central tension.

Dipsychus's problem is that there is no longer possible a precise fit between ideal moral principles and material and social experience. This slippage is represented in the poem as a contradiction between the necessity of acting and the unsuitability of the kinds of action afforded by modern social life:

> We ask Action,
> And dream of arms and conflict; and string up
> All self-devotion's muscles; and are set

> To fold up papers. To what end? We know not.
> Other folks do so; it is always done;
> And it perhaps is right. And we are paid for it.
> For nothing else we can be. He that eats
> Must serve; and serve as other servants do:
> And don the lacquey's livery of the house.
> (IX, 131-139)

Regardless of his dissatisfaction with the opportunities for redeeming activity, Dipsychus's submission to the exigencies of material and social living is implicit and immanent throughout the poem. Spirit insists repeatedly:

> But how meantime to live is fit,
> Ask Common Sense; and what says it?
> Submit, submit! (X, 189-191)

And Dipsychus finally recognizes it as well: "Be it then thus--since it must, it seems./ Welcome, O world, henceforth; and farewell dreams!" (XIII, 20-21). The poem continually asserts that agents must live in the world in some way. Even monastic life constitutes a fundamental moral choice: how one is going to live one's life, according to what principles. And, in fact, suicide would be the only means of completely evading the claims of social experience.

Despite the poem's Faustian overtones, however, there is not really anything which constitutes a deal or bargain between Dipsychus and Spirit. Precisely what Dipsychus stands to gain or lose by submitting in never specified. Rather, the necessity and inevitability of his submission is implicit. We do, however, get a picture of what Dipsychus's life might look like if he does not submit:

> Stay at Venice, if you will;
> Sit musing in its churches hour on hour
> Cross-kneed upon a bench; climb up at whiles
> The neighboring tower, and kill the lingering day
> With old comparisons; when night succeeds,
> Evading, yet a little seeking, what
> You would and would not, turn your doubtful eyes
> On moon and stars to help morality;
> Once in a fortnight say, by lucky chance
> Of happier-tempered coffee, gain (Great Heaven!)
> A pious rapture: is it enough?
> O that will keep you safe. Yet don't be sure--
> Emotions are so slippery. Aye keep close
> And burrow in your bedroom; pace up and down
> A long half hour; with talking to yourself
> Make waiters wonder; sleep a bit; write a bit of verse,
> Burnt in disgust, then ill-resorted, and left
> Half-made, in pencil scrawl illegible.
> Sink ere the end, most like, the hapless prey
> Of some chance chambermaid, more sly than fair,
> And in vain call for me. O well I know
> You will not find, when I am not to help,
> E'en so much face as hires a gondola.
> Beware!-- (X, 116-139)

What is most noteworthy about the life Spirit predicts for Dipsychus is its absence of direction, purpose, or product. It is a life of paralysis with not even enough fortitude to take pleasure where it may be found. This kind of paralysis is the closest thing imaginable to amorality.

The moral vacuity of the life Dipsychus will lead if he does not acknowledge the claims of society serves chiefly to point up the inevitability of his submission. Such inevitability suggests that Spirit represents nothing much more definite than the spirit of the age--than the inescapable requirements of Victorian living. Dipsychus

hears Spirit's responses long before he addresses him directly, as though the voice were in the back of his mind for a long while--part of Victorian consciousness itself. When Dipsychus does finally address Spirit he already knows what Spirit's "demands" will be. Finally, in assenting to those demands, Dipsychus surrenders little except the purity of his ideal principles. He is, for example, allowed--even encouraged--to keep his religion and to pursue aesthetic gratification. He simply needs to put a different construction on it.

Clough's rejection of the Evangelical code led him to acknowledge the claims of social experience upon the individual. The practical realization is a deferral to social roles which have the capability of organizing the agent's life. In the absence of moral ideals, social roles provide the answer to the moral question: "how to live life." For example, Dipsychus's final response to the problem of finding ennobling action in modern experience is to give his life over (albeit unwillingly) to social roles:

> Ah, if I had a course like a full stream,
> If life were as the field of chase! No, no;
> The age of instinct has, it seems, gone by,
> And will not be forced back. And to live now
>
> I must sluice out myself out into canals,
> And lose all force in ducts. (IX, 103-108)

The "force" (independent will) Dipsychus fears losing is largely illusory since it has not and will not enable him to take some positive line in life. Adoption of social roles such as marriage, religious observance, and professional

life are all Spirit is really demanding of Dipsychus. Dipsychus's immanent surrender to Spirit is indicative of the inevitability of the claims of social roles on the individual.

There has been much disagreement about Clough's attitude toward duty, specifically whether or not it constituted for him a positive theory of moral action.[11] On the one hand, in "The Questioning Spirit" duty is represented as a truly viable alternative to the despair of skepticism. The poem ends with the questioning spirit kneeling beside the spirit of duty:

> But as the echoing chorus died away
> And to their dreams the rest returned apace
> By the one spirit I saw him kneeling low,
> And in a silvery whisper heard him say:
> Truly, thou know'st not, and thou need'st not know;
> Hope only, hope thou, and believe alway;
> I also know not, and I need not know,
> Only with questionings pass I to and fro
> Perplexing these that sleep, and in their folly
> Imbreeding doubt and sceptic melancholy;
> Till that, their dreams deserting, they with me
> Come all to this true ignorance and thee. (40-51)

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[11]Anthony Kenny finds in several of Clough's poems evidence that Clough's appeal to duty was not a positive cultural theory but a way to cope with and work through doubt and skepticism (Kenny 27-37). Conversely, Michael Timko reads Clough's appeal to duty in light of what he terms Clough's "positive naturalism"--a positive regard for human goodness. Timko argues that Clough's positive naturalism does constitute a positive cultural theory which incorporates active service to others as a primary social responsibility (Timko 53). Robindra Biswas thinks Clough had, finally, no positive cultural theory (196).

Duty here supplies direction when true knowledge is unattainable. In "Bethesda (A Sequel)," however, duty is differentiated from a mechanical adherence to convention. As Anthony Kenny points out, "duty" in "The Questioning Spirit" has degenerated into "the work of the world" in "Bethesda--a Sequel" (33).[12] It has lost its ideality and its appeal. The questioning spirit is among the invalids on the stony floor still committed to the way of the world though unable to call it duty:

> 'I know not, I will do--what is it I would say?
> 'What was that word which once sufficed alone for all,
> 'Which now I seek in vain, and never can recall?'
> 'I know not, I will do the work the world requires
> 'Asking no reason why, but serving its desires;
> 'Will do for daily bread, for wealth, respect, good name,
> 'The business of the day--alas, it that the same?'
> And then, as weary of in vain renewing
> His question, thus his mournful thought pursuing,
> 'I know not, I must do as other men are doing.'
> (21-30)

In so far as duty and the work of the world are not the same things, the poem demystifies the appeal to duty in the wake of skepticism. In addition, the highly satirical "Duty, that's to say complying" makes a similar differentiation between duty and compliance. And, as discussed above, Dipsychus makes much of the notion that social roles do not afford the opportunities for ennobling action one could wish for.

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[12]The following reading of Clough's poems concerning duty follows though is not specifically indebted to Kenny's analysis.

R. A. Forsyth has developed a compelling synthetic view of Clough's ambivalent deferral to social roles. He argues that Clough effected a return to "religion" by looking inward. Through a centuries-long process of secularization, God had disappeared from the world, though man could still find Him in the human heart, in what Clough termed the "inmost I." Having de-transcendentalized humanity in this way, Clough looks to the ordinary experiences of every-day life as the arena of spiritual activity. Forsyth uses the concept,"trudging Service," taken from scene X, lines 11-14 of Clough's Dipsychus, to name this deliberate engagement with the social world ("Trudging Service" 30).[13] Forsyth sees Clough as

> looking on the emergent industrialized world without recrimination or expectation, though being well aware of "the unnumbered difficulties, contradictions, and corruptions of the heated, crowded, busy, vicious, and inhuman town." However, he recognized as a matter of historical necessity its irresistible claims, in his own term, to Service. The term implies involvement and it stresses that participation--which does not mean unthinking acceptance of, or submission to, the developing bourgeois hegemony--is the essence of activity, and that alone would provide the ingredients for the "inmost I." ("'Inmost I'" 261)

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[13]Clough's commitment to the reality of (social) experience has been established by other critics as well. Michael Timko, for one, has argued that virtually Clough's entire criticism of Wordsworth is grounded in Wordsworth's confusion of the sentiment produced by an object and the object itself. Clough insists Wordsworth "takes the sentiment produced by it in his own mind as the thing; as the important and really real fact.--The Real thing ceases to be real; the world no longer exists." See Timko, "Wordsworth and Clough," 413.

The spiritualized realm is brought down to earth. The search for the "inmost I," Clough's process of spiritual self-(re)creation, can only take place through participation in the social world. In other words, Forsyth sees Clough's cultural strategy as a kind of pragmatism which lays stress on the individual's personal responsibility for the realization of his own self-image ("'Inmost I'" 262).

According to Forsyth, Clough's "Service" is not simply a form of Christian socialism. "[H]e is not . . . simply transporting the spiritual into the realm of the political. Rather he is expressing the one, absolutely though undoctrinally, in terms of the other, thereby establishing a novel politico-religious ethos" ("Clough's 'Adam and Eve'" 61). According to Forsyth, it is just this "significant amalgamation between (real) social and political issues and (ideal) moral and spiritual considerations that defines Clough's modernity" ("Clough's 'Adam and Eve'" 61).

To summarize, much of Clough's poetry concerns a discontinuity of ethical experience in terms of a slippage between traditional foundational moral principles and the exigencies of modern social experience. Clough's poetry responds to this discontinuity by shifting the locus of the dilemma away from foundational discourse, situating it instead in the context of the individual ethical consciousness, thus leaving resolution to take place as an individual's own negotiation of the claims of idealized

moral principle and exigencies of modern social experience.

Whereas Arnoldean poetic moralism universalizes moral insight derived from local circumstance, Clough's ethical poetry particularizes morality in its recognition that the nature of human ethical consciousness changes and that moral insights must change with it. It is in this sense that Clough's poetry constitutes a kind of casuistry. Its moral determinations are not referred back to dogmatic principles but are left free within the context of an individual ethical consciousness to vary with the prevailing conditions. Recognition that those conditions must be attended to leads to a deliberate and active participation in the social world. It, not the heavens, becomes the sphere of ethical significance.

Forsyth points out that Clough was not a trained philosopher, and whatever cultural theory is available from his poetry and other sources does not constitute a systematic response to the Victorian cultural crisis. Forsyth explains that

> we must compensate for the absence of systematic documentation with the sense of authenticity and immediacy we gain from his more informal epistolary presentation which, together with other occasional pieces, require us as readers to help construct the actual building from Clough's sketch plans. ("Trudging Service" 29)

We can complete that "actual building" by turning to T. H. Green, who represents a painstakingly systematic articulation of nearly all Clough's deepest commitments.

III

Like Clough, Green's response to the Victorian cultural crisis incorporates a sense of the inadequacy of Arnold's treatment of morality. In the introduction to his Prolegomena to Ethics Green argues for a metaphysics of morals made necessary by the inadequacy of the prevailing Victorian models of ethical discourse. Green explains that there exists a segment of educated Victorian society which, having become disenchanted by "stereotyped theology," has turned to poetry to satisfy their appetites for moral discourse. However, Green retorts,

> the highest poetry of our time--that in which the most serious and select spirits find their food--depends chiefly for its interest on what has been well called 'the application of ideas to life'; and the ideas so applied are by no means sensibly verifiable. (PE, §1)

The reference to Arnold's "The Study of Poetry" is unmistakable. As noted above, Arnoldean poetic and cultural theory is predicated on the assumption that the ideas poetry applies to life have a verifiable reality or truth. In the case of Wordsworth's poetry, for example, the ideas (primary affections and duties) applied to life are verified as true moral ideas which produce joy and consolation. If the reader can experience the joy and consolation represented in the poem, then he/she verifies that the primary affections and duties do, in fact, produce joy and consolation.[14]

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[14]For example, the feeling of the necessity of following in the path of righteousness is the central fact of the Bible, according to Arnold. It replaces the miracles

Thus, verification applies to the emotional resonances of the moral ideas applied to life. The poetic application of ideas means, in effect, an aesthetic (emotional) mediation between a moral idea (deep conviction) and a lived experience such that the poem posits a nexus between the moral idea and the emotional consequence of its application to lived experience. This conception of poetry constitutes an "aesthetic mediation" of moral ideas and lived experience in the sense that emotional experience is that category of experience which is invoked as a means of determining the appropriateness of the application of the moral ideas to lived experience.

Green's phrase, "the ideas so applied," indicates his belief that the method of application is what prevents the ideas from being verifiable. For Green, the aesthetic mediation is not an acceptable means of determining the appropriateness of the moral ideas.[15] About the moral thinking produced by Arnoldean poetics, Green has this to say:

> Presented in the rapt unreasoned form of poetic utterance, not professing to do more than represent a mood of the individual poet, it is

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as the fact which guarantees the truth of its other insights. Because readers can experience the feeling of this necessity themselves, they can verify that the ideas collectively referred to as "righteousness" are "true" (moral) ideas.

[15]The point of contention has to do with the fact that Arnold's notion of moral ideas as universal does not correspond with Green's belief that the content of moral ideas is properly only particular.

> welcomed by reflecting men as expressing deep convictions of their own. Such men seem little disturbed by the admission to a joint lodgement in their minds of inferences from popularised science, which do not admit of being reconciled with these deeper convictions in any logical system of beliefs. (PE §1)

Green's comment about "the mood of the individual poet" is a jibe at what Keats has called the "egotistical sublime" and Clough called Wordsworth's "mawkishness"-- his "sentimentalizing over sentiment" ("Lecture on the Poetry of Wordsworth" 121). Green may seem overly dismissive of poetry, but what he is dismissing is specifically the Arnoldean model.

Green shares with this model the goal of determining a content for these "deep convictions" worthy of becoming foundations of morality. Arnold treated the "ideas" poetry applies to life with much the same reverence, invoking them as the absolute moral foundations of culture. The difference is that for Green, aesthetic experience is not a sufficient means of determining or verifying the truth or reality of moral ideas. In much the same way, because moral principles are not sensibly verifiable (in essence, empirically derivable) the natural sciences had little to contribute to the search for moral foundations. It is directly in opposition to these two poles of existing Victorian moral discourse that Green situated his ethics. Much like Clough, Green wanted to develop a treatment of moral issues that would answer to Victorian rationalism and spiritualism without relying on dogma or mythology. Green

found the spiritualism and rationalism he was looking for already combined in German metaphysical idealism.

For Clough, it will be remembered, God's withdrawal meant that the individual had to become the locus of moral authority. He thought moral authority could be reconstructed in the individual through a process of self-image making in which the "inmost I" was invested with spiritual significance. Forsyth has described this part of Clough's cultural strategy as a pragmatism which lays stress on the individual's personal responsibility in the realization of his own self-image ("'Inmost I'" 262). Green found the spiritual dimension he was after in Fichte's notion of the reproduction in the individual of eternal consciousness.

Eternal consciousness appears in Green's ethics as a principle of self-consciousness. It is the reproduction of this self-conscious principle in them that allows agents to distance themselves from their several desires, survey them, and arrange them in a hierarchy. Moral development, conceived of as the realization of potential, can only take place when agents can thus take steps to realize some desires and not others. To do so is to formulate and to begin to realize an idea of a "possible self." Clough's "inmost I" and Green's "idea of a possible self" represent respectively poetic and philosophical mediations of the notion that the individual must become the locus of modern moral authority through internalization of a spiritual

principle. Clough's ethical poetic and Green's idealist ethics represent alike secular though spiritualized versions of how this might happen.

As we have seen, for Clough the realization of the "inmost I" is dependent upon the individual's participation in society--what Forsyth has termed "trudging Service." For Green as well, social roles are a necessary condition of moral development. Green's ethics are concerned primarily with the moral development of the individual--which takes the form of self-realization. Self-realization depends upon self-conscious organization of desires into a hierarchy designed to provide a more permanent satisfaction than the gratification of merely transient desires. Social roles and institutions provide agents with ideas of possible selves they might become. In this way, they represent ideas of extended and more permanent satisfactions. Social roles also help to organize agents' desires and convert them into activities that will lead to the realization of that idea of a possible self which an agent imagines will produce a permanent satisfaction.

Green's recognition that agents need social roles to organize their lives is the foundational insight of the positive construction of freedom that characterizes his political philosophy. Because Green regarded social roles as necessary conditions of moral development, he insisted that those conditions be carefully managed. According to Green, a society is based on the recognition among its

members that what is in the common interest is also in each individual's interest. If any particular freedom is recognized by the members of a society as contributory to an individual's or the common good, then it must, logically that is, be guaranteed to all individuals.

In Green's view, it is, therefore, the first responsibility of any government actively to secure to all individuals whatever freedoms are recognized as contributory toward the individual and common good. The notion of freedom or liberty implicit in this model of society is "positive" in the sense that members of society are free by virtue of the presence of rights which secure to them conditions recognized by society as necessary for moral development. This is contrasted with "negative" freedom, which conceived agents as free by virtue of the absence of restraint.

Green's argument for positive freedom should be seen as the political realization of his ethics and religious philosophy. It represents the philosophical underpinnings of what Melvin Richter has referred to as Green's "christian citizenship." It is a secularized yet spiritual (metaphysical) translocation of moral authority from the celestial to the social sphere. It relocates moral activity in the ordinary everyday experiences of social interaction.

IV

Clough's Victorian critics were too desperate for a solution to the problems of cultural dissolution to allow Clough time and space for speculation. The judgment of Clough's failure is perhaps mostly based upon the Victorian-sage expectation that a poet respond to the cultural crisis with a positive theory of some sort. Arnold told Clough this directly:

> You would never take your assiette as something determined final and unchangeable for you and proceed to work away on the basis of that: but were always poking and patching and cobbling at the assiette itself--could never be finally, as it seemed--"resolve to be thyself"--but were looking for this and that experience, and doubting whether you ought not to adopt this or that mode of being of persons qui ne vous, valaient pas because it might possibly be nearer the truth than your own: you had no reason for thinking it was but it might be--and so you would try to adapt yourself to it. You have I am convinced lost infinite time in this way: it is what I call your morbid conscientiousness. (Norton, 523)

What Arnold could not seem to recognize is that Clough's poetry does provide a coherent cultural theory.

I have attempted to show here that Clough's poetry does respond directly to Victorian culture by configuring a new kind of poetic ethical discourse. Clough's poetry represents an awareness that moral understanding does and must change, and it attempts to respond by establishing a discourse and configuring a faculty capable of maintaining the flexibility necessary to deal with the historical and individual particularity of the discontinuity of ethical experience. It does this by preserving the dialogic

character of moral problems, situating them in the context of the individual ethical consciousness, and insisting that they be resolved there.

Because of Clough's effort to construct modern ethical understanding in a particular way, his poetry ought to be recognized as the ethical discourse it is. In ethical terms, the movement from Arnold to Clough is a movement from moral intuitionism to casuistry--it is the movement from pre-modern to modern ethical understanding. It is also the movement from poetic moralism to ethical poetry.

Finally, Clough's treatment of ethics and religion is an important voice in Victorian cultural thinking. Anticipating as it does many of Green's most important observations and arguments, Clough's poetry needs to be recognized as an early poetic mediation of the ethics and cultural theory of positive-freedom Liberalism. It gestures toward the kind of liberalism that becomes in the late twentieth century a cultural theory protective of tolerance and ethical diversity.

Chapter IV

AESTHETIC GEMEINSCHAFT AND THE SOCIALLY-CONSTITUTED SELF: GEORGE ELIOT AND T. H. GREEN

Recent cultural criticism of George Eliot's fiction has included the view of her critique of English cultural dissolution in imperialist and nationalist terms. Reading Daniel Deronda (1876) in the context of a symbiotic relationship between novelistic discourse and nation-building, Patrick Brantlinger sees Eliot's critique of English cultural dissolution as leading to "nationalism, but a nationalism that clashes with merely provincial, merely English, narrowness" ("Nations and Novels" 271). Eliot's is "an international nationalism, and one moreover that Eliot expresses in terms of racial unity or community, even though no race can be pure in the physical sense, so that the only possible unity is spiritual--that is, cultural" ("Nations and Novels" 272). Similarly, Katherine Bailey Linehan comments on Eliot's "vision of imperialism as a corrupting force in English national life" (324). She argues that "the social ideal that Daniel Deronda posits as a corrective to imperialism is that of a non-combative, spiritually oriented nationhood, poised for international fellowship but founded on racial separateness" (324-325).

Both Brantlinger and Linehan, then, attempt to recover Eliot's fiction by reference to the spiritually-oriented sense of community she advocates as a response to Victorian cultural dissolution. The ways in which Eliot tries to create that spiritualized sense of community, however, are severely problematic with respect both to her own assumptions and to the current climate of cultural theory. I want to suggest here that Eliot's fiction offers other and better resources for contemporary cultural theory than the view of her fiction as advocating a spiritualized nationalism would provide. Eliot's later fiction contains a critique of deontological individualism, advocates a socially-constituted self as a response to cultural dissolution, and even gestures toward a position of proto-positive freedom. These cultural theoretical resources in Eliot's fiction become evident when her imagination of community is compared with T. H. Green's. Moreover, the comparison reveals Eliot's later cultural thinking to be more closely allied with Green's positive-freedom liberalism than the negative-freedom liberalism of J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer whom she so much admired.

I

I want to begin by considering the compatibility between Eliot's self-proclaimed realist foundations and the kinds of resolutions she invokes in her fiction. I want to examine the models of self Eliot invokes in her novels and

compare these with the philosophical realist foundations of her broader cultural thinking. For it is my contention that there is a discontinuity between Eliot's realist predilections and the socially-constituted models of self she invokes as mechanisms to a renewed sense of community.[1]

I am not the first to perceive a split in Eliot's work.[2] It has commonly been described as a fact-value split, by, for example, Bernard Paris. My analysis differs, however, in an important way. Paris explains primarily how Eliot managed to find a way to talk about values while maintaining her realist sympathies. My analysis strives to grasp at something deeper, something more systemic in Eliot's notions of literature and culture. For it seems to me that the implications of realism are at the very heart of the cultural problems Eliot is trying to solve. There is evidence in her last two novels that this is something Eliot came finally to recognize.

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[1]I am primarily concerned here with philosophical Realism, although because the origins of literary realism are in philosophical realism, much of what I have to say about realism has implications for literary realism as well.

[2] Bernard Paris makes the most of this division, but there have been others. In his book, Man and Society in Nineteenth-Century Realism: Determinism and Literature, Maurice Larkin formulates the split as an opposition between determinism and moralism. See especially pages 88-97 and 179-181. Basil Willey has also alluded to a similar distinction in his Nineteenth-Century Studies.

Eliot's affinity for realism--in art and philosophy--has been well documented.[3] Her own intellectual history recapitulates a movement from theological to metaphysical to positive paradigms similar to that which Comte outlines in his General View of Positivism. And we know that Eliot was an eager reader of Comte, Lewes, Spencer, and Mill. The issue I want to address here is the part these commitments to versions of realism play in George Eliot's cultural thinking, especially the limitations they put on the kinds of social integration she advocates in her fiction.[4]

While there is considerable biographical evidence for Eliot's attraction to realism, from, among other things, Eliot's reading record, a good picture of Eliot's understanding of realism can be derived from the things she

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[3]Bernard Paris gives a detailed account of Eliot's commitment to positivism by tracing her comments on the work of G. H. Lewes, August Comte, and J. S. Mill. See specially Chapter 2, " The Nature of Things." Suzanne Graver also details this debt. See pages 5-8.

[4]Philosophical Realism has meant different things at different times, including simultaneous and opposite things. In ontology, Realism names a belief in the real, non-material existence of universals apart from any particular manifestation of them. In this sense, Plato's theory of Forms might be thought of as a kind of Realism. In epistemology, however, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Realism means nearly the opposite. Here it refers to a belief that knowledge is limited to what is gained through sensory experience. In this sense, Realism is a privileging of the "real"--i.e. material--world over the ideal, metaphysical world. It is in this latter sense that Positivism is a kind of Realism. It is a belief in the ontological reality and epistemological importance of a world external to and independent of the experience of subjects. This philosophical position--or a version of it--inform(s) the theoretical assumptions of George Eliot's cultural theory.

herself wrote. Eliot reveals her foundations in philosophic realism in several review essays she published on German and English philosophers. In her 1855 review of Otto Friedrich Gruppe's Gegenwart und Zukunft der Philosophie in Deutschland, she registers a distinct appeal for Gruppe's empiricist--in essence, realist--epistemology. Eliot recommends Gruppe to English readers specifically on grounds that he does not engage in the Germanic system building:

> 'The age of systems is past. . . . System is the childhood of philosophy; the manhood of philosophy is investigation.' So says Professor Gruppe in the work of which we have given the title above, and we quote this dictum at the outset in order to propitiate those readers who might otherwise turn away with disgust from the mention of German philosophy, having registered a vow to trouble themselves no more with those spinners of elaborate cocoons--German system-mongers. ("Future" 148-149)

Gruppe's main goal, on Eliot's account, is the "Reformation of Logic": the redirection of philosophical method away from speculative idealism toward scientific, empirical "investigation." "The true object of investigation is the formation of ideas from judgments" ("Future" 151). "Investigation" here signifies the scientific orientation which privileges the particular over the general, the concrete over the abstract. The formation of ideas from judgments means the generation of universal ideas induced from judgments made about and via sensory experience (Future 151).

> Thus, from the simple act of judgment we ascend to the formation of ideas, to their modification, and their generalization. And by a series of

> ascending generalizations we are led to the most comprehensive, abstract ideas. ("Future" 152)

These passages clearly indicate that Eliot was no stranger to speculative philosophy. More importantly, they characterize Eliot's attitudes toward realism and idealism. We can find stronger, more specific priority given to realism over idealism in the concluding paragraph of her review of Gruppe:

> What then, asks Herr Gruppe in conclusion, is the future sphere of Philosophy? It must renounce metaphysics: it must renounce the ambitious attempt to form a theory of the universe, to know things in their causes and first principles. . . .
>
> These are rather abstruse subjects to enter on in a short space, but we have at least been able to present one point of interest to our readers, in the fact that a German professor of philosophy renounces the attempt to climb to heaven by the rainbow bridge of 'the high <u>priori</u> road', and is content humbly to use his muscles in treading the uphill <u>a posteriori</u> path which will lead, not indeed to heaven, but to an eminence whence we may see very bright and blessed things on earth. ("Future" 153)

Eliot's conclusion is telling in two ways particularly. First, it marks the difference and antagonism between Germanic speculative and English experimental philosophies. Second, the ability and desire to "see very bright and blessed things on earth" is represented as an epistemological boundary, but not a lamentable one. This realist or empirical foundation is directly indicative of Eliot's conviction that the proper object of philosophy--especially social philosophy--is the concrete world of ordinary experience.

The strong preference for the realist's method and the essentially empirical epistemological limit Eliot points to in her review of Gegenwart und Zukunft der Philosophie in Deutschland provide a theoretical justification for the priority she gives in her cultural theory to the particular and concrete over the general and abstract. The case for the application of this epistemological limit as a foundation for cultural theory is developed in her review of Wilhelm Heinrich von Riehl's Naturgeschichte des Volkes. The privileging of observation and fact in Eliot's cultural theory--including, especially, art--is largely entailed by the specifically moral telos she assigns it:

> The greatest benefit we owe to the artist . . . is the extension of our sympathies. [Social and moral a]ppeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is apart from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment. ("Natural History" 270)

The passage clearly indicates the way Eliot assigns a moral telos to art. The implication is that art has the ability, as not all discourses do, actually to generate that sympathy which is the sine qua non of moral sentiment--a condition of one agent's actively taking other agents's interests into account.

This point is most forcefully made in the famous opening to the seventeenth chapter of Adam Bede:

> 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: it is these more or less ugly, stupid, inconsistent people, whose movements of goodness you should be able to admire--for whom you should cherish all possible hopes, all possible patience. And I would not, even if I had the choice, be the clever novelist who could create a world so much better than this, in which we get up in the morning to do our daily work, that you would be likely to turn a harder, colder eye on the dusty streets and the common green fields--on the real breathing men and women, who can be chilled by your indifference or injured by your prejudice; who can be cheered and helped onward by your fellow-feeling, your forbearance, your outspoken, brave justice. (AB 222)

If, as the passage implies, the object of morality is realization of fellow-feeling, it is best to recognize and accept the natures of those fellows toward whom we are to develop sympathetic feelings. Thus, there goes with the moral telos of art the responsibility of representing "true" objects to which readers are to direct their sympathies. In this way, and to this extent, Eliot's realist epistemology is a means to a moral end:

> All the more sacred is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the life of the People. Falsification here is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life. It is not so very serious that we should have false ideas about evanescent fashions--about manners and conversations of beaux and duchesses; but it is serious that our sympathy with the perennial joys and struggles, the toil, the tragedy, and the humor in the life of our more heavily-laden fellow-men, should be perverted, and turned towards a false object instead of the true one. ("Natural History" 271)

Although Eliot privileges art as especially capable of extending sympathies in order to generate moral sentiment,

other cultural discourses have similar moral goals, and, therefore, also entail the moral responsibility she attaches to artistic realism. These are the foundation of her praise of Riehl's Naturgeschichte des Volkes:

> If any man of sufficient moral and intellectual breadth, whose observations would not be vitiated by a foregone conclusion, or by a professional point of view, would devote himself to studying the natural history of our social classes, especially of the small shop-keepers, artisans, and peasantry,--the degree in which they are influenced by local conditions, their maxims and habits, the points of view from which they regard their religious teachers, and the degree in which they are influenced by religious doctrines, the interactions of the various classes on each other, and what are the tendencies in their position towards disintegration or towards development,--and if, after all this study, he would give us the result of his observations in a book well nourished with specific facts, his work would be a valuable aid to the social and political reformer. ("Natural History" 272-273)

The rejection of idealism and metaphysics already noted in Eliot's review of Gegenwart und Zukunft der Philosophie in Deutschland returns in Eliot's review of Riehl's book in the context of a rejection of totalizing and deracinated social theories.

> After the notable failure of revolutionary attempts conducted from the point of view of abstract democratic and socialistic theories, after the practical demonstration of the evils resulting from a bureaucratic system which governs by an undiscriminating, dead mechanism, Riehl wishes to urge on the consideration of his countrymen, a social policy founded on the special study of the people as they are--on the natural history of the various social ranks. . . . For, says Riehl, the more deeply we penetrate into the knowledge of society in its details, the more thoroughly we shall be convinced that a universal social policy has no validity except on paper, and

> can never be carried into successful practice. ("Natural History" 289)

There is in this passage as well a clear indictment of what Eliot would have recognized as idealist social theories which sought to realize a social or political ideal in social reality. Her implicit complaint is that an a priori idea of polity cannot successfully precede an understanding of the actual social conditions in which that idea of polity is supposed to take hold. Viewing these passages together, then, we can conclude that for Eliot cultural theory must be grounded in a realist attention to the arena of ordinary life in order to generate fellow-feeling as the fundamental basis of a community.

Eliot was hardly alone in her advocacy of realist-grounded social thinking. There was a strong connection in Victorian England between realist (empirical) philosophy and deontological versions of individualism and liberalism. Two of Eliot's closest connections, J. S. Mill and Herbert Spencer, both advocated philosophical realism as well as deontological liberalism. Deontological liberalism advocates a negative model of freedom which represents the individual as an autonomous "substance" not greatly dependent upon society for its being or moral development. One ascendent formulation of this argument appears in J. S. Mill's On Liberty, where, essentially, individuals are conferred rights without responsibilities other than keeping out of one another's way. In what is a holdover of

Benthamite hedonism, the stream of responsibility between individual and society flows one way only--towards the individual.

In the case of Herbert Spencer, the internal connection between realist philosophy and deontological individualism is quite clear. Spencer's foundation in evolutionary theory led him to consider social development in the same light as biological development. In both cases, "development" for Spencer means increased heterogeneity, and heterogeneity is a condition of intrinsic value because of the increased potential for survival. According to Spencer, unlike animal organisms, society is not more than the sum of its parts. Whereas the parts of an animal or plant organism exist for the benefit of the whole, the opposite is true of the social organism where the whole exists for the benefit of its individuals. For Spencer, heterogeneity translates into a privileging of individuality over community, the foundational assumption of deontological liberalism.[5]

II

Despite the affinities between Eliot and Victorian realist cultural and political theory, there are elements in her fiction that run decidedly against the typical realist

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[5]Eliot's attraction to Mill's, Spencer's, and Lewes's social thinking has been well documented. Suzanne Graver, for one, has made a strong case for Eliot's assent to Mill and Comte based upon Eliot's reading record, and to Lewes and Spencer based upon long personal acquaintance (4-9).

conception of individuality. Tony Jackson has recently taken a view of Daniel Deronda that sees Eliot's final novel as a critique of the culture of deontological individualism. Contrasting romantic fiction with realist fiction, Jackson situates Daniel Deronda in a tradition of realist fiction that seeks to establish "its moral legitimacy by attacking the kind of personality that was being presumed and reinforced by [romantic and sentimental] fictions" (229). Specifically, he finds in Gwendolen's narrative realism's critique of the autonomous self that romantic fiction presupposes. Jackson's larger point is that whereas Gwendolen's narrative represents the paradigmatic (literary) realist critique of autonomous egoism, Deronda's narrative posits as an alternative a self that "thinks of itself as a relationship, rather than as a point of substantial being" (236).

Daniel Deronda is indeed fundamentally concerned with the cultural consequences of opposing models of selfhood. Both Gwendolen's and Deronda's narratives record conflicts that get resolved as the characters become increasingly self-realized in different ways. The polarity of their alternate models of selfhood is firmly connected in Eliot's fiction with causes of and responses to moral and cultural dissolution.

In the course of Daniel Deronda the idea of a possible self that Gwendolen strives to realize changes dramatically. Initially, the model of selfhood on which Gwendolen operates

is one that seeks satisfaction in what might be termed self-regarding desires. Gwendolen is so accustomed to having her own way that she conceives of her marriage primarily as a way to maintain and even extend her capacity for self-satisfaction:

> The prospect of marrying Grandcourt really seemed more attractive to her than she had believed beforehand that any marriage could be: the dignities, the luxuries, the power of doing a great deal of what she liked to do, which had now come close to her, and within her choice to secure or to lose, took hold of her nature as if it had been the strong odour of what she had only imagined and longed for before. . . . Gwendolen conceived that after marriage she would most probably be able to manage him thoroughly. (DD 173)

Marriage to Grandcourt promises gratification of a wide range of Gwendolen's desires. Most important, however, is her desire to maintain and assert her own will--the capacity to imagine and realize objects of desire. Aside from the individual desires Gwendolen thinks marriage will gratify, she expects her marriage to provide an arena in which she can freely and fully exercise will. To use Jackson's typology, Gwendolen is represented in this part of the novel as an "autonomous self" in the sense that she acts as though she were disconnected from others's spheres of desires. Rather than negotiating the intersection of those spheres, Gwendolen strives to expand the scope of her will to subsume others's.

In marrying, Gwendolen thinks she is maximizing the scope of her will--her capacity for self-satisfaction. It

is just this aspect of her character that gets crushed by Grandcourt's stronger will:

> One belief which had accompanied her through unmarried life as a self-cajoling superstition, encouraged by the subordination of every one about her--the belief in her own power of dominating--was utterly gone. Already, in seven short weeks, which seemed half her life, her husband had gained a mastery which she could no more resist than she could have resisted the benumbing effect from the touch of a torpedo. Gwendolen's will had seemed imperious in its small girlish sway; but it was the will of a creature with a large discourse of imaginative fears: a shadow would have been enough to relax its hold. And she found a will like that of a crab or boa-constrictor which goes on pinching or crushing without alarm at thunder. (DD 477)

Marriage proves a great disappointment, even a torment, for Gwendolen because it does not give room enough for her to exercise her will as she is used to doing.

The battle between Gwendolen's and Grandcourt's wills has recently been read by Katherine Linehan as an allegorical critique of English imperialism and the culture it produced within English society. According to Linehan, Eliot's

> strategy then is to show a connection, both symbolic and actual, between the self-absorbed "small social drama" of British Establishment private life and the "mighty drama" of national and international politics, with the part played by the English high-society characters in their "puppet show" reproducing England's involvement as a nation on the side of domination rather than liberation and self-interested materialism rather than idealism. (327)

In short, Linehan sees Gwendolen as "a spoiled child of a spoiled society" (330). Eliot's "spoiled child" can be characterized as a self that seeks to exercise its will over

others and in so doing creates a culture of similarly isolated and antagonistic wills.

Others who have read Eliot's fiction as cultural critique have commented on the representation of antagonism of wills in her fiction. Suzanne Graver has employed Ferdinand Tönnies's distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft conditions of societies in order to describe a crucial polarity in Eliot's thinking about community:

> [Tönnies] uses Gemeinschaft to refer to local, organic, agricultural communities that are modeled on the family and rooted in the traditional and the sacred; and Gesellschaft to denote urban, heterogeneous, industrial societies that are culturally sophisticated and shaped by the rational pursuit of self-interest in a capitalistic and secular environment. . . .
>
> Thus his hypothetical construct establishes a polarity within which to comprehend [Eliot's] acute preoccupation with the historical transition from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft and [her] effort to promote in [her] world, which [she] perceived as Gesellschaft, the mutual ties and common interests associated with Gemeinschaft. (Graver 14-15)

Gemeinschaft names a phenomenon of human consciousness in which agents will the same or compatible or complimentary objects.

This alignment of wills begins with the physical and spiritual proximity of mother and child and expands to include agents not of the same family: Gemeinschaft of blood (Blut) becomes Gemeinschaft of place (Ort) and, further, Gemeinschaft of Mind (Geist)--the truly human and highest kind of Gemeinschaft:

> Denn die Gemeinschaft des Blutes, als Einheit des Wesens, entwickelt und besondert sich zur

> Gemeinschaft des Orts, die im Zusammenwohnen ihren unmittelbaren Ausdruck hat, und diese wiederum zur Gemeinschaft des Geistes als dem bloßen Miteinander-Wirken und Walten in der gleichen Richtung, im gleichen Sinne. Gemeinschaft des Ortes kann als Zusammenhang des animalischen, wie die des Geistes als Zusammenhang des mentalen Lebens begriffen werden, die letztere daher, in ihrer Verbindung mit den früheren, als die eigentlich menschliche und höchste Art der Gemeinschaft. (Tönnies 16)

In the passage above, Miteinander-Wirken conveys a sense of close correspondence in the application of energy to effect; Walten implies consensus regarding notions of order and control. Thus, Gemeinschaft of mind--the highest kind of Gemeinschaft--ought to be thought of as a matter of alignment of action and consensus regarding control or order. The thing to note in Tönnies's theory of Gemeinschaft is that it refers to states of consciousness aligned in reference toward a common purpose or goal. This is the condition Eliot wanted to recover or reproduce in what she saw as a modern Gesellschaft society.

Tönnies's concept of Gesellschaft names that condition of culture characterized by a co-location of antagonistic, autonomous wills.

> Die Theorie der Gesellschaft konstruiert einen Kreis von Menschen, welche, wie in Gemeinschaft, auf friedliche Art nebeneinander leben und wohnen, aber nicht wesentlich verbunden, sondern wesentlich getrennen sind, und während dort verbunden bleibend trotz aller Trennungen, hier getrennt belieben trotz aller Verbundenheiten. (Tönnies 48)

Whereas in Gemeinschaft, despite material divisions, individuals see themselves as united by virtue of the

objects of desire they share, in Gesellschaft individuals are divided with respect to consciousness despite the material relations that connect them. Gesellschaft, then, describes that cultural situation in which individuals conceive of themselves as independent and antagonistically related to one another:

> [Es] finde[t] hier keine Tätigkeiten statt, welche aus einer a priori und notwendiger Weise vorhanden Einheit abgeleitet werden können, welche daher auch, insofern, als sie durch das Individuum geschehn, den Willen und Geist dieser Einheit in ihm ausdrücken, mithin so sehr für die mit ihm Verbundenen als für es selber erfolgen. Sondern hier ist ein jeder für sich allein, und im Zustande der Spannung gegen alle übrigen. (Tönnies 48)

As Tönnies explains here, in true Gesellschaft societies there are no actions undertaken by individuals that express the unified will of the society. All agents act for themselves and as a result there is an antagonistic tension between all. Thus, whereas Gemeinschaft implies, for Tönnies, a compatibility of determinative wills, Gesellschaft describes a co-location of fundamentally antagonistic wills. Gemeinschaft describes an emphasis on unity amid difference: Gesellschaft an emphasis on difference amid unity.

Application of the Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft distinction to the representation of culture in Daniel Deronda reveals Eliot's sense of cultural dissolution as the failure of deontological individualism to create and sustain the network of intersubjective relations characteristic of

Gemeinschaft. In Eliot's critique of deontological individualism, Deronda's socially-constituted self is presented as a corrective to Gwendolen's autonomous ego.

The condition in which we find Deronda at the novel's beginning might be described as a state of cultural deracination:

> . . . what he most longed for was either some external event, or some inward light, that would urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy. . . . But how and whence was the needed event to come? --the influence that would justify partiality, and making him what he longed to be yet was unable to make himself--an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without fixed local habitation to render fellowship real? (DD 413)

At the beginning of the novel, Deronda is in much the same position as Gwendolen: isolated from the social sphere--though for vastly different reasons. His deracination is due to an absence of those social relations which serve to anchor individuals in communities. His narrative records the willful construction of those relations that Gwendolen seeks to either control or ignore. An event or new interest of the above description would serve to establish a new relation to another person or people, thereby grounding his interests in a community which would give direction to his efforts at fellow feeling--in essence, make them real.

Throughout the novel Deronda makes the choices he does in order to realize his idea of who he wants to become and in so doing establish relationships to some community.

Eventually, however, his idea of who he wants to become changes. Despite questions about his parentage, or perhaps because of insecurity leading from them, Deronda first makes a determined effort, while still young, to become an English gentleman (220). When Sir Hugo asks him if he should like to become a great singer, Deronda becomes indignant because he interprets the suggestion to mean that he does not inhabit the same social sphere as those about him. His determination to become an English gentleman is an act of the will directed toward self-realization. Deronda seeks to make himself into what he thinks he ought to become, despite the fact, unknown to him, that he exists at the intersection of social relations that construct him quite differently.

Gradually, Deronda's desire to become an English gentleman gives way to a more independent line of thinking. This is first evident in the apparently insignificant decision to quit Cambridge:

> In hours when his dissatisfaction was strong upon him he reproached himself for having been attracted by the conventional advantage of belonging to an English university, and was tempted towards the project of asking Sir Hugo to let him quit Cambridge and pursue a more independent line of study abroad. (DD 220)

Deronda's divergence is significant for the fact that in coming to question the propriety of his remaining at Cambridge, he not only begins to diverge from the traditional path of English gentlemen but he misses the opportunity to acquire those cultural associations and attitudes that mark the English gentleman. In other words,

Deronda misses an opportunity to establish the relations to English society which are typically inculcated by education. In giving up the university, Deronda gives up a traditional means for acquiring foundational anchors of the self. In this way Eliot provides Deronda an escape from the egocentric patterns of establishment behavior.

As Deronda slowly gives up his desire to become an English gentleman, he takes tentative though active steps to fill in the gaps in his family and cultural heritage. His quest for Mirah's family and his seemingly inexplicable attendance of services at synagogues are steps toward realizing relations to a cultural tradition other than the one in which he was raised. Inexplicable as they initially seem, they are implicitly accounted for by a spiritual bond or attraction within the Jewish community.

This mystical attraction is Eliot's version of the spiritual bond of Gemeinschaft and sharply contrasts with "the conventional advantage of belonging to an English university" (220). That "conventional advantage" provides the material connections (acquaintances and opportunities) to a commercial society in which human transactions are mediated primarily by financial consideration. Eliot is careful, therefore, to have Deronda explicitly reject aligning himself with those kinds of relations, for to do so would be to construct a self not fully implicated in a society but standing partly against it.

Deronda's dismissal of Sir Hugo's encouragement to pursue a political career is a further movement away from integration into a Gesellschaft English culture. The rejection of English politics as a profession becomes the more significant in light of Deronda's later passionate acceptance of Mordecai's political aspirations for a Jewish national state:

> 'Since I began to read and know, I have always longed for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude--some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize. You have raised the image of such a task for me--to bind our race together in spite of heresy. You have said to me--"Our religion united us before it divided us--it made us a people before it made Rabbanites and Karaites." I mean to try what can be done with that union . . . .' (DD 819-820)

Deronda is able to find a life-purpose in this Jewish political goal, as he could not in English politics, because he has in the interval recognized and begun to realize those relations which link him to a cultural tradition and, consequently, create in him a sense of community. Eliot's choice of Hebraism as the cultural tradition which Deronda reconstructs is all the more significant given the priority of family and nationality within Jewish history. It is these features of Gemeinschaft, primarily, that supervene issues of membership within the Jewish community.

Deronda's decision to pursue the foundation of a Jewish nation-state doubly emphasizes the socially-constituted nature of his self. Throughout his narrative, Deronda loses then slowly gains those kinds of social relations that

define a self and give it meaning by giving it purpose. Finally, his decision to pursue the foundation of a Jewish state represents the reciprocity of those very same social relations. As Deronda makes sense of himself by coming to recognize and striving to realize the social relations that define him, he, in turn, realizes those relations by making them material, as manifested in the creation of a Jewish nation state, giving political reality to a cultural ideal. In effect, neither Deronda nor the Jewish state can exist without the other. Conversely, as the individual recognizes those relations that constitute it, the society itself becomes increasingly realized. More precisely, both come into existence simultaneously and depend upon one another for their continued being and development.

Whereas Deronda's narrative represents the nature of the self and the basis of community Eliot is advocating, Gwendolen's narrative represents the application of these principles to particular facts of social experience. The socially-constituted model of the self that is dramatized by Deronda's narrative provides a template for the sense of community that serves as the resolution to Gwendolen's problems--problems that have resulted from her activity as an autonomous ego.

Gwendolen's repeated seeking of advice from Deronda dramatizes Eliot's belief that some version of the socially-constituted self is the remedy for English cultural dissolution. Deronda suggests that Gwendolen's remorse

might be the violent shock necessary to shake Gwendolen out of her habit of autonomous egoism. In effect, she is confronted with the consequences of her egoism every time she sees Grandcourt. Because of his dominating, brutal nature, she is unable to redress her wrongful treatment of Glasher through him, and she is unable to go around him. Deronda's advice is to use the guilt to rise above the moral isolation imposed by her troubles:

> 'Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action--something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot.' (DD 501-502)

Deronda is suggesting that Gwendolen seek to realize a new idea of a possible self--one that seeks satisfaction in the realization of social relations. This is what he is finally able to do, and in so doing finds purpose, direction, and importance for his life. The parallel between his effort at self-realization and what he advises Gwendolen to do is evident in passages, such as the following, which gesture toward a more integrated sense of social experience--toward a sense of Gemeinschaft:

> 'The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher life, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities. The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling; but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge.' (DD 507-508)

Knowledge here is knowledge of the lives and concerns and troubles of other individuals. This epistemological requirement refers back to Eliot's insistence on realism as the only appropriate philosophical basis of cultural theory. Knowledge of others's lives is something Gwendolen has little of, and in a later conversation, Deronda tells Gwendolen that once she begins realizing social relations the horizon of her world will expand:

> 'Other duties will spring from it. Looking at your life as a debt may seem the dreariest view of things at a distance; but it cannot really be so. What makes life dreary is the want of motive; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in your mind, there will be unexpected satisfactions--there will be newly-opened needs--continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant.' (DD 839)

The organic growth of Gwendolen's life will be the spontaneous and simultaneous spreading of roots into the community and the extension of branches reaching out to other individuals. The larger point here is that the resolution to Eliot's novel has the leading characters recognize and realize relations between themselves and the community to which they belong, in which they exist. It is not until they do so that their characters become constructed in ways that are satisfying to themselves, to the problems of the novel, to the author, and to the reader.

Individuals seeking satisfaction in the realization of social relations are, in effect, seeking it in the

realization of society itself. When this idea of a possible satisfaction is universally promulgated, the members of the community share an idea of personal good which has, in fact, become a common good. The idea of the reification of society itself becomes an idea of a good common to all members of the society. This is Gemeinschaft, and it is Eliot's antidote to what she saw as a pervasive condition of Gesellschaft.

III

Although Daniel Deronda registers Eliot's sense that English cultural dissolution (Gesellschaft) is closely associated with deontological individualism and that a socially-constituted self is the means to recover a lost sense of Gemeinschaft, the means by which the socially-constituted self is actually to be recreated in Victorian society remains severely problematic for Eliot.

Forest Pyle has recently argued that "'sympathy' is the means which Eliot employs to provide the solution to the ideological predicament she inherits from Romanticism; it is . . . the means by which the romantic wound opened by the imagination is to be sutured" (5). Imagination, for Pyle, is the driving force of novels. It is associated with individual desire and points to a difference between what is and what could be, or what one wants to be but is not. Pyle reads imagination in Eliot's works in terms of a collision between internal desire and external fact. As long as

individual agents identify themselves with the objects of their egoistic imagination, they can only co-exist as independent and antagonistically oriented wills. Sympathy is the mechanism by which this antagonism is overcome.

Pyle points out, however, that "no individual character in Eliot's novels can make sympathy work," and therefore "the effective work of sympathy must be assigned--'transferred'--to the act of narration itself" (12). His point is that Eliot tries to create sympathy among her characters in order to bind them into communities. But this sympathy is not in fact a part of the Gesellschaft cultures she represents in her later fiction. It is not, therefore, available on the realist premises of her narrative/cultural theory. Because the problems of Eliot's Gesellschaft novels entail Gemeinschaft resolutions, and because her realism cannot easily provide for such an internal principle of social cohesion, she is left to other, essentially aesthetic means. This is what Pyle refers to as the failure of sympathy in Eliot's story but its revival in the narration. Pyle observes that "the drama of the narrator involves most directly the eliciting, the <u>naming</u> and the <u>making</u> of that which remains lacking in the events and actions of the story: a sympathy forged out of the romantic conditions of the imagination" (12).

I want to extend Pyle's observation by pointing out that Eliot's own effort to re-create a sense community, her effort at Gemeinschaft, is "aesthetic" in the further sense

that she is left finally to create only the sensation of community in her audience by stirring in them "sympathy" and "fellow feeling." This is, according to Eliot, the most important effect of art in general. It is the sense of the famous passage from Adam Bede quoted above, and of Eliot's insistence that the role of the artist is to create sympathy. Moreover, sympathy and fellow feeling are the foundations upon which she constructs Gemeinschaft among characters, within her novels. "Fellow-feeling" is what binds the members of Middlemarch together, as, for example, Lydgate and Dorothea, Dorothea and Rosamond, Ladislaw and Dorothea, and Lydgate and Bulstrode. Sympathy is what brings Deronda and Mirah together, and, consequently, what sets Deronda about realizing his cultural heritage. Sympathy is what reverses Deronda's repulsion of Gwendolen, and what initiates Gwendolen's remorse with respect to Glasher.

Whereas Eliot recognized Victorian England as a Gesellschaft society, the principle of social cohesion she adduces (sympathy) is neither a functional part of that society nor consistent with the Gesellschaft concept of the individual. Furthermore, although sympathy is for these reasons a tenuous principle of social cohesion, it is perhaps the only one available in truly Gesellschaft societies. Terry Eagleton raises this very point in The Ideology of the Aesthetic. Understanding "the aesthetic" in its original sense as referring to a discourse of internal

experience, Eagleton points out that the economic and political spheres of Gesellschaft provide few if any real possibilities for social cohesion:

> The question therefore arises as to where [bourgeois society] is to locate a sense of unity powerful enough to reproduce itself by. In economic life, individuals are structurally isolated and antagonistic; at the political level there would seem nothing but abstract rights to link one subject to the other. This is one reason why the 'aesthetic' realm of sentiments, affections and spontaneous bodily habits comes to assume the significance it does. Custom, piety, intuition and opinion must now cohere an otherwise abstract, atomized social order. (IA 23)

This is why, Eagleton explains, the aesthetic is such an important concept in bourgeois thinking: "the alarming truth is that in a social order marked by class division and market competition, it may be finally here, and only here, that human beings belong together in some intimate Gemeinschaft" (IA 75). Eagleton thus reads the rise of the aesthetic as a last ditch effort to provide for a sense of social cohesion in a social situation that regards individuals as atomistic and antagonistically competing for scarce goods and services in the market place.

The implication I want to address here is that a theory of culture that purports to provide a principle of social cohesion will have to find something more substantial and more integral to the actual workings of society than mere fellow-feeling adduced from the outside. What that something is, I propose, is a conception of the individual that conceives of its interests as fully implicated in the

interests of others, and both in the actual workings of society. Eliot's combined literary and cultural theory points to the solution to Gesellschaft cultural dissolution, but she is not quite able to provide it.

IV

As I have tried to show, Daniel Deronda represents Eliot's critical view of deontological individualism and the cultural dissolution it occasioned. As such, it suggests a reading of Eliot's final novel as a critique of the realist cultural theory she proposed in her early review essays. The socially-constituted model of the self she advocates as the foundation of Gemeinschaft contrasts sharply with the atomistic self that is the basis of deontological liberalism such as Mill's and Spencer's. Eliot's effort to provide a principle of social cohesion comes down, finally, to aesthetic means which were not ultimately up to the task.

There were, however, other critiques of deontological individualism/liberalism grounded on conceptions of a socially-constituted self contemporaneous with Eliot's. Green's positive freedom liberalism was among these. Like Eliot, Green advocates a socially-constituted self, but rather than relying on aesthetic means for creating it, he conceives of the individual's immersion in society in a way that makes Gemeinschaft a natural result of the internal workings of culture, not simply something adduced upon it. The essential identity of the individual good with the

common good provides that Gemeinschaft is deeply imbedded in the intersubjective practices and institutions that make up society.

We can begin to see the correspondence between Eliot and Green by looking first at Green's conception of the true or unconditional good. Geoffrey Thomas has extracted from Green's scattered writings on the topic five criteria for the true or unconditional good. On Green's model, the true good

> (i) is achievable only as an object of pursuit; (ii) contains a constructive element; (iii) is imperatival; (iv) is non-exclusive and non-competitive; and (v) is a social or common good. (Thomas 249-250)

Although Green's ethical theory is primarily concerned with the individual moral good, what he takes to be the true or absolute good for the individual must be a good in which other members of a society share. According to Green, the absolute good can only realize itself "in a system of social requirements and expectations" (PE §199). Criteria (iv) and (v) above specify the essential Gemeinschaft character of Green's cultural theory. According to Thomas, Green's supposition about non-competition must be "that anything which could be endangered or frustrated by competition between agents, anything of which one agent's possession would exclude its possession by another, would be an imperfect candidate for the true good" (Thomas 252).

Criteria (v) further specifies that the true good is a common or social good. This is a crucial feature in Green, for it is the precise point at which his ethical theory (concerned with the individual's self-realization) becomes cultural theory (concerned with the formation of Gemeinschaft). This criteria provides, in effect, the identification of the personal good with the common good. The identity hinges on what Green calls "the ultimate fact" of social interest (PE §199). An agent's idea of something that is absolutely good for itself derives from its consciousness of itself as an end to itself. This consciousness is the same thing as an idea of a self it might become, since the best possible self is what would be absolutely good for itself. The very idea of a possible self contains within it something very much like the seeds of Gemeinschaft.

> It is a self already affected in the most primitive forms of human life by manifold interests, among which are interests in other persons. These are not merely interests dependent upon other persons for the means to their gratification, but interests in the good of those other persons, interests which cannot be satisfied without the consciousness that those other persons are satisfied. (PE §199)

Elsewhere Green explains that the idea of a best possible self includes an interest in other "persons as persons," where "person" means personality or subjectivity--the ability of a subject to present itself with objects and seek to realize those objects. In other words, the idea of a possible self includes an interest in other persons who are

likewise ends in themselves. An interest in "persons as persons" requires an interpenetration of consciousnesses, and an alignment of wills.

We have already seen that self-consciousness constitutes an agent's capability of seeking the absolute good through regarding itself as an end to itself. This is also the very same capability an agent has for entering into another agent's consciousness of itself as an end to itself. Given the social interest, an agent finds its own satisfaction is dependent upon others' satisfactions. In order to realize its own satisfaction, then, it must enter into the other agent's consciousness of themselves as ends to themselves. When this happens, the expression of these two consciousnesses corresponds in choosing the objects they seeks to realize. Their wills may then be said to be aligned. This is the sense of Green's contention that "Will, not force is the basis of society" (PPO, title of chapter 6). Gemeinschaft is another name for this synchronization of individual and common wills.

This so-called "social interest" Green regards as an "ultimate fact of human history" because without it is impossible to explain the development of society as we know it:

> Some sort of community, founded on such unity of self-consciousness, on such capacity for a common idea of permanent good, must be presupposed in any groupings of men from which the society that we know can have been developed. (PE §202)

It is of course debatable in what sense this social interest is really a "fact." Certainly it is not a fact for the whole of humanity. Otherwise moral philosophy and cultural theory would be unnecessary. Even though it may not be a universal fact that agents take other agents's interests into account, Green's task as a moral philosopher is to give rational reasons for doing just that. A descriptive discrepancy on this point, then, is not an impeachment of the argument. Rather, Green ought to be regarded as trying to show that the true good for individuals is something that is simultaneously good for all members of the society.

The larger point here is that Green's account of the self's quest for satisfaction provides for an idea of a common good that is identical with the absolute (individual) good. In this way, the individual's search for lasting satisfaction leads to a principle of social cohesion, addressing the very conditions of Gesellschaft by resolving a plurality of isolated wills into a unity of aligned wills. This is due to the fact that in seeking to realize its own satisfaction, the self-conscious agent enters into the consciousness of other agents as being ends in themselves. In this way, individual self-realization leads to realization of the common good, to the reification of what is best for the society.

This interpenetration of wills, this identity of individual and common good, is precisely the Gemeinschaft condition Eliot was after though could not extract from her

realist representation of social reality. If Eliot and Green were nearly aligned in their belief that social dissolution was a consequence of deontological individualism, they were even more closely aligned in their recognition that the nature of social experience has crucial implications for individual self-realization. There is, then, another equally important and close correspondence between Eliot's and Green's imaginations of the individual's immersion in culture. This second point of correspondence has to do with the individual's dependence upon society for moral development, and is best seen by examining Eliot's penultimate novel.

Middlemarch is the only one of Eliot's novels named after a community not a character. The title as well as the narrative itself suggest that the novel is about the community itself, as much as it is about anything quite that specific. One of the most significant observations Eliot makes about the Middlemarch community is the severe limitations which that community places on Dorothea Brook's attempts at self-realization.

Like Deronda and Gwendolen, Dorothea tries to realize an idea of who she thinks she can and ought to become. This idea provides the content of what might be called her moral potential. It takes the form of a strong desire to engage in socially redeeming activities, represented initially by her desire to build improved cottages for neighboring tenant farmers. Without money of her own, however, she cannot

undertake such activities. Sir James Chattam presents the first opportunity to realize her moral inclinations. He has the willingness and financial means to allow Dorothea to pursue her social projects. However, Dorothea rejects him for Casaubon on the assumption that the latter's scholarship and piety are more closely aligned with her own moral ideal. This turns out to be a faulty perception, and she is disappointed and frustrated when she realizes the self-serving character of his intellectual activities. Moreover, because of his dominating nature, he narrowly prescribes and proscribes the ways in which she can organize and direct her own social and intellectual pursuits.

Prior to marriage Dorothea had no means of realizing her moral potential. During it she has no freedom to apply those means. Nor is she much better off after Casaubon dies, for, although she then has the means and freedom lacking before, she has become aware of the need to acknowledge the claims of her emotions. In marrying Casaubon Dorothea denied the claims of self-regarding (emotional) desires in order to satisfy her other-regarding desires. In marrying Ladislaw in order to realize those self-regarding desires, Dorothea is forced to give up the financial means necessary to realize her other-regarding desires.

Middlemarch represents Eliot's awareness of a socially devastating incompatibility between individual self-realization and what I shall call full social participation.

Dorothea cannot realize her full potential as an individual and an engaged member of society because society does not provide adequate avenues for her simultaneously to acknowledge the self-regarding and the other-regarding claims upon her. This incompatibility alienates the individual from society, forcing it to choose between its own interests and those of the society. Thus, Middlemarch ends problematically with the novel's most sympathetic characters (Dorothea, Ladislaw, and Lydgate) all choosing in effect against Middlemarch: they all pursue their lives elsewhere. In so far as Eliot's penultimate novel is critical of the inadequate opportunities Middlemarch provides for Dorothea's self-realization, it gestures toward what might be called proto-positive-freedom. That is, it points to the need for social institutions that contribute positively to the individual's realization of a best possible self.

Green's positive-freedom liberalism also conceives of the individual's immersion in society in a way that regards social institutions as contributing factors to individual moral self-development. In fact, this aspect of Green's thinking constitutes his most important contribution to Victorian cultural theory: his argument for positive-freedom. Green contends that the realization of personal perfection (self-satisfaction) can only take place in persons, through society. The idea of a possible self, which is a condition of moral self-realization, depends upon

an agent's ability to be self-consciously an end to itself. In other words, the idea of self-perfection is identical with self-consciousness, and self-consciousness is something that can only inhere in individuals. In Green's language, the idea of personal perfection can only realize itself in "persons," where "persons" means "the quality in a subject being consciously an object to itself" (PE §182).

At the same time, however, it is only as members of society that the idea of realizing personal potential--and, identically, human perfection--has any practical hold over us (PE §183). According to Green,

> . . . human society presupposes persons in capacity--subjects capable each of conceiving himself and the bettering of his life as an end to himself--but it is only in the intercourse of men, each recognized by each as an end, not merely a means, and thus as having reciprocal claims, that the capacity is actualized and that we really live as persons. (PE §183)

In order to realize an idea of personal perfection, agents need to have definite ideas about what the possibilities for human perfection are. These ideas of who/what agents might become, and the social possibilities for realizing those ideas must come from somewhere. According to Green, they come from society itself in the form of social roles. Social roles present agents with ideas of possible selves and structure opportunities to realize them.

This is the sense of Green's contention that society constitutes the external conditions necessary for individual moral development. It is the foundation of his argument for

positive freedom. Positive-freedom points to the moral necessity of society providing social roles adequate to the ideas of possible selves of its citizens. As an acknowledgment of this necessity, positive freedom shifts a significant portion of the responsibility for the individual's moral development onto social organization itself.

In this way, Green's liberalism is a more detailed and systematic version of one of the main objects of social representation in Eliot's Middlemarch. Eliot's critique of society in that novel recognizes a tension between the conditions of moral self-realization and the conditions of social membership and full integration. The novel gestures beyond its own conclusion toward a conception of social participation that resolves or avoids this tension. Green's positive freedom is the recognition that social opportunities are a necessary condition of individual moral development. His cultural theory provides that social opportunities (social roles and rights) are distributed in ways that all members have equal possibilities to exercise their capacities for self-satisfaction.

If we recognize that social organization has a role in conditioning moral development, society as a whole has a responsibility to each of its members. Moreover, it has the same responsibility to each of its members. In so doing, positive-freedom liberalism strives to replace the competitive atmosphere of Gesellschaft with a collaborative

one, making Gemeinschaft part of social reality. In other words, Green's positive-freedom liberalism accomplishes what Eliot's novels fail to do: it imagines a configuration of society in which alignment of wills is the natural outcome of the individual's immersion in ordinary social transaction.

Chapter V

FROM CRITICAL THEOLOGY TO CULTURAL THEORY: MARY WARD, ROBERT ELSMERE, AND T. H. GREEN

The best selling novel in the nineteenth century was written not by Dickens or Thackery or Trollope. It was written by Mary Augusta Ward. Robert Elsmere was published February 1888, and by the first week in June, 3,500 copies of the triple-decker edition had been sold to lending libraries. By November it is estimated that 100,000 copies had sold in America alone; that by March 1889 between 30,000 and 40,000 copies of various editions had been sold in Britain, with sales continuing at the rate of 700 copies a week. Mary Ward estimated in 1909 that nearly one million copies of the book had been circulated in English-speaking countries.[1]

Despite its supreme Victorian celebrity, Robert Elsmere is hardly known at all now and rarely read. Its popularity

[1] Later there were 1,000 copies of a two-volume library edition, and 20,000 copies of a half-crown edition had sold before the end of 1890. That adds up to about 128,000 copies in three years. Two decades later, still another a cheap edition sold 50,000 copies in two weeks, and 100,000 copies within a year. For a fuller account of sales see Peterson 221. The edition I cite is the authorized one-volume American edition (Macmillan and Co: London and New York, 1888), reprinted from the seventh London edition.

in the nineteenth century reflects the currency of its ideas and its formulation of cultural problems and cultural solutions. Robert Elsmere deals directly with the common Victorian problem of a crisis of faith, though Ward's treatment of that problem is rather uncommon, or better: her treatment is not typically English.

In his 1989 essay on the relationship between nineteenth-century biblical criticism and Victorian fiction, Stephen Prickett leads us to Hans Frei's observation of the difference between English and German biblical scholarship:

> In [eighteenth-century] England, where a serious body of realistic narrative literature and a certain amount of criticism of the literature was building up, there arose no corresponding cumulative tradition of criticism of the biblical writings, and that included no narrative interpretation of them. In Germany, on the other hand, where a body of critical analysis as well as a general hermeneutics of the biblical writings built up rapidly in the latter half of the eighteenth-century, there was no simultaneous development of realistic prose narrative and its critical appraisal. (Frei quoted in Prickett 1)

According to Frei, the relative lack of narrative prose criticism in Germany created a tendency to recognize the narrative realism in the Bible as a species of history, not literature. Conversely, the relative underdevelopment of an historical hermeneutical tradition in eighteenth-century England lead to the nineteenth-century treatment of biblical narrative in more literary than historical terms.

Frei's observation is corroborated, for example, by Matthew Arnold's Literature and Dogma. Arnold's effort in that work is to redirect attention away from the historical

nature of biblical miracles to the emotional experiences represented by them. In short, Arnold urges replacing the historical understanding of the New Testament with a metaphorical one. Despite this shift in perspective, Arnold aimed at preserving the Bible as a locus of moral (and therefore cultural) authority. In this way, his biblical criticism is essentially conservative. It is an attempt to provide new foundations for old Christian truth.

Mary Ward--Matthew Arnold's niece--departed significantly from her famous uncle's approach. Ward, like Green, had a much more radical response. Ward's Robert Elsmere is dedicated to T. H. Green, and, in addition to containing a thinly disguised portrait of him, makes use of direct quotations from his works.[2] By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Green's name was firmly associated with the transmission of German idealism in England.[3] The

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[2]I am not the first to comment on Green's presence in Robert Elsmere. Among the most significant are Lionel Trilling, Melvin Richter, William Peterson, Roesmary Ashton, Bernard Lightman, Robert Lee Wolff, John Sutherland, and William Peterson. While Richter gives the most detailed attention to Green's philosophy, he says very little about the novel itself. Conversely, the others, while mentioning Green in passing, give no serious attention to Green's ethics and religious philosophy and their political implications as they are represented in the novel. Moreover, none gives any treatment of the way(s) in which Robert's critique of dogmatic theology prefigures the alternatives he pursues after he abandons orthodox Christianity.

[3]While there are other English writers familiar with German idealism, especially Coleridge and Carlyle, none of these gave the same kind of explicit and sustained systematic treatment of English cultural problems on idealist premises as Green. Nor can any of them be regarded

most important aspect of his German connections for this study is his close textual links to the German biblical criticism and his development of them. Green's work on the Bible is fundamentally different from Arnold's. It is German and historical as opposed to English and literary. Glossing Frei's observation, Prickett agrees that it is not difficult to see how German historical critics "judged the prose narratives of the Bible by their own standards of history and found them of such dubious value" (Prickett, 7). Working in this same historical tradition led Green also to search for alternative articulations of spiritual and moral truth.

On the one hand Green was looking for a cultural discourse which did not oppose reason and spiritualism the way orthodox religion tended to do. At the same time, however, he was intent on finding a (rational) alternative to utilitarianism, which, because of its reliance upon hedonism, he regarded as incapable of supplying adequate inducement to moral improvement. These aspects of Green's religious, ethical, and social critique get picked up and developed in Ward's Robert Elsmere in ways that domesticate his German idealist religious, moral, and political philosophy for English consumption. These various discourses are condensed, so to speak, into a single (literary) mode.

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as starting a "school" in the sense of having disciples.

My chief contention here is that Mary Ward's Robert Elsmere represents and advocates what might now be recognized as the cultural theory of British philosophical idealism. Many of the central features of Robert Elsmere are prefigured by inside connections between German critical theology and idealist ethics, and again between idealist ethics and a positive-freedom Liberalism. The answer to the question "How does German theology become domesticated as English cultural theory?" might be: "Via a cultural politics of science and imagination." For as I shall try to show, a cultural theory of science and imagination accounts for the generation and resolution of the major conflicts in Robert Elsmere: the protagonist's abandonment of orthodox Christianity, and the positive cultural theory and cultural politics he figures as an alternative to it.[4,5]

A second and less specific contention of this chapter is that the way religious controversy was formulated at

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[4]A second and less specific contention of this chapter is that the way religious controversy was formulated at Oxford has a great deal to do with the nature of the secular modes of ethical discourse which emerged from that debate. Robert Elsmere demonstrates how, primarily through Green, German critical theology becomes transformed into English post-Anglican cultural theory.

[5]I use the term "cultural theory" to refer discourses which cross between theology, ethics, and politics. Thus, I reserve the term "cultural politics" to refer to the mediation of power and authority in the realization of an idea of culture--of what the intersection of private and social experience ought to look like.

Oxford has a great deal to do with the nature of secular modes of ethical discourse which emerged from that debate. Robert Elsmere represents in part how that secularization of Christian ideology took place in the latter part of the nineteenth century. This topic has been treated by new historicists, Jerome McGann in particular. McGann's Romantic Ideology examines some of the ways in which early nineteenth-century English literature initiates and embodies a secularization of Christian ideology. But McGann has to dig relatively deep into the structures of meaning and feeling in order to tease out a romantic secular ideology. My recovery of Green's place in Ward's very popular novel objectifies a cultural moment at which that secular impulse goes public--becomes a functional part of Victorian culture.

II

The great crisis of Robert Elsmere is the title character's crisis of faith. Despite his largely agnostic upbringing, Robert takes holy orders at Oxford and accepts a rural living in Surrey. It is through contact with Wendover, a local landowner and scholar, that Robert begins to question the historical veracity of the New Testament. Wendover's scholarship, and Robert's critique of Christian orthodoxy are patterned on German critical theology.

Wendover's thirty years of scholarship have produced two of three proposed volumes treating the conditions which govern the correspondence between testimony and facts. The

chief results of Wendover's inquiry into the nature of testimony convinced him that testimony has "developed" in the sense that "man's power of apprehending and recording what he sees and hears has grown from less to more, from weaker to stronger, like any other of his faculties" (317). Wendover's sense of the developmental character of testimony is coupled with an urgent advocacy of "what is meant in history and literature by "the critical method," which in history may be defined as the "science of what is credible," and in literature as "the science of what is rational" (317).

Bernard Lightman has recently written about the biographical basis of Ward's own commitment to historical scholarship. He finds a precedent for Wendover's historicism in Ward's contribution to Henry Wace's Dictionary of Christian Biography. Ward writes to her friend Mandell Creighton:

> 'what convinced me [of the difficulties raised by historical considerations] finally and irrevocably was two years of close and constant occupation with the materials of history in those centuries which lie near to the birth of Christianity and were the critical centuries of its development. I then saw that to adopt the witness of those centuries to matters of fact, without translating it at every step, into the historical language of our own day--a language which the long education of time has brought closer to the realities of things--would be to end by knowing nothing actually and truly, about their life.' (Ward quoted in Lightman 295).

Lightman also finds that Ward's own work in history "led directly to the writing of Robert Elsmere" (Ward quoted in Lightman, 296).

Taken together, what Wendover advocates is what might be called a "scientific" understanding of sacred writing, which treats sacred documents as historically conditioned, and, consequently, as texts which must be historically understood. Given his pre-existing passionate interest in historical scholarship, Robert found the logic of Wendover's "scientific" approach compelling. It is principally Wendover's scholarship that puts into motion changes that dramatically alter Robert's life: changes in the very foundations of Robert's conception of Christ and Christianity. Robert's interest in history had led him to church history before he met Wendover, but at that time Robert had been able to defeat the beginnings of religious skepticism. Wendover, however, proves to be the catalyst that precipitates the cataclysmic change in Robert's view of Christianity.

The narrator in Robert Elsmere describes Wendover's decisive influence on Robert's beliefs this way:

> By the end of their conversation that first period of happy unclouded youth we have been considering was over for poor Elsmere. In obedience to certain inevitable laws and instincts of the mind, he had been for months tempting his fate, inviting catastrophe. Nonetheless did the first sure approaches of that catastrophe fill him with a restless resistance which was in itself anguish. . . But now at every step the ideas, impressions, arguments bred in him by his months of historical work and ordinary converse with the squire rushed

> in, as they had done once before, to cripple resistance, to check an emerging answer, to justify Mr. Wendover. (317)

The questioning spirit bred in Robert by Wendover's scientific method leads to an imaginative revolution in Robert's conception of Jesus. Thinking about his conversations with Wendover, Robert begins to refigure his image of Christ:

> In the stillness of the night there rose up weirdly before him a whole new mental picture--effacing, pushing out, innumerable older images of thought. It was the image of a purely human Christ--a purely human, explicable, yet always wonderful Christ. It broke his heart, but the spell of it was like some dream-country wherein we see all the familiar objects of life in new relations and perspectives. (RE 321)

What is most significant in this passage is that Wendover's introduction of a scientific point of view brought about an imaginative change in Robert's conception of Christ. This, in turn, precipitates what Robert describes as a "failure of feeling" for the habits of Anglican worship.

The final break with Anglican orthodoxy comes when Robert begins to consider the implications of critical scholarship a propos of St. Paul's witness to the Resurrection.

> Between the Paul of Anglican theology and the fiery fallible man of genius--so weak logically, so strong in poetry, in rhetoric, in moral passion, whose portrait has been drawn for us by a free and temperate criticism--[Robert] knew, in a sort of a dull way, that his choice was made. The one picture carried reason and imagination with it; the other contented neither. (330-331) [emphasis added]

Robert's newly modified understanding of Christian documents is characterized by the combined faculties of science and imagination. Science (reason in the form of historical scholarship) establishes new perspectives toward sacred texts, which, in turn, precipitate a reconception--a reimagination--of Jesus and other central biblical figures. Linked together, reason and imagination drastically change the nature of Christian belief.

III

The reconception of Christianity presented in Robert Elsmere elicited a variety of textual responses from various readers, including numerous sermons and reviews and one especially long and critical piece by then ex-Prime Minister William Gladstone entitled "Robert Elsmere and the Battle of Belief." Gladstone's main dissatisfaction with the novel is what he took to be the inadequate representation of Anglican apologetics. Ward does, in fact, give little opportunity for Anglican orthodoxy to defend itself. It is generally true, as Gladstone charges, that in Robert Elsmere "there is a great inequity in the distribution of arms. Reasoning is the weapon of the new scheme; emotion is the sole resource of the old" (778).

> A creed, with the testimony of eighteen centuries at its back, cannot find an articulate word to say in its defence, and the downfall of the scheme of belief shatters also, and of right, the highly ordered scheme of life that had nestled in the Rectory of Murewell, as it still does in thousands of other English parsonages." (Gladstone 769)

Additionally, Gladstone did not think Ward knew enough about Christian apolegetics to do it justice:

> There is nowhere a sign that the authoress has made herself acquainted with the Christian apologists, old or recent; or has weighed the evidence derivable from the Christian history . . . . (Gladstone, 778)

In response, Ward wrote a long fictional dialogue for The Nineteenth Century entitled "The New Reformation: a Dialogue." In this piece two old college friends debate the relative merits of Anglican and German critical theology. Ward's ostensible first purpose was to defend herself against Gladstone's charge that she did not know enough about Christian apologetics or about critical theology to have treated them satisfactorily in her novel. The command of the history and development of German and French critical theology she evidences in "The New Reformation" is impressive. In addition to defending herself, however, Ward uses the occasion of "The New Reformation" to explicate and defend Robert's assent to critical theology and the critique of Christian orthodoxy it occasioned.

In "The New Reformation," Ward argues energetically that the real advancements of critical over Anglican theology are attributable to an improvement in, what she terms, "historical scholarship." She characterizes the advent of critical theology as the combination of scientific and imaginative faculties in the consideration of Christian documents. In the dialogue, her advocate for critical theology describes its "advances" this way:

> 'The older books had had certain statements and products of the past to render into the language of the present. And they had rendered them inadequately with that vagueness and generality and convention which belong to bad translation. And the result was either merely flat and perfunctory, something totally without the breath of life and reality, or else the ideas and speech of the past were hidden away under what was in truth a disguise--often a magnificent disguise--woven out of the ideas and speech of the present. But the books since Neibuhr, since Ranke, since Mommsen! There you found a difference. At last you found out that these men and women, these kings and bishops and saints, these chroniclers and officials, were flesh and blood; that they had ideas, passions, politics; that they lived, as we do, under governing prepossessions; that they had theories of life and the universe; and till you understood these and could throw yourself back into them, you had no chance of understanding the men and their doings. . . . And all this was brought about by nothing in the world fundamentally but improved translation, by the use of that same faculty, half scientific, half imaginative, which in the rendering of a foreign language, enables a man to get into the very heart and mind of his author, to speak with his tones and feel with his feelings.' (NR 457)

This "historical faculty," "half scientific, half imaginative," correlates precisely with the representation in Robert Elsmere of Robert's "conversion" as occasioned by a combination of reason and imagination.

According to Ward's dialogue, among the consequences of improved historical translation is a more complete recognition of the historical contingency of testimony--of the significance of what in the above passage are termed "governing prepossessions." As Ward points out in "The New Reformation," critical theology began in 1835 with Strauss's Leben Jesu, which reasserted the Hegelian distinction between Begriff and Vorstellung:

> The particular system of dogmas put forward by any religion is the Vorstellung or presentation, the Begriff or idea is the underlying spiritual reality common to it and presumably other systems besides. Why in Christianity have you gone so far towards identifying the two? . . . Examine [Christian evidence] carefully and you will see that the particular statements which it makes are really only Vorstellung as in other religions, the imaginative mythical elements which hide from us the Idea or Begriff. (NR 470)

For Ward as for Strauss, recognition of the distinction between that which in Christianity is simply Vorstellung and that which is Begriff leads to an understanding of Christian dogma as historically contingent.

Ward objects, however, that Strauss's method was overly speculative and a priori: "Strauss criticized the contents of the Christian literature without understanding the literary and historical conditions which had produced it" (471). She goes on to explain that it was Ferdinand Christian Baur who made the final breakthrough to a conception of Christian documents and Christian evidences as thoroughly historically contingent:

> Baur, that veteran of knowledge, was struck, in the first place, with the fact which Strauss's book revealed, that a scientific knowledge of Christian sources was as yet wanting to theology; in the next he was imbued with the conception that the Gospels had been till then placed in a false perspective both by Strauss and New Testament criticism generally--that not they, but the Pauline Epistles, represent the earliest and directest testimony we have to Christian belief. (471)

Ward's advocate in "The New Reformation," attributes his own progress in theological understanding to a reading of Baur's Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche:

> I began to read one of his chief books, and I can only describe what I felt in the words lately attributed by his biographer to Professor Green: "He thought the Church History the most illuminating book he had ever read." (NR 460)

This is a precise moment at which the orbits of Ward's fiction and Green's philosophy intersect. Though he does not get the quotation quite right, Ward's character is correct in attributing large significance to Green's reading of Baur. Green's biographer, R. L. Nettleship, reports Green as having said in regard to Baur: "'I have found him . . . nearly the most instructive writer I have ever met with'" (see Nettleship, "Memoir" xxxvii). Green, in fact, began a translation of Baur's Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche by the end of 1863. And although he abandoned the project to undertake a solicited translation of Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics, he did make explicit and significant use of his partial translation of Baur in the form of a piece entitled "Essay On Christian Dogma."[6]

In Green's religious philosophy, the distinction between Christian Begriff and Christian Vorstellung takes the form of a distinction between immediate consciousness of divinity on the one hand and systematic articulations of that consciousness on the other. The first is religion; the second is theology:

> Christianity, in its simplest primary form, is involved in the divine consciousness of Jesus and in that of St. Paul . . . Now this consciousness of the divine, as it existed in these two parents

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[6]See Nettleship, "Memoir" xxxviii.

> of our faith, was essentially an immediate consciousness. It was one which penetrated to its object, as was then said, by revelation, as we should say, by intuition, without the intervention of any system of ideas. It was, therefore, according to the definition we have given, no theological consciousness, nor could its utterances constitute a theology. ("Essay on Christian Dogma" 164)

Theology, for Green, is "a connected system of ideas, each qualified by every other, each serving as a middle term by which the rest are held together" ("Essay on Christian Dogma" 164). Further, Green distinguishes between faith ("a certain condition of spiritual consciousness") and dogma ("the expression of this consciousness in terms of the understanding") ("Essay on Christian Dogma" 181). For Green, religious consciousness is the essential fact of Christianity, while dogma and theological consciousness are derivative. The development of dogmatic theology, and its gradual separation from religious consciousness, corresponds to the successively reduced imaginative presence of Christ in subsequent church documents ("Essay on Christian Dogma" 168, 170).

As the personal intuitive consciousness of Christ faded with the passing of successive generations, Christians began to feel the need for a fresh assertion of Christian truth. Because not yet fixed by conventional interpretation, New Testament scripture was unable to supply adequate evidence for controversial purposes. Thus the apostolic churches intervened to resolve ambiguity and establish canonical interpretation. This, according to Green, accounts for the

origins of the creeds, and although they do not contradict anything in the New Testament, "they convey it in a different form, and the difference, primarily one of form, becomes one of substance" ("Essay on Christian Dogma" 163).

> [In the creeds] christian truth is no longer the immediate expression of the highest possible spiritual life; it has become a theology, which inevitably reacts on the canonical writings, whose deficiencies it was originally introduced to supply. ("Essay on Christian Dogma" 163)

Gradually, theological (in essence, rational) articulation of Christian truth replaces the immediate religious consciousness of the divine. Religious experience thus devolves into theological dogma. Most importantly, this dogma is derivative, not essential. Green regards it as an historically conditioned representation (Vorstellung) of Christian truth.

Having determined that dogmatic theology is contingent Vorstellung rather than essential Begriff, Green turned to idealist philosophy for a fuller, less contingent articulation of spiritual and moral truth. He chose idealism because it alone could represent and contain a fundamental dualism he recognized in orthodox religion: that between spiritualism and rationalism. As has been explained, on the one hand Green regarded the fundamental fact of christianity as an immediate intuition of the divine. On the other hand, however, he was convinced that such an intuition was not at odds with reason:

> Christianity is cheaply honoured, when it is made exceptional: God is not wisely trusted when declared unintelligible. . . .
>
> God is for ever reason; and his communication, his revelation, is reason; not, however, abstract reason, but reason as taking a body from, and giving life to, the whole system of experience which makes the history of man. . . . The divine mind touches, modifies, becomes the mind of man, through a process of which mere intellectual conception is only the beginning, but of which the gradual complement is an unexhausted series of spiritual discipline through all the agencies of social life. ("The Witness of God" 239-240)

Put another way, spirituality is identical and coextensive with rationality. In both its aspects, religion for Green is a matter of consciousness. As the consummate philosophy of consciousness, philosophical idealism is an exquisitely appropriate mode of articulating spiritual and moral truth.

Green's acceptance of the conclusions of critical theology led him, in the way I have described, to develop an alternative (idealist) articulation of spiritual and moral truth, one which preserves and combines reason and spiritual intuition. As we have seen, Robert's "conversion" in Robert Elsmere is predicated on an "historical faculty" conceived of as a combination of science and imagination. This same historical impulse in critical theology occasions Robert's development of an alternative to Christian orthodoxy.

III

As I have tried to show, Green's appropriation of critical theology is the background for Robert's abandonment

of orthodox Anglicanism. Green's place in Robert Elsmere goes beyond merely explaining the protagonist's skepticism. The real gravity of Ward's appropriation of Green has to do with the implications his critical theology has for English cultural theory. In addition to occasioning Robert's doubt, Green's theology serves as the foundation for the positive alternative Robert later espouses. As an alternative to Anglicanism, Ward's Robert Elsmere represents an ideology grounded in the same faculties of science and imagination responsible for Robert's abandonment of orthodox christianity. Robert's alternative "religion" articulates a connection between spirituality and citizenship that Green attributes to the exercise of "will" and "reason" in the individual.

After giving up an ecclesiastical living in Surrey, Robert's desire to effect some social good carries him to London, where he channels his efforts into a Workmen's Institute. In a speech he delivers to its members, Robert gives a succinct articulation of his reformed "religious" beliefs. His primary purpose in addressing the Workmen's Institute is to give reasons for a reformed Christian belief in the existence of God and "eternal goodness." However, Robert's speech is couched in the unmistakable language of philosophical idealism. Moreover, Ward has selected for it topoi and language from Green's religious philosophy which bear directly on the viability of idealism as a foundation for social reform.

> 'My friends, . . . the man who is addressing you to-night believes in God; and Conscience, which is God's witness in the soul; and in Experience, which is at once the record and the instrument of man's education at God's hands. He places his whole trust, for life and death, "in God the Father Almighty,"--in that force at the root of things which is revealed to us whenever a man helps his neighbor, or a mother denies herself for her child; whenever a soldier dies without a murmur for his country, or a sailor puts out in the darkness to rescue the perishing; whenever a workman throws mind and conscience into his work, or a statesman labours not for his own gain but for that of the State! He believes in an Eternal Goodness--and an Eternal Mind--of which Nature and Man are the continuous and the only revelation. . . .' (RE 494)

In this explicit statement of his reformed religious position Robert registers a transformation of the orthodox idea of spirituality into an idea of citizenship. "Eternal Goodness" is in apposition to "Eternal Mind." Robert identifies God (spirituality) with that force which makes agents sacrifice themselves in deference to an idea of a good which is not merely a personal good. The acts of self-sacrifice Robert lists imply an identification, on the part of the agent, of his own personal good with the common good. It is only such an act of identification which can account for the agent doing what is apparently not in his personal interest--risking his well-being or even his life. Robert's transformed "religion" is thus formulated in such a way as to make social identification paramount. An agent's obligation to the community becomes identical with ultimate spiritual fact. The novel's central (religious) conflict is resolved by transforming Christian mythology into a

metaphysically-grounded citizenship, thus reconciling Robert's demands for rationality and spirituality.

The novel's other main conflict--that between Robert and Catherine, his wife--is resolved very much to the same effect. His Oxford tutor remarks of Robert's devoutly Anglican wife that "she is the thirty-nine articles in the flesh." Catherine's own moral vocation fulfills a promise to her dying father to take care of her mother and sisters. Consequently, she is initially reluctant to marry for fear of deserting that obligation. Out of the same respect for her father's beliefs, she is unwilling to allow Robert to explain his changed religious opinions or even to know about his work in the East End.

> 'Robert, I cannot defend myself against you,' she cried, again clinging to him. "Oh, think for me! You know what I feel; that I dare not risk what is not mine!' (RE 405)

The passage continues:

> She did not attempt a reply, but the melancholy of an invincible resolution, which was, so to speak, not her own doing, but rather was like a necessity imposed upon her from outside, breathed through her silence. (RE 405)

Catherine here reveals that her religious notions are not her own but her father's: "I dare not risk what is not mine." Robert has employed his reason to decide what part of Christianity belongs to miracles. Catherine is unprepared and unwilling to take this step, maintaining instead a deference to her father's religious opinions. She

does not allow her reason to be brought to bear in the problem. Thus represented, Catherine's position is a dogmatic one. While there is no lack of deep personal commitment, it relies primarily upon an unexamined acceptance of another's formulation, on second-hand evidence so to speak. This difference of opinion, Robert's effort at reconciliation of reason and spirituality and Catherine's dogmatism, threatens "that exquisite homelife of theirs, that tender, triple bond of husband, wife, and child."

The quasi-resolution of their disrupted married life comes when Catherine discovers that what Robert has been doing in the East End in the way of social work corresponds exactly with his activities as a parish minister in Murewell. In Murewell, among Robert's chief accomplishments were the establishment of a Naturalist's Club and a story-telling group. These are exactly what Robert succeeds in establishing in the East End. This discovery is the occasion of the greatest moral crisis of Catherine's life (520) because she is confronted with a contradiction between her orthodoxy (or, rather, her father's) and her lived experience. What appeared as a relaxation of moral fiber she associated with Robert's heretical ideas turns out to be the same energy and moral commitment that characterized Robert's work as an Anglican minister.

Forced thus to reconsider her reluctance to acknowledge Robert's newly formulated religious position, Catherine makes the following explanation :

> 'You were right--I would not understand. And, in a sense, I shall never understand, I cannot change . . . My Lord is my Lord always; but He is yours too. Oh, I know it, say what you will! That is what has been hidden from me; that is what my trouble has taught me; the powerlessness, the worthlessness, of words. It is the spirit that quickeneth. (530)

Finally Catherine says "I am past thinking. Let us bury it all, and begin again. Words are nothing" (530).

On the negative side, in its assertion that "words are nothing," the novel rejects dogma. On the positive side, however, the novel has important implications for the re-conceptualization of spiritual truth. By devaluing the linguistic--in essence doctrinal--differences between Robert and Catherine, and by re-grounding their new beginning on a shared social commitment, the novel transfers the locus of spiritual significance from the Bible and orthodox religion to moral and social practice. Catherine's final acceptance of Robert's heterodoxy acknowledges morality and social commitment as the essential representation of spiritual truth. As with Robert, so eventually with Catherine: religion has become citizenship--an idea of an eternal, absolute good to be realized through intersubjective relations. In a quasi-allegorical way, then, Anglicanism is brought finally to recognize philosophical idealism as a viable expression of its paramount moral and social commitments.

In resolving the novel's conflicts in this way, Ward appeals to and advocates an ideology which transforms

religion into citizenship. Just as Robert's critique of Christian orthodoxy was predicated on a conjunction of scientific and imaginative faculties she adapted from critical theology, his alternative to orthodox religion also expresses a latent reliance on faculties of science and imagination. This becomes evident when Robert's speech to the workers and Catherine's recognition of his East End work are viewed in relation to Green's ethics. For it is in Green's moral philosophy that the nexus between spiritualism and citizenship is most carefully worked out. That nexus has primarily to do with the exercise of reason and will.

In the Book III of Prolegomena to Ethics Green considers the practical value of utilitarianism as compared with that of his own theory of the ultimate good as human perfection. He strongly criticizes utilitarianism because, relying as it does on a hedonist account of the origin of human action, it is not capable of supplying any inducement to be better, nor is it capable of accounting for any sense of obligation to others. Conversely, his idealist ethics does account for these fundamental moral phenomena:

> The action of [an idea that an agent has of himself as becoming that which he has it in him to become] in the individual accounts for two things which, upon the Hedonistic supposition, are equally unaccountable. It accounts for the possibility of the question, Why should I trouble about making myself and my neighbors other than we are? and, given the question, it accounts for an answer being rendered to it, in the shape of a real initiation of effort for the improvement of human life. (PE §352)

Because his ethics configures human perfection as the ultimate good, it provides an agent interested in pursuing the ultimate good with an inducement to realize its full potential, its full capacities. Moreover, according to Green's ethics, an agent's own well-being is materially bound to the well-being of others in whom he takes an interest. Thus, progress to one's own perfection specifically entails the perfection of others. It is by including this social aspect in the individual's idea of its personal good that Green's idealism supplies a new foundation for the social reform he--and Ward--were looking for. Both these features of Green's ethics are made possible by the exercise of will and reason in the individual agent.

By virtue of the activity of self-consciousness in them, agents have the ability to differentiate themselves from their desires and to choose to realize those ideas of possible satisfactions which will produce permanent satisfaction. To do so is to "will" an object. Character or "self" is a propensity to will certain kinds of objects. A "moral" self is one which habitually wills objects which really do provide the most lasting satisfaction. Reason provides the practical connection between an idea and its realization. It is in this sense that morality, for Green, is a matter of realizing an idea of a possible self through the exercise of will and reason:

> By will is understood, as has been explained, an effort (or capacity for such effort) on the part of a self-conscious subject to satisfy itself: by reason, in the practical sense, the capacity on the part of such a subject to conceive a better state of itself as an end to be attained by action. . . . In this most primitive form they are alike modes of that eternal principle of self-objectification which we hold to be reproducing itself in man through the medium of an animal organism, and of which the action is equally necessary to knowledge and to morality. (PE §177)

It is, however, only in social space, through an act of social identification, that an agent can give reality to an idea of a best possible self. It is only through an act by which the individual takes as its objects of desire those of the other agents in whom it takes an interest that the moral self develops. This social identification Green regards as a "primary fact." An agent interested in bettering its own condition, Green argues,

> cannot contemplate himself as in a better state, or on the way to the best, without contemplating others, not merely as a means to that better state, but as sharing it with him. (PE §199)

Put another way, an agent's complete and fullest self-satisfaction includes with it the self-satisfaction of others in whom the agent takes an interest.

> So human society presupposes persons in capacity--subjects capable of each conceiving himself and the bettering of his life as an end to himself--but it is only in the intercourse of men, each recognized by each as an end, not merely a means, and thus as having reciprocal claims, that the capacity is actualized and that we really live as persons. (PE §183)

By "persons" Green means self-conscious agents with the ability to conceive of themselves in a better condition than

at present--i.e., agents in whom the spiritual (self-conscious) principle begins to realize itself.

Green goes to some length to explain that the self-conscious principle realizes itself only in persons, not, for example, in nations or in a national spirit. At the same time, however, it is a fallacy to suppose that individuals "could have their moral and spiritual qualities, independently of their existence in a nation" (PE §184).

> Only through society is anyone enabled to give that effect to the idea of himself as the object of his actions, to the idea of a possible better state of himself, without which the idea would remain like that of space to a man who had not the senses either of sight or touch. Some practical recognition of personality by another, of an 'I' by a 'Thou' and a 'Thou' by an 'I,' is necessary to any practical consciousness of it, to any such consciousness of it as can express itself in act. (PE §190)

The real import of the notion that the moral idea can only be realized in social space is that it locates in the very nature of individual moral development a positive obligation on the part of that individual to other individuals. This positive obligation serves as the rationally articulated ground for social reform Green--and Ward--are looking for. He expresses it as the exercise of will and reason. She expresses it as a cultural politics of science and imagination. Green's will and reason become Robert's imagination and science. In so doing, Ward has translated--and transformed--foundational topoi of German critical theology into English cultural theory.

IV

My main argumentative point thus far has been that the appeal to critical theology in both Ward and Green provides a reconfiguration of divine spirituality as social commitment. The attempt to effect this reconfiguration in social space takes the form of a cultural politics designed to secure to the individual the external conditions necessary for moral development. In Ward's novel, Robert's social work serves to inculcate the conditions of morality by developing the faculties of science and imagination. In Green's case, the ethics of philosophical idealism gets worked into the view that protection of the exercise of will and reason is the sole justification of governmental intervention. The result is a cultural politics of positive-freedom liberalism in Green, and something very much like it in Ward's novel.

At Murewell, in addition to improving tenant housing, Robert's chief successes were the establishment of a naturalist's club and a story-telling group. These two achievements stand out as Robert's only specifically reported efforts at social work. About the naturalist's club itself little is related, though its effect on one local inhabitant is given some important attention. Robert explains that after one member was expelled for brutality toward his grandmother, his despondency at being rejected apparently caused him to reform his behavior. This civilizing Robert ascribes to the club: "It's extraordinary

what a rational interest has done for that fellow!" (179). Robert describes the aim of his story-telling group in this way:

> My story-telling is the simplest thing in the world. I began it in the winter with the object of somehow or other getting at the imagination of these rustics. Force them for only half an hour to live some one else's life--it is the one thing worth doing with them. That's what I have been aiming at. (180-181)

When he relocates in London's East End, Robert resumes both the scientific education and the story-telling sessions. Here again, apart from a series of lectures on the New Testament, these two endeavors constitute the totality of Robert's systematic efforts in the way of social work. In London the Naturalist's Club takes the form of a scientific Sunday-school. And although Robert attributes this particular instantiation of his commitment to science to one of T. H. Huxley's lay sermons, the aim is essentially the same as in Murewell--the inculcation of rational interest for the purpose of moral development.[7] Similarly, Robert regards the aim of his London story-telling group as "the rousing of moral sympathy and the awakening of the

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[7]The sermon to which Ward apparently is referring is the April 1869 address entitled "Scientific Education: Notes of an After-Dinner Speech." There Huxley contends that a scientific Sunday school would provide scientific education for those who have no other opportunity for it. In a previous lay sermon, "On the Advisableness of Improving Natural Knowledge," Huxley argues that the benefit of scientific education is two-fold: it provides practical assistance in "getting on," and it introduces ideas which put human actions and concerns in perspective. Thus, it serves both a practical and an abstract moral function.

imaginative power pure and simple" (473). Just as in Murewell, Robert's efforts at scientific education and his story-reading group serve actively to inculcate and develop the faculties of science and imagination, which are, once again, analogues for the conditions Green regards as conditions of moral development.

In Green's own work, the recognition that moral development depends upon reason and will (science and imagination) prefigures the nature of his specifically political commitments. In his commentary on Green's political milieu, Melvin Richter has pointed out that "Liberalism in theology leads to Liberalism in social and political life, a connection inherent not in logic but in the special conditions of the Oxford controversy" (29). He goes on to explain that those special conditions have to do with the way lines of allegiance were drawn at Oxford: "the alliance between reform in politics and modernist theology on the one side, and between Toryism and orthodoxy on the other" (29). These intimate Oxford connections between liberal theology and liberal politics were not lost on Mary Ward.

In this passage from her memoir, she approvingly identifies Balliol's most famous liberal religious thinkers with their liberal politics:

> [Jowett], Green, Toynbee--their minds were full, half a century ago, of the "condition of the people" question, of temperance, housing, wages, electoral reform; and within the University, and by the help of the weapons of thought and

> teaching, they regarded themselves as the natural allies of the Liberal party which was striving for these things through politics and Parliament. (A Writer's Recollection vol I, 177)

This affinity between religious liberalism and political liberalism has much to do with Green's evangelical impulse to social reform, as does, certainly, Ward's sympathy with his cultural and political theory.

It is difficult to determine precisely whether Green thought his philosophy served primarily to supported his religious convictions or his commitment to political reform. Whatever Green's actual intellectual priorities were, that he viewed these concerns as interdependent and mutually supporting is certain. It is clear from the opening remarks in his "Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation" that Green explicitly viewed his political philosophy as a practical realization of the conclusions of his ethics. Nettleship, for example, comments in his memoir of Green that Green regarded political and social life as intimately related to ethics in this way:

> The Prolegomena to ethics must be read in connexion on the one side with the addresses on The witness of God and Faith, on the other with the lectures on Political obligation, if the solidarity of the writer's life is to be appreciated. ("Memoir" cxlii).

This leads Nettleship to conclude that "the lectures on The principles of political obligation form in some degree an illustrative commentary on the Prolegomena to ethics" ("Memoir" cxlix).

Green's stated purpose in "Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation" is "to consider the moral function or object served by law, or by the system of rights and obligations which the state enforces, and in so doing to discover the true ground or justification for obedience to law" (PPO §1). There immediately follows this initial statement of intent a review of the conclusions of his own lectures on the nature of moral goodness and how it is possible that there is such a thing; "in other words, what are the conditions on the part of reason and will which are implied in our being able to conceive moral goodness as an object to be aimed at . . ." (PPO §2).

It is with this moral telos in mind that Green works out the conditions under which the moral function of laws is to be realized:

> The value then of the institutions of civil life lies in their operation as giving reality to these capacities of will and reason, and enabling them to be really exercised. In their general effect, apart from particular aberrations, they render it possible for a man to be freely determined by the idea of a possible satisfaction of himself, instead of being driven this way and that by external forces, and thus they give reality to the capacity called will: and they enable him to realise his reason, i.e. his idea of self-perfection, by acting as a member of a social organization in which each contributes to the better-being of all the rest. So far as they do in fact thus operate they are morally justified . . . . (PPO §7)

When "laws" is substituted for "institutions of civil life" in the above passage, the ground of Green's advocacy of positive-freedom becomes clear. Generally speaking, the

only moral justification for intervention, in Green's opinion, is to secure to individual agents the conditions necessary for moral development--that is, according to the ethics, the ability to exercise their will and reason.

A single example illustrates this particularly well. Because acquisition of material objects provides scope for the exercise of will and reason, and therefore for moral development, Green is generally in favor of what he terms freedom of contract--"the freedom in all forms of doing what one will with one's own". However, because not all agents entering into contracts have adequate conceptions of objects in which lasting satisfaction can be realized, it is irresponsible of the government to allow them to enter freely and self-destructively into certain kinds of contracts. Green has in mind here members of the proletariate entering into sub-sustaining labor contracts in order to get any income at all. Government intervention in the form of legislation in such a case results in what Green terms "positive" freedom because the government actively secures to the individual the conditions necessary for its moral development--here, the minimum rate of pay necessary to sustain a worker and his family.

In this case, the intervention prevents the realization of an object of desire (any income at all) which does not contribute to lasting satisfaction but to further personal and economic degradation (in essence, by depressing further

the state of wages generally). Thus Green is willing to contend:

> Our modern legislation then with reference to labour, and education, and health, involving as it does manifold interference with freedom of contract, is justified on the ground that it is the business of the state, not indeed directly to promote moral goodness, for that, from the very nature of moral goodness, it cannot do, but to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible. ("Lecture on Liberal Legislation and Freedom of Contract" 374)

V

In the preceding sections I have tried to show that there are closely corresponding analogues to Robert's science and imagination in Ward's understanding of critical theology as represented in "The New Reformation." Additionally, I have tried to show that there are close textual linkages between her understanding of critical theology represented there and Green's own reading of critical theology, specifically F. C. Baur. Moreover, I have tried to show that Green's philosophical idealism does support a cultural politics of social reform, and that that cultural politics takes the shape of a positive-freedom liberalism.

Certainly, Green's insistence that reason and religion (spiritualism) are compatible figures importantly in Robert Elsmere. Robert's "conversion" is facilitated--in some sense precipitated--by a preexisting interest in historical scholarship. More important, however, is the idea that

philosophical idealism provided both Green and Ward with rational grounds for social reform. Because Robert engages in a cultural politics of positive freedom even before he comes to acknowledge the claims of critical theology, Robert Elsmere does not represent critical theology as leading to a cultural politics of science and imagination. There is not this teleology built into the novel. I would like to postulate, conversely, that Ward came first to regard science and imagination as conditions of moral development, perhaps having run across them in Green, and that she set out in Robert Elsmere to articulate the adequacy of (his) philosophical idealism as a theoretical foundation for a cultural politics designed to inculcate these conditions of morality. One of the things Ward's appropriation of critical theology does is to register the (at least) potential commensurability of critical theology (and philosophical idealism) with a domestic evangelical enthusiasm for social reform. It is primarily in this way that Robert Elsmere domesticates German critical theology as English cultural theory.

Finally, I want to conclude with an observation about the role of narrative fiction in this process of domestication. As we have seen, Hans Frei noted that there was no strong domestic historical hermeneutical tradition in England at the time biblical criticism was developing there. Mary Ward acknowledges this in her own way when she points

out in "The New Reformation" that the "advance" of German critical theology was an improvement in historical translation. Furthermore, she explains that critical theology could not have developed in England, where theological discourse was controlled by Anglican-run universities:

> what possibility is there in this country of a scientific, that is to say an unprejudiced, and unbiased study of theology, under present conditions? All our theological faculties are subordinate to the Church; the professors are clergymen, the examiners in the theological schools must be in priest's orders. ("The New Reformation" 467)

The point I want to make here is that only someone outside the English theological establishment would have the opportunity and freedom to domesticate German theology for English consumption.

As an Arnold and particularly as a woman novelist living on the fringes of Oxford university, Mary Ward was perhaps uniquely positioned to draw upon Oxford scholars (Green, Jowett, Pattison) and Oxford culture without being subjected to that university's most severe institutional theological restraints. Ward was not subject to the same pressures of religious conformity expected of students enrolled at Oxford--all of whom at that time were men.

Given Anglican control of English theological discourse, one could well argue that imaginative literature is the primary discourse in England by which the conclusions of critical theology could become incorporated in English

cultural theory. Other domestic rational alternatives to orthodox religion--utilitarianism and other materialist accounts of human action--lacked necessary components of imaginative experience. Over and above these materialist accounts, Green's idealism contributes an imaginative or spiritual component to English cultural thinking at this time, and so makes a half-step between religion and purer forms of materialism. Ward's novel propagates the importance of this imaginative component both in the details of its plot and in the very fact of its being a piece of imaginative literature.

It is primarily in this kind of historical religious fiction that one finds the combination of scientific and imaginative faculties Mary Ward associates with the advances of critical theology. In this way, Robert Elsmere bridges the gap Frei articulates between German historical and English literary biblical commentary--and the cultural theory it occasioned.

Chapter VI

MORAL SELF-REALIZATION AS THE RECONCILATION OF IDEAL AND REAL: MAY SINCLAIR AND T. H. GREEN

Between 1893 and 1927 May Sinclair wrote twenty-four novels, two novellas, five volumes of short stories, two volumes of verse, numerous essays on literature and psychology, two technical books on philosophical idealism, and a translation of Rudolph Sohm's Outlines of Church History. Sinclair began her career with an exposition of T. H. Green's metaphysics and ethics ("The Ethical and Religious Import of Idealism") followed by two novellas (The Cosmopolitan and Superceded) and a novel (The Divine Fire) written on explicitly idealist ethical premises. The chronology and the range of her writing across literary, moral philosophical, and religious issues firmly situates Sinclair as an immediate inheritor of Mary Arnold Ward's ethical-literary hybrid of cultural response. Like Ward, Sinclair draws directly upon Green's ethics. And like Ward again Sinclair developed narrative representations of Green's moral analytic. There is, however, an important difference represented in the move from Ward to Sinclair. Whereas Ward's response to Victorian doubt directly engages

the religious alternatives (if only to dismiss them), the cultural viability of religious ethical discourse is a moot issue for Sinclair. She has moved into wholly secular modes of ethical discourse.

Sinclair's most overtly idealist novel, The Divine Fire (begun in 1897 and published in 1904), is flanked chronologically on one side by her 1893 explication of T. H. Green's metaphysics and moral philosophy ("The Religious and Ethical Import of Idealism") and on the other by her later two full-length books on philosophical idealism (A Defence of Idealism, 1917 and The New Idealism, 1922). This chronology indicates that she was already familiar with idealist ethics when she wrote her first novels, The Cosmopolitan, Superceded, and The Divine Fire.

Hrisey Zegger, for one, has argued that although Sinclair began her novelistic career in a programmatically idealist mode, after the publication of her first two novels she became dissatisfied with idealism as a philosophical background for fiction (34). Passing over the earlier novels, Zegger turns instead to Sinclair's later, "psychological" fiction. While there is undoubtedly a change in Sinclair's fiction of the kind Zegger describes, publication of A Defence of Idealism (1917) and The New Idealism (1922) strongly suggests that Sinclair remained at least philosophically if not novelistically committed to idealism long after the shift Zegger hypothesizes. Zegger's de-emphasis of Sinclair's earliest novels is part of a

general dismissal of the role of philosophy in Sinclair's fiction. The result of this reception history is that the relation between Sinclair's philosophy and even her earliest fiction has yet to be fully accounted for[1].

Careful analysis of the correspondence between Sinclair's philosophy and her early fiction reveals that her work shares commitments closely analogous to those of T. H. Green's ethical and cultural thinking. Her novel, The Divine Fire, dramatizes foundational ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism. The conversion of Green's moral analytic into Sinclair's fiction is controlled by a pervasive and sustained theme of the reconciliation of

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[1]Sinclair's fiction has received little sustained attention, and her philosophical works even less. There is no detailed account of the relationship between her philosophical writings and her fiction.

Most recent commentary has dealt with her fiction from a feminist perspective or in some other way dealt with gender issues. For example, Janice Harris has discussed the treatment of marriage in Sinclair's The Helpmate, Kitty Tailleur, and The Creators. There have been two recent dissertations dealing with Sinclair's novels as Bildungsroman: "The Modern British Bildungsroman and the Woman Novelist" by Janis Maria Richard and "Literary Viragos: Late Victorian and Edwardian Female 'Bildungsroman'" by Catherine Elizabeth Hoyser. Additionally, Laura Stempel Mumford has written about feminism and war in her essay, "May Sinclair's Tree of Heaven: The Vortex of Feminism, the Community of War."

Book-length studies include Hrisey Zegger's May Sinclair, which treats mainly the later psychological and psychoanalytic novels, and Theophilus Boll's biography Miss May Sinclair: Novelist. While Boll's biography does mention Sinclair's A Defence of Idealism, he does not discuss its relation to the fiction, instead leaving "an adequate description of her A Defence of Idealism . . . to come from those who have made formal philosophy their life's work" (258). Similarly, Boll treats Sinclair's The New Idealism in terms of the "elements in it that any student of literature may enjoy" (304).

ideal and real. While Sinclair's early exposition of Green makes clear the origins of her most important moral philosophical commitments, those commitments are most fully and systematically articulated in her two later books, A Defense of Idealism and The New Idealism. Both works remain closely congruent with her earlier treatment of Green.

In addition to Sinclair's adoption of Green's moral analytic, there is a more general correspondence between the qualities of their responses to Victorian culture. Sinclair's life-long interest in the reconciliation of ideal and real corresponds to Green's assertion that moral development--as a basis of society--depends upon simultaneously acknowledging that there are both internal (cognitive) and external (material) conditions of morality.

After first recovering Sinclair's debt to Green, I look at the philosophical articulation of her effort to reconcile ideal and real, and then turn to consider her novelistic treatment of this reconciliation as an essential problem for ethics.

I

Sinclair explains in her 1893 exposition of Green's ethics that Green found himself "in a world in which logic was divorced from metaphysics, metaphysics was regarded as an implicit contradiction in terms, and ethics installed at the head of the physical sciences" ("Ethical and Religious

Import" 695). Against the trend of contemporaneous materialist accounts of morality, Green contended that a metaphysical principle was the only possible foundation for a system of ethics. The general effort of Sinclair's exposition of Green is to explain the nature of the "metaphysical principle" and to argue for its importance as a condition of morality.

Sinclair explains first that according to Green some kind of synthesizing principle is necessary to stabilize a multiplicity of relations and to unify experience.

> It is obvious that the world of our experience presents itself to us, not as a flux of unmeaning sensations, but as a system of intelligible relations, the "infinite variety" of which cannot disguise from us its essential unity. That the many should be <u>related</u> implies that they are in some sort one. But such a unity in difference is only possible in and for thought. Only a subject or self, as we said before, is that which truly maintains its identity in the midst of change. The <u>individual</u> self cannot be the source and upholder of that order which, as revealed to his reason, stretches before and after, beyond the date of his finite days, but a self-consciousness which is higher than his individuality is the key to his limited experience. ("Ethical and Religious Import" 698)

Following Green, she identifies this synthetic principle behind the unity of experience as thought or, more specifically, (self-) consciousness. Like Green, and like Kant before him, Sinclair maintains that the synthetic activity of self-consciousness is a necessary condition of all our knowledge of the external world.

Additionally, Sinclair explains, the activity of self-consciousness is a condition of moral development. It makes

it possible for an agent to differentiate itself from its desires, thus allowing it to survey them and choose which to realize and which to defer or ignore completely. In this way, self-consciousness is behind an agent's choice of which ends to pursue.

> The essential characteristic of man's action as distinct from that of animals is not that it is action directed to some end, but that its end is one inseparably related to his self-consciousness. ("Ethical and Religious Import" 699)

The point here is that the self-conscious agent selects an object or end, the realization of which will produce a satisfaction, and acts to realize that object or end. Such a process requires the activity of the self-consciousness to differentiate one's self from one's desires, objectify them, and recognize them as an end worth being realized--i.e., as an end that when realized will lead to satisfaction. Human satisfaction thus depends upon the activity of self-consciousness.

The step from satisfaction to morality is made across the threshold of freedom. Because self-consciousness allows an agent to take a critical position with respect to its own desires, self-consciousness makes it possible for the agent to be self-determined with respect to its ends. The self-conscious agent is no longer subservient to its merely animal instincts or desires:

> Green here follows Kant. According to the "Critique of Practical Reason," the will is independent of the chain of natural causes so far as it can be determined by a law presented to it by reason, which as "noumenal" is totally distinct

> from the "phenomenal" law of causality. This independence of the will constitutes its freedom. But further, man's action, as we have seen, is always directed to an end which he chooses as his own, with which he "identifies himself." In Hegel's words, "Als sich selbst den Inhalt gebend ist der Wille, bei sich, frei überhaupt." This autonomy of the will is the sole conceivable basis of morality. ("Ethical and Religious Import" 700).

For Sinclair, as for Green, freedom--and morality--is a matter of rationally determining one's own ends and seeking to realize them. In Green's language, this is the combined activity of the will and reason, where will is an agent's effort to satisfy itself through the presentation and realisation of objects of desire, and reason is the ability to conceive an ideal self as an end to be attained through action.

The salient point of Sinclair's exposition of Green is that morality begins in the application of a law which the agent applies to itself. Without this kind of self-determination, an agent is the object of external compulsion and consequently has no freedom. Because the self-conscious agent can set its own ends, its will is free. Thus, Sinclair concludes: "This autonomy of the will is the sole conceivable basis of morality" ("Ethical and Religious Import" 700).

II

As we have seen, morality for Sinclair hinges upon self-conscious self-determination, upon a process of self-

development or self-realization. For Green, self-determination is the process of making an idea of a possible self into something real. Sinclair was similarly committed throughout her life to reconciling ideality and reality, though this commitment took shape in a number of forms. Her most thorough and systematic (i.e., philosophic) effort to reconcile ideal and real is revealed in her attempt to reformulate absolute idealism to take more adequate account of the "realities" of space and time than idealists up to that time had done.

In the introduction to The New Idealism, Sinclair explains that she is not there defending her earlier A Defence of Idealism but remedying that work's chief shortcomings:

> The worst of these were its failure to realise the supreme importance of Space-Time in the problem of consciousness, and the bearing of Values on the moral problem. (The New Idealism ix)

Sinclair's remedies take the shape of adapting absolute idealism to some of the conclusions of such New Realists as G. E. Moore, Bertrand Russell, Alford Whitehead, and Samuel Alexander. She takes particular heed of their various insistences that Space and Time are the ultimate elements of reality and need to be directly dealt with as such.

Sinclair approvingly paraphrases the general argument of Samuel Alexander's Space, Time, Deity (1920):

> The simplest, ultimate elements are Space and Time. To these all things, life and mind included, are reducible "without residue." Not to Space and Time as separate entities, but to Space

> and Time taken together. For Space and Time are not really two entities, but two aspects of one entity. Space and Time by themselves are unreal abstractions from the one indivisible reality which is Space-Time. Space-Time is the a priori stuff from which all things are made, the universal "matrix" in which matter "crystallises" and from which, when it has reached a certain appropriate complexity, the empirical qualities emerge; to be followed in their turn, when they too are suitably compounded, first by life, then by consciousness. (The New Idealism 164)

Sinclair acknowledges here that the New Realists in general and Alexander in particular have made a strong case for the seriousness of Space-Time, and, in so doing, have made a genuine challenge to older Kantian and Hegelian versions of idealism.

Sinclair agrees that Kant does not treat space and time adequately by giving them special ontological status as a priori categories.

> [Kant] gave Space and Time a doubtful status somewhere between thought and sense. The schemata are amphibious organisms, hovering between two realms, and unfitted to survive. Kant did not go down into the thick of Space and Time and show that the presence or absence of consciousness made a difference. On the contrary, it was notoriously Kant who saddled idealism with his antinomies, and insisted on thought's powerlessness to solve them. (New Idealism 223)

Nor, according to Sinclair, does Hegel deal adequately with space and time by subsuming them under the Absolute:

> As for Hegel, he contented himself with proving that Space and Time were as good categories as any other; and though in his system their contradictions follow all other contradictions to sublimation in the Absolute, the Absolute cannot be said to have extinguished them here and now. (New Idealism 223)

She concludes that Alexander and the New Realists have

> shown us how to "take space and time seriously"; shown that Space with Time cannot just be shoved away among the categories and left there, and that, when criticism has done its worst, their status remains only one step removed from that of ultimate and supreme reality. (New Idealism 223)

Although Sinclair acknowledges the "seriousness" of accounting for Space and Time, she herself strongly rejects Alexander's (and other New Realists's) claim that Space and Time are ultimate. That is, she rejects the implication that consciousness has nothing to do with the generation and maintenance of ultimate reality. In the summary to her own book she asserts that she finds it

> impossible to reduce quality and all the categories to mindless Space-Time, or consciousness to compresence, or mind to its neural basis; impossible to conjure life and consciousness and Deity out of the lifeless and the unconscious. (New Idealism 312)

If Space and Time are not, as Alexander holds, ultimate forms of (unminded) reality, they are for Sinclair at least "penultimates, the simplest forms of consciousness." Not surprisingly, then, Sinclair argues through the second-half of The New Idealism that, if reformulated, idealism can provide an adequate account of Space and Time while maintaining the ultimate primacy of consciousness.

The details of Sinclair's own reconciliation of idealism and realism (of ideal and real) need not detain us any longer here than to recognize that she manages it by distinguishing between primary and secondary consciousness. Thus, although Sinclair maintains consciousness to be the necessary foundation of ultimate reality, she acknowledges

the claims of space and time by positing a distinction between infinite (primary) and finite (secondary) consciousness. These two consciousnesses correspond respectively to a world of reality and world of appearances.

The most succinct articulation of Sinclair's account of primary and secondary consciousness comes in the introduction to The New Idealism:

> I have tried to show both that consciousness is ultimate and that there is consciousness and consciousness, and that the realist attack bears hard, not on primary consciousness which perceives, feels, wills, remembers, conceives and imagines, but on consciousness which returns on itself, on that secondary supervening consciousness which reflects, judges, infers and reasons. (The New Idealism viii)

What Sinclair has done is to divide ultimate and experiential reality. Primary consciousness holds the world together, so to speak, and the secondary consciousness holds individual experience together. It is via this bifurcation of consciousness that Sinclair manages the reconciliation of ideal and real in metaphysical terms.

Reconciliation of ideal and real in the domain of the ethical becomes for Sinclair the problem of the reality of good and evil as abstract Universals. In her Defence of Idealism Sinclair agrees with the Realist treatment of moral phenomena as realities of human experience:

> There is one side of the New Realism which is not directly touched in these essays --its Ethics. This ground is covered by what had been said about its theory of concepts or "universals"; the "Platonic Ideas." But I believe that Ethics owe a

> greater debt to the New Realism than to any other philosophy that has been its forerunner in modern times. If "Goodness" and "Justice" are not eternal realities, irreducible and absolute, "moral sanction" is a contradiction in terms; there will be no ethical meaning and no content that distinguishes "goodness" from "usefulness," or "pleasantness," or "justice" from "expediency." The work of Mr. G. E. Moore is a perfect exposure of the fallacies and sophistries of Hedonism, Utilitarianism, Pragmatism, and Evolutionary Ethics. The clearest and strongest statement of the case for "Absolute" Ethics is to be found in his Principia Ethica and in Mr. Bertrand Russell's Philosophic Essays. (Defence xvi)

Sinclair's insistence that good and evil need to be treated as real Universals comes mainly from her concern for the relative emotional or psychic comfort afforded by accounts of morality that do and do not treat them as real. Sinclair insists that evil and pain are real things that affect people's real lives, and must therefore be dealt with seriously by any philosophy that presumes to give an adequate account of the "facts" of human experience.

It is on this point about the reality of good and evil as Universals that Sinclair's New Idealism departs significantly from traditional idealist ethics. In particular, she rejects the conventional idealist argument for the correlative nature of good and evil.

> [T]he dependence of goodness upon evil, the endurance of evil for the sake of good--was the old Idealism's solution to the moral problem. Not a bad solution, as far as it went, whenever you could get it to go. . .
>
> Yes, it is all very soul-stirring and uplifting; but it is not true in the world where its truth matters; this tragic world of space and time. The pleasant fancy of evil as negation is no more convincing to the logical mind than it is consoling and satisfying to the unreasoning heart;

> It won't work. It won't wash. Go to the victims of war and pestilence, and tell them that their torment is only the opposite of rapture. . . tell a mother who has just lost her only son that bereavement is simply the negation of possession, and see how it works and washes. (Defence 340)

However, despite her interest in accommodating idealism to the claims of the New Realists, Sinclair is not completely willing to follow their habit of treating pain and suffering as things ontologically independent of subjects who happen to run into them from time to time. For Sinclair, such a Realism withholds the emotional comfort of possible escape from these things by regarding pain, suffering, and evil as permanent features of human experience. Furthermore, if evil is regarded as eternal and, therefore, inevitable, there may be no incentive to resist, avoid, or destroy it.

Additionally, Sinclair wants to acknowledge that what agents experience as good and evil are culturally and historically relative. Her solution to maintaining the joint ideality and reality of these moral phenomena follows the pattern of her metaphysics:

> [The idealist] is dead right about the relativity of the evil that we know. The goods and evils of our earthly life are purely relative both to each other and to human conditions. They are even interchangeable. Goodness may be sought for, now in this set of actions, now in that. It may be attached to things once accounted evil. Evil may be attached to things once accounted good. Goodness itself remains as an eternal immutable Idea. . .
>
> Badness also remains an eternal and immutable Idea. (Defence 341) [emphasis added]

The distinction between moral phenomena "that we know" and moral phenomena as "eternal immutable Ideas" corresponds to

the distinction Sinclair made in the metaphysics between infinite primary and finite secondary consciousness. Here again, the primary consciousness maintains the eternal reality of the Idea of good and evil, yet in the individual's knowledge of them they remain relative to one another.

Even though Sinclair recognizes that the Realists made important advances in moral theory over traditional idealism by treating good and evil as real Universals, she maintains one serious reservation about the New Realist treatment of ethics:

> The reader must judge whether Absolute Ethics and the moral sanction are securer on a basis of Spiritual Monism or on the Pluralistic theory of the "outside" realities. They will remember that a purely external sanction is no sanction at all. The metaphysical basis is crucial in the ethical question. (Defence xvii)

Necessity is the form of moral or any other sanction, and even if the good is a real Universal, it must have some direct connection with the individual--the individual must be able to participate in the good if it is to have any necessary bearing on that agent's life.

> How can a man be bound by a law which he does not recognize as his own? (The question sounds paradoxical, we admit.) But if, on the contrary, the moral law is the expression of his own highest nature, then in the deepest sense he is bound by the "instinct of self-preservation" (which some moralists tell us is the root of the idea of duty) to obey it. ("Ethical and Religious Import" 701)

It is the identity of the infinite primary and the finite secondary consciousness which provides that the sanction

will not be external only. In her exposition of Green's ethics, Sinclair articulates the (Kantian) point that when an agent subordinates itself to a law of its own making it is following a law of its own nature. Whatever sanction it imposes on itself in this way will be "internal."

Internally generated moral sanctions are necessary for free will, for without them there is external compulsion and morality (moral responsibility) is meaningless. Furthermore, the free will is a fundamental condition of positive-freedom liberalism in the following way. Positive-freedom liberalism is the recognition that there are external as well as internal conditions of moral development. It seeks to secure to all agents the conditions necessary for each agent to realize its <u>own</u> idea of personal and absolute good. As such, positive-freedom liberalism depends upon agents being self-determined with respect to the objects with which they identify themselves and in which they seek satisfaction. To will is just this process of self-determination, and, consequently, positive-freedom presumes that agents' wills are free.

To conclude this discussion of the correspondence of Sinclair's and Green's moral thinking I want to point out an important congruence in the quality of their responses. For Green moral development depends upon the "internal" conditions of will and reason as well as the "external" conditions of agents being presented with adequate ideas of

possible selves and adequate opportunities to realize those ideas. In Sinclair's work the "internal" conditions of morality take the form of recognizing that self-determination depends upon the activity of self-consciousness on the part of the agent. Recognition of the external conditions of moral development appears in Sinclair as an acknowledgment that good and evil are permanent features of human experience.

Although the terms of Sinclair's moral analytic do not precisely match one-for-one with Green's, there is a close correspondence in the quality and strategy of their efforts to develop an ethical discourse. What Sinclair's treatment of the problems of metaphysics and ethics demonstrates above all else is an eagerness to combine her sense of the importance of consciousness with an acknowledgment of the claims of material experience. In other words, what is important for reconstructing Sinclair's profile as the inheritor of Green (and Ward) is the recognition that her effort to reconcile ideal and real corresponds with Green's insistence that moral development has both internal and external conditions. In a sentence: Sinclair's philosophy is closely congruent with the overall tendency of Green's cultural thinking to combine ideal and real, spiritual and material.

III

The foregoing analysis of Sinclair's philosophical efforts toward reconciliation of ideal and real brings to the reading of The Divine Fire an understanding of her central philosophical and rhetorical strategy. In that novel, the reconciliation of ideal and real becomes specifically focused on problems of moral development. Sinclair's conception of morality as self-conscious self-realization combines in The Divine Fire with her commitment to the reconciliation of ideal and real to dramatize the ethical presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism.

Begun only four years after her exposition of Green's ethics, it is not surprising that The Divine Fire (1904) bears echoes of (Green's) idealist thinking. The conversion of ethics into narrative in that novel is accomplished primarily by means of a reconciliation of ideal and real that corresponds closely with the patterns of Sinclair's reformulated idealism and Green's analysis of morality. It is a neo-classical drama written by the novel's protagonist, Savage Keith Rickman, that provides the organizing trope for the novel's most important features.

Although the son of a middle-class London book dealer, Rickman received a thorough education in classical literature because his father regarded such an education as capital improvement on his own book-selling business. Rickman's attitude toward his father's business is well

summed up by his referring his father's new store as "The Gin Palace of Art." Rickman is frustrated with his part in the book shop because it interferes with his intention to have a literary career. His literary production at the novel's beginning consists of a neo-classical tragedy, Helen in Leuce.

At the beginning of Rickman's drama Helen appears on the island of Leuce, where she prays for deliverance from Aphrodite's power.

> In Act I . . .[t]he Chorus tells the story of Helen, her rape by Theseus, her marriage with Menelaus, her flight with Paris, the tragedy of Troy and her return to Argos. It tells how through all her adventures the godhead in her remained pure, untouched, holding itself apart.
>
> In Act II Helen is asleep, for the soul of Leda still troubles her divinity, and her mortality is heavy upon her. Helen rises out of her sleep; her divinity is seen struggling with her mortality, burning through the beauty of her body. Desire awakens in Achilles, and in Helen terror and anguish, as of one about to enter again into the pain of mortal life. But he may not touch her till he, too, has put on immortality.
>
> [In Act III] Pallas Athene was there to appear to Achilles and divest him of his mortality; that she was to lead him to Helen, whose apotheosis was supposed to be complete . . . . (The Divine Fire 137-138)

The central issue of Rickman's neo-classical drama is the struggle for divinity to find an adequate incarnation for itself, and that all inadequate attempts to incarnate divinity devastate those who try. In one instance, the reconciliation of dream and reality patterns Rickman's love for the novel's other principle character, Lucia Harden. In another important instance, it (pre)configures the paradigm

for Rickman's own moral development in a way that closely corresponds with Green's idealist ethics. In order to recognize the novel's idealist paradigm of moral development, it is useful to examine in detail the trope of reconciliation as it is first set up in Rickman's play and worked out in his developing love for Lucia.

In Rickman's drama, Helen resists incarnation in all mortal form because it is always inadequate to her divinity. Each of the three men who try to possess Helen objectify her in terms of only one aspect of her divinity. Theseus chooses her because he wants to marry one of Zeus's daughters, Paris wants her for pleasure, and Menelaus hopes to domesticate her. Each of these three try to force Helen's ideality to suit one aspect of their own mortality, and each is devastated by his inability to unify divine ideal and mortal reality.

> His Helen, [Rickman] said, was eternal Beauty, the eternal Dream. Beauty, perpetually desirous of incarnation, perpetually unfaithful to flesh and blood; the Dream that longs for the embrace of reality, that wanders, never satisfied till it finds a reality as immortal as itself. Helen couldn't stay in the house of Theseus, or the house of Menelaus, or the house of Priam. Theseus was a fool if he thought he would take her by force, and Paris was a fool if he thought he could keep her for pleasure; and Menelaus was the biggest fool of all because he expected her to bear him children and to mind his house. They all do violence to the divinity in her, and she vindicates it by eluding them. Her vengeance is the vengeance of an immortal made victim to mortality. Helen in Argos and Troy is the Dream divorced from reality. . . "This divorce is the cause of all the evil that can happen to men and women." (DF 148)

Rickman concludes his description of the play by saying:

> "The idea is reconciliation, the Wedding of Dream to reality." (DF 149)

In the course of writing the play itself, Rickman begins to effect such a reconciliation:

> That first draft was the work of the young scholar poet, the adorer of classic form, the dreamer who found in his dreams escape from the grossness of his own lower nature and from the brutalities he lived in. A great neo-classical drama was to be his protest against modernity and actuality. Then came an interval of a year, in which he learnt many things that are not to be found in books, or adequately expressed though a neo-classical drama; and the thing was finished and re-written at a time when, as [Lucia] had said, something had happened to him; when that same gross actual world was making its claims felt through all his senses. And he was suffering now the deep melancholy of perspicuous youth, unable to part with its dreams, but aware that its dreams are hopelessly divorced from reality. (DF 150)

Rickman retains his dreams, yet acknowledges that they are divorced from reality. In the range of his own experience he cannot find adequate incarnations for them. Even though he began the drama as a protest against reality, in the course of writing it he begins to acknowledge the claims of reality upon him.

Although Rickman's allegorical drama is charged with much symbolism, he manages to breathe life into the symbols, making them flesh and blood. In his art, then, he is able to reconcile ideal and real, but he is not yet able to do this in the reality of his life. Whereas he uses art to escape the reality of his life, he needs yet to reconcile (wed) ideal and real on the reality-side of the equation.

Rickman himself has a Dream of ideal beauty, and he successively tries to find an incarnation for that Dream in the women with whom he becomes involved. He is, therefore, in a situation roughly analogous to Paris, whose task it is to chose between incarnation of the fairest goddesses. Each of the three women with whom Rickman becomes involved corresponds to one of Paris's choices alluded to in the drama. In Poppy Grace, a slightly disreputable musical actress, Rickman looks for an incarnation of his dream in the form of Aphrodite, in the form of sexual pleasure and love. Later, he becomes engaged to Flossie Walker, a woman whose principle ambition is to marry and start a family. She represents for Rickman an incarnation of his dream in the form of Hera, in the form of domestic happiness--hearth and family.

It is not, however, until he meets and falls in love with Lucia, the novel's other main character, that he makes any real progress toward the actual reconciliation of dream and reality. When he meets Lucia, she functions as his Helen. Lucia presents to him the first nearly adequate incarnation of his ideal dream, and the experience is strange to him.

> [M]ost of all he dreaded the supreme agitation of love. For he knew now perfectly well what had happened to him; though he had never known it happen to him in this manner before. It was love, as his heart had <u>imagined</u> it in the days before he became the thrall of Miss Poppy Grace. He had known the feeling, but <u>until now he had not known the woman who could inspire it</u>. It was as if his heart had renewed its primal virginity in

> preparation for some divine experience. (DF 132) [emphasis added]

In fact, Rickman undergoes nothing less than a kind of non-specific, quasi-mystical conversion at the hands of Lucia.

Rickman's play thus patterns his own attempt to find in Lucia an incarnation of Helen, of his own dream of ideal beauty. His Helen in Leuce becomes "Helen in Lucia." The following description of his drama applies equally well to his developing relationship with Lucia:

> "In Leuce, you know, she appears as she is, in her divine form, freed from the tyranny of perpetual incarnation. I can't explain it, but that's the idea. Don't you see how the chorus in praise of Aphrodite breaks off into a prayer for deliverance from her? And at the end I make Athene bring Helen to Achilles, who was her enemy in Troy.--That's part of the idea too."
> "And Achilles?"
> "Achilles is strength, virility, indestructible will." (DF 148-149)

Rickman's own greatest achievement in the novel is a tremendous and sustained act of self-abnegation in which he demonstrates "indestructible will" corresponding to Achilles's. It is this act of "indestructible will" that divests Rickman of his own "mortality" and makes him worthy of Lucia's love and marriage. More specifically, the divestiture of Rickman's "mortality" comes through his moral development. This moral development takes the form of his adopting for himself an idea of a possible self that is determined by rational principle, not by immediate desire.

IV

The reconciliation of dream and reality serves its most important patterning function in configuring the representation of moral development in The Divine Fire. Rickman's moral development is closely analogous to Green's idealist analysis of morality. The parallels concern the acquisition of an adequate idea of a possible self one might become and the effort to realize that idea.

The idea of self or personal good under which Rickman operates in the novel's beginning is patently hedonist. Although his literary pretensions do lend him a propensity to idealize experience, the realization or incarnation of those ideals generally takes shape in the gratification of sensual pleasures. For example, he frequently spends his time away from the book shop drinking to excess and in the company of a slightly disreputable musical actress. As his own neo-classic drama would suggest, the actress, one Miss Poppy Grace, is a vastly inadequate incarnation of his ideal vision of Love and Beauty. Yet an excess of champagne helps fill in where the reality leaves off.

The satisfactory reconciliation of dream and reality in Rickman's own life begins only after he is sent to a country manor owned by Lucia Harden to catalogue its especially historic library. In that setting, Rickman's moral development comes through a difficult struggle occasioned by an intricate moral dilemma. From the start of his relationship with Lucia, Rickman is bothered by the

difficult position in which he finds himself. Rickman was requested by Lucia to make a catalogue of the famous Harden library. He has learned through a business acquaintance that the library is soon to come onto the market because its owner, Lucia's father, is about to go bankrupt. Lucia, however, is completely ignorant of her father's financial status. Thus, Rickman's opportunity to catalogue it gives him explicit and "inside" information about the library's true value, and puts his father and him in a position of great advantage.

Rickman will be given right of first refusal to purchase for 1,000 pounds the library which he knows is worth over 4,000. The library's owner--Lucia and her father--thus stand to lose 3,000 pounds of the real value of the library if Rickman acts on this inside knowledge. Rickman is thus in the dubious position of standing to purchase the library far below its value at the expense of its owner who stands to lose most of its real value. Moreover, he is in this position because of knowledge he ought not to have.

Rickman is sensitive from the start about the dubious moral position in which he finds himself. He is torn between his growing love for Lucia, loyalty to his father who educated him, and his own sense of the morally proper thing to do. After he comes under Lucia's spell and falls in love with her, however, he undergoes a moral metamorphosis. Thus, when Lucia's father dies, and the

library is sold to Rickman's father against his son's vehement objections, Rickman first threatens to and then actually does permanently estrange himself from his father and the business.

The final phase of Rickman's own moral development does not begin, however, until several years later when his own father dies and he inherits his father's estate as well as its financial obligations. In those several years, Rickman's father took out a debt against which the remainder of the Harden library was being held as collateral. Upon learning this, it immediately occurs to Rickman that once he reclaims the library by paying off the remaining debt, he would be free to do with it as he pleased, including returning it to Lucia.

It takes Rickman several years of dreadful self-abnegation in which he nearly starves himself to death trying to save money, but he eventually pays off the remainder of the debt and reacquires the library in order to return it to Lucia. She, however, is very reluctant to accept it because of their unequal social status and because of the difficult life he has lived. In order to convince her to accept the library he tells her that he had to go to some trouble to redeem it, and that if she refuses, his work will have be thrown away for nothing. In the following passage Rickman explains to Lucia that the years working to redeem the library were the best years of his life:

> "There were about three years of it, the best three years out of my life; and you are going to fling them away and make them useless.". . .
>
> "The best years out of your life--why were they the best?"
>
> "Because they were the first time in which I was free." (DF 553)

Rickman's "freedom" comes in here, in spite of his working under the obligation of a (moral) debt, in the Kantian sense in which a moral agent is only free when governed by a law of its own making. During the time he was working to redeem the library, Rickman has ordered his life according to a rational and moral principle of his own choosing. He is motivated by an idea of what is morally right. He is no longer subservient to sensuous pleasures. Rickman's declaration of freedom here corresponds to Achilles's divestiture of mortality, and it is this, following the pattern of his drama, which allows Rickman to achieve the reconciliation of his dream and reality in the form of marrying Lucia. Their marriage, then, represents the "wedding of Dream to reality" (DF 149).

Rickman has developed an idea of what is ultimately right with respect to the library, and the central struggle of his narrative concerns his attempt to realize that idea for himself and others. The alternation between Rickman's earlier life of drinking and debauchery and his later life of self-abnegation and principled choice dramatizes a parallel alternation between hedonist utilitarianism (with its pleasure principle) and Green's "Kantian" ethics which configures moral development in terms of creation of a

hierarchy of desires ordered by rational or principled choice and supervened by self-consciousness.

Sinclair's position regarding the viability of hedonist ethics is clearly given in this passage from her essay on Green:

> All so-called ethical systems which have not recognized the metaphysical principle in man--Eudaemonism, Hedonism, Utilitarianism--are failures because they cannot account for the simple fact that a moral being is moved by an end which is not happiness, or pleasure, or utility, but is more often opposed to them, and therefore by no conceivable process can be evolved from them. It is not a question of Determinism versus Indeterminism. In all cases man's action is determined by motives (otherwise it would be purposeless action, the action of an idiot), but in moral action he is moved by an end which is not imposed on him from without, or by the necessities of his merely physical nature, but is itself determined by the constitution of his rational nature from within. ("Ethical and Religious Import" 700)

The idea that moral sanctions must be internally generated is perhaps the central informing theme of The Divine Fire. It explains his relentless effort to redeem the library. It shapes Rickman's declaration of freedom even while he is under apparent compulsion of redeeming a debt. The significance of this apparent paradox becomes clearer when it is noted that Sinclair is careful not to put Rickman under any external compulsion to redeem the library. Lucia does not expect nor at all encourage Rickman to return the library to her. Moreover, Rickman must several times negotiate a longer term for the repayment of the money borrowed against the library. He has ample opportunity to

let the debt lapse and surrender the library as collateral. In choosing to persevere in clearing the debt, Rickman puts himself under a moral obligation no one else recognizes. His compulsion is entirely of his own making.

Finally, there are two specific features of Rickman's moral development that correspond closely with the presuppositions of Green's positive-freedom liberalism. First, Green makes much of the idea that moral development depends upon agents having adequate ideas of possible selves--ideas of selves which, when realized, will in fact result in lasting satisfaction on the whole. (For Green the goal of morality is permanent satisfaction on the whole, what he terms "an abiding satisfaction of an abiding self.") It is clear that before Rickman meets Lucia the idea of personal good he attempts to realize is not one which will produce lasting satisfaction. Conversely, Rickman learns from Lucia--albeit in a somewhat mysterious way--a more principled/ideal conception of what his life ought to look like. Nevertheless, it is not until he forms an adequate idea of his own moral potential that he begins to make moral progress.

Secondly, according to Green, agents need social scope in which to realize the ideas of possible selves they have. This is an important part of the foundation of Green's commitment to positive freedom. Correspondingly, Rickman's moral development depends upon his being able to act on his idea (to redeem the library). It is not until he frees

himself from his father's book shop and the usurious commercial ethic it represents that he has the scope in which to realize an idea of a possible self.

V

The problems of metaphysics and especially the problem of reconciling ideality and reality preoccupied Sinclair for her entire career. Her first novels deal with it and her last philosophical works are determined attempts to refit philosophical idealism with the implications of the New Realists. Amid this sustained preoccupation, The Divine Fire should be seen as an experiment in reconciliation of ideality and reality in specifically ethical space. Given Sinclair's pre-existing commitment to the ethics of idealism, her novelistic representation of this moral philosophical problem suggests that what was missing from the solution was an element of realism. Put another way, Sinclair gained from Green's ethics the moral idea(l)s, and turned to the novel for the both the means and the realist material needed to complete the reconciliation. That a literary work within her own novel provides the pattern for the protagonist's moral development strongly suggests that she recognized literature's potential as just such a reconciling mechanism.

Geoffrey Hill begins his essay on Green explaining that Green's admirers were much more prone to abstraction than Green himself was. In support Hill cites Nettleship's

comment that Green "sent us out once again on the high pilgrimage towards Ideal Truth" (Nettleship quoted in Hill 104). Nettleship adds that Green would not have liked such "high" language applied to himself, but, he adds, "it is true" (104). Hill says of Nettleship's comments that "they may be taken as a marginal indication of the central issues in Green's metaphysical and ethical debate" (104). According to Hill, that central preoccupation is

> the recognition that while we are 'unconditionally bound', 'necessarily belonging to such a world', being so bound is not necessarily the same as being in a fix and is most certainly not the same as being a fixer. (Hill 104)

Hill's point about Green is that he felt caught in "an essentially Kantian crux"--i.e., between the concrete world of experience and the desire and (moral) necessity of being unconstrained by that world. Put into other words, Green was frustrated by the seeming incompatibility of the ideal (spiritual) and the material aspects of human experience. Green's metaphysics and especially his moral and political theory strive to overcome this incompatibility.

Hill indicates that this frustration was "a prevalent ethical emphasis of [Green's] time" (104). May Sinclair's name should certainly be added to the list of those who, like Green, struggled to reconceptualize human experience in ways that resolve the tensions between the ideality of human potential and the materiality of its realization. The

reconfiguration of the tension between human potential and human reality is the very thing Green's positive-freedom liberalism strives to resolve. Sinclair's fiction participates fully in the literary reconfigurations of Victorian cultural response occasioned by Green's ethical critique.

CONCLUSION:

BEYOND "PERPLEXED PERSISTENCE"

In an enigmatic essay on Green entitled "'Perplexed Persistence': the Exemplary Failure of T. H. Green," Geoffrey Hill explains that Green's admirers were much more prone to abstraction than Green himself was. In support Hill cites R. L. Nettleship's comment that Green "sent us out on the high pilgrimage towards Ideal Truth" (Nettleship quoted in Hill 104). Nettleship adds that Green would not have liked such "high" language applied to himself, but, he adds, "it is true" (104). Hill says of Nettleship's comments" that they may be taken as a marginal indication of the central issues in Green's metaphysical and ethical debate" (104). According to Hill, that central preoccupation is

> the recognition that while we are 'unconditionally bound', 'necessarily belonging to such a world [as this]', being so bound is not necessarily the same as being in a fix and is most certainly not the same thing as being a fixer. (Hill 104)

If correct, this would suggest that the central issues of Green's metaphysical and ethical debate are just this

tension between being bound to the material world of human experience and hoping to transcend it somehow. Hill's point about Green is that he observed that "the nature of the world is such as we are constrained to recognize, the ineluctable fact, but to be content with the rich discrepancies which this offers is none the less dangerous and is sometimes treacherous" (Hill 105).

Hill closely connects Green's discontent with such discrepancies to the extremely difficult prose he produced. He points out, however, that to discuss Green's shortcomings is to be caught up with "Bona fide perplexity" "having its origins really in intellectual difficulty, not in any selfish interest" (108). But the difficulty of Green's prose reveals much more than only the difficulty of the problems with which he dealt. "Green gave us ideas but he did not give a 'language'; and in failing to give a 'language' he closed off one dimension of moral intelligence" (118). "Perplexed persistence" is Hill's term for the quality of Green's very difficult idiom that does not escape the unresolvable tension between the material and moral tendencies of Victorian culture.

Hill represents Green as feeling caught in "an essentially Kantian crux"--i.e., between the concrete world of experience and the desire and moral necessity of being unconstrained by that world. This tension in Green represents what Hill takes to be a characteristic of much Victorian thinking about the "formal engagement" between

literature and society. It represents, Hill says quoting Coleridge, a "fealty to Reason under the servitude to an accepted article of Belief" (Hill 105).

What distinguishes Green's moral analytic from its contemporaneous alternatives is his attempt to articulate moral experience through the language of philosophical idealism. Even more than natural scientific explanations of morality, Green's idealist ethics provide a supremely rational mode of moral inquiry. This is so in two ways.

First, Green seeks to comprehend residual orthodox religious moral thinking within a rationalized discourse in a way that the natural sciences had not done. Green points out in the opening section of the Prolegomena that most people would rather leave their deep moral convictions juxtaposed yet unreconciled with the conclusions of popularized science "than that anything calling itself philosophy should seek to systematise them and to ascertain the regions to which they on the one side, and the truths of science on the other, are respectively applicable" (PE §1) [my emphasis]. Green adds that in such a climate a moral philosopher must explain why he holds "a metaphysics of morals to be possible and necessary; the proper foundation, though not the whole, of every system of Ethics" (PE §2). Green's momentous effort was to consolidate and systematize a range of modes of moral inquiry into one supervening discourse.

Secondly, the metaphysics of morals Green develops as a foundation for ethics makes rationality the very core of moral understanding and moral self-realization. The distinctive thing about human experience, Green contends, is that it is thinking experience. And, beginning with a (Kantian) analysis of knowledge, Green works through an analysis of moral development to a moral evaluation of social and political institutions. Reason is thus not only the method to the foundation: it is ultimately the very foundation itself. Given this dualistic commitment to a hyper-rationalized account of morality, Green certainly does exhibit, as Hill suggests, a "fealty to the Reason."

At the same time, however, there are crucial places in his broader cultural analytic where the efficacy of reason breaks down. Hill observes that

> The difference between Kant and the Victorian students of Kant in England may well turn on a difference of emphasis concerning that which 'points beyond the data'. In Kant this is a 'common element' existing as 'a logical presupposition, a purely formal implication'; in Sidgwick and Green that which points beyond the data is more often a pious wish. (108)

Getting beyond the data means, in Kant, getting to a sphere of transcendent significances, causes, or origins. To connect phenomena with such origins would be to give a complete explanation and justification for the appearance of those phenomena.

In Green's case, the function of "that which points beyond the data" is to carry the moral imagination to a

transcendent origin capable of grounding moral behavior by transcendentally authorizing the idea that people should take other agents' interests into account. We might say Green's pious wish shows up as a hope that human potential can indeed overcome the constraints placed upon it by social experience. Green's rigorous philosophy leaves him no other option than to seek such a transcendental authority.

More precisely, we might say that Green's "fealty to the Reason under the servitude of an accepted article of Belief" leads him to view Victorian society as needing to be precisely adjusted to the parameters of human aspiration and human potential. Thus, Green remains rationally tied to the here and now while hoping with a pious wish that human potential can overcome it. The here and how is for Green more easily adjusted than the pious wish.

For Green, the adjustment of social reality to human potential is characterized by an effort to defeat two kinds of determinism: natural laws and social organization. Against the utilitarians and social Darwinists, for example, Green argues that human action is not determined by natural laws. More importantly his positive-freedom liberalism is aimed at defeating the constraints placed on human potential by society itself. Thus, the real thrust of Green's liberalism is effort to maximize freedom and human moral agency and to defeat those social formations that constrain freedom and agency. Positive-freedom liberalism does this (first) by recognizing that "the mere removal of compulsion,

the mere enabling of a man to do as he likes, is itself no contribution to true freedom" ("Liberal Legislation" 371). Secondly, the corollary of such a recognition is that positive external opportunities have to be secured for the internal moral powers really to be effective. To act on such a recognition means to bring about in social space the conditions under which people can actively pursue their moral development. It is to increase the possibility, at least, for moral agency.

Viewed in this way, Green's liberal cultural theory shares fundamental assumptions with the contemporary cultural studies movement. In his account of the origins of cultural studies in Britain and America, Patrick Brantlinger explains that

> The task for both the liberal humanist who believes that the arts have . . . an emancipating influence at least on individuals, and the radical cultural critic like [Raymond] Williams, is to find ways to maximize the power of cultural forms over the economic base--that is, to maximize freedom and minimize blind necessity in all aspects of life. (67)

Brantlinger's useful formulation needs to be updated in a couple of important ways to reflect the contemporary commitments of cultural studies. Contemporary cultural studies' emancipatory efforts have moved beyond recognizing and resisting only the economic determinism of so-called "vulgar" Marxism with which Williams was originally preoccupied. Those efforts have expanded to include a

critical stance toward social formations that have now become the triumvirate of contemporary cultural critique: class, gender, and race. To these colonial/post-colonial theory has added nationality.

Thus, in the case of gender studies Brantlinger points to one formulation of the "negative task" of feminist cultural criticism:

> to oppose the forms of patriarchal exclusion and misrepresentation that have over and over again treated women . . . as art objects, "texts," "blank pages," to be written upon by men, while denying them cultural authority and the chance to be authors and artists themselves. (141)

As artists and authors, women have the capacity to articulate for themselves in art and literature their own aspirations for a more perfect society and their place(s) in it. Thus the "positive task" of feminist cultural critique might be seen as an effort to identify and bring into the open discourse practices "that would bring those traces of utopian longing and critical opposition into the open and allow them to become politically empowering instead of marginalizing" (141). Quite generally speaking, the goal of feminist cultural critique might be understood as emancipatory--the attempt to increase women's agency by circulating the discourses by which women construct society and their places in it. It is first an epistemological effort to know what those places are. It is secondly an ethical effort to realize in social space those roles and avenues for agency.

In much the same way, colonial/post-colonial studies tries to recognize and resist conceptions of race and nationality that limit the agency of those regarded as "other." Thus, in the introduction to a recent special issue of Nineteenth-Century Contexts devoted to "colonialisms," Fred Dallmayr explains that contemporary modes of colonial/post-colonial discourse are departing from "earlier forms of colonial discourse predicated on models of either linear teleology or polar opposition and antithesis" (2). Giving up these premises means constructing cultural identity and cultural interaction in ways that avoid simply polar conceptions of "otherness." Edward Said is one important model here, whose work "strains against the confines of cultural polarity, thus pointing obliquely toward a 'deconstruction' of compact identities and a 'de-essentialized' form of cultural-political analysis" (4). This means, in effect, reconstructing national and cultural identity in ways that do not always regard one group against or "other than" a privileged or normalized group. To configure the previously subaltern group's existence independently of the dominating culture in this way effects an increase in their agency by increasing their autonomy.

Through their engagements with literature, cultural studies and Victorian studies use literary texts as representations of Victorian recognitions of social formations that limit moral agency. Green's positive-freedom liberalism provides a Victorian resource for the

very same ethical logic that characterizes and drives Victorian studies' current engagements with such emancipatory discourses as gender and colonial/post-colonial studies. Moreover, it draws upon those same texts in order to identify and understand the sites and strategies of resistance to those same social formations. Reading Green along with period texts that challenge Victorian conceptions of such things as race, gender, class, and nationality allows us to rethink the critical formations of their resistance.

For example, using Green to characterize Clough's resistance to Arnoldean poetics and the construction of morality it reinforces reveals the ways in which that poetics actually restricts rather than increases moral agency. The objective of Arnold's poetic moralism is to draw the individual's (emotional) experience into line with conventional patterns of moral thinking. But those emotional experiences are themselves highly conventionalized already. (It is largely in the highly conventionalized discourse of poetry that emotional experiences are popularly created, differentiated, related, and compared--recognized as distinct aspects of human experiences at all.) In this way, then, there is no independent variable in Arnold's equation of emotional experience with true moral insight. The equation of emotional experiences with true moral ideas

is itself fixed, conventionalized, and thereby arbitrarily perpetuated.

When applied to the Bible, Arnold's poetic moral intuitionism simply reinforces highly orthodox patterns of association between emotional experience and moral judgments. By so doing, it merely conventionalizes the individualized features of individual moral experience, severely reducing the possibilities for individual adjustments between the two.

Whereas Arnold specifies the association of emotional experience with moral idea, what is needed to maximize moral agency is a poetics that opens this engagement somehow, multiplying the possibilities. To do so is to increase moral agency in the following way. Morality for Green (and Clough) is a matter of realizing an idea of a possible self that will lead to permanent or "abiding" satisfaction. If we understand "emotional experience" as the quality of an agent's regard for some particular idea of a possible satisfaction, then to allow the individual agent to configure the way in which it regards a possible satisfaction would be to allow the individual increased autonomy in choosing the possible satisfactions it will realize. That is, it is to allow the agent greater freedom in realizing its moral potential.

Against centripetal and conventionalizing patterns, Clough finds ways to separate emotional experience from

conventional patterns (discourses) and thus to maximize the individuality of the engagement of emotional experiences with moral ideas and in so doing to achieve a real increase in agency. The dialogic tendency of Clough's poetry accomplishes this by reconstituting moral consciousness apart from conventional moral discourses, and by relocating moral determinations within the individual moral consciousness.

In a similar way Mary Ward's advocacy of the historical hermeneutic of Green's critical theology opposes the Arnoldean conventionalization of morality occasioned by his reassertion of the Bible as the locus of moral authority. When replaced in the constellation of texts in which its signification was originally implicated, Robert Elsmere forms a resistance to Anglican orthodoxy and Arnoldean biblical criticism, both of which merely reassert the Bible as the primary locus of moral and cultural authority. Anglican orthodoxy ritualizes and thereby conventionalizes the engagement of emotional experience with moral ideas in much the same way Arnoldean poetics and biblical criticism do.

Against Arnold's literary version of biblical criticism, the historical hermeneutics of critical theology views biblical narrative and therefore dogma as the contingent Vorstellung of a particular group of interpreters or authors of a particular time. For Baur, Green, and Ward, this Vorstellung is merely dogma--not the essential Begriff,

conceived of as a personal and immediate consciousness of divinity. Ward's novel resists the fusion of Vorstellung and Begriff that characterizes religious orthodoxy because it conventionalizes and depersonalizes the individual's emotional engagement with moral ideas.

In the case of the protagonist of Robert Elsmere, the conventions of that engagement preclude the use of reason in contemplating ideas of possible satisfactions and possible selves. Reason individualizes the emotional attachment to moral ideas by allowing the individual to identify its own good with the idea of a possible satisfaction, and to regard that identity as an end to be attained by action. If orthodoxy precludes the use of the reason, then it impedes this process, and one could well argue that without this kind of personal attachment no inducement to reach for it would ensue. Ward's recurrence to the historical hermeneutics of Green's critical theology explains her resistance to various forms of religious and moral orthodoxy as a social formation that limits individual moral agency.

George Eliot presents a less difficult deployment of positive-freedom to maximize moral agency. Eliot's invocation of a socially-constituted self sharply contrasts with the deontological individualism associated with Victorian realists she so much admired: Mill, Spencer, and Lewes. Daniel Deronda is itself thus a locus of resistance to the deontological conception of the self--a conception of human interaction which, while decreasing external

compulsion, also actually decreases moral agency. The difference between freedom and moral agency is that the removal of compulsion does not necessarily increase one's ability to realize an idea of a possible self that will result in permanent satisfaction. Green argues, for example, that:

> If the ideal of true freedom is the maximum of power for all members of human society alike to make the best of themselves, we are right in refusing to ascribe the glory of freedom to a state in which the apparent elevation of the few is founded on the degradation of the many . . . . ("Liberal Legislation" 372)

His essential point regarding deontological individualism is that a true increase in freedom is not/cannot be merely a null-sum gain. In other words, any increase in human freedom and human agency must be "compossible." The juxtaposition of models of subjectivity represented by Deronda and Gwendolen in Eliot's novel can be read as a critique of the limits for social cohesion afforded by each model. Eliot's deployment of Deronda's socially-constituted self as the principle of resolution represents a critical resistance to this limitation of deontological liberalism.

Finally, May Sinclair's narrative transformation of Green's moral analytic represents a late-century recognition of both internal (faculty) and external (material) conditions of moral development. Rickman's quest for an adequate idea of a possible self is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of his moral development. He must have social scope (social opportunities) in which to realize that

idea of a possible self. Thus, it is not until he eventually frees himself from the usurious commercial ethic associated with his father's book-shop dealings that he has the opportunity to realize an adequate idea of a possible self.

The ethical reconstruction of the Victorian "literary" I have here proposed has as its goal the reformation of Victorian literary studies into a mode of ethical discourse. It makes Green's moral and cultural analytic available for contemporary appropriation by situating it against the moral and cultural conditions it was developed to address. Reading Green back into literary representations of Victorian experience, we see the engagement of his moral analytic with lived cultural problems. We come to understand the real opportunities for moral freedom of a given cultural moment. The ethical reconstruction of the Victorian "literary" makes literary studies productive of ethical knowledge in a broader way as well. It allows us to understand and use literary texts as sites of and strategies for resistance to social formations of all kinds that limit human moral agency. To combine ethics with literary studies in the way I have done here is to create the language Hill found missing in Green--to open up one important dimension of moral intelligence. The engagement of ethics with literary studies helps us to move beyond our own "perplexed persistence."

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