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JOHN STUART MILL AND MICHAEL OAKESHOTT:
A CASE STUDY OF SOME DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL
POLICY AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY.

City University of New York, Ph.D., 1976
Philosophy

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JOHN STUART MILL AND MICHAEL OAKESHOTT:
A CASE STUDY OF SOME DIFFERENCES
IN SOCIAL POLICY AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY

by

CAROL PHILLIPS

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Philosophy
in partial fulfillment of the re-
quirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

1976

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Philosophy in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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PROLOGUE

Our exploration of John Stuart Mill's and Michael Oakeshott's political thought grows out of two areas of concern. The first of these is over the problem of discovering and understanding the sense in which a philosopher's social policy reflects or is built upon underlying beliefs which can be interpreted as the wider corpus of his philosophical commitment. We intend to explore some of Mill's and Oakeshott's social policy views not only in themselves, but insofar as they are philosophical politics, or social policy formulated under the influence or within the context of an encompassing philosophical theory. The second centers on problems which may emerge when philosophical theories are regarded as opposing, or even competing as is the case with Mill's and Oakeshott's theories. Normative issues, such as what should count in making a comparison or on what criteria should evaluation rest, often have to be faced. We intend to deal with issues of this sort, as well as with questions that may arise in the actual evaluation of opposing views.

A brief overview of some examples of philosophical social policy shows a number of ways in which the influence of a theorist's philosophy on his politics can be explained. These

can be exemplified and categorized in terms of a central theme which can be interpreted as dominating the relationship between these two levels of thought.

Some analyses focus, for example, on what is seen as the ideological character of their subject matter. This sort of approach proceeds under the assumption that, in ideological politics, a specific program for political action is synthesized with "an integrated understanding of the world"¹ so that the synthetic product emerges with considerable normative impact. It further emphasizes that the commitment to particular goal-directed courses of action is treated as a logical consequence of a particular world-view, and this, in turn, is presented as indisputable. Thus, the world-view acts as a special kind of determinant or motivator for action, one that both directs and justifies.

The first step to be taken in adopting this point of view is to distinguish the ideological commitment from the practical policy recommendations that come under its influence. A political theory that has, traditionally, lent itself to this kind of approach is, of course, Marxism. Christianity, as well, has been characterized as being susceptible to this kind of analysis, particularly because within its framework, the worth of an individual is directly determined by his belief (what one is, is a function of what one believes), and this belief either is a species of or entails certain behavior.²

It is important to note that the ideological approach does not necessarily interpret ideology in a disparaging manner. It is concerned, as has been mentioned, with separating two conceptual levels of thought with an eye towards discovering how ideological values shape political policy. And, although the method of exploration we shall use in our present study is unlike the ideological approach, our emphasis on the architecture, so to speak, of the philosophical politics under consideration, reflects a similar aspect of the ideological approach.

The philosophy of Thomas Hobbes provides a particularly clear example of how philosophical exploration can concentrate on discerning how policy is built on philosophical foundations. Hobbes sets down his foundations very clearly and precisely, in terms of his materialistic and corporealistic picture of nature. This comprises literally, the building blocks for all aspects of human existence, as well as for reasoning. "When a man reasoneth," Hobbes says, "he does nothing else but conceive a sum total, from addition of parcels; or conceive a remainder, from subtraction of one sum from another."³ These material parcels are the ingredients or input, for Hobbes; his beliefs about the organization of civil society and the positivistic, amoral nature of civil law comprise the practical output which is supported by the substructure.

While this kind of orientation is close to that which we

are assuming, there is nevertheless an important difference. We are particularly concerned with the specific functions of the philosophical level on the practical level. Therefore, our exploration of Mill's and Oakeshott's social policy views treats these as a substantial in themselves, but also as helpful in getting a grasp of the respective philosophical commitments and their operations on the more practical material. Our above comments on how a philosophical politics like Hobbes' can be studied do not emphasize this further direction or goal. For example, an appropriate question in this direction might pertain to the possibility of there being a deductive connection between Hobbes' picture of nature and his social policy. In this case, Hobbes' own account of reasoning would be manifest in the meta-study of his philosophy.

It is, certainly, feasible to explore philosophical politics by treating a philosophical commitment as a major premiss from which policy decisions are deduced. This method can be exemplified by referring to the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham. The opening passages of An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, provide support for its adoption:

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to determine what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we

think. every effort we can make to throw off our sub-
jection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it.
In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire; 4
but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while.

This approach, which can be called "deductive" can
identify Bentham's psychological hedonism as his major premiss.
A great portion of the rest of his book is a detailed classification
of the conceptual elements of a socio-legal system, with accom-
panying arguments which can be used to show that each prescription
or definition logically follows from his unproven value scheme. For
example, Bentham points out that punishment for law breaking is
justified insofar as it prevents other offenses, keeps down mis-
chief, and engenders the least possible expense. 5 All these are
examples of pain's minimization or pleasure's maximization.

An alternative way of applying this so-called deductive
approach to Bentham's philosophy is to treat, as his major prem-
iss, his wholehearted commitment to positivism. This is suggest-
ed in his connecting, in the above quotation, what is actually done
with what ought to be done. In this case, Bentham's positivistic
major premiss would consist in the analysis of the above logical
connection; and its implications would be the various social and
legal policies following from this logical connection.

This, however, is not the approach we are adopting.
Although we are not ruling out the possibility that parts of Mill's

and Oakeshott's broad philosophical beliefs can logically entail their policy recommendations, we are reluctant to assume that this is the only mode of relation that can exist. There might very well be a plurality of relationships, for example; and this kind of judgment will emerge in the course of our study.

Another possible means of discerning two levels of thought and their relations in political philosophy can be described as following the style of Nietzsche. If Nietzsche were exploring theory and practice in philosophical politics, he would focus on the psychological character of the philosopher being studied. Nietzsche would explain social policy in terms of a single type of personality that is expressed in the details of practical recommendations. In other words, the underlying temperament of the political philosopher would be treated, according to this approach, as the relatively broad philosophical outlook which shapes specific policy views. Professor Danto's comments on Nietzsche's philosophy show why explaining practice through temperament is indeed, a reasonable approach to understanding the specifics of philosophically-based policy. Danto points out that the way in which a moral concept is used by an individual affects the way in which that individual sees himself and his surrounding world.⁶ A Nietzschean approach, identifying temperament-type with the use of moral concepts, would, therefore, tend to explain attitudes toward practical life in terms of

underlying, dominant temperament-types.

The reason we cannot use this kind of approach is the same reason for our rejecting the deductive approach. Both run the risk of committing the error of oversimplification and reductionism.

Parallel to searching for the unity of theory and practice in temperament differences is an approach which looks, for the explanatory connection between philosophy and policy, at the historical context within which the philosophical politics belongs. If, for example, one were to emphasize that the historical milieu may influence a theory insofar as it may be directed towards a specific, contingent goal or to otherwise cohere with its historical context, the historical approach would be the path taken.

One might utilize it in exploring Locke's or Burke's political theories and policy views. After all, both Locke and Burke reflect concern with social phenomena; both express particular interest in accomplishing explicit results. Specifically, Locke's belief that

the liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust in it,

expresses his support of the Revolution of 1688 and the monarchy

of King William. One using the historical approach can point out that the impact of Locke's political theory does not rest on its specific historical relevancy, but understanding the particular events that contributed to Locke's political consciousness certainly adds to one's understanding of Locke's policy views.

A similar analysis can apply to Burke's writings, especially to his remarks condemning the French Revolution and supporting the revolt of the American colonists against the British. Burke's belief that idealized and abstract values, such as "rights of man", lack meaning and utility, is expressed as follows:

Is it because liberty in the abstract may be classed amongst the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a madman, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty? Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer who has broke prison upon the recovery of his natural rights?⁸

The French Revolution exemplifies, for Burke, exactly this kind of situation in which there is an unconditional upholding of values, such as "liberty" and "human rights" regardless of the surrounding circumstances. In another expression of this same thought, Burke says that, "we know the consequences of unnecessary physic."⁹ On the policy level, Burke is stating that a single social medicine is not appropriate in all cases that merely appear to be analogous. Burke sees the French Revolution as leading to a dangerous purge of tradition, and the American Revolution as

representing an attempt to preserve and solidify a way of life. Therefore, since it is not unreasonable to acknowledge the role of historical consciousness in Burke's (as in Locke's) thought, the historical approach might well be utilized here.

It would be possible to use this particular approach in exploring the philosophical dimension of Mill's and Oakeshott's political views. In fact, every other approach we have mentioned represents a possible direction for our case study. We are, however, reluctant to employ a primarily historical perspective - or, for that matter, an ideological, Hobbesian, deductive, or Nietzschean approach. Each of these approaches centers on a particular hypothesis concerning the type of relationship between a theorist's philosophy and politics. Each assumes that there is a single dominant category that is particularly useful, or "fitting" in some way, for discovering the two levels of thinking that contribute to philosophical politics. And, as already mentioned, we intend to leave open, at this point, the possibility that there are a number of ways in which Mill's and Oakeshott's politics are shaped by their philosophical commitments.

Furthermore, while each of the above approaches represents a particular way in which a body of political views can be shaped by a broad philosophical commitment, they neglect the tradition of controversy over just this issue - whether any particular

philosophical orientation logically entails any specific type of politics, or whether there is a weaker, or perhaps no, relationship between a theorist's two levels of thought. A sampling of the disparate answers to this question suggests that it should be, at least, acknowledged.

Bertrand Russell, for one, argues for a logical connection between a philosophical commitment to empiricism and a liberal politics.¹⁰ He points out that the importance philosophical empiricism places on having justification criteria, its insistence on the tentativeness of all verified conclusions, and the attitude of open-mindedness which accompanies the constant search for new evidence are the links which logically lead to liberalism as the practical counterpart of empiricism.

However, in contrast to Russell, René Williamson discovers a logical connection between a philosophy that espouses absolutistic, objectively true, non-contingent values which cannot be empirically verified and a democratic politics.¹¹ Williamson argues that this connection is difficult to see because the function of societal consent, crucial to democratic society, tends to be misinterpreted so as to lead to the view that a democracy requires consensual determination of values, rather than consensual agreement to, or acknowledgement of, existing values embodied in what Williamson calls "antecedent law."¹² It is not necessary for our

purposes to follow Williamson's argument step-by-step. Suffice it to say that he believes that careful conceptual analysis makes it impossible to accept anything but the latter interpretation of the role of consent in a democracy, and that this interpretation establishes a logical connection between a non-empiricist philosophy and the politics of democracy.

Just the opposite point of view is presented by Hans Kelsen. He draws a logical connection between a philosophical anti-empiricistic absolutism and political conservatism.¹³ This general philosophical outlook is typified by natural law doctrine and its central tenet that nature has immutable normative content. Since "nature" is all-encompassing and unchallengeable, by definition, the political reflections of this philosophical orientation are relatively autocratic and unchallengeable. There is, quite simply, no method in this kind of philosophy for challenge, thus engendering, according to Kelsen, a conservative and autocratic political system as a logical consequence.

At this point, then, we have a view which sees a logical connection between empiricism and liberalism, one that connects philosophical absolutism and liberal democracy, and one that connects philosophical absolutism and autocratic conservatism. And there is an entirely different position, as well, exemplified by Felix Oppenheim's view that there is no logical connection whatsoever between a theorist's philosophy and politics.¹⁴ Oppenheim

focusses on the independence of theories describing how we come to judgments and shows that a philosophical commitment can shape the former but not the latter. He then goes on to suggest that when a philosophical theory is judged to have bearing on a political theory, there might very well be what he calls a "political connection" between the two areas of concern. An example of this sort of connection might be a political value judgment about the proper role of government. Then, the outgrowth of a philosophical position (which describes how to reach judgments), plus the value judgment (about some aspect of political life), might very well be a particular view on a political issue. But, the second (political) ingredient is crucial, according to Oppenheim.

This, added to the range of alternatives considered above presents a somewhat problematic picture. Nevertheless, it provides us with a context and a take-off point for our exploration of Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophical politics. If, along with Oppenheim, we reject the thesis that a particular philosophy logically entails a particular philosophy (and our sampling of disparate views prima facie supports this), we can nonetheless maintain, again along with Oppenheim, but with additional support from Russell who states that "A man's philosophy has practical importance,"¹⁵ that one's philosophy certainly can influence political views. We are then committed to discovering relationships between two levels

of Mill's and Oakeshott's thought which are non-logical, in the narrow sense, but still functional so that knowing a theorist's philosophy deepens our understanding of his politics.

Two paths to discovering such relationships come to mind. The first is the notion of "contextual implication", developed by P. H. Nowell-Smith for one; and the second is the concept of a paradigm of thought, as used by Thomas Kuhn in his writings on the philosophy of science.

In his article, "Contextual Implication and Ethical Theory,"¹⁶ Nowell-Smith first calls attention to the fact that in ordinary usage there is a relationship of implication between thoughts or assertions which is far broader and more flexible than the relation of logical implication. This can be exemplified by imagining a situation in which a person experiencing severe pain in his arm when playing tennis, consults a physician who diagnoses a case of "tennis elbow" and prescribes a band to be wound around the painful area when playing. However, there is no lessening of the pain. When questioned, the doctor points out that the diagnosis and prescription do not logically imply that the player can expect to feel better when following the prescription. Nevertheless, is it not reasonable or normal, in some sense, for the player to expect improvement? His expectation, while logically independent of the doctor's statements, is certainly justifiable.

It is this reasonability, normalcy, or justifiability which signifies that the relation of contextual implication obtains between the doctor's statements and the player's expectations.

Contextual implication can be described by pointing out that in any given situation, there is a surrounding context or set of circumstances which make an act (verbal or not) reasonable. These surrounding circumstances are contextually implied by the act if it is reasonable under those circumstances. In terms of our example, expecting pain alleviation is contextually implied by the doctor's diagnosis and prescription.

Nowell-Smith states that

there are . . . rules which might be called rules of rational discourse, which are in some sense universal and necessary. . . . These rules are . . . necessary in the sense that they must be adopted by any rational purposive being if he is to achieve the ends for which speech is used.¹⁷

Applied to our example, Nowell-Smith's words suggest that there is a rule which connects the diagnosis and prescription with the expectation. This rule,* contextual implication, allows

* It must be emphasized that "rule" is being used very loosely here. It would be difficult, at the very least, to cite specific rules of contextual implication. Nowell-Smith's use of the term probably signifies only that guidelines (however nonformal and vague) are being followed when there is contextual implication.

one to see the expectation as rationally purposive in light of the doctor's diagnosis and prescription.

The relevance of contextual implication to our present study is that this relationship might very well hold between the philosophical level and the level of political policy views in Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophical politics. As mentioned above, we are reluctant to assume that there is a univocal relation between Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophies and politics - that the influence follows a single scheme as was exemplified by the philosophical politics of the ideologues, Hobbes, Bentham, Nietzsche, Locke and Burke. Also, through examples, the problems of demonstrating a logical connection have become clear. Still, more can be expressed in an assertion than is explicitly stated¹⁸, and there is certainly a connection between what is explicitly stated and what is implicitly stated. Our exploration is focussed, in part, on the applicability of this statement to Mill's and Oakeshott's political theories.

Certain aspects of the approach suggested by Thomas Kuhn, in The Structure of Scientific Revolution¹⁹, parallel the approach we intend to develop for our exploration.

Specifically, Kuhn argues that the development of innovative scientific theory takes place within the context of some very influential commitments held by the scientist concerning nature

and how it can be investigated. Kuhn describes these commitments as the basis for scientific practice in that scientific investigation takes place, partially, as "a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into pre-existing conceptual boxes."²⁰

The similarity between Kuhn's thesis and ours centers on this very point - that theory construction does not take place in a tabula rasa style, but that there are always impressions on the tabula which affect what subsequent impressions shall be like.*

The details and operations of these impressions - the so-called "conceptual boxes" - can be uncovered by delving into the explicitly presented scientific or political theory. And just as Kuhn does not hypothesize, in advance of actual exploration, what the conceptual boxes are like, neither do we. Once Kuhn has an idea of what these metaphysical and epistemological boxes are and how they work, he "tests them out" so to speak, and ascertains their explanatory value for other material that he has reason to believe has been analogously shaped. This is what we are doing, in our present study. Strictly speaking, the only assumption that functions in both Kuhn's and our inquiry is that there is a higher level of commitment that operates on lower level thinking and that exploration of the lower level (of

* Kuhn's approach can be described in the language of conceptual implication. The pre-existing commitments Kuhn refers to comprise the surrounding context of a particular scientific experiment which makes it "rationally purposive."

practice) is a means of comprehending the higher level (of philosophical commitment).

In order to control the possibility of any other assumptions creeping into this operating hypothesis and to preserve its crucial characteristic of having minimal content, we have adopted the concepts, Level One and Level Two, in order to denote, respectively, the body of political and social beliefs and the philosophical commitment held by the theorist. This terminology deliberately carries no presumption or prejudgment of what the Levels will contain or what the interlevel relationship will be like.

The form our study will take is determined by its nature, as described above. It is, most importantly, a case study - in the political ideas of Mill and Oakeshott, so as to carry forth, with our modifications, the previously described traditions of doing political philosophy. We do not hope to offer an exhaustive analysis of Mill and Oakeshott; for our thesis lies in the viability of our method for understanding philosophical political theory. Our first task will be, then, to examine certain key concepts or ingredients of political life as seen by Mill and Oakeshott. These include political education, social change and tradition, and the political nature of man - our Level One concepts. Our second task is the discovery of the concepts that comprise the philosophy of the Level One political ideas. These, our Level Two concepts, are the metaphysical and

epistemological beliefs held by Mill and Oakeshott. A crucial part of our study will explore the relationships between the various Level One and Level Two concepts.

The choice of Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophical politics as case study subjects will enable us also to consider the traditionally acknowledged opposition between them. For not only are Mill and Oakeshott representative of opposing traditions of political thought, but they address themselves to some of the same elements of political life. This makes an examination of Level One differences a feasible undertaking. And, both Mill and Oakeshott do genuinely philosophical political theorizing, so it is unlikely that our attempt to discover, connect, and address ourselves to the differences between two bilevelled schemes will be abortive.

This comparative dimension of our analysis grows out of our method. It seems reasonable to assume that if Mill's and Oakeshott's Level Two philosophies contribute, in some way, to our understanding of their Level One philosophies, their differences can be explored from the viewpoint that Level One - Level Two analysis gives us.

And, finally, if we are able to suggest, with plausibility, that the ways in which our two philosophers see the world are functions of broad, often unarticulated philosophical commitments uncovered through our approach, we will have provided a ground for

applying this approach to the problem of understanding philosophical politics in general, as well as apparently competing political theories. But now, this is a hypothesis for which our subsequent chapters are the first test steps.

Throughout this project, the encouragement and inspiration of Professors Abraham Edel, K. D. Irani, and Martin Golding has been nothing less than sustaining. And finally, special thanks are due my mother, Carolyn M. Zimmerman, and my husband, Michael Phillips, whose technical skills and moral support were always there for the taking.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Preston King, "An Ideological Fallacy," Politics and Experience, ed. Preston King and B. C. Parekh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 344.

² *Ibid.*, p. 363.

³ Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. and with an Introduction by Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1960), p. 25.

⁴ Jeremy Bentham, an Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, The Utilitarians (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁷ John Locke, "An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government," Society, Law and Morality, ed. Frederick A. Olafson, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 125.

⁸ Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, ed. Thomas H. D. Mahoney (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1955), p. 8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁰ Bertrand Russell, "Philosophy and Politics," Unpopular Essays (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950).

11 René de Visme Williamson, "The Challenge of Political Relativism," in The Journal of Politics 9 (May, 1947).

12 Ibid., p. 159.

13 Hans Kelsen, General Theory of Law and State (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946). This subject is discussed in the Appendix, "Natural Law Doctrine and Legal Positivism."

14 Among the articles in which Oppenheim argues for this view is his "Relativism, Absolutism, and Democracy," American Political Science Review, 44 (1950).

15 Russell, p. 16.

16 Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, s. v. 36 (1962).

17 Ibid., pp. 4 - 5.

18 G. E. Moore, Ethics (London: Home University Library, 1912), p. 25.

19 Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962).

20 Ibid., p. 5.

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CHAPTER I

MILL'S AND OAKESHOTT'S DIFFERENCES

John Stuart Mill and Michael Oakeshott are generally considered as belonging to two opposing traditions in European political philosophy. This essay explores some of their more outstanding specific differences, and attempts to develop a method for understanding the general nature of their dispute and of other such disputes, as well. This second area of investigation will seek to discover how their opposition in political theory is part of a broad complex of philosophical differences.

Their specific differences, which we shall call "issue" differences, include descriptions of political institutions and processes, and the recommendations concerning strategies and goals of political life. An examination of their issue differences leads to some of the broader questions which Mill and Oakeshott raise about politics in general. These questions include: how one can go about understanding political experience; the type of knowledge a political theorist seeks; and how political decisions should be reached.

Mill belongs to the strong European tradition in political theory which treats the human intellect as the ultimate judge and

administrator of the rules which determine virtuous behavior. He adopts the method of scientific inquiry for reaching conclusions and decisions. In fact, Mill's political theory is his attempt to develop a genuine social science, the success of which would be demonstrable by reasonably accurate predictions and the control of social phenomena. In sharp contrast, Oakeshott feels that the scientific approach is grossly inappropriate for dealing with political matters. His best known essay, "Rationalism in Politics,"¹ is an attack on theorists of the Mill genre. Oakeshott's characterization of political life as being "organic" or "holistic" helps clarify his rejection of the scientific approach. He interprets the various parts of society as being related to each other in such a way that their nature cannot be fully understood when they are considered apart from their integral place within their context. The parts of society are related as are the parts of an organism. Understanding their organic relationship is essential for understanding the nature of any one ingredient. Mill's scientific approach does not acknowledge this organicism among society's parts, and this is one reason why Oakeshott contends that Mill's is an unfruitful method for accurately describing the nature of political life. We can even suggest that Oakeshott's characterization of politics suggests that it is more closely related to art than to science. R. P. Anschutz, in comparing the utilitarianism of philosophers like Mill with Oakeshott's theory of political organicism, indicates the strength of their opposition: "the main

interest of modern political theory lies in the fight between these two schools of political thought."²

Among the outstanding differences between Mill and Oakeshott are those over (1) political education, (2) social change and progress, and (3) the nature of man. In order to focus more clearly on their divergent political views, we shall present a brief overview in each of these areas.

(1) Political education.

Both Mill and Oakeshott are in agreement that there is, properly, a field of education for politics. They disagree about almost everything else pertaining to that field. One point of issue is over the stringency with which the field can often be defined. Although both believe that political education blends into all other areas of learning and maturation, Mill is able to state, with far greater precision than Oakeshott, the details of the educational process. Mill believes it is possible to specify, in part, the areas of experience that must be studied to achieve political education, while Oakeshott feels that any division of the educational process into categories or subjects does not describe what occurs within the process.

Perhaps the most obvious opposition pertains to their respective views on how political education should be accomplished. Mill is a proponent of a carefully thought out, planned approach, the justification of which would be in its fulfillment of clearly defined and

accepted goals. Oakeshott envisions political education as an apprenticeship, a period devoted to imitation, trying out skills, trial and error - actually a process of initiation into the world of politics. For Oakeshott, the details of the process can never be completely mapped out in advance, as Mill is inclined to believe.

(2) Social change and progress.

Here, as above, their arguments emerge with little difficulty. Both believe in its possibility and value. However, this ignores far more interesting aspects of their political theories. Mill attributes such importance to innovation that many of his political recommendations are designed to maximize its possibility. It is for this reason that he urges the fostering of eccentricities among people.³ Oakeshott is much more wedded to tradition and to the "establishment". In "On Being Conservative,"⁴ he defends a conservative temperament and attitude towards change as the only one that is reasonable. This is not to say that he distrusts any attempt at modifying an accepted political practice, for this is not true of Oakeshott's conservatism. It is to say that he has a highly qualified view of the value of social or political innovation. These qualifications tend to make him emphasize the value of tradition at the expense of innovation.

(3) The nature of man.

To give this name to a category of Mill's and Oakeshott's thought is troublesome because of its ambiguity. We use the term

to refer to human characteristics including man's psychological nature, potentialities, interests and goals, modes of action in various contexts, role attributed to sensation and experience, etc.

Mill's image of man is part of his inheritance from his father. In James Mill's Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind⁵ are the beginnings of John Stuart's associationist psychology. This describes how particular experiences which are contiguous become mentally associated. That specific mental associations can be cultivated is the basis for Mill's belief that human character can be rationally improved. He feels, in fact, that possibility would be the saving grace in a morally declining environment.

Oakeshott's theory of human nature contrasts markedly with this. In his book, Experience and its Modes,⁶ for example, man is portrayed as continuously striving towards making his life within his world cohere into one organic whole, which spatial and temporal relations can never concretely describe. Furthermore, one's own subjective and necessarily prejudiced experience (in other words, opinion) is the primary data of the world. Analyzing experience as Mill tends to do would, according to Oakeshott, amount to treating it as objective data and thus ignores the fact that human opinions are reality's vital constituents.

Along these same lines, Mill tends to view experience as being analyzable, into distinct stages and ingredients. For example, sensing is stage number one. We interpret sensations as the

experiencing process proceeds. But for Oakeshott, this, too, distorts the essential subjectivity of experience. It assumes that experience is the kind of thing that can be looked at. He rejects any interpretation of experience in which its conceptualization is treated as a distinct phase, or, in fact, where any analysis at all takes place. In other words, although Mill would say that a person "has experience", Oakeshott would deem this utterance a misrepresentation. Instead, the concept should be of man as an "experiential creature".

In our cursory description of these differences over specific issues in Mill's and Oakeshott's political views, the way has been opened for many questions. In our subsequent discussion, a chapter will be devoted to a detailed exploration of each of these topics. But before exploring these, the very fact of Mill's and Oakeshott's apparent wide divergence is to be considered.

There have been a variety of attempts to analyze and understand the kind of political theory differences exemplified by Mill's and Oakeshott's theories. Approaches appear to fall into two broad categories: (1) those that reduce the various points at issue to what are considered broader, underlying differences; and, (2) those which concentrate on the logical structure or function of the political theory in question. The latter type play down the significance of the specific issue differences. We shall consider each of these categories separately.

Professor Plamenatz's view is the first to be examined.

He belongs to the first of our two broad categories. That is, he attempts to simplify what Professor Anschutz, quoted above, calls the "fight" between two types of European political philosophies. Plamenatz describes the fight as centering on opposing views about how human virtue can be acquired:

. . . one [type of political theory]. . . makes the supreme object of human endeavor the full and harmonious development of the individual, while the other declares that virtue consists in behaviour according to rules that man can discover by the use of his reason.

In this statement Plamenatz suggests that the complex of differences separating two broad schools of political thought can be adequately reduced to these two differences. They are not necessarily appropriate for Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophies, however; Oakeshott is not rule oriented, and Mill is more emphatically an individualist than Oakeshott appears to be. But this does not obscure the point of this illustration which typifies approaches tracing myriad differences to broader, more encompassing ones.

Another attempt to understand the range of differences in terms of one which is more comprehensive is Professor May Brodbeck's. Her characterization rests on the distinction between a nominalistic metaphysical orientation and a non-nominalistic, holistic view of society. According to this view, political philosophers have tended either to adopt a model of social life which is atomistic or one that is holistic. The atomistic model sees society as a spatio-temporal

arrangement of individuals. The contrasting holistic view interprets society as organically connected complexes which cannot be completely understood by reduction to the individuals who are part of it. It is pointed out by Professor Brodbeck, that ". . . holism is intimately connected with hostility toward the liberal political individualism of the western political tradition."⁸ This connection between a metaphysical model and a political attitude is explained in terms of the strength of the "cement" or whatever functions in holding together the organic whole postulated by holism. The cohesion is such that only secondary importance is attributed to the possibilities of the individual member of society. Oakeshott adopts a conservative stance in which there is coherence among members of society. It is effected through traditions and prejudices which function as the "cement". Mill, on the opposite side, is, historically, the outstanding defender of individualism. And, as we shall subsequently see, his metaphysics is unequivocally atomistic.

These exemplify attempts to explain differences in political theory by characterizing them in terms of broader and fewer differences. Although Plamenatz's approach uses values, and Brodbeck's, metaphysics, both are methodologically comparable.

Another kind of approach to understanding political theory differences concentrates on analysis of the logical structure and function of political theory. A question that such an analysis could lead to is, "What does a particular formulation of a political theory

accomplish?" We shall consider some assertions of Philip W.

Cummings, David Easton, and Sir Isaiah Berlin as providing examples of this approach.

Cummings believes that rather than seek to explain the content differences in traditional political philosophy, contemporary philosophers rethink the concepts that have been historically significant. These analyses can lead to terms such as "general will", or "social contract" being treated as

models of the political process. When so interpreted, new sorts of questions arise, questions appropriate to the relation between a model and reality rather than to the analysis of an empirical description.

The model building approach makes comparative political theory a descriptive study. The terms we have called "significant" function, within the theory, as convenient representations of a complicated procedure whose description corresponds to political life. A primary task of the model-constructing theorist is justifying the relationship between his model and the set of conditions he wishes to represent. Thus, we characterize the model building approach as being one of logical analysis of a theory's structure, rather than as analysis of empirical issues.

The systems analysis approach to political theory is the full-blown version of what we have described as model building. David Easton is a leading proponent of this analytic technique.

Easton's systems analysis starts with the assumption that

political life is a system of empirical variables that are (1) mechanistically connected, and (2) logically separate from an external environment which exerts influence (mechanically) on the political system. Easton feels that this approach leads to a high degree of empirical accuracy which is testable through predictions. The systems approach provides a mechanical method for recognizing differences, as well as one for resolving conflicts.

In approaches such as this one, explaining the particular issue differences amounts to understanding why they arise where they do within the theory's context. Plamenatz and Brodbeck sought simpler, but descriptive, differences as explanations, Cummings and Easton seek to understand the logic of political theory arguments.

This categorization of approaches makes it possible to place Sir Isaiah Berlin's approach with that of the analysts. Although Berlin does not construct models and he feels that comparative politics goes beyond micro-description á la Easton, Sir Isaiah is nevertheless concerned with the logic of political theory. A clear statement of this occurs in his article, "Does Political Theory Still Exist?" where he attempts to justify asking the traditional questions of political philosophy in spite of the effects of T. H. Weldon's obituary notice. The proper method of dealing with broad points of dispute among opposing theories is, according to Sir Isaiah, to regard them as symptomatic of basic philosophical differences. These differences are about "the all but permanent ways in which we think, decide,

perceive, judge, and not about the data of experience", the issue differences themselves.¹⁰ In this sense, Sir Isaiah is concerned with the logic of diverse political positions. He is focussing on the relationship between political theory differences and one's general philosophical commitment.

It is now possible to summarize the above material. The wide divergence between Mill and Oakeshott was, first, indicated by describing three issue differences, which will subsequently be examined in detail. Next, we considered some broad views about the nature of such differences. These seemed to divide into those attempting to describe complex differences more simply, and those who feel that the differences belong primarily to a theory's logical structure rather than its content. Our own approach to understanding the nature of these and other broad issue differences will emerge in the course of our exploration of Mill's vs. Oakeshott's views on the three topics already mentioned. In effect, Mill's and Oakeshott's differences will serve as a kind of case study for developing our approach.

This aspect of our inquiry can be clarified by going back to Sir Isaiah Berlin's analysis of pervasive political differences. His analysis of these differences does not specify what the permanent categories of thought, judgment, etc., could be. The fact that the various categories of thought are not precisely exemplified is significant in formulating our project as the exploration of the

nature of Mill's and Oakeshott's dispute. Sir Isaiah's view, that specific arguments have some kind of relationship to differences about fundamental thought categories, suggests a possible approach to our own exploration of such differences. Our approach shall consider possible forms these categories of thought and judgment could take, and the modes in which they relate to Mill's and Oakeshott's three specific issue differences.

Thus, our project can be interpreted as a continuation of Sir Isaiah Berlin's thought. The first step is to examine in detail several of the specific issue differences between Mill and Oakeshott. As has been mentioned, these shall be: political education, social change and progress, and the nature of man. This step leads to the second part of our project, developing a critical, systematic, analytic scheme for elucidating and comparing these concrete, specific differences. Although we cannot specify the details of such a scheme at this point, we can describe and justify certain general assumptions about its structure which are made in order to initiate our inquiry.

It is our view that political theories can be analyzed as having two distinct levels. We shall subsequently refer to these as Level One and Level Two. Level One of Mill's and Oakeshott's political theories includes the specific issue differences we have mentioned. Their Level Two's include the parts of each one's general philosophical systems which, in various ways, increase our understanding

of their respective First Levels. Therefore, in the first part of our project, we shall be primarily concerned with the Level One; and in our second part, we shall be involved with Second Level material.

Several important questions concern why this analysis is plausible, what we base the level distinction on (how do we draw a line between levels?), and what the possible relationships between the two levels are. Each shall be considered separately.

Our first point concerns the credibility of our suggestion that political theories can be understood in terms of a bifurcated structure. Paraphrasing part of Kant's philosophy is helpful here. In Kant's first Critique, he maintains that in the acquisition of knowledge, the knower contributes a necessary ingredient to the raw data of sensation. Sensations, alone, form no coherent pattern of experience. The structure, order, or arrangement into which the data fall in order to become cognitive experience is imposed upon the data by the knower.

Here we have a suggestion that there are, in a sense, two distinct kinds of operations in acquiring knowledge. We can refer to these as "levels of operations". The First Level consists of the collection of pure sensations. These do not, by themselves, form cognitive knowledge. A Second Level operation is necessary to have knowledge. This is like a lens which mediates between the naked eye and one's vision of the world. The lens, or the Second Level operation,

works on the First Level in acquiring coherent knowledge. The First Level then can be understood as being organized or structured by the Second Level operations.

An analogy between this interpretation of Kant's philosophy and the approach to be utilized in this essay can be drawn. Just as an assertion, "I know that . . ." analyzes into a First and Second Level, we feel that the political theories of Mill and Oakeshott can be understood in terms of two levels. The Second Level constructs a philosophical theory out of a collection of First Level political views, just as the Kantian Second Level lens constructs a system of knowledge out of a group of sensations. This analogy obviously must be qualified insofar as for Mill and Oakeshott, but not for Kant, the Level One political views can stand, comprehensibly, on their own. However, for both Kant and Mill and Oakeshott, the Second Level operates on the First Level material so that understanding Level Two contributes to discerning what takes place on Level One.

The next question pertains to how one judges whether any of Mill's and Oakeshott's assertions belong on the First or Second Levels; or even, whether any assertions can overlap both levels. Again, it is convenient to work with an example from the history of philosophy. In this case, we shall refer to Hume's theory of causation.

The terms which are used in talking about Hume's description of the conditions upon which one bases a statement, "A causes B", are "regular sequence" or "constant conjunction". His position

is that the evidence supporting a causal statement is the repeated observation of a pattern between phenomena. This observed pattern is followed by a psychological association. When the association becomes sufficiently strong so that observing the antecedent in the pattern precedes one's expectation of its consequent, the foundation is laid for stating that A causes B. But more than this can be said about Hume's causal theory. It is important to acknowledge that the details of his theory can be linked with his empiricism. In other words, Hume's empiricism, his belief that all knowledge about the world originates in sense impressions, has a definite relationship to his account of causation.

Examining each of these parts of Hume's philosophy separately provides a means of distinguishing our Level One from Level Two. These two areas of thought have different functions insofar as they contribute to Hume's overall, comprehensive philosophical view.

When Hume makes particular statements about the nature of causation, i.e., when he identifies a cause and effect relation as the occurrence of the regular conjunction of two variables, he is referring directly to phenomena in the world. However, in the statements which make Hume an empiricist, such as his view that all phenomenal knowledge is ultimately traceable to impressions, events in the world are referred to, but in addition, these statements refer to his assertions about cause and effect.

This exemplifies the principle for the Level One-Level Two

distinction. Our Level One corresponds to Hume's causal theory. It refers to objects and events in the world, specifically, political and social phenomena. Our Level Two pertains to the world as well, but its distinctive property is that it also refers to material of Level One. Thus, the general metaphysical and epistemological views of Mill and Oakeshott make up Level Two.

This leaves open the possibility for overlap. As we have said, it is necessary for a statement to refer to another (First Level) statement in a philosophical theory for it to be Second Level. But, as our Hume example indicated, a Second Level statement can talk about the world as well. However, this is not its distinguishing, or necessary condition.

Let us briefly reconsider Kant in order to see if our principle for distinguishing the two levels is consistent with that earlier part of our discussion. We recall that we applied the concept of the First Level to the raw sensory data. Ordering, arranging, actually conceptualizing, was identified as a Second Level operation. It appears that any allusion to the raw data of sense refers directly to what originates in the world^{*}. The ordering

* A difficulty in speaking about Kant is that, strictly speaking, it is impossible to speak of the world-in-itself, that is, as unordered by the knower. However, this does not affect the force of our argument as it is still possible to speak of sensations as arising from the world - even though it is as yet unknown.

categories operate on that sense data and consequently construct the world, but only insofar as there is sense data (First Level material) for them to work on. This does reflect the principle of level distinction, as exemplified in Hume's philosophy. For both Kant and Hume there appear to be two levels of assertions differing with respect to their primary function in the whole philosophical theory. It is our opinion that Two Levels, distinguished in this way, can be discovered in any philosophical theory and, therefore, in J. S. Mill's and Michael Oakeshott's political theories.

The three specific topics to be examined in our subsequent detailed discussion of Mill and Oakeshott will, therefore, be treated as belonging to the First Level. They all refer directly to the world. This is clearer in the case of our first two topics, political education and social change and practice, than for the third, theory of man. Ambiguity arises from the fact that a theory about the nature of man can be interpreted as being relevant to a subject such as education. This possibility causes confusion about whether these two topics are First or Second Level material. However, our scheme does allow for the possibility of overlap between levels. Perhaps Oakeshott's and Mill's theories of man refer to the world and, in addition, to other areas in each one's Level One political views. In that case, certain assertions about human nature will be First Level; others, Second Level. This is a question that will have to remain open until each specific area is considered.

We can now turn to the third of our tasks - clarification of the possible modes of relationship between the two levels. Specific examples will again be used in order to have data from which general principles can be extracted.

Our examples will be based on Kant and Hume, again, and on Aristotle's Politics.^{*} These three philosophical examples reveal that in each case the Second Level is related differently to the First Level. Thus, the possibility of an even wider plurality of relationships is suggested. Discovering their specific nature would be one of the results of analysis.

For Kant, the Second Level clearly can be interpreted as providing, for the First Level, principles for meaningfulness. Without the logical operation of the Second Level, the First Level data could not be objects of cognition. The Kantian forms and categories actually impose conditions for logical possibility on sensations. They give intelligibility to sensations; they include the conditions by which changes occur; and they provide the basis for differentiation or specification among entities.¹¹ Therefore, the model for the relationship between the levels that reflects Kant's philosophy is a logical one. It defines the logical structure of the First Level assertions.

* It should be noted that the only criteria for selecting examples is their relative uncontroversial nature with respect to the history of philosophy, and their convenience and clarity with which they illustrate the point in question.

Hume's Second Level empiricism has a different type of relationship to his First Level causal theory. His empiricism principles appear to place certain restrictions on the First Level. Specifically, Hume's empiricism will not allow his causal theory to be stated as anything but as reports and consequences of having impressions. The mode of relationship between Hume's Second and First Levels appears, then, to be one of constraint. The Second Level philosophy limits the First Level material to a specific type which in this case is descriptive of sense experience.

We include an additional example, from Aristotle's Politics, in this context in order to show a different mode of relationship, one unlike Hume's or Kant's. The specific part of the Politics providing this example is in Book 1, where Aristotle's belief is stated that man can best lead a worthwhile life in a social context. This can be seen as Level One material; it refers directly to the qualities of ordinarily experienced life. Asking why Aristotle feels this is so leads us to his Second Level. His rationale centers on his view of man as having certain capabilities. These include thinking, judging, and communicating the outcome of reasoning. In order for these capacities to be functional, man must live in a social environment, with others. A hermit does not use these distinctively human strengths.

Men, along with other living creatures, have inherent purposiveness, and this is discovered by observing how they function and what they are capable of. Developing one's capacities is necessary

for a worthwhile existence. Ignoring them and letting them atrophy is a kind of sin. Aristotle's teleological point of view explains his statements about the requisite conditions for a worthwhile life. In this case, the Second Level clarifies the First Level. The reasons for valuing social life are presented in Aristotle's teleological view of man. In a sense, also, Aristotle's teleology can be seen as placing constraints on the style of life one can properly adopt. An isolated, non-societal life would conflict with what Aristotle sees as man's natural inclinations. However, this constraining mode of Level relationship can be accounted for under the mode discussed above, that of clarification. Specifically, the restrictions that Aristotle places on certain forms of life, namely, one that is asocial, are clarified in terms of his teleological view of nature.

The following summarizes our central points:

TABLE 1

EXAMPLES OF THE TWO LEVELS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS		
Level One	Level Two	Mode of Relationship
Kantian notion of pure, raw sense data	Necessary conditions, for cognition of data	Logical
Hume's theory of causation	Empiricist theory that all experience originates in sense impressions	Constraining
Aristotle's view that social life is requisite for a good life	Teleological view of the world	Clarificatory

TABLE 1 - Continued

Level One	Level Two	Mode of Relationship
J. S. Mill's and Michael Oakeshott's assertions about political education, social change and progress, theory of man.	To be discovered in our study	To be discovered in our study

We have seen, through our three examples from the history of philosophy that analysis of a philosophical theory into Levels One and Two does have plausibility, what the principle for this bifurcation is, and what forms the interlevel relationships can take. Although we have exemplified three modes of relationship, it is not unreasonable to expect that more kinds of relationships will emerge from our study of Mill and Oakeshott. All we can assume, in advance, is the fact that this kind of analysis is possible, that the distinction between levels is drawn in terms of the referents of the assertions, and that the Second Level functions in numerous respects to the first.

The final matter to be discussed here concerns the possible usefulness of this kind of exploration and analysis. What are the sorts of conclusions one would expect from it? Using our conceptual scheme as a method for understanding the nature of differences between Mill and Oakeshott involves a detailed analysis of the structure of each theorist's philosophy. This involves rethinking a traditional and pervasive dispute in political philosophy. Practical implications can emerge from such exploration. For example, it is possible that

relating the First Level issue differences to Second Level differences will sharpen our perception of what the dispute is about. This, alone, is a worthwhile result. A possible consequence of this result would be the refocussing on the significance of the dispute: instead of emphasizing the fact that Mill's and Oakeshott's theories directly confront each other, concern could shift to the possibility that in Mill and Oakeshott we have two different models of political life and that it would be worthwhile to concentrate on their comparative uses.

Perhaps, by considering Mill's and Oakeshott's political theories as a case study of this kind of philosophical investigation, subsequent analysis, involving other philosophical disputes, will be seen as worthwhile.

An unjustified assumption of all these suggestions is that our exploration will reveal that Mill and Oakeshott have widely disparate Second Level commitments. Then, because

. . . no two propositions can contradict one another unless they are answers to the same question and questions are the same only if their presuppositions and not merely their verbal or symbolic forms are the same, ¹₂

and by replacing "presuppositions" with "Second Level Assertions", we will be able to draw conclusions concerning the traditional view that Mill and Oakeshott represent diametrically opposed political philosophers.

But, irrespective of the justifiability of this, or any other

assumption made in this discussion, is the continuing validity of Sir Isaiah Berlin's conception of how productive political philosophy can still be done.

As we embark, therefore, on our exploration of Mill's and Oakeshott's theories, our goal can be formulated in Sir Isaiah's words, which, in spite of their vagueness, reflect our hope: the development of a "coherent and enduring conceptual system" which will provide insight into each philosophical theory.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (New York: Basic Books Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 1 - 36.
- 2 R. P. Anschutz, The Philosophy of J. S. Mill (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 9 - 10.
- 3 John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, ed. Aubrey Castell (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1947), p. 16
- 4 Michael Oakeshott, "On Being Conservative," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, pp. 168 - 196.
- 5 James Mill, Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind (2 vols.; London:
- 6 Michael Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).
- 7 John Plamenatz, The English Utilitarians (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), p. 11.
- 8 The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, s.v. "Holism and Individualism in History and Social Science," by W. H. Dray.
- 9 Ibid., s.v. "History of Political Philosophy," by Philip W. Cummings.
- 10 Sir Isaiah Berlin, "Does Political Theory Still Exist," Philosophy, Politics and Society, ed. Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman (2nd series; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 25.
- 11 Based on discussions with Professor K. D. Irani, City University of New York.
- 12 Donald S. MacKay, "On Supposing and Presupposing," The Review of Metaphysics, II (September, 1943), 5 - 6.

CHAPTER II

MILL AND OAKESHOTT ON POLITICAL EDUCATION

Nowhere in J. S. Mill's and Michael Oakeshott's political theories are their differences more apparent than in their respective views on political education. In their writings on political education, the term is used broadly. Political education refers to both education for citizenship as well as for political leadership, as for the role of legislator or statesman. Their differences become obvious over issues such as the proper goals of political education, the details of the educative process, and the criteria for evaluating both of these. Although Mill and Oakeshott occasionally sound quite similar in their views on the subject matter and method of political education, the manner in which each reaches his conclusions and the stringency with which each defines the realm of political education are entirely different. Perhaps this suggests that each philosopher has his own meaning for terms such as "educated".

One of the interesting aspects of their differences on education is that both views are very persuasive. It is difficult to judge one more adequate than the other. The philosophical significance of this will be explored in our subsequent Level Two, in which we shall consider the

various modes in which Mill's and Oakeshott's specific political differences arise. Our First Level investigation, into their specific political views and recommendations, will provide the material for our Second Level analysis of their differences.

Our decision to consider their views on political education first is based only upon the fact that both Mill and Oakeshott felt that education was one of the more important aspects of political life, and their opinions about it are very clearly expressed in their writings. Our examination will begin with a brief overview of their differences.

J. S. Mill sees education of citizens in all phases of their lives as a vital ingredient in any program for political improvement. Decisions concerning the details of the education process follow from what a scientific study of the human mind reveals. This psychological investigation shows both the mind's capacities and the causal connections that are requisite for bringing them to fruition. The process of political education then amounts to the careful cultivation of human rational capacities. It is, as any scientific procedure, subject to experimental revision. This means that continual conscious evaluation is an integral part of the educational process.

Michael Oakeshott, in sharp contrast, denies that genuine education for political life can follow or be part of an overall plan. Nor can it be rationally prescribed to take advantage of an intellectual model. Learning political savoir faire (whether it be for statesmanship

or citizenship) is, according to Oakeshott, something like learning to brew a good pot of chicken soup. This sort of skill can't be acquired through following a recipe, no matter how detailed. Producing a culinary success is the result of a pinch of this and a dollop of that. The skilled chef continually tastes, as he produces his creation, but he cannot specify exactly what he is tasting to find out. Political success is reached in much the same way. Learning how to participate in areas of politics is effected as an initiation process, by a sensitive teacher who is concerned with awakening sensitivities of the pupil.

The persuasive impact of each view emerges even in this brief summary. A proponent of Mill's approach would be on firm ground in criticizing Oakeshott's failure to incorporate criteria of adequacy into his scheme. Part of Mill's strength lies in the iterative effect which follows from the fact that his scientific approach leads to predictions, and consequently, makes evaluation possible. Mill can be much more specific and detailed about the proper method and goals of political education than can Oakeshott. This is because Mill sees critical, objective inspection as crucial in developing and maintaining a fruitful educational system; Oakeshott, on the other hand, regards this kind of conscious attention to the process as being completely inappropriate in light of how the educational process works. It is interesting to note that Oakeshott's view does not disintegrate in light of its antagonist's strengths. There is a strong, common sense

credibility in it. Recipes, as well as the most detailed descriptions of technique, physical laws, or anatomy, will not tell one how to do certain things, like cook or ride a bicycle. Perhaps adequacy rather than "convincing" is more suitable as a criterion.

At this point we can turn to detailed Level One analysis. Besides being informative in itself, this provides the material for the second part of our project, the Second Level analysis of what we will have, by then, discovered as the First Level differences. We shall begin with Michael Oakeshott's theory of education, one of his main concerns.

Specific terms occur with regularity in Oakeshott's discussions on education and his protagonists' elaborations of them. Although some occur much more frequently than others in ordinary everyday language, they all have rather special functions in his presentation. An examination of his educational theory must clarify his use of concepts such as the "intimations of a society," the "various conversations and literatures of mankind," and the process of "imitation". Understanding what he means by these terms is requisite for getting a grasp of his beliefs, which are elusive in the very fact that they declare themselves to be non-scientific - thus, lacking the meaning and judging criteria upon which understanding often rests.

Besides clarifying what these concepts mean, we shall see that part of Oakeshott's educational theory is directed towards showing what is wrong with the view he sees as diametrically opposed to his, which Mill typifies.

In this critical part of his theory, he uses the concepts "rationalistic" and "ideological". These refer to the kind of educational approach which begins by stating comprehensive guiding principles or values. The educational process is then seen as the means of realizing these goals. Success is interpreted in terms of the degree to which these goals are reached. The techniques of scientific method are not necessary for a rationalistic, ideological political education. However, it is clear that this approach would fit into a rationalistic scheme readily, providing a standard method for evaluating a program's success. Oakeshott's main point of contention with this style of political education is that it is inappropriate for preparing anyone, on any level, for political activity. It does not deal with what Oakeshott feels are the genuine dimensions of political experience, only their abstract representations.

One philosopher of education, Kingsley Price, in surveying the history of his special field, speculates about primitive education as follows:

There was probably a time when human culture was transmitted spontaneously from one generation to another. The young of the species cannot survive to maturity unless they assimilate some beliefs about the world, some attitudes toward it, and some skill in solving the practical problems it presents.¹

This quotation is helpful to us, because although Professor Price is referring to a primitive kind of education, it sounds uncannily like Oakeshott's portrayal of political education in general. In fact,

Oakeshott never departs from this image of transmission of skills, responses, beliefs, and such, as an unconscious process of absorption. It is accomplished by the pupil's conscious and unconscious limitation of the teacher.

This seems to be consistent with the fact that Oakeshott sees politics as part of a fundamental, ingrown, traditional cultural heritage. This would be in accordance with his notions of learning political behavior. However, this characterization does not completely describe Oakeshott's view of politics. Although he does categorize political knowledge as part of a society's basic, traditional possessions, he sees politics as extending beyond tradition. One certainly has to have a carefully cultivated empathy with a society's traditions in order to function well in its political area. Unconscious absorption and imitation are certainly important. But Oakeshott goes on from this point in his admission that political education is directed towards political activity and practice. Knowing politics may be partially achieved relatively passively, but this knowledge leads to action and further knowledge. We can, therefore, see that Oakeshott emphasizes, but does not limit his view of politics to, what is present in a cultural inheritance.

Let us return, briefly to our example about cooking. Oakeshott, himself, uses this art as an illustration for explaining the process of political education.² The "know-how" of turning out an excellent pot of soup is certainly passed on through generations. The child learns

to cook by watching, helping, and imitating, the teacher. The skill is acquired as during an apprenticeship. However, the apprentice's soup is certainly not identical in taste to the teacher's. Acquiring the skill involves imitation, but only insofar as it enables one to grasp on to the skill so as to make it one's own. This last sentence is crucially important in understanding Oakeshott's educational philosophy. The notion of grasping a skill is, itself, significant. The choice of this word rather than others is important. Analyzing its use will lead to several central points which Oakeshott makes concerning political education.

What sorts of things, we may ask, does the word "grasp" most ordinarily have as its objects? The obvious answer is particular, concrete, empirical entities such as doorknobs and elbows. However, when we speak of grasping an idea, the meaning of a statement, or the skill of politics, the concept is being used by means of an analogy to its primary meaning. Oakeshott and his proponents repeatedly use the concepts of "grasping" and "concreteness" in speaking of politics. For example, from "Political Education":

"What we require is not so much a definition of politics from which to deduce the character of political education, as an understanding of political activity . . . [and] to understand an activity is to know it as a concrete whole."³ Oakeshott is focussing on the fact that politics is an activity which consists of a set of concrete entities.

Understanding the nature of an activity is impossible without knowing

the concrete specific acts which comprise it. Oakeshott thus points out the fruitlessness of trying to grasp abstract, generalized concepts, such as "politics" interpreted in any other sense but the Oakeshottian one. Politics is the kind of thing that can be grasped, according to Oakeshott's view, because it is a concrete set of entities - as concrete as the previously mentioned doorknob.

In another of his articles on political education, "The Study of Politics in a University," this line of thought continues. Here, one gets the impression that political education deals with tools and their uses. And, again, this accords with the idea that political education involves grasping concrete, particular things. In this article Oakeshott defines political education as "learning . . . how to recognize and make something of ourselves."⁴ Hence, political education is a kind of self-recognition. He makes it clear that this process is a concrete activity which involves particular, individual acts exclusively. What Oakeshott says about the nature of one's "self" supports this comment: "Selves are not rational abstractions, they are historic personalities, they are among the components of the world of human achievements."⁵ Again, we see the emphasis on the concrete, the particular - i.e., objects that can be grasped. Furthermore, Oakeshott believes that one's self is inextricably part of a social and political context. And it is through this involvement in a context that the self acquires its particularity and uniqueness. Any number of examples are illustrative of this principle. Even an uncomplicated

inanimate object like a knife acquires a character that distinguishes it from others of, perhaps, the same shape, size, etc., through the particular context in which it functions.

Therefore, one cannot participate in or understand education without acknowledging its context as a necessary condition. The context is what is ordinarily called "civilization." It is in his characterization of civilization, that the typical Oakeshottian emphasis on concrete particularity shines through.

What makes up a particular civilization? We can answer in terms of a specific example. When one describes his visit to, say, the Mayan ruins at Chichen-Itza, does he describe that ancient civilization by presenting detailed accounts of the pyramids, ball-courts, and other artifacts? The answer must be negative. The remnants of a civilization have been described, not the civilization, itself. The civilization led to the building of the structures and to the manufacture of the various sundries. The Mayan civilization, in a sense prior to the super-structure of artifacts, consists of the complex of mental and physical habits, shared attitudes towards external entities, in fact, all the accepted, ordinary manners of dealing with and participating in every-day situations. The civilization can be understood, loosely, as the personality of a society. It is what is in mind when asserting that the Maya are unlike the Aztecs.

As we have said, Oakeshott defines education as the process by which one discovers his place within a special context called a

civilization. This definition could be objected to as being inconsistent with Oakeshott's own polemic against rationalistic, ideological political education. The notion of "finding one's place in civilization" can be accused of being a rationalistic guiding principle. But, if we are clear about what he means by the notion of "finding one's place", the objection loses much of its force. It means, to Oakeshott, getting a hold on, or a grasping of, the way of life in a society.

Let us note what sorts of things compose the civilization in which one seeks, in education, his place. The nature of civilization's ingredients is discovered by seeing how they function. And as is suggested in "The Study of Politics in a University," all the components of civilization are instruments for carrying on one's life. Civilization's components are to be used.⁶ In other words, they function, according to Oakeshott's theory, as tools. Finding one's place is learning how to use them. And learning how to use tools well is the imitative, initiation process we previously described. It is an osmosis-like procedure, and cannot be formulated in terms of universal, guiding rules.

This image of learning to use tools is very important to Oakeshott's theory. Oakeshott has a tendency to refer specifically to the discreet facets of civilization as "languages" or as the "conversations" between the members of a society. We can recall how we learned to speak in a particular language, and, thus, discover how similar it is to learning to use a tool.

Therefore, let us briefly consider learning to use a language and a tool, and then apply our impressions to the task of getting deeper insight into Oakeshott's educational theory. Learning a language is certainly accomplished by performing specific, concrete speech acts. First, the instructor is imitated, then one attempts communications on one's own. Achievement is demonstrated through successful communication, i. e., through proper use. Analogously, how does one learn to use a wire whisk, an instrument for beating up eggs? By actually picking one up and whipping it around, in imitation of the teacher's wrist movements. In other words, by actually making specific use of the instrument.

Oakeshott does not explain in great detail what sorts of tools one should become familiar with in order to do politics successfully. He is vague concerning an academic political curriculum and purposefully so. After all, there is no formal program for a successful apprenticeship; individual mentors have their own styles which they can adjust to fit an individual student's needs. Oakeshott would probably recommend political internships as effective educative methods, programs in which internes work in various capacities with persons involved in politics. These are actually political apprenticeships. He does say that the academic study of historical and comparative politics is useful in a supplementary way, but only insofar as these studies awaken the student's sensitivity to the political traditions of his society.

Let us go over the various images that have followed from

Oakeshott's definition. We first noted that Oakeshott's choice of certain concepts, such as grasping is suggestive. Analysis of this concept led to that of the concrete educational context, namely, civilization. This, in turn, led to the introduction of a notion of a particular tool with which one becomes acquainted by actual use. Our analysis of what it means to grasp and our interest in Oakeshott's use of the concept came into play at this point, because tools are clearly objects which it makes literal sense to talk of grasping. This is because they are concrete, experienceable, objects. In much the same way, a language is grasped insofar as it is a tool. As we can clearly see, the emphasis on concrete particularity, which we started with, is consistently strong throughout.*

A few additional words must be said about this important concept. "Concreteness," "particularity," "individuality" - all

* In "The Study of Politics in a University," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (New York: Basic Books Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), Oakeshott distinguishes between elementary, vocational, and university education. In his description of each, he relies strongly on the concepts we have been analyzing, such as "grasping" and "concreteness." For example, in elementary education one learns to handle the tools for communication, but does not yet understand what the tools' use is. Vocational education consists in learning how to use the tool so as to acquire a product; this particular skill is the technique of living in one's current milieu. Oakeshott distinguishes university education from the other two types insofar as "it is concerned with the management of explanatory languages . . . and not prescriptive languages." (p. 310). Its subject matter is what is unique about it, for its concern lies with why the already acquired skills and tools are suitable, appropriate ones. We can see that each educational phase involves getting a grasp of a concrete, particular instrument. The details of the activity of grasping are different for each phase; nevertheless, each phase involves how to grasp and handle a tool.

terms descriptive of what one can grasp - lead us, by their meanings, to the notions of uniqueness and singularity. Oakeshott sees the subject matter of education as discreet, separate, non-abstract experiences. His emphasis on concreteness amounts to a playing down of any procedures which involve categorization or classification, because classification necessarily involves selection and abstraction of certain aspects of a group of entities which become those upon which the classification is based. If we are correct in interpreting Oakeshott's continual emphasis on both the act of grasping and on concreteness as indicating his belief that the subject matter of political education is unique and, consequently, impossible to classify or at least distorted by classification, this is useful in understanding his rejection of Mill's approach to political education.

We have mentioned Oakeshott's animosity to the type of political education he describes as rationalistic or ideological. He would describe Mill's approach in these terms. Misguided approaches to political education begin by stating a set of premeditated, universal, uncontroversial principles. These are the ideology of a society. They are the goals which are deemed worth pursuing in that society. The ideological principles are then supplemented by rules of technique which state how the goals are to be implemented. What is taught, then, is the general, accepted ideology, the techniques for achieving the ends described in it, and the methods for ascertaining how well the techniques are working.

Oakeshott feels that ideological political education is inadequate for several reasons. It misrepresents the nature of political goals because it assumes that it is possible to state uncontroversial goals, independent of and prior to actual participation in political situations. This would be a necessary condition of the goals' acting as guides to political life. However, general principles do not occur and function in this manner, according to Oakeshott. The ideological process reverses the manner in which they actually do function. What in fact happens is that general principles arise from concrete, particular political situations as part of a society's tradition. They are the result of the political process rather than its initiator and guide.⁷

A related difficulty is that the universality and generality of ideological principles tends to distort what politics is actually like. Ideological political education emphasizes its guiding principles to such an extent, that they become treated as literally true facts. This is also a misrepresentation of their nature, for as we have seen, Oakeshott regards the content of political life as concrete, particular, graspable events. The emphasis of ideological politics on universal principles neglects politics' essential particularity. It results in treating abstract terms as if they accurately reflect actual political phenomena. Oakeshott's views on this subject can be illustrated by examining the content and function of general, universal slogans which might occur in the context of ideological political education.

Such slogans are stressed at the expense of actual political facts, namely, individual practical political situations. As examples, let us consider two slogans, "the sovereignty of the people", and "the equality of all people under law". These represent political goals which are stated as part of a society's ideology. They might have persuasive and cohesive force within that society and Oakeshott would admit their value as such. They become problematic, however, when they are emphasized to the degree that the particular, individual political procedures they represent are underplayed because the slogans are treated as describing actual, realizable states. When political education teaches such slogans, it has a tendency to ignore the fact that the slogans do not represent actual states of affairs. Neither do they describe possible situations that it is reasonable to aim for. This, then, is the primary danger of teaching politics ideologically or rationalistically. The realities of political life, i. e., the specific procedures, demands, confrontations of interests, and the like, are forced to the background by the slogan's appeal.

This is not to say that slogans emerging from rationalism and ideology are without political value. When interpreted accurately, and not as in the above examples, they are useful indicators of the political traditions which are so crucial a dimension of social life. In this light, we can interpret our first example of a slogan as referring to our political tradition of insisting ". . . that procedures must be provided for ensuring that the policies of rulers shall be criticized in

light of their effect on the lives of the ruled,"⁸ our second slogan, to the traditional practice of incorporating in our judicial and legislative systems specific procedures for safeguarding impartiality in making and administering the law. In other words, the danger of sloganizing is that the particular facets of political life that slogans represent may be obscured by the subtle persuasive forces associated with such political slogans. Consequently, when political education stresses ideological principles, the practical, traditional conditions from which the ideology has emerged may be neglected, if not ignored. Thus, there is always the possibility of the ideology's becoming an instrument for the will of whoever is most persuasive. Ideological political education, as Oakeshott means it, can lead to a perversion of political life in which any normative element at all can be justified (by skillful rhetoric) in terms of a carefully formulated ideology; so that those valuable political values and traditions which have evolved and developed along with the other elements of civilization are consciously and thoroughly eradicated. This is why Oakeshott sees ideology or rationalism as an inappropriate means for preparing to deal with every-day political phenomena.

Another way of focussing on Oakeshott's view of the mistake of ideological political education is to focus on the ideologist's assumption that there is a clearly defined end which he aims for in much the same way that an engineer has a model for a bridge he intends to build or someone going on a journey has his route plotted on a map, before

he embarks. The mistake that the ideological educator makes is that he looks around ". . . for the equivalent of bridges to be built or ports to be steered to."⁹ But Oakeshott points out that, practically speaking, there is no one model to be fulfilled, no agreed-upon destination to be aimed for. In this crucial respect, politics is unlike technical enterprises. The very fact that the goals are open and subject to continual examination is what distinguishes political life from the other two manners of activities. Ideological politics' approach pretends that there is a model for ideal political life. Oakeshott argues that there is no such thing.¹⁰ The fallacy of ideological political education, in light of this argument, is that it follows a model which is incorrect. The model does not correspond to the essential realities of political life.

Oakeshott associates the mistakes of the ideological approach with the scientific, empirical treatment of political life. The scientific approach sees the study of politics as an empirical science. The politician becomes a skilled data collector, maker of empirical generalizations, and predictor. The errors of this approach are similar to the problems of the ideological approach, because the rules, concepts and categories of empirical science are inadequate, distorting modes of expression for the concrete, particular data that comprise politics. The very fact that the scientist's goal is to draw generalizations from discrete experiences is sufficient to indicate its inadequacy. Empirical generalizations, although based on particular facts, are abstractions

from groups of facts. They classify particular facts as falling under a general statement. Thus, the error is that of the ideological approach: the essential particularity, concrete factuality, and uniqueness of political events are neglected in favor of the social scientist's abstract empirical generalizations. The scientific approach searches for general rules, but these say nothing that is literally true about the individual units that are functional. Education in the techniques of science is, consequently, of little import in dealing with the individual units that one encounters in the political context. The intricacies, complexity, dynamics, and fluidity of social and political life are not adequately represented in a universal statement that is based on, but is nevertheless an abstraction from, such crucial qualities.*

Oakeshott's rejection of the scientific study of politics and society can be defended by focussing on the essentially amoral character of empirical description and the undeniable normative facet present in political dealings. The various modes of justifying political acts have normative dimensions which a purely empirical approach can never reflect, without surreptitiously introducing some moral standpoint - which amounts to a departure from a strictly empirical approach. The

* Perhaps Oakeshott is reversing the familiar adage in his criticisms of educational systems that result in "not seeing the trees for the forest." Oakeshott might argue that if one wants a healthy forest, what should he concentrate on, if not the states of health of its component parts, the trees?

political or social scientist collects data, describes correlations between variables, and makes probabilistic predictions about the future, but he cannot, from empiricism alone, justify any decision or act as being morally defensible. It is this particular inadequacy that Oakeshott has in mind when, in "Political Education", he criticizes the scientific approach to politics as not being what he calls "a concrete manner of activity",¹¹ but merely a disconnected, incoherent response to appetites. In other words, descriptive science can lead to desired situations, but the question of the desirability of the produced situations is never asked by the scientist. Oakeshott feels that this latter question is a crucial part of successful political participation. Therefore, adequate political education must go beyond training in empirical method and its techniques.

Nevertheless, Oakeshott's argument must be seen as resting on broader grounds than the normative versus descriptive issue; it depends upon the function he sees experience as having in one's initiation into politics. Oakeshott never discounts the role of experience in developing political insight; his rejection of the scientific approach is over the place attributed to experience in learning about politics, as well as what is meant by saying that knowledge is based on experience. Oakeshott believes that concrete, individual, personal experiences -- whatever the form they take -- are the contents of political life. The acquisition of political knowledge consists in immersion and involvement in this milieu of individual experiences. Political knowledge is not the result of having experiences; it is the concrete

mode of activity within a political context. In comparison, Oakeshott sees the scientific approach as treating separate experiences as raw data or as ingredients, from which political knowledge shall be constructed. The construction process is the drawing of empirical generalizations from the raw data. The crucial issue is this: Oakeshott sees experiences as both the beginning and end point of political knowledge. The proponent of scientific politics sees experiences as a means to his goal, the content of political generalizations. In other words, the scientist sees political knowledge as the product of political education, very much as a cook sees the finished product, the pie, as the result of his ancillary activities. In contrast, for Oakeshott, political education, the involvement in political life is what is primarily important. Oakeshott concentrates on the "doing", not on the state that the "doing" leads to. This latter model, in Oakeshott's eyes typical of scientific political education, distorts what actually happens in political activity, he believes.

Therefore, our previous point that scientific political education tends to underplay the normative dimension with which political life is infused is really to be treated as symptomatic of what Oakeshott believes is basically wrong with a scientific approach to education: that science sees the acquisition of knowledge as following a certain pattern, as being specifically structured, and this does not deal with the particular, concrete realities of political life and the knowledge it provides.

In light of this, Oakeshott's remarks about civilization, or the context of politics, as being a conversation among people, a mode of communication, can be understood. It follows, then, that acquiring political know-how is something like learning a skill or learning how to use a tool well.

Therefore, a scientific approach to political education, which tends to overlap with an ideological approach, is rejected because it is inadequate for grasping the concrete, particular skill of political conversation.

Oakeshott's example about cooking is now worth looking back at. It illustrates exactly how Oakeshott sees the process of political education, as distinct from a scientific education. His analogy from learning how to cook to learning how to function effectively in politics, shows that there are every-day practices which are learned informally, in the course of activity, without a rationalistic* model as guide. These activities have no goal besides that of performing whatever the activity is, effectively. Politics is this sort of every-day enterprise. Oakeshott feels that a political education system should reflect this. It must be an education in practical activities, in languages or modes of communication, rather than an education in what are the proper goals to be

*By "rationalistic", Oakeshott means technical or theoretical, rather than practical. A scheme or plan for action that originates in thought, not action, is accused by him of being rational. Thus, ideology and scientific politics both employ rationalistic methods.

pursued. It is impractical to state and expect to stick to a predetermined rationalistic political goal. Since political values are among the concrete, particular facets of political life, they are flexible and responsive to all the other facets of the social context. Political goals change and develop as to the personalities and histories of those involved in politics.

For example, it is quite possible for political theorists to agree, conceptually, on a goal worth pursuing; but to share no view of what actual conditions that particular intellectual idea denotes. In such a situation the goal can take on an elastic or expressive interpretation so that it can be seen as consistent with varying, even opposite, conditions.* Thus, the goal becomes associated with whatever set of behavioral patterns that carry approval in the social and political context. Oakeshott's educational philosophy, with its emphasis on the concrete, individual mode of practice in society, rather than on general principles, reflects this particular facet of political life. Ideological and scientific approaches, simply because they concentrate

* A specific illustration of this kind of analysis occurs in Benn and Peter's comments on the political value, "equal educational opportunity". They point out that phrases like this are used, in political contexts, to justify all sorts of educational programs, as well as cases where specific educational differences are both neutralized and compensatorily weighted in order to produce situations that are judged worthwhile. In effect, the phrase's meaning depends on the conditions that are approved of within a political context. This discussion is in S. I. Benn and R. S. Peters, "The Principles of Political thought," (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 137 - 138.

on general rules as the products of the educational process, do not reflect this facet with the clarity of Oakeshott's view.

Another example, this one pertaining to the judicial decision process, similarly adds credibility to the Oakeshottian approach to political education. The judge's decision is often interpreted as being more than the application of an established rule of law to a new case. It goes beyond these limits, because a judge

. . . is faced by a complex situation where many rules might apply to a set of facts and he has to determine which rule does apply. Judgment of a similar sort is involved in diagnosis, in tact, in deciding which golf club to use, or in dealing with non-routine types of situations in war, business, and politics.¹²

In other words, the crucial operation is judging what the most apt rule of law (of several possibilities) is. There is no closed set of directions for this operation, any more than there is a path for becoming a brilliant diagnostician by following a manual to the letter.*

The mastering of politics, then, is approached as is the mastering of any skill in which efficacy is a matter of "know-how", or, as we mentioned, of savoir-faire.

The examples given perhaps add plausibility to Oakeshott's educational theory. Its elusiveness stems from its refusal to

* A well-known physician related to the author that an accomplished diagnostician diagnoses by smell as well as by other means. He explained that to the sensitive medical nose, diseases have distinctive odors. This seems to be in accordance with our argument, because a technical manual for smelling does not appear to be feasible.

incorporate any scientific evaluation or testing criteria. As we have said, there are very few specific recommendations that Oakeshott can make. But this situation is not unique to Oakeshott's educational philosophy. Our examples show that Oakeshott's approach to politics has common-place analogues in familiar practical activities and accepted, credible skills.

Oakeshott's persistent refusal to associate politics and political education with science and education in scientific methodology faces, in John Stuart Mill's educational philosophy, a counter-argument. Our primary purpose is not to see Mill and Oakeshott as competitors. Nevertheless it is important to understand their points of opposition in order to benefit from our subsequent Second Level analysis of their philosophical disparity.

Just as a specifically Oakeshottian interpretation of concepts such as "politics" and "educated" emerges in our previous discussion, Mill's corresponding use of these concepts will become manifest. Mill's writings on education are more voluminous than on any other aspect of political life, and certainly his output on this topic is far greater than Oakeshott's. Comments on political education appear in almost every one of Mill's works, from his obscure essays to his major political writings. In order to present a relatively unified theory, we have categorized his views as falling under several main headings which include: the psychology of political education, the educational value of political participation on all levels, the

neutralization of private interests in favor of public interests and social improvement, the responsibility of government in education, the educational value of idiosyncrasy and experimentation, and specific curricular features that Mill feels are valuable in political education.

Mill can be categorized as belonging, in many respects, to the class of philosophers whom Oakeshott describes as ideological*, or as one who approaches political decisions as if they are based on scientific data collection.

Mill uses the concept, "politics" to refer to a specific, rather strictly bounded area of behavior. A political act is one which affects the lives of anyone beyond the individual committing the act. They are of public, rather than private interest. For this reason, political acts are subject to regulation - preferably by those affected by them - so that the possibility of causing harm to any member of society will be minimized. Political education is the method of optimizing the political acts of persons, or the policies adopted by a group. Mill sees political education as preparation for legislative

* The terms "ideological" and "rationalist" belong to Oakeshott's philosophy, and they are here being used to describe one of his chief antagonists - perhaps an objectionable practice. However, the details with which the terms were explained hopefully justify their use in this part of the chapter. They are not being used in any evaluative sense, but simply to refer to a particular approach and method of political education.

decisions or for a citizen's exercising his right to vote. It prepares people for behaving correctly in the exercise of their political rights.

Developing a method of political education which will, hopefully, optimize political performance is a problem in social science. Alternative educational programs are evaluable scientifically, by Mill, in terms of the degree of political well-being (which he feels leads to long-range happiness^{*}) that is produced.

Even this brief description of the categories of his thought and his terminology suggests that Mill approaches political education scientifically, or ideologically, in Oakeshott's language. For Mill, political experience is a clearly defined dimension of life that is subject to a general set of criteria, values, and standards whose application goes beyond politics, but which are imposed upon political facts in appraising them. Political education pursues the optimal arrangement and administration of political matters, in much the same way as an engineer searches for the best mechanism for accomplishing a particular task.

The following question engenders a response which points to Mill's beliefs about the justification he continually demands for educational methods. How does the study of aesthetics contribute to political education?" one might ask. Mill's answer is stated in

^{*} This, obviously reflects Mill's Principle of Utility.

his Inaugural Address at St. Andrews:

"Art, when really cultivated . . . maintains, what it first gave the conception of, an ideal Beauty, to be eternally aimed at, though surpassing what can be actually attained; and by this idea it trains us never to be completely satisfied with imperfection in what we ourselves do and are: to idealize, as much as possible, every work we do, and most of all, our own characters and lives."¹³

The high esteem with which he regards continual conscious evaluation and detailed analysis of educational methods is evident here. In other words, Mill demands justification that any technique employed is efficient and productive.

Oakeshott's reaction to such a question would be quite different. He feels that using any outside guide or set of principles in dealing with political situations is, in a sense, something like cheating on an examination.¹⁴ Such a guide might help out in an emergency, but using it perverts what is meant by having political experiences. The element of self-conscious analysis, so important to Mill, has no place in Oakeshott's scheme of political education.

The two theorists' different responses to the above question can be explained further. First of all, the question itself, assumes that there are methods and criteria for testing the correctness of an answer. If this were not assumed, there would be no point in asking the question. The question is something like, "How do push-ups help in training for long distance swimming?" Mill's answer to the original question is like a reasonable answer to this question, one which

could describe the muscles that would be developed, etc., and how this would increase one's endurance. The point is that such a question requests an answer in non-circular terms. We recall that for Oakeshott, genuine (not "cheating") political apprenticeship leads to nothing except grasping the skill for political behavior. A question of the type analyzed above cannot be answered, by Oakeshott, in terms that would give any new information about what skilfully doing politics requires. He feels that the activity of politics simply cannot be analyzed into its elements. Mill, in comparison, is committed to a degree of conscious analysis by his belief that political education can be modified in order to improve political life. The two theorists are far apart concerning the stringency with which political education can be defined.

Mill certainly shows his father's influence in his educational philosophy. This is especially obvious in both James' and John's emphasis on human psychology and the manner in which the educational process is designed to make use of what both James Mill and his son believed true about the human mind.* John Stuart Mill states, very

* The part of Oakeshott's educational philosophy which corresponds to Mill's discussion of human psychology is Oakeshott's discussion of how the particular steps in political education amount to a kind of political apprenticeship. The laws of human psychology give Mill's theory plausibility. Analogously, the nature of human political experience supports the credibility of Oakeshott's approach.

simply, that, "psychology . . . is . . . the knowledge of the laws of human nature".¹⁵ These are the laws of association, discovered empirically and describing how thoughts, feelings, responses, etc. are connected in one's thinking and acting. Psychological data describe how mental and behavioral habits can be cultivated and erased from one's behavior. Controlling responses makes use of the modes of association, insofar as people naturally act so as to (hopefully) maximize their happiness. Human voluntary acts are dominated by this intention. Consequently, expectations of happiness will influence the way in which persons act in social, as well as private, contexts. This is how education becomes politically relevant. The whole character of a society can be influenced by cultivation of habits: according to Mill, this is a crucial area of political education. Insofar as Mill's utilitarianism includes the view that conscience is a feeling that can be cultivated, the political implications of education are strong.

Mill's view can be seen as a reaction to Intuitionism, the view that conscience ". . . is rational and cognitive in essence."¹⁶ The good is, for Mill, whatever is expected to lead to the most happiness. In a society, such expectations can be cultivated by strengthening productive associations. Citizens will thus be inclined to value certain goals more highly than others.

An obvious question concerns the method of habit cultivation.

Mill speaks of two forces which are strongly functional in producing and reinforcing responses. One is a natural empathy with one's fellows. Feelings of identification with others influence behavior in the social context. This makes persons socially conscious. The associative link is the sympathy one person feels for another. This influences his acts which, in turn, strengthen the bond between people. In political education, then, this feeling of unity should be emphasized wherever possible.

The other factor which enhances associations between thoughts, etc., is, in Mill's words, "the powerful agency of the external sanctions."¹⁷ These operate similarly to empathetic feelings. If a certain act, goal, or whatever is associated, by habitual experience, with the unpleasantness of a penalty or other sanction, one's natural tendency will be to avoid whatever initiates the association.

Mill thinks the educator could make great use of this fundamental psychological data. One of the points he criticizes his intellectual predecessor, Jeremy Bentham, for neglecting is that a person's inner responses to stimuli determine the nature of his outward responses.¹⁸ And, the control of inner responses can be achieved, in education, by the cultivation of associations with either happiness or unpleasantness. Consequently, political education begins at the earliest age, for happiness or its opposite can be

cultivated as responses even during childhood. It is, as we can see, a matter of very careful planning, testing, and modification.

Because political education is so important to society's political health, and because achieving success in this area is a relatively complicated and delicate matter, Mill feels that it should be controlled by those who are affected by its results. This, coupled with government administered examinations, should maximize the possibility of securing social and political well-being.¹⁹ Broad-based control of an area that has such wide-range effects is a safeguard against education in habits and responses being dictated by selfish interests. While this is certainly no guarantee that beneficial values will be reinforced among the citizens, it provides the best opportunity for it. An additional benefit of an educational system that promotes the well-being of its citizens is the feedback effect between the government and its citizens' characters and values produced by education. A citizenry, educated in political virtue, will support virtuous governments, and this will, in turn, enhance the cultivation of political virtues in its citizens.

It appears, then, that Mill interprets political education to be, essentially, the cultivation of virtue. The success of political education can be measured in terms of the utility it produces in the society. The two forces which we have already discussed, social empathy and sanctions are the means by which virtue is strengthened

in political education. However, these forces are enhanced when citizens take on an active participatory role in the machinery of politics. Mill feels that "the prime duty of government is to assist self-development,"²⁰ (his synonym for virtue), and participation hastens and strengthens this process. Clear comments on the educational value of political participation occur in Considerations on Representative Government, and in his essay, Tocqueville on Democracy in America. In the former, he maintains that the middle class opportunities to engage in minor political roles broadens their comprehension of politics in a way in which one who refuses such functions never have. Those who participate, even if just on juries, become, he says, "very different beings, in range of ideas and development of facilities."²¹ In the Toqueville essay, Mill's emphasis is on the educational value of political participation insofar as private concerns thus become diffused so as to apply to the community rather than the individual.²² These are two clear statements of the belief that the best way to learn about something is to understand its principles, do it, and then subject one's attempts to stringent criticism in order to reach a higher level. This credo appears to have originated in Mill's childhood, during which, he recalls, his father insisted he "find out everything for myself."²³ Although he shows resentment towards the stringency with which his father administered his son's educational program, this aspect of it obviously made a positive impression upon him.

The significant educational impact of political participation is a consequence of the fact that participation maximizes the diversity of values, goals, etc., that are present in government. Heterogeneous input into political programs is highly valued by Mill. This is for two somewhat obvious reasons. For one thing, exposure to a wide variety of points of view is educational, in itself. The possibility of stagnation is, thus, minimized. In addition, the wider the diversity among opinions and values, the greater is the chance of producing a genuinely great political improvement. Mill criticizes Comte for arguing that the value of strict control of opinion far outweighs the value of variety and heterogeneity. Comte feels that political and moral well-being can arise only where there is absolute control over the values of people.²⁴ Mill disagrees and maintains that the diversity of opinion nurtured by participation is the essential stimulus to finding optimal solutions to political problems. Teachers should encourage diversity in the classroom, just as political activity encourages it in the wider context of community life. For Mill, homogeneity stifles excellence in politics. Thus, it is crucial that political education be designed to maximize diversity. For this reason he goes so far as to recommend support and encouragement of experiments in varying styles of social life. Their value, he notes in his Autobiography, is independent of their success.²⁵ They are worthwhile because they present alternatives to a political life style that people take for granted.

The comparative formalism of Mill's educational philosophy should not, however, be neglected in light of the above discussion. For one thing, political education is subject to constant evaluation and possible modifications. The phrases which describe his views, viz., "learning by doing," "safeguarding heterogeneity," etc., name carefully evaluated methods of optimizing the political health of a society. Decisions concerning the efficacy of such procedures are always open to reconsideration by disinterested experts who are committed to the value of social utility. Political participation, experimentation, and the like, are justifiable only as long as they promote utility.

In addition, Mill believes that an important dimension of preparation for political life is conventional study in the disciplines which strengthen the intellect; this is as much a part of political education as anything we have considered above. The combination of educational factors which Mill recommends amounts to, in his estimation, effective training in the methodology of political decision making. In a letter he wrote to Comte in 1844, Mill emphasizes that education properly teaches methods of inquiry, not particular doctrines.²⁶ In this spirit he recommends the following disciplines for the stated reasons: classics, to provide examples of the workings of great minds; history, to present a record of human potential and to guard against political egocentrism; the various fields of philosophy including

political, moral, aesthetic, and religious, as occasions for inspiration and intellectual awakening of students by their skilled professors; and finally, logic and metaphysics, because these are disciplines in which the mind is most rigorously trained in methods of inquiry and examination of evidence for conclusions.²⁷ This appears to reflect his own training, for he repeatedly speaks of how valuable it was for him that his father's approach was to stress the methods of inquiry rather than the correct solution to problems. Still, the correct solution is the aim of inquiry and inquiry is justifiable only through success, in Mill's opinion. While method is considered requisite for proper political decisions, the goal of political education is still making the proper decisions, again, those that maximize utility.

The theme of Mill's philosophy of political education is social improvement through cultivation of common, utilitarian goals. This is the only end of political education. All its procedural details are evaluable in terms of the degree to which this end is served. Implied by this is the belief that, given the laws which describe the responses of people to stimuli, human interests can, in fact, be adjusted to fit a utilitarian model.

There is always the possibility of correction or modification. Mill, himself, states that political education is the only way to improve society in a letter written in 1842, to Robert Barclay Fox:

" . . . it is becoming more and more clearly evident to me that the mental regeneration of Europe must precede its social regeneration."²⁸ This reflects Mill's belief that a necessary condition for political and social well-being is a citizenship that institutes and supports policies and officers which will enhance their broadest interests - those which promote utility. Political education, or "mental regeneration" in Mill's words, is the means of reaching this goal. He believes that education is the key to social and political improvement. Since such improvement is meant by Mill to reflect experiential judgments, the details of the educational process are always matters of careful appraisal.

For these reasons, Mill feels the value of tradition in education is accidental and minimal. Although Mill's beliefs in this area are discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter, mentioning them now helps in recalling the differences between Mill's and Oakeshott's educational philosophies. In many respects, their specific prescriptions for political education would be indistinguishable from one to the other. However, Mill envisions

* This belief is also stated in Mill's essay, "Coleridge", Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 133; his Autobiography (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 120 and 167; and his Inaugural Address, Delivered to the University of St. Andrews (London: Longman's, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), pp. 4 - 5.

political education as a consciously evaluable program specifically designed to optimize social life in terms of an experiential criterion - Utility; Oakeshott sees it as an osmotic, unconscious initiation into rituals, rites, or modes of conversing. Mill can specify what he considers valuable results with much greater detail than Oakeshott can. Mill interprets the problem of designing a successful curriculum in much the same way that an engineer sees designing a mechanical device to perform some operation effectively and economically. Mill can justify judgments that Oakeshott would not even make in the first place.

For Mill, then, politics and society, and consequently education for politics and life in society is unlike Oakeshott's conception of brewing the good pot of chicken soup and the grasping of that skill which we spoke of in our earlier exploration of his views. According to Mill, before one starts cooking, he must be able to specify what he wants to accomplish. If the soup is disappointing at first, Mill's approach assumes that there are definite reasons why, and that these can be discovered through ordinary experience. There are specifiable methods of cooking which are referred to and discovered, in perfecting the soup. Although Oakeshott also believes that there are correct and incorrect methods, he does not believe that these methods can be isolated and described, or that individual, particular mistakes can be diagnosed. Again, the element of

self-consciousness that is present in Mill's theory is not functional in Oakeshott's theory.

To complete our analogy, for Mill effective political participation is, in the final analysis, based on training in method and making judgments. These require having some sort of rules to base judgments on. It is the business of political education to acquaint its students with all these means of optimizing political life.

Although, as we have mentioned, Mill and Oakeshott would undoubtedly agree on several aspects of political education, the reasoning underlying any such agreement shows how far apart they actually are. We have seen, for example, that both feel that participation is an effective means of political education. Both would accept the necessity of following rules in learning political (or cooking) skills. Their recommendations concerning the academic facet of political education would be similar. But these similarities are accidental in light of the different ways in which each reaches his own conclusions. As we have suggested, Oakeshott sees political education as a non-analytic, opening-of-oneself to political experiences. Mill sees political experiences as instrumental in arriving at true political knowledge. For him, the educational process begins with an analysis of experience; among the products of this analysis are the prescriptions which Mill makes. Oakeshott, however, does not take any steps towards analyzing brute experience.

One comment by a contemporary scholar of Mill's philosophy crystallizes the differences:

. . . Mill called for 'experiments in living' as a way of testing our beliefs about how people could and ought to live. If people wished to live differently, then we should not try to stop them so long as their doing so would not harm us directly; what we ought to do was to allow them to perform any experiment whose cost they were willing to bear, as we could thus see what new truths might emerge about social life - and even if none did, we should better understand the old truths.²⁹

The suggestion that there are truths to discover in politics is central to Mill's scheme. In fact, the discovery of truth is the main goal of empirical data collection and its analysis. This view would be rejected by Oakeshott. Truths are not the result of investigation; for all there is, in social and political life, are individual, personal experiences. For Oakeshott, truth in Mill's sense is not a property of the concrete experiences of political life. Rather, he sees all dimensions of experience as equally real.

In fact, this particular difference epitomizes the others we have discussed in our exploration of some of the First Level differences between Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophies of political education. Oakeshott's consistent emphasis on political education as an apprenticeship in which concrete skills are grasped does not lead to truths - at least as Mill sees them. If there are any political truths at all for Oakeshott, they are private insights that occur in the course of action. They need not be verbalized, even by the one grasping them,

in order that they be truths. What gives them this status is that they work for the individual; they are effective in the performance of whatever his task is. On the other hand, discovery of general propositional truths which can be used to direct the educational program is crucial to Mill's approach. Such generalizations provide the rationale for possible procedural modification.

Although the First Level differences between Mill and Oakeshott are interesting in themselves, a deeper understanding of their philosophical differences can be acquired. In order to accomplish this, several other areas of First Level disparity will then be reconsidered, together, in our Second Level analysis which is which is designed to provide this deeper philosophical understanding.

FOOTNOTES

¹ The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, s.v. History of Philosophy of Education, by Kingsley Price.

² Michael Oakeshott, "Political Education," Rationalism in Politics (New York: Basic Books Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), p. 119.

³ Ibid., p. 113.

⁴ Oakeshott, "The Study of Politics in a University," Rationalism in Politics, p. 303. The discussion immediately following this quotation is based on the next few pages of this article.

⁵ Oakeshott, "Learning and Teaching," The Concept of Education, ed. R. S. Peters (New York: The Humanities Press, 1967), p. 161.

⁶ Oakeshott, "The Study of Politics in a University," p. 304.

⁷ W.H. Greenleaf, Oakeshott's Philosophical Politics (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), pp. 54 - 55.

⁸ Richard Peters, "'Experience' and the Function of the Educator," Authority, Responsibility and Education (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), pp. 104 - 105.

⁹ Peters, "Must an Educator Have an Aim." Authority, Responsibility and Education, p. 84.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 86 - 89.

¹¹ Oakeshott, "Political Education", pp. 114 - 115.

¹² Peters, "Michael Oakeshott's Philosophy of Education," Politics and Experience, ed. Preston King and B. C. Parekh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 54 - 55.

- 13 John Stuart Mill, Inaugural Address, Delivered to the University of St. Andrews (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), p. 96.
- 14 Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," Rationalism in Politics, p. 25.
- 15 Mill, Inaugural Address, pp. 63 - 64.
- 16 Mill, Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. xliii.
- 17 Mill, "Utilitarianism," Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, p. 232.
- 18 Mill, "Bentham," Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, p. 98.
- 19 Mill, On Liberty (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1961), pp. 586 - 588.
- 20 R. P. Anschutz, The Philosophy of J. S. Mill (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 46.
- 21 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (Chicago: Henery Regnery Company, 1962), p. 73.
- 22 Mill, "Toqueville on Democracy in America," Essays in Politics and Culture, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 185.
- 23 Mill, Autobiography (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), p. 20.
- 24 Mill, "August Comte and Positivism," Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, p. 203.
- 25 Mill, Autobiography, p. 25.

26 Mill, The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, ed. Francis E. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), p. 647.

27 The reference to metaphysics is from Mill's Inaugural Address, p. 65; he speaks of the value of the other subjects in the essay "Civilization", Essays in Politics and Culture, ed. Himmelfarb, pp. 73 - 75.

28 Mill, The Earlier Letters, pp. 563 - 564.

29 Alan Ryan, The Philosophy of the Social Sciences (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 233.

CHAPTER III

MILL AND OAKESHOTT ON SOCIAL CHANGE

This, along with the other First Level issues we have considered, is one over which Mill's and Oakeshott's beliefs differ widely. Their relative attitudes toward social change, the role of tradition in society, and the probability and value of progress are well known. In short, Mill is sometimes characterized as political theory's great liberal and adherent to the view that genuine social progress is attainable; Oakeshott's reputation reflects Burke's conservatism and he consistently places a high value on traditional modes of social behavior as opposed to conscious innovations and reform movements. However, one must be careful not to overemphasize the link between Burke and Oakeshott. Although much of the contents of Oakeshott's writings appear, at first glance, to be similar to Burke's there are important differences. Oakeshott sees Burke's conservatism as a rationalistic belief, initiated by a comprehensive, thus abstract, first principle, namely, Burke's religious belief in the inherent evil dimension of human nature. In effect, Oakeshott rejects a natural law principle which Burke emphasizes. So, while many of Oakeshott's arguments sound like Burke's, it is necessary to keep this qualification in mind.

Mill is so identified with the liberal movement that his political philosophy is sometimes interpreted as the outstanding intellectual exploration of this political attitude. He is very clear in his commitment to social progress and improving the quality of human life through whatever means accomplish this most thoroughly. Along these lines, Mill feels traditional practices lose much of their force in their uncritical application to new social situations. Mill points out that a degree of caution must be exercised in making general statements about phenomena. Although it is possible to make justifiable, inductive generalizations about socio-political phenomena, it is crucial that the inference proceed from particular observations to a class of phenomena which "resemble the former in what are regarded as the material circumstances."¹ The fact that each human activity takes place in its own context suggests that inductively reached generalizations about behavior patterns that are reached casually, without sufficient attention to relevant similarities, that might support the persistence of tradition are, by themselves, inappropriate ways of dealing with such phenomena. In the application of a tradition, there must always be a decision concerning the relevance of the established practice to the activity under consideration. This decision, itself, involves looking beyond the tradition and thinking innovatively.

In this chapter, the details of each philosopher's meaning of and reaction to the ideas of social change, progress, and tradition will be examined in detail. The term "social" will be used to refer

to the various manifestations of life in a societal context. As such, political phenomena, those pertaining directly to the formal distribution of power and arrangements for government in a society, are included within the framework of social concerns. The type of change we will be interested in will include any process which is identifiable as being relatively discontinuous or dissimilar to the established mode of specific social activity. This tends to require special justification in contrast to tradition, which is usually regarded as being a "tried and true" method of practice simply because it has persisted.

Whether or not social change can lead to progress - a higher level, improved manner of living, according to whatever standards are accepted - is an issue independent of theoretical explanations for such change or the manifestations of its occurrence. Both Mill and Oakeshott have specific theories which attempt to explain social changes which both history and present-day observation reveal. Each has a distinctive view of the relationship of change to the achievement of progress. Their respective beliefs on this subject, as well as the details of their explanatory theories, belong to Mill's and Oakeshott's First Level differences.

A distinctive characteristic belonging to traditional practices is that they do not require justification for their performance.

They are

indefinite series of repetitions of an action, which on each occasion is performed on the assumption that it has been performed before; its performance is authorised . . . by the knowledge, or the assumption, of previous performance . . . such a tradition is without a conceivable beginning; each performance presupposes a previous performance in infinite regress.²

It is a bit confusing to refer to a tradition as having an inconceivable beginning; perhaps, instead, its beginning or initial performance should simply be regarded as of secondary importance. Consideration of some examples of traditional social practices show the usefulness of this modification. The traditional practice of a man's walking on the street side when with a woman provides an illustration. The beginning of this tradition is ordinarily associated with the time when streets were muddy and full of debris and whoever walked close to the street would be splattered with it. Along with many other traditions pertaining to male-female relationships, the content of their beginning is certainly not inconceivable. But it is relatively unimportant to the practice of the tradition. It does not really make any difference to those who practice such traditions that the streets are now paved and there is as much debris on the sidewalk as in the gutter. The behavior pattern is still considered "the correct way". There seems to be no reason for such an attitude except "this is the way it should be done", and that can be called a pseudo-reason.

On the other hand, there are other examples of traditions

which suggest that the above definition is too narrow. There are practices whose origins are crucial to their perpetuation; those whose every performance is a reminder of their first one. Religious traditions are of this type. These can be exemplified by the Jewish tradition of the Passover Seder in which almost every occurrence is a deliberate, explicit reminder of the emigration of the Jews from Egypt. In fact, one can regard "reminding" as the ritual's primary function. To say that traditions have inconceivable beginnings is not supported by this example, either.

Nevertheless, what both types of tradition have in common concerning their beginnings is that the factual basis or justification that their beginnings provide is unimportant to their continuation. The psychological satisfaction of practising them goes far beyond any rationale derived from their initiation. In fact, a rationale external to their performance is really not required in order to practice traditions and to experience satisfaction from their performance.

The last sentence suggests why it is plausible to classify Mill as generally unsympathetic to traditions and Oakeshott as a traditionalist. Mill's approval of innovation and reform contrasted with the strong association Oakeshott believes exists between social change and tradition can be examined in light of Mill's emphasis on reaching causal explanations and justifications for social practices and Oakeshott's relative unconcern with this mode of thought.

Oakeshott does not interpret the general conditions which lead to understanding of the occurrence of social change as causes. He rejects attempts to explain changes in terms of alleged causes as being completely non-illuminating. His argument depends, in part, on his view of what the correct approach to understanding history is, which, in fact, sees the historian as being unconcerned with the discovery of causes of events.³ The historian seeks to construct a picture of the past which is as coherent as possible. The more details he can fill into the processes of the past, the more coherent it becomes to him. He is doing something significantly like painting a portrait of someone whose personality as well as physical features he wishes his portrait to reflect. The more he discovers about his subject and the more details he fills in with his brush, the more that particular, unique individual emerges on the canvas. A complete, well-integrated portrait-of-a-specific-person replaces an impersonal drawing of anyone-at-all with blond hair, a long nose, etc.

Another way of explaining Oakeshott's approach to understanding the social aspects of history is to acknowledge, as does Oakeshott, that insofar as people have social interests, they are engaged in what Oakeshott sees as practical activity. In other words, they are concerned with getting something accomplished, with reaching a goal. Oakeshott asserts that as long as someone is concerned

with practical matters, he does not feel that his goals are perfectly realized and there is always something left to be done. Comprehending how this point of view has functioned in concrete instances is the process of painting the portrait of the past. It involves grasping and accepting those facets of social life that were real in the past - thus, the element of the traditional must be included - rather than discovering from an outside observer's point of view, how historical phenomena were causally connected.⁴

Were the historian interested in causes of historical phenomena, he would be juxtaposing an ordering of events, a historical priority, in effect, a standard outside the historical process, itself. Oakeshott believes that, although discovering causal patterns in past phenomena is useful for a scientist, for example, the nature of historical processes is distorted by the scientists' categories. He compares understanding historical change with one's "having a lover of whom he never expects to tire and whom he never expects to talk sense."⁵ This suggests that he believes that understanding past changes consists in developing a personal attitude of acceptance of history's events, perhaps a feeling of being comfortable and "at home" with one's picture of them. Cultivation of such an understanding does not, for Oakeshott, require that criteria be imposed which, when fulfilled, justify judgment that the past "makes sense", as to a scientist.

In effect, when the past is recognized as coherent, it is explained. Oakeshott views changes with carrying their own explanations insofar as they, alone, contribute to the emergence of a coherent, persuasive portrait of the subject under consideration. Understanding social changes as parts of a coherent whole takes place, according to Oakeshott, insofar as one understands the ways in which the participants in a social context see themselves. He says that the self-image that persons have had throughout history has been either of two types, and the change from one to the other is the manner in which general social changes come to be understood.* "Individualistic" and "anti-individualistic" are Oakeshott's names for the two types of self-images.⁶

In a period when individualism is pervasive, persons have strong perceptions of themselves as capable of choice, prudent decisions, self-determination in general. They see their destinies as results of their own, individual actions, not conditioned by communally held and uncriticizable values, but as functions of their personal responsibility. They identify themselves less with the context in which they live (i. e., their village, family, church) and more strongly as separate, individual entities who can make up

* This does not undercut Oakeshott's attitude towards searching for causes. He treats a society's self-image as the mode in which one understands change, not as a causal phenomenon.

their minds, so to speak, and who enjoy exercising this ability. Individualism demands a political organization that is strong enough to grant and protect individual rights of self-determination, without being centralized in its authority or oppressive in its government. Rather, its primary role is to administer the political aspects of social life so that individual rights to all of the above will be maintained. Oakeshott identifies this style of government with parliamentary government in which the legislators are continuously responsible to the wishes of the electorate.

Anti-individualism is generally antithetical to individualism. The person who fits its criteria has a self-image which makes self-determination and choice a burden too difficult to willingly bear. In fact, this type's characteristics can be arrived at by ascertaining the exact opposite of the individualist's qualities and predicating them of the anti-individualist. Among the consequences of their disavowal of self-determination, and their passive acceptance of the modes of behavior of whatever group they identify with, is an overall egalitarian view of society, one which sees all citizens as equivalent for all practical purposes and which denies the social significance of individual differences.

The anti-individual is uncomfortable if faced with the necessity of having to make a real choice affecting his lot in life. But he feels a bit of an internal conflict over this attitude, because

he cannot comfortably admit his own impotency. The resolution of this conflict occurs in the form of government he feels most at home with. Oakeshott identifies this as popular government. It appears, on the surface, to be representative government, but closer analysis reveals that it is, instead, strongly authoritarian. Although the legislators state that they are responsible to the wishes of the citizenry, what actually happens is that the people tend to vote for whatever the governing powers choose for them and subtly convince them of. Thus, there appears to be more of an element of self-determination than actually operates; and the anti-individualist preserves his emotional integrity. These types of popular, egalitarian-based governments lead to collectivist states, according to Oakeshott, in which the individual's personal identity is made as non-functional as possible. The overall, general, superpersonal organization is what is primarily real for each member of society. This is consistent with the fundamental self-image the anti-individual has. It preserves the (superficial) entrappings of self-determination but nevertheless minimizes the actual burden of choice that each person has to assume.

Oakeshott interprets historical changes in the structure and character of society as manifestations of the way in which members of society see themselves - in either individualistic or anti-individualistic categories. There are a number of ways in which this correlation is revealed in society.

Oakeshott believes, for example, that when a person has a

particular image of himself, he desires and instigates a social environment that reflects the traits he sees as belonging to him. This is Oakeshott's idea of coherence function. It denotes the internal relationship towards which societies tend. He recognizes that for a member of society "volition lies always within a system and is the attempt to make that system more systematic."⁷ In other words, in pursuing change, society's goal is a more coherent whole - one in which there is less and less internal conflict between the facets of life. The correlation Oakeshott describes between self-image and style of government thus illustrates how coherence functions socially.

Oakeshott's theory of social change emphasizes that social processes never aim for goals which are external to the individuals involved. In other words, Oakeshott would judge it incorrect to identify change solely in terms of institutional modifications. Rather, change takes place only insofar as persons' experiences of themselves change, and neither insofar as their responses to external situations become modified nor as the environment, itself, changes. Perhaps this clarifies his emphasis of the self-explanatory nature of change as well as his reluctance to explain it as being caused by social variables that can be extracted and examined objectively. His view is that change occurs only insofar as society changes exclusively in its own estimation.

Tradition, according to Oakeshott, is an inherent aspect of social change because its content is a key to an individual's self-image. Consequently, if society changes as the self-images of its members change, understanding social tradition is essential for understanding the details of the social process.

Several attributes belonging both to tradition and to a person's self-image suggest that the two phenomena are closely related. What, for example, does an individual experience in experiencing himself? Tradition, which is the unchallenged and uncriticized, taken-for-granted, unexplained ways of behaving in social contexts is the mode in which an individual's self-image becomes manifest to him.

Neither tradition nor a person's self-image is impeachable in terms of an outside, objective criterion, Oakeshott thinks. As has been pointed out, the performance of tradition does not rest, in any way on authorization beyond its own performance. Similarly, one's self-image is not analyzable by a person in purely objective terms because such analysis would always occur through eyes already conditioned by whatever one's self-image is. When traditional behavior occurs, one's view of oneself is reinforced, through the uncritical continuity of the tradition's performance. Tradition, requiring no self-analysis insofar as its performance does not require reaching satisfactory answers to questions, provides instances for

pure, unselfconscious manifestation and functioning of one's self-image.

Furthermore, both are means in which the past can be seen as continuous with the present. Neither concept denotes a series of disconnected events: the connotation of both a tradition and a self-image includes an organic, internal relationship between elements, a pervasiveness through time. This does not, of course, prove that tradition is the manner in which one has self-experience, but it does increase the plausibility of that interpretation.

The several points brought out in this discussion can now be drawn together. Returning to Oakeshott's theme, that changes in the characteristics of society (including its political features) are functions of the way in which a person sees himself, leads to the plausibility of his attitude towards tradition. Tradition and one's self-image are seen to be significantly analogous in their functioning for the individual. The relationship between traditional practices and a person's self-image can be referred to as the "mode" in which one's self-image becomes manifest in behavior. This calls attention to the closeness with which the two ideas are connected. The more we understand one of these, the clearer the other becomes; it is impossible to grasp either one of their meanings without referring, at least implicitly, to the other concept.

Other facets of Oakeshott's traditionalism focus on tradition's social value rather than its inevitability in the process of

change.

His arguments in this area fall into three broad categories: (1) his defense for practical reasons; (2) his belief that tradition is an element in all social behavior and cannot be rejected while preserving an accurate picture of society; and (3) his argument that tradition guards against the chief sin in political life, rationalism or the ideological approach. The first two arguments overlap in Oakeshott's presentation.

Oakeshott defends tradition as socially beneficial throughout his writings. His characterization of politics as practical, as belonging to those areas of life in which a primary goal is getting something accomplished, is central to his evaluation. As has been suggested, political life is inherently infused with change. Paraphrasing Oakeshott's words, there is a gap between what is and what ought to be, and political behavior is one attempt to close this gap.⁸ Tradition functions in the gap-closing procedure. It provides a justification or a direction for the corrective procedure.

An example, the interests of the women's liberation movement, shows more clearly what Oakeshott has in mind by characterizing tradition as the element of continuity when change occurs. This movement is an attempt to modify, for the better, established, taken-for-granted social patterns. Its expression often is political. Its proponents point to specific manifestations of a gap between what

is and what they think should be the case. Acknowledging that there is a gap is far simpler than planning and achieving its closure. At first glance, one might oversimplify the goals of women's liberation by identifying them with the attempt to nullify tradition, to negate and eliminate the traditional socio-sexual roles. However, the situation can be described otherwise, in a way in which tradition is seen as a positive force which is useful in modifying ingrained habits. For example, among the mechanisms invested as means to the goal are the governmental commissions set up as hearing agencies with authoritative powers in cases of alleged sexual discrimination. This is a method which certainly makes use of tried, practiced procedures whose efficacy has been demonstrated in other political contexts. These means have been shown to work in analogous situations.

Traditions provide guidelines in political practice in another way. Using our same example, one of the problems the women's liberation movement has to confront is providing care for children, heretofore the unquestioned responsibility of the female parent. The recent innovation and growth of day care centers for children is a way of handling this responsibility. In this case, as with the previous one, tradition provides a guide. The concept of "mothering" is not eliminated in day care; rather, it is carefully retained. The direction for solving the problem, never, for a moment, sought to eliminate tradition, but only to modify its exercise so as to make the goals of

women's liberation realizable.

Both examples show how traditional values and methods are present and have significant use in change. They show that Oakeshott proceeds from acknowledging tradition's practical benefits, as providing non-arbitrary practical guidelines, to his opinion that traditions are always functional in social contexts. Although tradition's practical value does not entail its omnipresence in social life, viewing change as the attempt to increase coherence suggests that tradition does have a significant function in change. For Oakeshott, both change and tradition are essential to a coherent political process.

This is evident in Oakeshott's comparison of social innovation to

the appearance of a new architectural style; it emerges almost imperceptibly, under the pressure of a great variety of influences, . . . there are no origins; all that can be discerned are the slowly mediated changes, the shuffling and reshuffling, the flow and ebb of the tides of inspiration, which issue finally in a shape identifiably new.

Tradition, Oakeshott says, is always present in coherent innovations which satisfy men's practical needs. His choice of architecture as an analogous example to politics is illustrative in the same way as was the women's liberation movement example. Architectural traditions point the way to successful invention. They guide the designer simply by indicating what requirements are necessary

to prevent the whole structure from falling down. Another argument pertaining to the relation between change and tradition concerns making political decisions. These involve choosing among alternatives which implies having a criterion for evaluating the possibilities. This criterion need not be, strictly speaking, consciously adopted from the past for it to be associated with a society's tradition. Oakeshott's point is that value standards, if genuine, must have origins within a society's framework in some sense. Even if heretofore accepted standards are rejected, modified or replaced, the justification for doing this, if not wholly arbitrary, has a source that has made a mark on the judgments of those involved in the decision. Samuel Coleman, commenting on Oakeshott's views on social tradition, comments that the judgment, "x is done rationally", is itself a matter of tradition because the concept of rationality is itself variable in meaning and instantiated in terms of tradition.¹⁰ In other words, at one time the rational might be associated with the economical, at another time, with that which maximizes utility, at still another time, with something else. The meaning of rationality is a function of the way in which tradition affects its use.

Suggesting what a completely a-traditional society would be like is another of Oakeshott's approaches to defending tradition as having practical social value. It has been pointed out, for example, that tradition is influential in preserving the humanistic elements in

society and preventing a degradation into a seemingly Hobbesian jungle. James Fitzjames Stephens, for one, points out that the most influential force in maintaining morality is tradition. In a polemic against anti-traditionalism and the avant-garde he characterizes public opinion (which is how he feels traditions become manifest) as "the great engine by which the whole mass of beliefs, habits and customs, which collectively constitute positive morality, are protected and sanctioned."¹¹ Stephens' pessimistic view of man will not be discussed here. However, it seems clear that tradition sometimes reinforces morality and sometimes not.

Oakeshott, while never identifying the traditional with the moral, feels that traditional practices often include modes of behavior that are desirable, simply because time has a way of eliminating the harmful. This seems to suggest a kind of natural selection or survival of the fittest. At the roots of this opinion is Oakeshott's view of political life as the attempt to balance competing interests, harmonize conflicts, reach a working arrangement for accomplishing the business of day-to-day social life - in other words, to increase social coherence.

Another way of making this very same point, that traditional practices are likely to be the most viable modes of behavior, is to characterize tradition as a wide body of knowledge that includes the distilled results of many "trial-and-error" runs. This knowledge is

not entirely verbalizable or conscious, although some of it might be. This explains why rationalization is so unimportant in practicing traditions. It may be said that this kind of knowledge is so qualified that it really cannot be categorized as knowledge; but this argument has too many counter-examples, belonging to common-sense, to consider it seriously. Oakeshott's own examples are knowing how to bicycle and cook, both known through tradition. Oakeshott's use of the language of "knowing how" specifically calls attention to the fact that this kind of knowledge is not of any sort of a fixed essence as in the case of knowing what something is.¹²

Arguments for both the inescapability of tradition and the practical advantages for acknowledging its use, tend, in spite of their persuasiveness, to appear to be somewhat elastic. The examples these arguments draw upon seem to be conveniently chosen so that they are consistent with every case, allowing no counterexamples. Tradition is never defined independently of the examples that are supposed to fall within its categorization. The concepts the arguments employ, such as "usefulness" or "inescapability" expand so that no counterexamples to Oakeshott's view appear to be forthcoming. For example, rationality can be called an elastic concept. It fits whatever the argument on its behalf wants it to fit. A comparatively well-known argument Oakeshott uses shows this elasticity. In it, he maintains that when, in political contexts, events or processes occur which appear to be genuine innovations, radical

departures from established procedure, the innovative aspect is mainly appearance. His chief commentator refers to the enfranchisement of women as depending upon "the recognition that the status of women had changed in so many ways already that not giving them the vote would leave an 'incoherence'".¹³ But this can be said about any political movement - that it was already implicit in the social complex and that formalization merely made explicit what was already functional.

Nevertheless, the credibility of Oakeshott's view can still be maintained because his goal is certainly not to present a logically consistent model of a political organism. He is, rather, portraying political experience as it occurs; and insofar as social phenomena are experienced as the manifestation and continuation of far-reaching, developing roots, this is how Oakeshott will describe them.

Oakeshott's adherence to this approach, presenting a picture of political experience as it is confronted by persons involved with it brings one back to his general theme - that changes occur insofar as people see themselves differently at different times. An individual experiences his life as relatively continuous. He sees separate facets of it as growing out of his personality, not as suddenly emerging without subjective grounds. It makes sense, from Oakeshott's point of view, to make tradition and the continuity it

represents an integral element of both the practical and analytical understanding of social change and innovation. Therefore, while innovation and change are functional terms in Oakeshott's philosophy, their meaning must be carefully qualified.

Suggested throughout this discussion is the view that, according to Oakeshott, imbalances within the social milieu are, in the long run, intolerable and consequently tend towards behavioral adjustments. Innovation is reconciliatory rather than revolutionary and the political process is a conserving rather than replacing force. This, again, is consistent with Oakeshott's overall theory of change. A person with a strong self-image, whose social behavior both reflects his self-image and has a feedback effect on it will interpret tradition as having practical value. Oakeshott's emphasis on tradition as both omnipresent and practically functional in political contexts, comes from this continuing, reinforced, dynamic self-image.

Oakeshott's beliefs are often characterized as belonging to the very broad and vague classification associated with conservatism. This term ordinarily signifies a wide range of negative attitudes towards political and social change. Because it is so wide in application it is more useful to examine Oakeshott's views in particular rather than the different senses of the meaning of conservatism.

Although one of his best known articles would seem to be a defense of this political position, inasmuch as it is entitled "On

Being Conservative", Oakeshott is precise and selective in his support and rejection of different aspects of conservatism. In this article, he commends the attitudes of caution, self-protection, and the value of familiarity which belong to the conservative. He remarks that undisciplined welcome of change and experiment for its own sake is a sign of immaturity.¹⁴ A child does not see the danger of wanting to accomplish everything at once in one giant step. The conservative, in contrast, prefers to take small steps one at a time, and look back and assess the effects of each one. Just as one cannot but help approaching each phenomenon encountered in the world without the conditioning of one's self-image, the conservative in politics constantly appeals to his past experience for guidance in his present. Oakeshott approves of this approach, and if this is what is meant by being conservative, he certainly is.

There is further material in this article as well as in his other writings that continue to suggest that simply labelling Oakeshott a conservative is neglecting the complexity of his attitudes towards change. Instead of being simply resistant to political change, he carefully explains his particular sense of what it means to him. He shows a somewhat cautious attitude, a wariness of large-scale, consciously planned changes. He believes that this type of wholesale change leads to disruption and often the disintegrative

effect of its disruption is not compared with the expected value the change should accomplish. He also points out that experience shows that actual change usually exceeds any proposed plan or design so that uncalculated consequences often result from a radical disposition.¹⁵ Both of these arguments question the wholesale desirability of consciously planned political and social restructuring. Just as a person cannot change his self-image by fiat, it is unlikely that the type of change Oakeshott is wary of will accomplish what he thinks change is primarily supposed to accomplish, namely, increase the coherence among the facets of social life. Oakeshott believes that politics is inherently fluid and developmental. The kind of change he cautions against reflects this belief.

Oakeshott's belief that political activity is a kind of skill further explains his breed of conservatism. His attitudes towards radical innovation in politics are just what they would be were he writing about carpentry or (using our stale, by now, example) cooking. Part of what is meant by calling an activity a skill is that it is performed traditionally. If a new procedure were incorporated into inlaying different woods, among the necessary conditions for its still being called a skill would be that it reflected the traditional difficulty, painstakingness, and that the finished product were of equivalent quality as that produced merely by the traditional means. If an inlaid wood table were produced merely by a series of mechanical processes, the operators of the inlaying machines would not be

described as skilled. Similarly, it takes no skill to put a frozen soufflé into the oven, set the timer, and remove the finished product at the end of the proper time. The chef at one of New York's best restaurants, however, introduced a modification in soufflé-making that certainly reflected his skill - he found that if the eggs used were several days old, the soufflé would not collapse as soon as it was removed from the oven. But this change was guided by the long accepted idea of what a soufflé should be like, and did not involve compromising that goal.

Oakeshott's own example is tool-using, a subject more fully discussed in our Chapter One. The skill of using a tool well depends greatly on familiarity with that tool. He points out that

. . . a carpenter is usually more skilfull in handling his own tools than in handling other examples of the kind of tools commonly used by carpenters; and the solicitor can use his own . . . copy of Pollock on Partnership or Jarman on Wills. Familiarity is the essence of tool using.¹⁶

This clarifies how Oakeshott views sweeping social reform. Participation in politics is clearly seen by him as a kind of skill. Just as one's skill is exercised in a small-scale, non-mechanized context, social and political change is most appropriately accomplished gradually, step-by-step, avoiding broad, sweeping reforms that ignore tradition but look for a clean, new start.

Returning to Oakeshott's identification between traditional practices and one's self-image, one can consciously modify his

self-image, but only painstakingly and gradually. It would be impossible for a person to erase his past and present, and fill a model set up independent of these factors. One cannot help but confront all experiences, even that of oneself, in terms of who one is at a specific time; and what one is must be an outgrowth of what one has been. Oakeshott's apparently deliberate choice of analogies between the kind of social change he believes is feasible and likely to succeed and comparatively small-scale personalized skills is a reminder of his general theory of change.

A strong element in Oakeshott's writing on the role of tradition in political and social change are his strong negative attitudes towards ideological or rationalist politics. These views have already been mentioned in our previous chapter, but it is necessary to clarify how they function with respect to our present subject.

It has been pointed out that although Oakeshott is cautious of political and social innovation, he would be loathe to be classified as a political conservative. In fact, his response to being classified as anything at all is, "whoever attaches a label to my thinking doesn't really understand it." The reason for this is that Oakeshott rejects all large scale doctrines because their formulation and application are always based on a basic principle, which is, Oakeshott feels, exactly where their inadequacy lies. Conservatism is guilty of this inadequacy as is liberalism, any "ism", in fact.

Political life is fluid, involving constant adjustment and balancing; no principle could be broad, or vague, enough to function as a guide to such an activity. Returning to the concept of a skill strengthens Oakeshott's argument. The carpenter or chef, at some point in the acquisition of the skill, became acquainted with some formal set of directions. The exercise of the skill, however, does not depend on following them, but on going beyond them, "the carrying on of a style, the continuation of a mode of behavior whose character can be apprehended but never analysed, and which in turn is realised in action rather than in conceptualisation."¹⁷ There are no completely adequate standards, no generalizations, that apply to politics any more than to any skill. A skill can be recognized without a complete set of directions given in advance. The skillfulness is in the continuation of the performance of the activity and is inseparable from that.

This argument helps in understanding Oakeshott's wariness of political decisions and changes that are derived from general rules. Oakeshott's characterization of political life and the nature of goals in politics leads him to distrust reform measures that are derived from a principle or are part of a pre-planned strategy. Approaching political situations ideologically or rationally is, for Oakeshott, like trying to whip up egg whites with a hammer. The means is completely inappropriate to the material

being dealt with. Here lie his reasons for rejecting the liberal reform movement initiated by the Utilitarians. Mill, for example, is interested in getting optimal performance from the various political operatives. Oakeshott thinks that the concept of optimization in politics as inappropriate, because it refers to a goal that is stated in abstract terms and has no direct application to political situations because its very nature makes it context-free. This does not mean that he finds it impossible to make evaluations about particular political measures. Oakeshott's standard for judging whether any change is better or worse for society is degree of coherence. But this standard is not an abstract one, which is comprehensible apart from the contexts it is applied to. The idea of degree of coherence only can be filled in with data from particular contexts. Hence, Oakeshott remains consistent in his rejection of universal, general criteria for evaluating social life while still retaining a method of judgment, based on coherence. All attempts in politics to fulfill goals stated independent of the particular, individual acts that make up the flow of the political process are, according to Oakeshott, inappropriate. An overall authority, whether a general principal or a goal, is unacceptable to Oakeshott. The ongoing processes and changes in politics, which amount only to the continuity between experiences that take place, do not reveal any overriding, general authoritarian principle which is adequate

to reflect the various intimations, nuances, and subtleties of the political experience. A sensitivity to tradition facilitates behavior which is harmonious with the nature of political and social life. The kind of conservatism Oakeshott embraces reflects this approach to political experience and rejects approaches which attempt to deal with its facets through general rules.

At this point, we can recognize that Oakeshott uses the concept of tradition in a very wide sense. This has already been suggested in discussing Oakeshott's view that political tradition is not only compatible with, but requires provision for, change. In addition, Oakeshott sees traditional practices as being so variable that, in a sense, there are no clear descriptions of them at all. One tradition names so many different kinds of acts that it is impossible to tell an outsider what "the tradition" is like. An example is the custom of handshaking where there is clearly always "an element of the idiosyncratic, unique and personal. Each of us performs the traditional . . . rite differently. . . . This uniqueness is the result of our infinite constitutional variety and the infinitely diversified things we learn by example or precept."¹⁸ The custom of handshaking probably shows a kind of family resemblance among the various styles, and there are any number of ways to identify this sort of resemblance. So, while a "tradition" can be spoken about, it cannot be completely defined verbally or ostensively

and is compatible with a very wide range of behavior patterns.

A consequence of this broadness is that Oakeshottian traditionalism seems, at times, to even be compatible with positions that claim to be antithetical to it. For example, an Oakeshottian might argue that attempts to a-traditionally authorize social behavior and political patterns eventually and unavoidably reach an impasse in trying to get to a rationale for any of their recommendations. The anti-traditionalist denies that the past is sufficient or necessary authorization for the present. However, he still must have some authorization. Often, certain methods of selection and orders of priority are used. The question which naturally arises is, "On what basis have these methods been arrived at?"¹⁹ No matter what his answer, the question can be asked again. The resulting suggestion is that conscious, outspoken anti-traditionalism is compatible and relies upon the antagonistic position, traditionalism. Oakeshott defines his position so broadly that it is sometimes difficult to interpret it as a view which is strongly opposed to liberalism, or to any other univocal train of thought.

Professor Plamenatz analyzes a similar situation in his short volume on Utilitarianism. Here he points out that several facets of Burke's political theory coincide uncannily with Utilitarianism.²⁰ Specifically mentioned are the following:

1. Burke's esteem for prejudices in politics is based on his belief that they provide psychological comfort. In addition there is the fact that they often work remarkably well in accomplishing hoped-for social and political goals

2. Traditional English property laws make long title sufficient basis for permanent ownership. The strength of this, as Burke sees it, is that the longer one has possessed something the more pain he suffers with its loss

3. Burke's negative reaction to the institution of almost all social and political reforms is based on his belief that perpetuation through time is evidence of conduciveness to happiness.

Each one of these remarks amounts to, essentially, a recommendation that the general happiness of society should be the goal of political processes. This sounds very much like Utilitarianism. However, accepting this interpretation does not mean that Burke was really a Utilitarian, but that the broadness of Burke's arguments make them compatible with the opposite position. Similarly, Oakeshott's broad interpretation of certain concepts and his consequent apparent compatibility with Mill does not make him a Utilitarian.

Throughout this exploration of the various facets of Oakeshott's Level One theory of change, a recurrent theme has emerged. This concerns the goal, the purpose, or the criterion

Oakeshott feels is appropriate for evaluating a social process; efficacy or success. For Oakeshott, societies undergo change in order to restore previously existing balance or harmony among their elements. Such coherence is comprehended by persons in terms of their relative acceptance or dissatisfaction with what they experience themselves to be. When persons see aspects of themselves as more or less out of balance with other factors, they seek to modify their self-images. The process results in social change. It is, therefore, a conserving process which aims at re-establishing individual satisfaction with oneself. Although social change may appear to involve genuine innovation, these steps are essentially steeped with tradition for it is only in terms of tradition that a person gets to experience himself. Oakeshott's attitudes towards tradition's inescapability and social value become clarified through this interpretation of social change.

Mill's theory of social change contrasts markedly to Oakeshott's. One difference is that Mill interprets social change as, primarily, a person's reaction to his environment; his account does not refer to one's states of internal balance, harmony, and coherence, as does Oakeshott's. These concepts, all of which refer to individual, subjective cognitions, have no place in Mill's description of change; Mill regards understanding change as an empirical project.

More specifically, Mill is interested in discovering the

necessary and/or sufficient conditions are for the emergence of innovations in social life. His procedure is to search for and intellectually isolate the factors which are always present in times of social flux. These theoretically provide materials for predicting the general course of social development. Among the consequences of this approach are first, that Mill's theory is essentially non-normative (unlike Oakeshott's traditionalism); and secondly, that all the factors contributing to change must be empirically describable. In effect, social processes are wholly naturalistic, according to Mill.

Mill's explanation and description of social change emphasizes the function of circumstances in affecting social life. Circumstantial phenomena are the many particular occurrences which are difficult to generalize about. Their operation interferes with his discovering a rigorous causal theory of change although he nevertheless treats circumstances as genuine causal factors.

Mill sees this complex of circumstances as influencing the manner in which persons evaluate and respond to the way in which they interpret their environment as shaping their styles of life. Depending on whether the factors people see as affecting their lives are judged as improving it or making it worse, do they desire and eventually realize changes in them. They pursue this kind of change by modifying variables which they see as objective to themselves. In other words, it is not their own point of view that they interpret

as the primary factor undergoing change, but conditions in the external world which, in turn, elicit responses.

An obvious question concerns the specific nature of these circumstances to which Mill attributes such importance. Simply because, as we have said, they are circumstantial, they cannot be completely enumerated. Examples can be given, however, which are typical. Among such circumstances are the more even distribution of property among a greater number of individuals, the wider availability and use of educational opportunities, technical innovations which make the communication of ideas less difficult. All of these have accompanied the growth of commercialism and its newfound strength in comparison to the previously dominant landed aristocracy.²¹ Mill feels that these circumstantial developments led to individuals' being more reluctant to take their lot in life for granted, voicing more and more dissatisfaction with existing lifestyles, and finally, taking active steps to secure more satisfaction.

He believes that when a group of persons are unhappy with the quality of life of their particular society, and they act to improve their situation, a point in the process of change is reached when those who are most fit to govern actually secure political power. He exemplifies this in the series of essays, The Spirit of the Age, where it is pointed out that the growth of commercialism did, but need not have, cost the landed aristocracy their political power. The latter had

certain advantages in the conflict for social dominance, such as leisure and the acquisition of a high level of mental cultivation. However, these advantages were not effectively taken advantage of, and political apathy flourished. There was a vast change, in which the power of the landed class was replaced by representative democracy in which the middle, business-oriented, class became the moral leaders of the whole society.²² Although Mill does not specifically speak of social evolution in which the fittest persons survive and spread their traits throughout society, he appears to have something like this in mind.

Mill's analysis of periods of varying amounts of change reveals two general types of social climates. A relatively stable situation is called an organic state, in Mill's terminology, when social life is comparatively stable since there is little discontent among members of society. There is not a strong demand or impetus for change. The leaders in this stage, morally and politically, are those best suited for that responsibility; this serves to maintain the formal status quo. In an organic phase traditions would tend to become stronger insofar as they express the practical responses of generally content persons to their environments. The critical stage is the antithesis of the organic. The prevailing feelings of the people are discontent, lack of leadership which has the confidence of the people, inability to see a clear path to society's goals, and

even widespread disagreement concerning those goals. This state of affairs leads to much discussion and debate. This is beneficial in resolving the problems encountered in a critical stage, because a number of points of view are presented and pitted against one another. The conditions characteristic of a critical phase become stabilized when the open discussion and consequent pervasive experimentalism of the critical stage lead to more satisfaction and consensus. Again, the specific direction the resolution takes largely depends on how various features such as those mentioned above combine and affect the responses of members of society to their environments.

This theory traces social change, in large, to the exercise of human intellectual attributes. The strength which is necessary for the emergence of a socially dominant class is the ability to critically evaluate goals and the paths to them. The fittest leaders in a society are those who can ascertain the critical elements in a society and use their past experience to predict the outcome of various alternatives to the status quo. At different times in history different groups have possessed the intellectual advantage; the specific details are largely a matter of circumstantial occurrences, as has been pointed out in several instances.

Mill's approach to understanding social change can be summarized by pointing out that he seeks to discover causal patterns

which describe how men act to modify their environments in order to increase their personal satisfaction. Social change occurs among the various social conditions which affect the quality of life in a society. These conditions engender a response among the individuals affected, which can be either a positive or negative reaction to the change. It must be noted that the primary place where change takes place is in the individual's surrounding environment. The subjective attitude modifications that have been mentioned are, in effect, consequences of the social change and are not, strictly speaking, included by Mill in its essential attributes. These attitudes may, of course, contribute to the causes of subsequent social modifications, but Mill nevertheless envisions the process, itself, as involving factors that belong to an individual's milieu rather than to his own person.

Since this distinction is crucial to Mill's theory of change, an example is appropriate, the previously mentioned rise of the commercially-motivated class to a position of moral dominance in a society heretofore dominated by a hereditary aristocracy. This change, according to Mill, took place as conditions affecting available education, opportunities to own property, and ease of communication among the entrepreneurs were modified. The rise of the middle class amounted to modifications such as these - in the circumstances that comprised the social contexts of the persons involved. The fact that their modified life style clearly affected

their own psychological responses is clear to Mill; this phenomenon is interpreted as a consequence of the change in social conditions rather than as a part of the change.*

Mill's theory of social change leads him to emphasize the importance of acquiring knowledge about human behavior. The path of social change can be significantly guided by this knowledge. It is, in effect, what makes the difference between a rational process of change and one that is irrational.

This last point continues to reflect Mill's view that social phenomena are situations which man can understand scientifically, as part of the objective world, and about which predictions can be made. Making some attempt to foresee the consequences of a social innovation is, in Mill's opinion, a reasonable prerequisite to pursuing it. An example of this reasoning occurs in his essay, "The Subjection of Women." In considering probable consequences of sexual equality, Mill first asks:

What good are we to expect from the changes proposed in our customs and institutions? Would mankind be better off at all if women were free? If not, why disturb their minds, and attempt to make a social revolution in the name of an abstract right?²³

He continues by giving reasons for his recommendations for

* This facet of Mill's interpretation of the process of social change is worth emphasizing. The contrast it provides with Oakeshott's interpretation of social change is an example of the kind of Level Two differences to be explored in our final chapter.

liberating women. The rationale includes the argument that men will benefit morally from being prohibited the "self worship" and "selfish propensities" that are encouraged simply by being born male. Mill refers to these attitudes as "unearned distinctions" and maintains that they are psychologically disabling. He calls attention to the increase in the quantity of talent that recognizing women's abilities would provide, and he points out that the feminine point of view, if taken seriously, would have a mitigating effect where violence were probable, as well as a stimulating influence on male tendencies such as honor and courage.

This example supports our previous point that Mill sees social change as a phenomenon that is part of the world which man sees as objective to himself, and thus, considers it an object of scientific investigation. Mill's reasons for advocating the above social reform reflect his observations and conclusions about human behavioral tendencies.

The importance of knowledge about men in guiding social processes helps explain Mill's favorable disposition towards progress. Mill is firmly committed to the practical realization of progress in social life. A keystone of his political philosophy is that existing situations can be made better, consciously, as a result of carefully plotted scientific schemes. The stimulus for change is men's desire for a better life. Rationally directed investigation and human effort

in applying knowledge is the means through which desired changes are accomplished. The connection between Mill's feelings towards knowledge and his emphasis on progress depends upon the fact that the type of knowledge Mill believes properly guides social change is cumulative. As he says in The Spirit of An Age,

The wisest men in every age generally surpass in wisdom the wisest of any preceding age, because the wisest men possess and profit by the constantly increasing accumulation of the ideas of all ages.²⁴

In other words, genuine social progress is realizable only insofar as social policy is guided by increasing knowledge. Progress is certainly not entailed by the mere fact of social change, but its probability is increased when policies are directed by those who have intellectual acumen, foresight about consequences of phenomena, sensitivity to the needs of society's members, and the ability to translate ideas of goals into practical, applicable steps.

Mill's belief that rational social innovation is a means to progress emerges, as well, in his view that as people reach satisfaction through successful social measures, their goals expand correspondingly and provide motivation for subsequent improvements. He believes that the individual in a society is the sole source and recipient of improved social conditions, and that improved social conditions emanate from the individual's desire for a more satisfactory life. The only way that the success of social programs can be judged is in terms of the satisfaction enjoyed by those persons

affected by the programs under scrutiny. It is clear that Mill does not see the health and well being of society or its members as natural states. The quality of social life must be cultivated by instituting reform measures that reflect an understanding of human inclinations.

Mill's procedure for evaluating social change and the data he believes relevant provide support for our previous suggestion concerning Mill's belief that the primary locus of social change is the world and not the individual. Mill's individualistic Utilitarianism is manifest in his view that each person affected by a social innovation examines his own psychological response to the changed conditions in his social environment. The change is thereby interpreted as taking place independent of the individual's responses, connected only insofar as human reactions follow new changes.

This distinction between the locus of social change and the locus of its consequences, first discussed above, is a key point in understanding how Mill and Oakeshott differ. Although Oakeshott feels that the value of social change depends on the degree of coherence re-established among the elements of social life, he does not emphasize its evaluation as does Mill. Coherence becomes manifest in the degree to which a social practice is seen as continuous with tradition and an individual feels himself fitting in with the style of his society. Both of these are discerned through a person's

examining himself, rather than by looking out at the objective world and its effects on oneself. An objective judgment is appropriate from Mill's point of view because the world that has changed can be scrutinized by the observer. This is not possible for an Oakeshottian, because the social change affects the individual's impression of himself, preventing an objective before-and-after judgment.

Because Mill believes that social reform can be guided so as to increase individual satisfaction, he tends to disapprove of adherence to tradition.

Mill often gives the impression that he sees persons as falling into one or another category - the reformers who succeed in their accomplishments to everyone's benefit or traditionalists, those who are passive, complacent, and stagnating with the status quo. As Mill says in Considerations on Representative Government,

The people who think it a shame when anything goes wrong - who rush to the conclusion that the evil could and ought to have been prevented, are those who, in the long run, do most to make the world better. . . . Inactivity, unaspiringness, absence of desire, is a more fatal hindrance to improvement than misdirection.²⁵

Mill would put an Oakeshottian in the latter group. Complacency is one of the most serious sins of politics, he feels. There are several reasons why uncritical satisfaction with the status quo is harmful to the production of social well-being. An easy acceptance of traditional modes of behavior turns one's attention away

from the possibility of improvement. Mill advocates cultivating a general positive response to change, a commitment to progress regardless of the particular state of society. The prudent exercise of this disposition is another matter, also important to cultivate. However, the disposition of receptivity to possible change, although no guarantee of progress, weighs the balances heavily in favor of the likelihood of achieving progress. This kind of judgment rests, in Mill's opinion, on observations about how people's attitudes and dispositions become manifest in behavioral situations.

Another of Mill's observations is that mediocrity is the most probable result of sticking to habit. Self-conscious, rigorous, and unrelenting criticism are the conditions most favorable to the emergence of excellence in politics. The absence of both outstanding personalities and their behavioral consequences is a probable result of adhering to tradition for its own sake, of following habits without challenging, or at least analyzing them.

The reasons why Mill feels adhering to tradition is dangerous accords with his views about political situations where a strong majority completely dominates minority opinions. This type of situation engenders the weakening of individual autonomy which lessens the likelihood of the emergence of excellence. Dominant majorities can stultify excellence by suppressing its expression and exploration. He maintains most clearly in On Liberty, that personal

autonomy is worth preserving except in cases where it limits the individual freedom of others.²⁶ Mill takes on the cause of personal freedom because he sees it as an integral aspect of human happiness. He believes that only by nurturing open discussion, by safeguarding a high degree of fluidity and dynamicism in society will there be the possibility of a genuinely utilitarian type of social change. Mill's advocacy of debate in society over proposed change is evident in his belief that opposition and confrontation, both taking place as means to a utilitarian goal, are efficient forces in guiding change so that it leads to improvement. One of the chief points of contention between him and Auguste Comte is the latter's strong advocacy of a centralized source of political power. Mill feels this would repress the arguments between factions that are such positive influences in the process of arriving at social decisions.

The achievement of social progress through the free exchange of ideas requires an element of restraint, however, the constant requirement that a proposed social policy change be justified. This necessitates showing how a proposal described a means of improving the quality of social life. A method Mill has observed to be effective is an adversary procedure in which the most polarized factions, the most widely separated issues, are to be pitted against one another. This improves the likelihood for

making a rational political choice.* A society which is homogeneous suffers from not having alternative possibilities exposed and presented in as strong as possible a light. Additionally, a strong adversary presentation can bring out the weaknesses of each respective position as well as the strengths. This style of format excites people's interests, and makes it more difficult for them to remain uninvolved. And, as pointed out, it is apathy and lack of interest that feeds homogeneity and stagnation. Mill speaks to this point eloquently, in commenting on the effects of the growth of civilized societies, with their advantages as well as their stylized entrappings which have a tendency to lead to mediocrity.

Are the decay of individual energy, the weakening of superior minds over the multitude, the growth of charlatanerie, and the diminished efficacy of public opinion as a restraining power, - are these the price we necessarily pay for the benefits of civilization ? . . . Assuredly not. Those advantages which civilization cannot give . . . may yet coexist with civilization. . . . All that we are in danger of losing we may preserve . . . but not by slumbering, and leaving things to themselves . . . only by establishing countertendencies, which may combine with those tendencies, and modify them.²⁷

This quotation shows Mill's commitment to the realization of progress, by systematic commitment and not by leaving the

* A similar rationale seems to be functional in the adversary process in our court system. The opposing cases are made as strong as possible; persuasion is the primary aim. The jury's decision concerning the facts of the case is thought to have a stronger justification having been made in light of the strongest possible statements of each side.

direction of social development to chance. There are factors which Mill has observed lead to mediocrity, and different factors which lead to excellence and progress. Being able to distinguish both types is largely a matter of recognizing empirical patterns. Mill's specific programmatic recommendations are observationally justified guidelines for maximizing the opportunity for the realization of social progress.

Several recurring themes in Mill's theory of change have been suggested in the course of this discussion, and it is useful in understanding Mill's theory and its difference from Oakeshott's to return to them in detail.

One is Mill's emphasis that it is necessary to consciously cultivate man's ability to make rational evaluations of social conditions. The capacity to utilize reason becomes stronger with practice. As J. M. Robson puts it,

Nature is . . . irrational, and man's reason is his great moral tool. . . . social advance comes only through the clear and reasoned perception of means to the end, and essential to its discovery ^{as} a living force, only reason can control the means. ²⁸

This is not so much a metaphysical statement, contrasting reason with nature, as a suggestion that reason becomes best utilized through its explicit and self-conscious exercise. This can be

accomplished through education.* The explicit development of man's rational judgment through education is Mill's defense against being characterized as having faith in the inevitability of progress.

The utilization of reason enables an individual, in many cases, to grasp the details of and make predictions about social innovations. This understanding provides reasons for approving of, rejecting, or modifying proposed social changes. In effect, reason is necessary, although not sufficient for a person to objectively view the phenomenon of social change.

This suggests that a person's subjective feelings and responses are part of the causal input of social change. As such they are conceptually and epistemologically separate from their effects, these being the conditions which undergo modification. In other words, Mill appears to assimilate persons' observing social change with their observation of any object in the world, such as stones or urns. Persons' examinations of objects are distinct from their awareness of the responses elicited by the entities.

Another relatively clear theme is that the practical application of Mill's theory depends on the ability of persons in society to

* An appropriate example that illustrates this point is the rational decision to limit population. People have to be consciously educated to the dangers of overpopulation. The rationality of birth control innovations is not immediately evident to persons who have not considered the alternatives and consequences. The enlightenment which makes acceptance of such measures likely is, for Mill, the result of education and the cultivation of social conscience.

articulate their explicit, agreed-on-goals, having consciously and methodically explored alternative means to them. This reflects Mill's advocacy of personal freedom and laissez-faire government, both of which facilitate exploration of individual preferences and decisions about worthwhile means and ends - hopefully enlightened by reason.

Throughout Mill's writings on social change, a style of argument appears which involves pointing out that where there are equally viable social alternatives, the harm and benefits (translated into Mill's language: dissatisfaction and satisfaction) of the presence and absence of each must be weighed in order to reach a justifiable decision. In On Liberty this is how he justified his belief that the laws in society should be minimal. Mill points out that the possible harms various laws cause must be weighed against their benefits; also, the harms vs. benefits must be compared in the case of there being no such laws. His conclusion is that in most cases, there is more to be lost by having a formal law than by leaving its content up to individual discretion.²⁹ An important facet of this argument is its implicit suggestion that justifying social change involves considering the two distinct phenomena: (1) conditions of the world, and (2) personal responses to them, both of which are naturalistic phenomena which can be empirically observed and correlated. Although choosing a social program involves

recognizing psychological responses, examination of the social process is independent of them.

This, in turn, emphasizes the dominant role of justification in Mill's theory. Thus, attention is called to the capacity men have for self-determination. Mill believes that to a great extent persons can influence their own ways of life. In situations where individuals exert a measure of control, their influence is seen by Mill as being directed toward conditions in the world. A goal, in attempting to manipulate social variables, may very well be a more satisfactory personal response, but Mill clearly interprets this as a consequent of social change rather than the change, itself.

All these dimensions of Mill's theory of social change, his description of its nature and his conclusions about social practices, provide occasion for comparison with Oakeshott's approach. Mill's and Oakeshott's disagreement is not simply about what the characteristics of a specific social movement have been. It is about the ingredients of social change in general, and how to get to know them.

Naturally, their theories about this have bearing on what they see as significant in understanding individual social processes. Thus, Oakeshott does not emphasize human choice as directing the path of change nor does he think in terms of the order of magnitude that Mill's thinking reflects. For Oakeshott, change is a matter

of continuous, ongoing, development that preserves the traditional threads of the social fabric. For Mill, change can involve the rearrangement of existing variables or the addition of wholly new ones that represent breaks with the past.

Returning to an example used at the beginning of this chapter is helpful in summarizing the differences. Although both Mill and Oakeshott might very well approve of the women's movement, they would disagree in describing how it exemplifies a process of social change. Oakeshott would describe its manifestations as embodying pervasive modes of thought. Understanding its ramifications is really grasping how it is continuous with tradition. Mill would characterize it as revolutionary, as a rationally directed program for instituting practices which are justifiable in terms of expected social utility.

What all these specific differences add up to, is perhaps, a difference over what the purpose of having a theory of change is. For Mill, it is an impetus to man's powers of self-determination. His theory is a set of guidelines to be applied to concrete situations where decisions about possible changes are called for. This is in keeping with his commitment to developing a science of man in society. Oakeshott's goals are not primarily practical, although practical application is certainly possible as a consequence of his theory. One could defend particular recommendations in terms of

how they contributed to the overall coherence of society. But Oakeshott does not seem to be terribly interested in this. Instead, he sees the study of the subtleties and innuendoes of social processes as giving one insight into himself. Social change is a manifestation of the changes (within a framework of continuity) of one's self-image. Consequently, as one experiences his environment changing, he can interpret this as signifying that he, himself, has undergone internal modification.

A fundamental difference has already been pointed out, over what each philosopher believes is the source of social change. Mill, believing that one looks at phenomena in the world in order to understand social - at economic conditions, technology, political events - directs his attention to variables which are manipulable as are a collection of stones or artifacts. Since Oakeshott feels that examining social change is, essentially examining oneself, this precluding the objectivity that is characteristic of Mill, his portrayal of change is relatively low-keyed and conservative.

The differences between Mill and Oakeshott are, then, relatively far-reaching in this area. They pervade their theories of change, from the most general level to their more specific, practical points of opposition. This comparison does not provide a full exploration of their differences, however, especially the differences in the structures of their theories. This will be the

task of the final chapter, occurring after we have explored our last Level One issue - Mill's and Oakeshott's theories of man.

FOOTNOTES

¹ John Stuart Mill, "A System of Logic," J.S. Mill's Philosophy of Scientific Method, ed. Ernest Nagel (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1950), p. 181.

² J.G.A. Pocock, "Times, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and Their Understanding," Politics and Experience, ed. Preston King and B.C. Parehk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 212.

³ Michael Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 126 ff.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 303 - 304.

⁵ Oakeshott, "The Activity of Being a Historian," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 166. Our immediately preceding discussion is based on pp. 137 - 167.

⁶ Oakeshott, "The Masses in Representative Democracy," Freedom and Serfdom, ed. A. Hunold (Dordrecht, Holland: Reidel, 1961). Oakeshott's article is the general basis for this discussion.

⁷ Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes, p. 261.

⁸ Ibid., p. 303.

⁹ Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, p. 13.

¹⁰ Samuel Coleman, "Is There Reason in Tradition," Politics and Experience, pp. 245 - 246.

¹¹ James Fitzjames Stephens, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, ed. R.J. White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 144.

¹² The distinction between knowing how to perform and understanding the theory of the activity is discussed in Gilbert Ryle's essay, "Knowing How and Knowing That," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 46 (1946 - 1947).

¹³ W.D. Greenleaf, Oakeshott's Philosophical Politics (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), p. 44.

¹⁴ Oakeshott, "On Being Conservative," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, pp. 173 - 175.

¹⁵ Julian H. Franklin, review of Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, by Michael Oakeshott. Journal of Philosophy, 10 December, 1963, p. 817.

¹⁶ Oakeshott, "On Being Conservative." pp. 177 - 182.

¹⁷ Pocock, pp. 236 - 237.

¹⁸ Coleman, p. 247.

¹⁹ Pocock, pp. 228 - 229.

²⁰ John Plamenatz, The English Utilitarians (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), pp. 56 - 57.

²¹ Mill, The Spirit of the Age (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 88 - 89. Mill also discusses this in On Liberty (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1947), pp. 73 - 74; also in "M. de Tocqueville on Democracy in America," Dissertations and Discussions, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, Rader, and Dyer, 1867), 2: 15 - 16.

²² Ibid., p. 90.

²³ Mill, The Subjection of Women (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1970), p. 79 ff.

²⁴ Mill, The Spirit of the Age, p. 16.

25 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), pp. 68 - 69.

26 Mill, On Liberty, Chapter 4.

27 Mill, "Civilization," Essays on Politics and Culture, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 63.

28 J.M. Robson, The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 151.

29 Mill, On Liberty, p. 82.

CHAPTER IV

MAN'S POLITICAL NATURE

The question, "What are human beings like?" is central to the study of politics. Politics is shaped in the course of human participation, and the quality of life is affected by the politics of society.

It is possible to correlate differences in political theories with differences over what the natures of persons are who belong to the political societies under consideration. Theorists sometimes justify characteristics of political systems by citing qualities of those who participate in them. In this chapter, some of the clear divergences between Oakeshott and Mill on the nature of man as a political creature shall be explored as additional manifestations of their broad First Level differences. We have made no antecedent assumption concerning a specific kind of relationship between the view of man held by each theorist and his political theory. At this stage human nature is another functional variable in the political system, just as political education and social progress are. In our concluding chapter, in which these specific First Level differences will be reconsidered together, the relations between them and their

roles in the political theories of Mill and Oakeshott will emerge.

Both Mill and Oakeshott refer, in their theories of man, to human nature as a phenomenon in the world, rather than to a concept which needs explication. Human nature can be interpreted as referring to man's capabilities and weaknesses, his capacity to acquire knowledge, his potential to improve, his role in society, and the way in which he is affected by his appetites and passions. On a more general level, human nature also pertains to the fundamental manner in which a person experiences and uses his experience. For Mill and Oakeshott these are all elements of human nature. They have strongly divergent views concerning the details of the above categories, but they appear to agree that these are the areas to turn to in considering human nature.

A key to grasping the differences in the content of human nature which emerge in Mill's and Oakeshott's theories is their respective accounts of the constitution of human experience.

The contents of a person's experiences shapes the character of that person. Yet, although Mill and Oakeshott treat experience as the basic ingredient of human nature, each interprets experiences as having different content. The complexity of their differences is intensified because each offers different evidence for his own interpretation of human experience. Their disagreement is over content as well as methodological. This double-edged difference is illustrated

by the familiar example of the four blind men who respectively described an elephant as a snake, a tree trunk, a leaf, and a rope. The analogy to our present concern is that (1) each blind man offered a description of the elephant, and (2) the descriptions differed in content because each person referred to a different source for his data.

These two points apply to Mill's and Oakeshott's account of experience. Mill and Oakeshott disagree about the content of human experience and they also disagree about the correct method, literally, the right place to look, in order to comprehend its content.

Oakeshott interprets human experience as referring to the subjective impressions an individual has of himself in relation to other entities. Mill understands this same term to denote the sensations, memories, responses, and other feelings one has about an environment or context which is separate, or objective, with respect to the experiencing individual. Their different results are correlated with their going to different sources for their data and their using different methods for acquiring this knowledge.

Human nature is shaped through experience, according to Oakeshott, and is limited only by the possible modes in which experience can occur. For this reason, Oakeshott's theory of man centers on the details of human experience. While he does recognize behavioral traits that are commonly distributed among men, he interprets these as limiting conditions that experience has to fulfill in order for it to occur.

Following Oakeshott's own approach, his theory of experience will be explored and treated as a means of understanding the behavioral qualities that will subsequently be considered.

Oakeshott's major work, Experience and Its Modes,¹ is a presentation of his interpretation of human experience, the forms it takes and its significance in understanding the various dimensions of human life. His theory of experience includes three main facets. Although it is artificial to separate them, they can be summarized as follows: (1) human experience is the ideas people have and that these ideas (in his special sense of the term) are ultimately real, (2) his view that human nature is identical to these ideas and thoughts, and that there is a kind of feedback effect between the content of a person's experiences and what that person's character is like, and (3) his belief that the myriad experiences that make up human nature comprise a cohesive, internally connected whole and that this wholeness will not be corrupted by the specific character of any sort of experience. In other words, a basic facet of human nature is that a person's experiences, regardless of their qualities, are cemented by an individual's personality, into a coherent whole. A consequence is that there are no limits, specifiable in advance, to the form or content of any human experience. Thus, exploring Oakeshott's views of experience and ideas is central in exploring his views on human nature.

Characterizing human experience as men's ideas is not the truism it might initially appear to be, in Oakeshott's theory. He identifies human experience as what one would ordinarily and non-critically see as the material that one thinks, the content of thought. Everything one thinks is included. It is important to note that nothing is included in human experience which is not, literally, present or given in thought. This makes it impossible, for example, to assert that an external, independent world is presented through experience. However, it is perfectly sensible to maintain that one has an idea of an independent world, among whose thought-of characteristics is that it exists outside one's mind. This distinction is crucial for understanding Oakeshott's approach to human nature because of the connection he makes between the contents of human experience and human nature. The former is, strictly speaking, the ingredients of the latter.

The distinction of subjective and objective ideas helps in explaining Oakeshott's interpretation of experience. The term, subjective, in this context, refers to the view that the content of a person's ideas is shaped by the particular reactions, feelings and attitudes that the person has. Calling one's ideas subjective asserts that the contents of the ideas are influenced by the individual's personality. Subjective ideas vary among persons insofar as their personalities differ. For example, a mountain lake can be inviting

to one person and to another, foreboding. The lake's qualities as they occur in subjective experience are manifestations of the personality of whoever has the idea.

According to Oakeshott, an idea's subjective qualities are as much a part of the idea's object as any of its other qualities. In terms of the lake, its attribute of being inviting or foreboding are as real as is the idea of the lake, itself. All these qualities refer to persons' thoughts.

This contrasts to the notion of objective ideas, which refers to the view that the personal attitude responses of an individual towards his experience are metaphysically separable from the nature of the experience itself. It is part of the concept of objectivity to assert that the genuine nature of an object can be known independent of one's reaction to it. In fact, attitudes, reactions and whatever else contributes to an idea's subjectivity are sometimes seen as corrupting the accuracy of an idea of a phenomenon.

Oakeshott does not believe that ideas can be objective, in this sense. Ideas or experiences are always thought by an individual.* They never occur apart from an individual's particular point of view. The expectation that an objective portion can be discerned, as distinct

* This has bearing on Oakeshott's treatment of physical science, which is discussed in detail below in this chapter, and again in Chapter Five.

from subjective characteristics is a consequence of interpreting an individual's ideas as representations of something external to them and that this external matter is somehow more real than a person's idea of it. Oakeshott denies this representational view. Its denial is a central point in his characterization of experience. He emphasizes that the total contents of human experience are the individual ideas that persons have and that there is no basis for treating ideas as evidence for inferring that which is outside them.

Oakeshott appears to be maintaining that human subjective ideas, which are the ingredients of experience, are the elements of the world. He interprets ideas as the sole objects in experiencing one's world. Ideas are "ultimately real" because there is nothing else present to an experiencing individual but ideas. However, in Experience and Its Modes, Oakeshott states that the world is neither a world of mental events nor is it a world of ideas.²

Each of the two above assertions, that ideas are real and that ideas are not the ingredients of the world, signifies something specific about human experience for Oakeshott. By maintaining that ideas are real, Oakeshott emphasizes that ideas are not mere signposts to that which is more real than they are. What is presented in experience, in one's ideas, is nothing less than the real world. The fact that ideas are subjective, being influenced by one's personality, does not make them any less real. At the same time, ideas are not

the ingredients in the world because they present a world of objects, and the contents of an idea is never an idea of an object, but an object. In effect, ideas are real for Oakeshott because subjective experience shows exactly what the world is like; and the world consists of objects, not non-material ideas. Although experience occurs in the form of ideas, our awareness is of the world, and not of ideas, according to Oakeshott.

The kinds of objects that experience contains are, therefore, typified by the inviting or foreboding lake of the above example. The inviting or foreboding qualities are as clearly presented as is the lake itself. To say that experience includes a lake which the observer attributes with varying qualities is a misrepresentation of Oakeshott's view of experience.

In order to connote the qualities which Oakeshott attributes to ideas and to contrast his sense with traditional representationalism, Oakeshott's ideas can be called object-ideas. This term reflects the fact that when I experience an inviting or foreboding lake, my experience does not reveal an idea that is somehow separable from the lake. There is a lake in my world, but the mode in which I directly experience it is as a lake-idea. And furthermore, as an inviting (or otherwise) lake-idea. The Oakeshottian concept of object-idea connotes that the nature of the lake is essentially connected to the way in which the lake is to me, an individual, with a definite point of view, a set of

attitudes, of subjective reactions which actually become part of the nature of the world. The device of an object-idea reflects Oakeshott's belief that there is no world which is not an individual's world. Understanding what Oakeshott means by characterizing experience as consisting of subjective, real object-ideas, brings us to the second facet of his theory of man, that human nature is constructed out of these private experiences and vice versa. There is a kind of two-way feedback between a person's experiences and personality. It is helpful in comprehending this relationship between human nature and the contents of experience to recall Oakeshott's belief, considered above, that one's world is essentially personal and subjective. This crucial dimension of experience and thus, the world, shapes the nature of an individual's personality; and one's personality, in turn, affects the way in which experience and the world occur to a person.

It is important to note that Oakeshott does not intend the relationship between personal experiences and human nature to be interpreted as linguistic. Oakeshott believes that this relation is true in fact; and that asserting it describes something significant about man, not about concepts.

Now, let us return to the central issue by using a specific example. Let us say that whenever a snake-idea happens in a particular person's experience, whether the idea is one of imagination or an actual object-idea, the experience is terrifying and

repulsive. However, our subject finds herself with the opportunity to vacation in Marrakech, Morocco, which everybody knows is famous for its snake charmers. The subject's Morocco-idea is of an enjoyable place (with the obvious exception), and her vacation-idea is also positive. The subjective attractions of the idea outweigh its subjective repulsions. In Marrakech, all the subject's experiences are positive; her world, at this point is pleasant, attractive, interesting, and satisfying. The nature of the world is affecting the nature of the subject's personality. No snake charmer, yet. Finally, a snake charmer is seen. At first, the sight is horrifying. But gradually, the subject's positive Morocco-ideas give the snake an aura of interest. By the time the vacation ends cobras are no longer the dreaded creatures they once were. The subject's world and her personality have mutually influenced one another throughout this process.

From Oakeshott's point of view, this change in the nature of snake-ideas can only be explained in terms of the subjective attitudes of the traveler. First, snakes actually are horrible. It must be emphasized that it is unfair to Oakeshott's theory to say that the snake itself is not horrible, and only the idea of the neutral object is because it is shaped by the subjective attitudes of the experiencer. Insofar as the idea is, essentially, reality, but also insofar as it is a personal, individual reality, there is a horrible snake, and the horror

is as real as the snake. However, the subjective elements that constitute the traveler's individuality undergo change. They change as subsequent Morocco experiences occur. The next time a snake-idea occurs it is from the point of view of a subject who has undergone slight modification. The modification is cumulative as Morocco-ideas continue.

This situation could be interpreted as one in which one's experiences are influenced by antecedent experiences. Oakeshott, however, would tend to remind the interpreter not to depart in his description from the mode in which the experiences actually occur, which is not as a series of experiences but as a series of object-ideas. This brings us back to Oakeshott's contention that, in experiencing, we confront our world. And the notion that experience consists of object-ideas serves to focus on this fact, which Oakeshott views as obvious and indisputable.

In summary, Oakeshott emphasizes that an essential aspect of an object-idea is that it is always experienced from the point of view of a particular person. This is the source of the idea's subjectivity. Therefore, when an object-idea occurs, its content includes qualities that belong to whoever experiences it. When the horrible snake-idea takes place part of its nature is the nature of the traveler in Morocco - in our example its horror and repulsiveness which reflect the subjective personality of the traveler, all of which

subsequently change.

What all this implies, is that in experiencing object-ideas, one experiences oneself. The subjective dimension of experience is a manifestation of the experiencing individual's personality. The particular subjective qualities that belong to one's world emanate from the individuality of that person. Therefore, one is what one experiences oneself to be. One can be a fearer-of-snakes, or an enjoyer of vacation trips. These two qualities exemplify facets of human nature. Strictly speaking, it becomes improper, in light of this discussion, to speak of qualities of "human nature" in general. For Oakeshott, there are personal, individual natures, which vary from individual to individual. Human natures vary as private, subjective experiences vary.

It follows from this scheme that it is possible that a person can, in a sense, take stock of the subjective qualities that shape his object-ideas and thus have a self-idea. These two kinds of ideas are analogous, and whether a person has an object-idea or a self-idea at any particular time, simply depends on his personal concern. The self-idea is a subjective idea of one's attitudes, responses, feelings, etc., and whatever else is functional in making ideas essentially subjective. This, again, reflects the belief that a person's nature is presented in his experience simply because one's experience is always subjective. One's nature is experienced in the occurrence of

object-ideas.

Let us now summarize this complicated discussion which has led to the point that the qualities of human nature are whatever the subjective elements of one's experience are. The personality of the traveler in Morocco (of our earlier example) included the qualities of snake-terror and snake-repulsion. The individual experienced herself in the occurrence of her snake-ideas. An idea of oneself is acquired just as any other object-idea is, the only difference being the direction of one's concern.

Furthermore, there is a feedback relation between experiences and human nature because a person's nature emanates from the subjective facets of his experience and one's experience is continuously shaped by his personality. Hence, subsequent experiences will show the stamp of past experiences.

It is crucial, in being faithful to Oakeshott's point of view, to note that he does not treat the feedback relationship between the two ideas, object and self, as causal. Oakeshott would deny that a causal dimension is ever functional in one's having a self-idea. An individual's perception of himself, of his own nature, takes place as one is aware of his experiences. It is, strictly speaking, inappropriate to adopt terminology that belongs to a mechanistic vocabulary, such as "feedback." In order to be faithful to Oakeshott, to describe the fact that human experience is the form in which human nature is

perceived, and also to point out that a person's nature is a significant factor in the subsequent character of his subjective experience. It must be noted that this term does not denote any mechanical, cause-like, relation.

Our third and final point that is crucial in understanding Oakeshott's view of human experience and consequently human nature is his belief that human experiences form an internally connected, cohesive whole. This belief is thematic in Oakeshott's thought, and it has important implications for his theory of human nature.

Oakeshott's belief that human experiences cohere into a whole unit is not meant as an a priori truth of metaphysics. He intends to portray, with rigorous accuracy, the minute details of human experience from the point of view of an experiencer.* He maintains that the subjective impression an individual has of his experiences is always that of a coherent, single unit, not of a collection of contingently connected atomic elements. To a person, one experience flows into another so that a point where the first ceases and the second begins is never discerned. When one refers to "his experience" he is referring to a single unit that is separate, in his

* A comparison can be drawn between Oakeshott's attempt to present a detailed picture of human experience and an impressionist painting which seeks to convey all the nuances of a phenomenon exactly as they impressed the painter - the light, the movement, even the weather in many cases. Oakeshott is trying to convey the nuances of experience as they impress the individual who is experiencing.

eyes, from others' experiences. A corollary to this is that it is impossible to identify an experience as one's own and not see it as integrally cemented into the coherent whole that is "one's experience", so to speak. If it belongs to a person's life it is perceived as part of the coherent whole; if it's not part of the coherent whole it simply is not envisioned as being part of one individual's experience. This is an essential aspect of human experience. In fact, in recognizing one's experiences as belonging to oneself, one is recognizing nothing but their internal coherence.

Oakeshott never presents a clear definition of what he means by coherence although he uses the term often in his writings. This is not a serious problem because Oakeshott's belief about the essential subjectivity of all ideas applies to the idea of coherence. Coherence describes the subjective impression that a person has of all his experiences fitting together into a relatively integral whole. The individual's object-idea of coherence is necessary and sufficient to assert its existence. Consequently, although the subjective feeling of coherence can vary from person to person, it will be predicable of one's experience.

Human nature shares the essential quality of coherence with its counterpart, human experience. For Oakeshott, there can be no inconsistent parts of a person's personality, in spite of the fact that inconsistencies might be judged to exist by an external observer. This

is not to say that a person can never behave unpredictably, or change in any way. However, to one's self, one's personality is experienced as a coherent singular unit, an integral organism. Simply by experiencing one's own self, one experiences its coherence. The connection between the object-ideas of coherence and self parallels the connection between those of one's own experience and coherence. Coherence is part of the very essence of both. Consequently, even what are common-sensically acknowledged to be inner conflicts are integral parts of the coherent self, when seen from Oakeshott's point of view.

In other words, the obvious fact that conflicts in personalities continually emerge and are recognized does not conflict with Oakeshott's view of human nature because he interprets coherence as a metaphysical constituent of one's self. He acknowledges that there are degrees of appearance of incoherence in an individual's character; nevertheless, coherence can never be completely absent from the synthesis of one's personality traits. In cases where there is a relative inconsistency, perhaps a conflict or a tension between aspects of a person's nature, it is natural for the person to strive for some modification or adjustment. This has bearing on the manner in which human nature is manifest in social and political behavior, where a kind of equilibrium among variables often is a goal.

Furthermore, even in situations where a resolution is not

sought, the very fact of conflict can be incorporated into the internally consistent idea one has of one's self. The conflict can be brought into balance with the rest of one's personality by the particular manner in which one responds to it, for example. The crucial point is that regardless of what the facets of one's personality are, they are cemented into a kind of internal balance by being experienced as belonging to one's self.

It must be noted that elucidating widely distributed, general behavior patterns is not emphasized by Oakeshott. On the whole, his writings on man lack precise, definitive statements which predicate general qualities to man. The relationship of subjective experience with human nature explains this. What can be known of man is limited only by the forms experience can take, and Oakeshott does not apply an external criterion to experience to distinguish genuine from pseudo-experience. Therefore, no dimension or form of experience is rejected by Oakeshott as contributing to the nature of man, and he recognizes the possibility of experience occurring in any number of forms in the future.

Furthermore, the previously discussed "feedback" between experience and an individual's personality contributes to Oakeshott's distrust of theories which emphasize general characteristics of "man" in general. There is, in experience, no phenomenon which corresponds to this general concept. There are different men with different qualities

and different experiences. Political schemes which are designed to attain goals for "man" are doomed to failure because they take for granted a picture of man which does not reflect what Oakeshott sees as an absolutely central fact: that since a person's nature reflects his subjective experience and subjective experience can take any number of directions which cannot be a priori defined or limited, there is, strictly speaking, not very much point in devising large scale programs that play down this variability in favor of general rules.

His own description of this kind of misguided political behavior is in his paper, "Rational Conduct":

Activity would be bent towards the performance of actions in pursuit of preconceived and formulated ends, actions, determined wholly by ends sought and from which fortuitous and unwanted consequences had, so far as possible, been excluded. Its aim would be, first, to establish a proposition, to determine a purpose to be pursued, secondly, to determine the means to be employed to achieve that (and no other) end, and thirdly, to act. Human behavior would appear to be broken up into a series of purposes to be achieved and a series of individual actions to be performed in pursuit of these ends.³

Clearly, Oakeshott feels that this model for political activity does not reflect the actual diversity which exists among men. General, preconceived ends are impossible to justify in light of this diversity. And is there really any imaginable course of action that does not result in unpredicted consequences? In effect, political programs which focus on general, idealized concepts which have no concrete counterparts

in the world ignore what human political experience is really like. Each of the steps Oakeshott mentions in the above passage is evidence of this ignorance.

Specifically, it is pointless to pursue goals which are formulated in advance so as to minimize the possibility of unwanted surprises occurring. This procedure assumes, first of all, that there are such ends for individual. Oakeshott's wholehearted rejection of this assumption is based on his belief in the individual uniqueness of persons, in light of the subjectivity of their experience. Secondly, because political activity is practiced by essentially diverse individuals who participate in a world where predictions can be, at best, approximations, Oakeshott believes it impossible to realize the degree of control assumed by this idealized model. And, finally, the analytic method this approach depends on simply does not, Oakeshott feels, fit the nature of political reality which is fluid, dynamic, and consequently, distorted by the application of a preconceived structure of the type that analysis requires.*

The errors of the approach rejected by Oakeshott appear to stem from the assumption that individual actions produce individual

* These arguments follow from Oakeshott's beliefs about the relationship between subjective experience and individual personality, and from Oakeshott's view that political reality cannot be understood within the framework of science. The former point is discussed above; the latter is elaborated as part of our conclusions in Chapter Five.

consequences in a one-to-one relationship. However, what actually occurs is that complexes of events occur and experience does not reveal a one-to-one causal relationship. Very often, a causal connection is a contribution from the subjective point of view of the experiencer, as in a self-fulfilling prediction.

In effect, it is a mistake, in Oakeshott's eyes, to suppose that man's political concerns can be reduced to particular methods of dealing with particular conscious, verbalized desires and the correlative goals which he sets up for himself. What actually explains political life is a somewhat vague, undirected feeling of dissatisfaction with the status quo and the general desire to improve one's lot in life. * Activity directed towards mitigating this general predicament is followed by various consequences but one's experience does not reveal a one-to-one connection.

A behavioral pattern is suggested by this description of the political context. Our earlier allusion to the coherence that an individual's experience must have for that individual explains the

* Oakeshott speaks to this point in his introductory essay to Hobbes' Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946). All great political theory gets done when man sees himself in a serious predicament and "the political order appears as the whole or part of the scheme of his salvation."¹ Hobbes describes man as seeing himself as having a solitary, isolationist's nature, and has a tendency to behave as such; however, he finds himself in an environment with others. The establishment of the sovereign and the commonwealth are his means of rectifying this discrepancy.

occurrence of political innovations. When an actual situation is not identical to a desired state of affairs, a degree of subjective incoherence is experienced. Adjustments, which manifest themselves in political innovations, are attempts to resolve the imbalance. Human experience is subjectively recognized as coherent and persons have a tendency to behave in a manner that reflects this. A person's behavior, in seeking to minimize specific imbalances within one's experience, reflects the nature of human experience insofar as coherence is one of its essential attributes. Oakeshott does not suggest what particular kinds of political measures are the usual responses to specific types of incoherences, but he points out that the general manner in which people experience leads to certain behavioral tendencies.

The tendency men have to see themselves as parts of a milieu rather than as isolated, self-sufficient atomic units illustrates the above point. Sociability reflects the fact that human experience always includes other persons, directly or indirectly. One's personality bears the mark of others' behavior and reactions. As in our previous examples of object-ideas, an individual continuously interacts with his social context, and he brings a personality which is the effect of past social object-ideas to each new one.

Feelings of empathy and social consciousness are the outward manifestations of this dimension of human nature. These

feeling-experiences tend to reinforce social bonds and cultivate interest in politics. One may realize, for example, that his putting a fence around his property has an effect on the neighbor the fence separates. He feels effects of his act from his fellow citizens' actions. One's social object-ideas lead to the conviction that "some directions of the activity of desiring are approved and others disapproved, that some are right and others wrong."⁵

Oakeshott explains the origin of rules for social behavior in terms of people's object-ideas of their social nature. However, Oakeshott clearly states that rules do not influence behavior. Instead, they abridge or nurture reactions and attitudes that are already functional. This interpretation of social rules suggests that Oakeshott views man as a thread in a complex, tightly woven fabric, namely, society. Individuals see themselves as part of the fabric's pattern which is constantly being woven as they continuously experience. This is consistent with Oakeshott's belief that men do not confront the world as atomic, isolated individuals; inasmuch as individuals are inherent parts of the social fabric, it is inappropriate to characterize social rules as externally imposed directives that qualitatively determine behavior.

The inherent prejudice and bias which color all object-ideas represent another aspect of human nature which Oakeshott sees as a dimension of all human experience. He believes that a person

never has a perfectly objective, neutral point of view. To value absolute open-mindedness as a desirable quality is to be committed to a fictional idea which does not exist in the real world.

Oakeshott interprets "prejudice" broadly. His attribution of this quality to persons focusses on his belief that there are always dispositions and conditioned attitudes that color one's experience. Consideration of the content of any object-idea illustrates this. The previously mentioned inviting (or foreboding) lake-idea contains the value response of the experiencer. The particular way in which it is valued reflects his dispositions, or his prejudices. A lake is never "just" a lake, an objectively confronted phenomenon. It takes on the characteristics attributed to it by the prejudiced viewpoint of its observer.

To judge that the value characteristic of the lake is, in some respect, less real than its other qualities is, according to Oakeshott, tantamount to the incorrect view that a person is like a smooth wax tablet upon which phenomena make their marks. Oakeshott's interpretation of every experience as influenced by a prejudice-laden personality is the opposite of a tabula rasa image of human nature.

Oakeshott's belief that prejudice is a necessary, and thus omnipresent, element of human experience brings to mind possible examples of strictly objective judgments, that the temperature of

the lake is sixty degrees, for example. Is this a counterexample to Oakeshott's characterization of man?

His qualified agreement, that this is an example of a relatively objective judgment, enables him to answer this objection. He distinguishes between the fact that the mercury level is at a certain point on a thermometer and the mode in which this judgment is made by an individual. The fact, that the temperature is sixty degrees, is not experienced in a vacuum, so to speak, isolated from the whole context of a person's experience, and thus, his nature. This surrounding context, namely, that the fact is discovered by a person, introduces the element of prejudice. The fact might be discovered by a swimmer or a fisherman. It has different significance for each; in other words, the statement "the lake's temperature is sixty degrees", is never made with complete objectivity because it is always made from a prejudiced point of view.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that Oakeshott certainly does not feel that modern science is irrelevant or useless in the acquisition of knowledge. He does feel that science, alone, gives a limited picture of what goes on in the world. Science may contribute to our grasp of reality; it is not sufficient - for the reasons just discussed.*

* Oakeshott's treatment of science is explored in detail in Chapter Five, along with the rest of the structure and content of his Level Two metaphysics and epistemology.

The two traits we have considered thus far, the tendency people have towards sociability and prejudice, lead Oakeshott to his convictions about the manner in which individual human characteristics can be modified.

For Oakeshott, the only sense in which general human traits can be discussed is insofar as they are interpreted as the characteristics that are constitutive of the occurrence of experience. Therefore, it is not inconsistent with Oakeshott's approach to speak of the tendency people have towards sociability and prejudice. These two characteristics are general, certainly, but only because they function in the above capacity.

For Oakeshott, because general human traits represent modes in which a person experiences, and because human experience and human nature overlap, changing or perfecting human nature would involve modifying the nature of experience. But we have seen that experience is always a function of one's past experience. It cannot, therefore, take on the fresh, new dimension that perfectability would require because the so-called imperfections of the past would always be functional.

Another way of presenting Oakeshott's view is to point out that if human perfectability is interpreted as entailing qualitative changes in human nature, an untouched tabula rasa is presupposed. This image is, however, rejected by Oakeshott in light of his

characterization of man as essentially prejudiced.

In effect, certain human traits are the necessary conditions of experience; consequently, experience cannot, logically, lead to a change in human traits.

Man's social awareness, his prejudice, and his imperfect-ability are all traits of human nature which have bearing on what Oakeshott believes is the proper role of government. It is not surprising that political programs designed to improve, or change, man's nature in any way are rejected as misguided and inappropriate.

The appropriate function of government is prevention of attempts at interference with the essentially unchangeable characteristics of persons. Those responsible for political decisions possess (hopefully) sagacity and insight acquired in their gradual initiation into the experiences of politics. They are aware of the experiential processes by which human nature is shaped. They also are sensitive to the interplay of personalities that becomes manifest as social consciousness. These qualities enable them to administer the political life of society in a non-disruptive way, maintaining the balance among the various elements that contribute to the society's character. An analogy can be drawn comparing government's role to a referee in a game. A game is played, successfully, so long as there is no disruptive force exerted upon the interaction of the players. The rules do not cause the particular acts in the game; they limit the

action that can be taken. This distinction illustrates Oakeshott's position in picturing what happens when, for example, a baseball player decides to steal second base. No rule told him to do this. The act is creative, on his part. However, if another player on the opposing team stands in his way and obstructs his path, the umpire calls a foul on the opponent. The rules prevent the balance among the players from being upset; if one player gains undue advantage the whole character of the game changes and in extreme cases it is possible to say that there is really not even a game anymore.* The umpire's function is to protect the game; he makes sure that the players have the opportunity to exercise their potentials. And, analogously, the government protects society by protecting its citizens against external impediments to their developing their own individual traits.

A concept that is central to Oakeshott's political philosophy, that of coherence, further clarifies how Oakeshott believes government can function in a way that is consistent with human nature.

A game has coherence because its various parts comprise an integral unit rather than a collection of disconnected activities.

* This consequence is not farfetched. Secretariat's performance in the Belmont Stakes impressed many spectators as there not even being a real race. That situation can be compared with a handicap race in which each horse carries the weight that is judged to equalize his strength with that of the rest of the field.

Similarly, a society can show an analogous kind of internal harmony and balance. Government can promote these conditions by preventing any activities or political programs that will force people to conform to models that conflict with their self-images. Tradition is important in this context. As pointed out earlier in Chapter Three, tradition represents the personality of a society, the continuity and distillation of the practical life of society's members. Therefore, when government protects social traditions it functions so as to promote social coherence through its protection of peoples' self-images.

Oakeshott's belief that people seek coherence in their practical activities, that they pursue an "integrate state of mind, which holds nothing worthy of consideration that hinders the achievement of . . . satisfaction"⁵, appears to be the basis for his evaluation of the function of government. Coherence is an important element of man's nature insofar as its pursuit inexorably influences his day-to-day life. However, Oakeshott presents neither a clear definition of the concept nor evidence for its role in human nature.

Reconsidering how the idea of coherence functions for Oakeshott's theory of man explains these omissions. The first, that Oakeshott does not explicate the concept's meaning, is not a problem because Oakeshott interprets coherence as a subjective impression about oneself. Coherence is, in effect, a feeling about one's experiences

that amounts to their being perceived as "one's own." The term "coherence" does not refer to a set of properties that a group of experiences may embody. It simply names the impression one has of his experiences, those which one perceives as belonging to him. Oakeshott's failure to justify his view that coherence is functional in shaping human activity is, similarly, not a serious difficulty. Because a person's experiences can never be, for him, completely incoherent, some degree of coherence must always be present in experience. Where experiences are relatively less coherent, some modification is usually sought, in order that one can see his life style as more integrated and closely knit. Nevertheless, coherence is always, to some extent, a property of a person's experiences.

A consequence of Oakeshott's interpretation of coherence as being subjective and necessary in one's experience, along with Oakeshott's view on the relationship between experience and human nature is that his theory of human nature is very broad and flexible. Human nature is limited only by the particular forms experience can take. There is no external criterion which is applicable to experience, according to Oakeshott. He says that "truth and experience are given together, and it is impossible to separate them," also that "without truth there can be no experience."⁶ In effect, the fact that a person has an experience is necessary and sufficient for that experience to be attributed with significance for human nature. Thus, human nature

can take any number of directions, limitable only by the forms one's subjective experience takes.

The breadth of Oakeshott's theory of man and the reasons for it provide a point of departure for exploring J. S. Mill's view of human nature. Mill's theory of man, like Oakeshott's cannot be understood independent of his concept of experience. However, Mill's sense of experience is more limited than Oakeshott's and the two philosophers differ concerning the way in which each believes human experience contributes to human nature.

One of Mill's life-long projects was the development of a science of man, a collection of descriptive statements about human behavior which, hopefully, would be the basis for successful prediction. Empirical observations show causal patterns in human behavior, thus revealing human nature. Human experience is requisite for acquiring knowledge about man according to this approach.

Closely connected to Mill's scientific approach is his commitment to a naturalistic theory of man. In effect, Mill sees men as physical entities which are part of nature, "as areas within which laws of nature operate and interact."⁷ Understanding human nature is, then, understanding and predicting how laws of nature become manifest in observable behavior. This suggests, in turn, that the kinds of qualities men will be discovered as possessing are

what can be called "naturalistic properties", those which sense experience can reveal. In other words, Mill does not attribute human beings with properties that elude empirical investigation.

Mill's dual commitment to science and naturalism, then, suggests that not only is experience necessary in learning about man, but that human nature will be seen to consist only of those qualities which can be experienced, either actually or possibly. In summary, the nature of human experience has bearing on Mill's philosophy of man in the following respects: (1) Mill's picture of man will emerge through discovery of behavioral patterns of response to human experiences; and (2) the experiences which function as causes of these responses consist of feelings and other sensations.

Although, according to Mill, human nature is understandable through science; and experience is, obviously, requisite for this understanding, he cautions against simply drawing general inferences from repeated particular occurrences without taking into account the possibility that this procedure might ignore experiential data which is relatively hidden from view, but still influential in shaping human nature. Mill believes that circumstances are extremely influential in shaping human character and influencing behavior.* Their

* The manner in which circumstantial factors operate in modifying general patterns of human behavior will be fully discussed in our subsequent consideration of the science of ethology, and in our Level Two analysis in Chapter Five.

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actions must be incorporated into any model designed to reveal general patterns of human nature, and an inductive model, correlating behavior patterns, might very well not do this, adequately.

This qualification suggests that Mill's image of man is of an entity whose properties are completely enumerable in terms of correlations between behavioral patterns, as long as the notion of "behavior" is interpreted widely enough. Mill himself, describes man as "a tree which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing."⁸ This particular comparison shows that Mill does not believe that every dimension of human nature can be readily discovered by observation. Were one's description of a tree's growth and development based solely upon observation, an essential aspect of the tree's nature would not be discovered. One could not discern that the tree is a living thing, and that its overall nature is more than a sequence of events that can be directly seen. Analogously, the character of man cannot be completely elucidated simply by describing his observable actions without putting his actions into a context which is constructed out of, and serves to explain, those actions which are directly observed. Just as the stages in a tree's growth does not completely explain what the nature of a tree is, the various acts men perform leaves something about human nature unexplained.

This unexplained residue, or "tendency of inward forces", although not directly present to experience, is known by experience indirectly, according to Mill. Human personality depends on a number of circumstantial factors which have bearing on one's response to external situations. These factors might include physical attributes, geographic location, education - in fact, any so-called accident of nature that contributes to the context of a person's life.⁹ Any combination of circumstantial variables comprise the relatively hidden aspects of human nature that a correct theory of man must include. Thus, it is necessary to go beyond manifest behavior and study the factors which account for it. Mill calls this branch of the study of man "ethology", the study of the formation of character. Ethology fills the gap, so to speak, between the behavioral observations of men (or the tree's growth patterns) and the fact that there is more to understanding behavior than reporting it. Mill was not eminently successful in attempting to develop a refined ethological discipline; however, he did attempt to justify its usefulness by comments such as,

Among a class composed of persons who have been born into a distinguished position, the habitual springs of action will be very different from those of a democratic community. Speaking generally . . . it may be said of the first that their feelings and actions will be mainly under the influence of pride; of the latter, under that of interest.¹⁰

and,

Consider, for instance, the French of Lower Canada. Equality of conditions is more universal there than in the United States . . . yet do we find in Canada that go-ahead spirit . . . that restless impatient eagerness for improvement in circumstances - that mobility . . . which M. de Tocqueville imputes to the same cause in the United States? In all these respects the very contrary qualities prevail.¹¹

Mill refers to other cases of the emergence of what can be described as national personalities. He also notes that both Oriental and Spanish personalities have strong tendencies towards envy, while the French, influenced by political and Catholic despotism, have developed into a relatively passive people.¹²

In effect, these applications of ethology show that human nature, partially revealed in manifest acts, consists also of traits that can be known by interpreting what is observed about human behavior. Ethology is not an alternative to the method of science, but, for Mill, an inherent dimension of it. Human characteristics are revealed in experience, as long as experience is seen as including a sufficiently vast complex of phenomena.

Mill's own statements about characteristics ethology and ordinary observation plus inductive generalization reveals tends to emphasize patterns of response to environmental circumstances. These human responses are described as types of feelings, by Mill. His references to personal pride, self interest, the American "go-ahead spirit" are all descriptions of feeling reactions

to various situations. Therefore, it appears that a key element in Mill's view of human nature are these individual feelings, brute responses to the environmental situations which persons find themselves in.

To a great extent, Mill identifies feelings with sensations, or in Humean language, impressions. The details of a person's character can be traced to his sensations - those in the past and those which refer to what is expected to be felt in the future. However, in addition to having sensations such as sitting on a hard chair or of experiencing hunger, Mill believes that human beings have another type of feelings, which can be called "distinctively and irreducibly human." He distinguishes between feelings which are correlatable with physiological states and those which are not thus reducible. The term he uses, "states of consciousness", signifies a kind of feeling which is not simply a physical sensation, but which is, nonetheless, experienced as a genuine feeling.¹³ In these distinctively human phenomena seem to lie what Mill sees as essential attributes of man.

Several examples clarify the nature of these feelings and how they characterize human nature.

Men make ethical judgments, for instance. Mill's theory involves associating ethical judgments men make with feelings of either attraction (or approval) or repulsion (disapproval). Evaluations

are nothing but the recognition, in oneself, of these sorts of reactions. However, to describe Mill's view of human nature and its manifestations in terms of expectation of only gratification or discomfort, may appear as an oversimplification of his theory of man. There is a whole gamut of human states of consciousness - pride, elevation, contentment, guilt, shame, anxiety, merely to scratch the surface. Nevertheless, all these are various modes in which gratification or discomfort are experienced. Any conscious response to a situation is, for Mill, describable as a variation of his utilitarian theme. The details of human nature are built upon these positive or negative reactions that men feel.

Another example of Mill's analysis of human responses is the fact that men experience feelings of responsibility for part of their own behavior as well as when other persons are affected. This sort of response is identified, by Mill, with one's internal feeling or conviction that he could have behaved otherwise or with the recognition that he is in control of his own activity.¹⁴ Mill believes that this is all the human characteristic of individual responsibility is, namely, a set of feelings that when recognized, is called responsibility. It is crucial that feelings such as these, the so-called "distinctively human" sentiments, all involve intellectual interpretation and judgment; this distinguishes them from purely physiological reactions. In his Utilitarianism, he points out that

moral ideas can be explained as recognitions of what we expect our feelings to be with respect to matters concerning society and over a relatively long duration.¹⁵ In other words, the distinctively human dimension in man's nature is composed of feelings, but not merely those which Mill calls "animal instincts."¹⁶ They include intellectual elements, but they are nevertheless species of the pleasure-pain dichotomy.

This analysis fits another feeling that Mill regards as distinctively human - guilt. Because this feeling of discomfort follows acts which engender differences of opinion or controversy, men attempt to avoid such acts.¹⁷ Men regard such acts as undesirable. Here, as in the above examples, patterns of human behavior reflect man's nature - to seek to maximize his personal gratification and minimize his pain. These patterns emerge as consequences of judgments men make about their expected responses to various situations.

Mill makes various political recommendations which reflect this approach to understanding human nature. In his essay on Coleridge, Mill speaks about methods that are effective in strengthening existing political organizations. He bases his recommendations on how he sees human nature, as a collection of sensations and responses. He suggests three means to increase social cohesion: (1) restraining selfish impulses and replacing them with

socially-oriented desires, (2) cultivating allegiance to some figure-head, be it a principle, person (even God), or a constitution, and (3) developing a sense of sympathy among people so that they experience a feeling of belonging to the same body-politic.¹⁸ Each one of these methods makes use of the view that what a person does is determined by his feelings. In each case, negative feelings are supposed to become associated with whatever behavior is to be changed; that which is supposed to replace any questionable behavior is supposed to be connected with pleasant feelings that a person will want to maximize.

At this point, it is possible to ascertain what specific facets of human nature account for persons' tendencies to react in one way rather than another. As just discussed, Mill believes that physiological conditions are inadequate for explaining patterns of response,¹⁹ and the judgmental element which functions in human responses shows that the pleasure-pain reaction is not simply awareness of one's body. Rather, persons tend to interpret and intellectualize about their purely physical responses so that anticipation of what is called pleasure need not necessarily be based upon the occurrence of actual physical gratification, but even, on occasion, on physical discomfort.* Man's

* It is not difficult to find examples that fit these cases. Whenever a person deliberately chooses a course of action that is a personal inconvenience or sacrifice his anticipated gratification is not based upon expectation of physical pleasure. In fact, in such situations one's personal satisfaction may be correlated with actual physical pain.

moral facet, not reducible to physical responses, is, in effect, what is essential to human nature in Mill's eyes.

Mill believes that this crucial dimension of human nature has significant bearing on man's private and social life style in that human beings are educable. Persons' abilities to make judgments about themselves and to evaluate their standards of life can be improved. Although Mill's theory of education has been discussed in detail in Chapter Two, his beliefs are relevant to our present interest insofar as man's inherent improvability reflects Mill's particular picture of the human mind.

Mill feels that the human mind can be understood in terms of processes of associations which develop between a person's thoughts and ideas. On the simplest level, a simple "carrot-stick" hypothetical situation illustrates how certain habits are strengthened because they are connected by association in one's mind, with pleasure; others are weakened when they are connected with unpleasant thoughts. In his critique of Hamilton's philosophy, Mill cites mental associations to explain psychological patterns he has observed in man. In this work Mill describes the process of reasoning as a version of association. Inference from evidence to conclusion takes place through an association with some mediating knowledge. When two phenomena are observed, separately, to be constantly joined with another factor, they become associated in the observer's mind and

he infers that they are factually related.²⁰

The ability to associate is an inherent capacity of the human mind. It explains men's responses to situations that they are relatively accustomed to. Mill repeatedly points out that the elements that function in the associative process are all sensations or feelings, and not innate or intuitive knowledge. What we have referred to as the interpretative, intellectual stage, through which man makes judgments about his feelings, is nothing other than association. This is how discreet sensations become significant to a person; through association they get their import and tell an individual something about himself and his world.

Mill describes the processes of association in detail; they consist of feelings of expectancy, feelings of recognition of qualitative similarity and temporal contiguity, and feelings initiated by repetition of already associated phenomena.²¹ A specific example which shows how these kinds of feelings are the building blocks of one's knowledge of the world is drawn from Mill's Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy. In this essay he points out various inadequacies which he feels belong to Bentham's view of man, one of which is failure to realize that men tend to support established governments more readily than they accept new, innovative institutions because they have developed affirmative habits of response to the familiar and associate the prospect of change with unpleasant feelings of

insecurity and fearfulness.²² Processes of association explain these reactions, according to Mill. Feelings of satisfaction are generated by making successful predictions about the future. Furthermore, the longer a person acquiesces or behaves according to certain rules or a specific style, the more favorable are his feelings about that mode of behavior. In effect, positive responses become temporally associated with a government that one can predict the effects of on one's life; and the more those predictions and the positive feelings occur together, the more unpleasant is the prospect of replacing them with the unknown.

In explaining man's responses to his environment, then, the phenomenon of association suggests why Mill believes that man's nature is such that he can be educated or improved. Patterns of judgment are correlated, via association, with expectations of pleasure or pain. Human judgments about various situations can be modified, clearly, if the responses with which they are associated can correspondingly be modified. In other words, human nature includes the capacity for change because the associations that explain the way persons act can be changed.

An appropriate question concerns the assimilation, in our discussion, of "change" with "change-for-the-better" or improva- bility. While it is possible to imagine one's reaching increased satisfaction from pursuing a new course of action, this, in itself,

does not itself justify Mill's optimistic attitude. What factors make it likely that processes of association will work towards generally beneficial, rather than destructive, patterns?

Mill's answer lies in the connection he makes between man's capacity for judgment and his belief that there is an elevated, almost noble dimension of human nature. In his Utilitarianism, Mill follows his distinction between higher and lower pleasures by pointing out that

it is an unquestionable fact that those who are equally acquainted with and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both do give a most marked preference to the manner of existence which employs their higher faculties.²³

Man's nature is such that those pleasures which are gratifying in distinctively human, non-bestial respects are preferred. Mill's theory of man emphasizes this dimension as central in human nature. He criticizes Bentham for ignoring qualities that men have such as their "sense of honour, and personal dignity . . . the love of beauty . . . of order . . . of power . . . of action."²⁴ The picture of man that emerges from such remarks accounts for Mill's optimistic attitude and his belief that men are capable of learning how to direct their responses in ways that are beneficial to themselves.

Mill's view of man is evident in patterns of social and political activity that he recognizes as characteristic. Among these is the tendency he believes is characteristic for men to be active

rather than passive; to take steps to express their feelings rather than to suppress them. This behavior pattern is consistent with the strong role that feelings and emotional responses play in shaping one's personality. The connection between Mill's view that man is a creature of feelings and that he leans toward their free expression emerges in Mill's remark that "the food of feeling is action: even domestic affection lives upon voluntary good offices. Let a person have nothing to do for his country and he will not care for it."²⁵

The statement indicates that not only is it the case that persons are influenced by their feelings and responses in various situations, but their feelings will be strengthened insofar as they are expressed in appropriate actions. On a relatively simple level, if one feels repulsion towards another person, he will more likely take appropriate steps to avoid proximity to him. But, if the individual in question is one's supervisor, for example, or has some other status that requires regular contact, the feeling of simple repulsion will be combined with other feelings, perhaps in this case the feeling of fulfillment at reaping professional rewards. The point is that action emanates from feelings, but feelings are reinforced by action, as well.

Among the political consequences that Mill sees as originating from this facet of human nature is the possibility that one interest group will be more explicitly active than others, and will

come to dominate society in such a way so as to suppress other interests. Even though there is a propensity among individuals to take positive action in expressing their feelings, there is no reason to assume that the varied responses within a diverse society will be expressed with equivalent strength. An example of this disparity in power which Mill considers, is the political situation in the United States. Here, favorable attitudes toward democracy have led to such strong emphasis on personal equality that the social value of individual differences has been almost ignored.²⁶

Nevertheless, Mill values individuality highly. Because a person's character is influenced by his responses to various external phenomena, a wider range of stimuli will increase the possible directions in one's personal development. Because Mill believes that human nature leans more towards self-improvement than not, that there are distinctively human capacities that are gratified more completely by what he calls higher as contrasted with lower activities, individualism is socially valuable. It increases the opportunities for personal and social improvement. In these interests, Mill advocates a political system of proportional representation as a most effective preventive of suppression of individuality such as the sort discussed above. The element of proportionality enables all persons to feel that their interests are being voiced; in effect, representative government distributes positive action most widely among citizens. This is

consistent with the elements of human nature that Mill emphasizes. It is necessary to note, however, that the efficacy of representative government in expressing man's inherent tendencies is qualified by Mill insofar as qualities such as education, exposure to alternative points of view, intellectual courage, and a certain degree of intelligence are present among the participants. Where these minimum prerequisites are not yet functional among the citizens, representative government will not function in encouraging the beneficial expression of human tendencies.

Perhaps it is symptomatic of the differences between Mill and Oakeshott in their theories of man that Mill emphasizes that human nature includes a built-in potential for qualitative improvement in comparison to Oakeshott's conviction that this belief rests on an inappropriate interpretation of man and his relation to experience. As has been suggested, Mill sees the distinctively human traits which are characteristic of man principally as abilities to make beneficial judgments about man's relation to his surrounding environment. As Mill says,

I have long felt that the prevailing tendency to regard all the marked distinctions of human character as innate, and in the main indelible, and to ignore the irresistible proofs [from experience] that by far the greater part of those differences, whether between individuals, races, or sexes, are such as not only might but naturally would be produced by differences in circumstances, is one of the chief hindrances to the rational treatment of social questions and one of the

greatest stumbling blocks to human improvement.²⁷

Mill points out in this statement that persons can consciously and rationally influence their own personalities. There are possibilities for free choices among alternative courses of actions. These are best operationalized by exercising one's ability to respond to the educational effect of exposing oneself to various alternatives, by political participation, exploring possible consequences of actions, and cultivating one's capacity to respond to situations in such a way that beneficial results will be most probable.

This sheds some light on the fact that Mill espouses a general laissez-faire approach to the question of governmental influence over people's lives. It is unnecessary to manipulate persons, to push or force them to take certain steps that are expected to result in increased well-being. Given adequate education, along with the inherent ability of men to utilize the content of their education, the natural course of human existence will tend towards improvement of the quality of life. Mill believes that knowledge of consequences are cumulative. Therefore, it is possible that persons can better their lives continually, making use of past accomplishments that are passed on to new generations.

This, of course, depends on a particular view of human beings that Mill holds. It is clear that if Mill's picture of man

were not so flattering, and that if he did not believe that people had the capability to make the right choices (within certain limits), Mill's beliefs about improvement and progress would lack credibility. In effect, both the ability and responsibility for improving the quality of life belong to man. Only by utilizing the capacity for self-evaluation can improvement take place.

Mill's comments on man's improvability treat the improvement process as involving a person's capacity to make judgments about his own experience. In contrast, Oakeshott's view that the particular details of one's experience become, quite literally, facets of his nature, makes this objectivity of judgment impossible. This helps in understanding Oakeshott's general reluctance to concentrate on broad, widely distributed human characteristics. Discovering the existence of such patterns suggests that man can view himself as an object of experience, but Oakeshott's interpretation how the qualities of a person's experience are incorporated into that person's nature amounts to rejecting the feasibility of such a suggestion, insofar as it requires an objective point of view.

We have seen that it is possible to describe both Mill's and Oakeshott's theories of man as treating the manner in which man experiences as central in developing a picture of human nature. However, their differences over the relationship of a person to his

experience, the contents of experience, and the ways in which experientially-shaped human nature becomes manifest in political and social behavior overshadow their basic similarity. These, and the other differences that have been previously explored are now to be critically examined as a whole, in our Second Level analysis.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Michael Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).
- ² Ibid., pp. 55 - 56.
- ³ Oakeshott, "Rational Conduct," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays (New York: Basic Books, 1962), pp. 88 - 89.
- ⁴ Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1946), p. xi.
- ⁵ Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes, p. 295.
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 323.
- ⁷ R. P. Anschutz, The Philosophy of J. S. Mill (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 171
- ⁸ Ibid., pp. 22 - 23.
- ⁹ Maurice Cowling, Mill and Liberalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), p. 66.
- ¹⁰ John Stuart Mill, "Tocqueville on Democracy in America," Essays on Politics and Culture, ed. Gertrude Himmelfarb (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1963), p. 248.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 258.
- ¹² Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1962), pp. 65 - 66.
- ¹³ Mill, On the Logic of the Moral Sciences, ed. Henry Magid (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965), pp. 24 - 26.

- 14 Alan Ryan, John Stuart Mill (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), pp. 109 - 110.
- 15 Mill, Utilitarianism (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), p. 79.
- 16 Ibid., p. 52.
- 17 Ryan, John Stuart Mill, pp. 113 - 114.
- 18 Mill, "Coleridge," Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, ed. J. M. Robson, vol. 10: Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 131 - 136.
- 19 Mill, On the Logic of the Moral Sciences, p. 26.
- 20 Mill, "From An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy," John Stuart Mill's Philosophy of Scientific Method, ed. Ernest Nagel (New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1950), p. 401.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 365 - 366.
- 22 Mill, "Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy," Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, p. 17.
- 23 Mill, Utilitarianism, p. 12
- 24 Mill, "Bentham," Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society, pp. 94 - 96.
- 25 Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, p. 51.
- 26 Mill, "Tocqueville on Democracy in America," p. 263.
- 27 Mill, Autobiography (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer), p. 192.

CHAPTER V

MILL'S AND OAKESHOTT'S SECOND LEVELS

The Transition to Level Two

An assumption made in the formulation of this project was that it is possible, as well as illuminating, to distinguish two levels in Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophies. Furthermore, these two levels were assumed to differ in both content and function. Until now we have focussed on one of these levels.

Specifically, Level One has concentrated on what can ordinarily be identified as various aspects of Mill's and Oakeshott's political theories. Areas of mutual concern - political education, social change, and human nature - were regarded as characteristic of each philosopher's Level One political thought. Mill's and Oakeshott's views on these matters can, however, be seen from another point of view. They can be considered in light of each philosopher's metaphysical and epistemological beliefs, or in our terminology, each philosopher's Level Two philosophy. Focussing now on the details of Mill's and Oakeshott's Second Levels, with particular attention to how each one's Second Level affects his Level One political theory, should contribute to a fuller understanding of their respective

political philosophies and, hopefully, lead to some conclusions about the general nature of their dispute.

The major portion of this part of our exploration will, therefore, consist of analytical explanation of facets of Mill's and Oakeshott's metaphysics and epistemologies and the modes of relationship discovered between the two levels.

The kinds of interlevel relationships that can be expected to emerge are multiple. In some cases, Level Two might function logically for Level One. An example of this would be where a metaphysical commitment would make it logically impossible to admit a type of entity as belonging to the natural world; or where an assertion's meaningfulness were to rest on fulfilling specific conditions of knowing it.

However, the majority of connections are probably informal. As originally brought out in chapter 1, Level Two has been interpreted, in large, as the context, or background complex of beliefs, which, when held, give an aura of reasonableness to a philosopher's Level One political theory assertions. A central point made in chapter 1 was that when certain beliefs contribute in this way to an explicit assertion, it becomes somewhat "odd" or "peculiar", but not logically impossible, to make specific assertions in question while simultaneously denying that the speaker holds the appropriate background beliefs. This is the kind of non-formal mode of relationship that might hold where Mill's

or Oakeshott's Second Levels clarify or explain, thus elucidating what is meant by Level One assertions. The situation would be similar where the interlevel relationship is justificatory, Level Two thus providing reasons for a particular Level One assertion.

These somewhat impressionistic examples barely scratch the surface of how Mill's and Oakeshott's metaphysics and epistemologies might function for their respective formulations of their political philosophies. But before embarking on our in-depth investigation, several preliminary thoughts about the general nature of their dispute come to mind.

One possibility is that Mill and Oakeshott are engaged in different Level One projects. Mill's political theory represents his attempt to construct a full blown scientific theory which would have utility in dealing with man's political behavior - either predictively, or as a basis for practical decisions. Mill analyzes a complex area of activity into its constituent variables and the lines of force between them. His thinking tends to occur in an "if . . . then" form, focussing on expected consequences of political and social events. This scheme can be used in selecting paths to particular goals. His Level One political theory is, actually, a kind of descriptive model of variables, goals, and strategies that belong to political activity. As is the case with all models, it has a representative or symbolic function and selectively portraying its subject in light of its alleged purpose.

In contrast, Oakeshott's endeavor seems to be much more like painting a portrait of a dimension of experience exactly how it strikes him. His purpose is to present this body of impressions. Oakeshott disavows constructing a theory of politics. His reasons for this contribute significantly to his Level One political beliefs. Furthermore, Oakeshott envisions the subject of his painting as being an area he is involved in and, therefore, cannot observe from an objective stance. He is attempting to portray the nuances and subtleties of his enmeshment in politics.

This leads to a second suggestion about the breadth of their difference. Oakeshott and Mill do not agree on what it is to know political life. Oakeshott believes that knowing it involves being enmeshed in its concrete expressions. This enmeshment prevents one from getting outside what he is involved in and discoursing about what he knows. Knowing, for Oakeshott, approximates getting comfortable or at home in political life. It is "making a place for oneself" in the political milieu.

For Mill, political knowledge is the product of gathering experiential data, then drawing and verifying conclusions. The epistemological process is distinct from its result. Mill can discuss the phenomena that he objectively knows, something that Oakeshott has difficulty in doing. Oakeshott speaks, not of phenomena, but of worlds of experience. There are, for him, a number of contexts. Each

is the totality of one's subjective involvement with his environs. Mill, in contrast, speaks of the world, the product of inference from experience.

Because Mill is building a model of political and social life which has predictive significance, there is an objective method for appraising the adequacy of his thought. What makes Mill's description accurate is not so much that it reflects his innermost impressions, but that it is instrumental in ascertaining how political elements affect the social structure.

Looking, from a general point of view, at the kinds of differences that occur in each one's Level One political theory, leads to the impression that each is "telling it as it is" . . . for him. In our subsequent detailed examination of each one's Level Two philosophy, the qualification "for him" will be explored. For it is Level Two - the pervading categories of Mill's and Oakeshott's metaphysics and epistemology and their influence on Level One - that, in effect, influences what political reality is like for each one.

The following table provides a guide to the concepts that comprise Mill's and Oakeshott's Second Level philosophies. Interestingly, the table suggests that it is possible to show a kind of correspondence between the two philosophers' Second Levels. Exploring the possible significance of this correspondence must await our in-depth analysis of the concepts that, in fact, correspond. However, at this

TABLE 2

COMPARISON BETWEEN MILL'S AND OAKESHOTT'S LEVEL TWO CONCEPTS

J. S. Mill		Philosophical Function*	Michael Oakeshott	
Concept	Explanation		Concept	Explanation
Empirical positivism	Commitment to develop science of man and society. Method uses observation of empirical variables, such as people's behavioral responses to various situations. Inductive generalizations are made and verified in terms of other behavioral consequence.	The key concept, metaphysically and epistemologically.	Oakeshottian idealism	View that individual, concrete experiences are constituents of one's world; no inferential process from experience to nature--experiences are literally, identical with nature. A consequence is that subjectively experienced impressions--tensions in nature, traditions, values--are considered concrete elements in the world.
Naturalism	All ingredients of world are part of empirically knowable nature, including values which are psychological consequences of responding to expectations of pleasure and/or pain resulting from courses of behavior. Is phenomenalist, in the sense that all nature's ingredients are phenomena.	Metaphysical	Modes of experience	Pluralistic view of nature interpreting experience as presenting different, independent worlds to individuals. These depend on interests, concerns, other facets of individual personality. Experience tends to fall into three modes: scientific, practical, and historical. Among important values Oakeshott holds is that it is harmful to people to assume that scientific mode of experience encompasses all phases of life.
Anti-intuitionism	Rejection of belief that truth can be immediately apprehended without observations, and interpretation of experiential data.	Epistemological	Anti-rationalism	Rejection of attempts to deal with political and social areas of experience scientifically, or by applying a general rule or principle to this facet of existence.
Atomism and mechanism	Atomism is belief that complex phenomena can be understood by analyzing them into their component elements. Mechanism is manner in which atomic units are connected: their relations are spatial and temporal and are discoverable experientially.	Metaphysical and epistemological	Organicism and coherence	Organicism describes how parts of a complex whole are related, namely as organs in a living entity as related to the whole. Calls attention to fact that relation is contributory and that no single part is fully understandable independent of other contributing components; also, that the whole is, in some sense more than the sum of its parts. Coherence is the internal connection between facets of social life. It is a kind of social cement that becomes manifest through tradition. Oakeshott's traditionalism emerges in connection with his belief in social coherence.

*A concept which functions metaphysically concerns the elements which comprise the world. A concept which functions epistemologically pertains to acquiring knowledge of nature.

point, it is possible to acknowledge that the correspondence appears to pertain to the particular manner in which each one's metaphysical

and epistemological orientation functions in affecting the details of his political world. That is, although Mill and Oakeshott clearly differ in the contents of their Second Level theories, there is a structural convergence. For example, each has a fundamental, key metaphysical and epistemological concept which affects the nature of the remaining Level Two concepts. These are Mill's empirical positivism and Oakeshott's special version of idealism. Then, each utilizes a metaphysical concept describing the overall nature of the ingredients in the world; an epistemological concept pertaining to knowing the above; and, finally, a combined metaphysical-epistemological concept which describes the details of the individual participatory elements in the world, their interconnection, and the method appropriate for discovering all of these details.

One final point to be kept in mind is that Mill and Oakeshott have radically different ideas about what Level One political theory should accomplish for the theorist and society. This difference necessarily affects the critical points that can be made in the analysis of each approach.

Specifically, Mill envisions political theory as contributing to a science of "man-in-society". Therefore, his Level One views can be evaluated as scientific theory, in terms of observational predictions to which his discoveries lead. This is not the case for Oakeshott, who never set out to understand social and political life

scientifically. Rather, the authenticity of Oakeshott's philosophy lies in the honesty and sensitivity with which he can portray the nature of his subjective experience. Oakeshott's presentation must reflect the way political life is experienced by him. Criticism of Oakeshott must center on his not expressing himself adequately, in his failure to communicate subjective impressions to his readers. There is an obvious difficulty in establishing objective criteria for judging Oakeshott's success in this respect. Setting up an objective judgment criterion would, in effect, amount to stating "Oakeshott does not really see it that way." Perhaps such a judgment could rest on inconsistencies or incoherences in his theory. Nevertheless, care must be taken to avoid that criticism of his work be logically analogous to saying "He is mistaken in his impression of having a headache."

Up to now, Mill's and Oakeshott's views have been considered separately. However, the following analysis will take the form of a point-for-point comparison. This serves two purposes: it focusses on a major theme of Oakeshott's philosophy - namely, that Mill is a paradigm of what Oakeshott identifies as a mistaken approach to political philosophy; and it facilitates discovering the structure of the philosophical dispute between Mill and Oakeshott, which, it has been suggested, extends beyond differences over issues of political life to the metaphysical and epistemological commitments held by each philosopher.

The Concepts of Level Two

Neither Mill's nor Oakeshott's Level Two concepts exhibit an architectonic structure. However, each Level Two theory shows an informal internal pattern which emerges through the meanings of the constituent concepts. Certain ideas are more readily understandable when explored after others. In this sense, the most fundamental part of Mill's Level Two theory is his commitment to developing a science of man which is apparent in his metaphysical and epistemological approach of "empirical positivism." Oakeshott's key Level Two concept is his distinctive version of metaphysical and epistemological idealism. This, in turn must be qualified by noting that Oakeshott explicitly denies espousing any "ism.". Nevertheless, even this self-appraisal reflects a fully developed metaphysical and epistemological orientation towards the world which, expectedly, contains his views on what sort of phenomena occur in the political and social sphere and how these can be understood. So, although interpreting Oakeshott's political and social views as contributing to a bilevelled theory is not strictly "Oakeshottian", exploring why this is so sheds some light on those particular views and thus fits the criteria-in-use for a Second Level relevance.

In effect, then, Oakeshott's espousal of idealism can be considered analogous to Mill's commitment to developing a science of society.

Mill assimilates social and political phenomena to those of the physical world. He is inclined to treat events of the former type as a broad sub-class of the latter category of facts. His adoption of the methodology of scientific inquiry to this new subject matter was, in part, due to the predictive success he observed in the case of the physical sciences. At the same time, he realizes that treating human behavior scientifically requires certain qualifications in light of the differences between persons and inanimate physical objects.

Mill's beliefs about a central requirement for understanding society scientifically are suggested in his commending Tocqueville for having "applied to the greatest question in the art and science of government the principles and methods of philosophizing to which mankind are indebted for all the advances made by modern times in the other branches of the study of nature."¹ Mill goes on to say that Tocqueville treats every phenomenon as an empirically describable object, "a reality in nature, and no mere mathematical or metaphysical abstraction, which manifests itself by unnumerable properties."² This calls attention to the metaphysical dimension of his empirical positivism, namely, that all the constituents of nature are experiential phenomena whose characteristics are behavioral. Natural objects tend to behave in specific patterns, according to Mill. These regularities, as well as their individual ingredients, are

among the metaphysical elements of Mill's world.

Behavioral regularity is the basis for discovering causal relations among variables. Mill tends to adopt a modified Humean model which describes causal patterns as constantly conjoined observable phenomena. However, he adds a significant qualification to Hume's model by saying that patterns are causal only insofar as a participating antecedent event is "relevant" to the occurrence of its consequent and not merely an accidental correlation.³ In other words, even though Mill acknowledges that nature's patterns consist of vast complexes, he nevertheless believes it possible to isolate those within the contexts which are factually related to each other. He accomplishes this by distinguishing between cases in which correlations are conditional and those in which the connection is unconditional. A genuine causal relationship can be said to exist only in the latter case.

The contiguity of both night and sunrise with day illustrates the difference. Day follows night, certainly, provided that the sun rises. But, the relation between sunrise and day depends on no other phenomenon. This kind of correlation, where no supplementary condition is necessary, is crucial in ascertaining bona fide causes, according to Mill, and for distinguishing them from spurious, contingent relationships. Genuine causal patterns in this sense are the dominant characteristics of Mill's world of experience.

Similarly, observation reveals the universality of causation. Mill believes the principle of universal causation is verified by the fact that every phenomenon is either simultaneous or successive with respect to some other event(s). While this interpretation is, perhaps, objectionable on grounds of triviality, it is significant for Mill because it calls attention to his general metaphysics of nature as a network, even a matrix, of behavior patterns. Mill believes that experience suggests and verifies these interconnections. He pictures nature as a "web composed of distinct threads," and interprets the rules for scientific exploration as "contrivances for unravelling the web."⁴

This is an important metaphor for Mill's metaphysics. His goal, developing a scientific system of knowledge about persons in social contexts, depends, to a great extent, upon there being, on the metaphysical level, an interrelationship of variables. If, contrary to Mill's belief, the experiential variables that comprise nature were unrelated and did not form a kind of vast network, empirical investigation would reveal, at most, discrete correlations between phenomenal elements. The scientist's representation of the world would be a set of disconnected correlations.

In that case, any attempt at scientific systematization would probably be unsuccessful. The scientist would not reach a comparatively small number of broad explanatory laws of human nature that would account for wide variations in individual behavior

instances. And this would be, in Mill's eyes, the absence of any sort of understanding or explanation of the social dimension of man. Pure description or enumeration of correlative instances is not "understanding why", for Mill. It really cannot even be said to be knowledge, for descriptive enumeration says nothing about the future. Furthermore, understanding or grasping nature means not only being aware of existing patterns, but also, having supportive evidence for the improbability of counter-instances. In effect, the only way Mill can justify experience as useful in understanding (in his sense) social reality, is through his view that these phenomena fall into a vast pattern which repeated investigations reveal. His own comments concerning this include, "All inductions . . . are confirmatory of one another,"⁵ and

The whole of the present state of facts are the infallible result of all past facts, and more immediately of all the facts which existed at the previous moment. If the whole prior state of the universe could again recur, it would again be followed by the present state.⁶

The focus of this discussion has heretofore been on Mill's empirical positivism insofar as it functions metaphysically on Level Two, as well as how it is manifest in his epistemological beliefs. The way Mill sees nature clearly affects the methods he feels appropriate for getting to know it;

More specifically, his epistemology combines induction and deduction. The basic elements of nature, which are empirical, are first grasped inductively. However, their wider interrelationships,

which participate in the so-called "web" he speaks of, are discovered deductively, by showing that there are logical connections between actually experienced variables and those which are predicted, and between general laws and their experiential manifestations.

The epistemological dimension of Mill's empirical positivism is, then, particularly concerned with distinguishing between simple empirical regularities and those which contribute to the complex of interrelationships; but it is also concerned with establishing genuine Laws of Nature, and distinguishing them from simple regularities.⁷ The difference between Laws of Nature and simple regularities rests on the importance of particular circumstances. Laws of Nature hold for people in general; empirical regularities are subject to particular place and time qualifications. Both are based on observation; but sometimes experience reveals empirical regularities; sometimes, Laws of Nature. In the former case, Laws of Nature are inferred from empirical regularities as consistent explanations for such observations. Subsequent empirical verification of these Laws occurs through deduction and testing of independent observation consequences. In the former situation, where the Laws of Nature are directly available, empirical patterns

are also deduced from them, thus providing independent confirmation.*

Both of these epistemological models reflect Mill's belief that the experiential phenomena that comprise nature participate in a system that can be cumulatively grasped.

When Mill's empirical positivism is applied to social and political life, the Laws of Nature are, for Mill, the patterns that

* In Book 6 of his *Logic*, Mill discusses methods of acquiring knowledge in the social sciences. Here, he points out inadequacies of what he calls the Chemical Method and the Geometrical Method. Both are inappropriate because they ignore crucial factors belonging to this specific subject matter, namely, human beings in society. The Chemical Method relies strictly on inductive enumeration and generalization from this data. Mill argues that specific experience is not only unnecessary for understanding every instance of social behavior patterns, but that some times it is impossible to make such detailed observations. Human interaction is unlike the interaction of chemical elements, where combination often produces a dissimilar compound. Persons do not undergo qualitative change when in social contexts. Therefore, it is possible to acquire knowledge of society without observing individual instances in every case. Rational or deductive connections can be discovered among analogous situations. The Geometrical Method does recognize the utility of deductive reasoning in discovering connections. Its shortcoming is that it tends to utilize variables that are not rooted in experience. Instead of reasoning about empirical factors, it starts with principles that have persuasive force and deduces their implications. Mill cites Hobbes as a case in point.

The two epistemological approaches Mill approves of combine induction and deduction. He calls these the Concrete Deductive and Inverse Deductive Methods. In the former, the Laws of Nature are inferred from, and subsequently (independently) verified by, empirical generalizations. The latter method starts with empirically founded Laws of Nature and verifies them by deducing empirical consequences which are, then, verified by observation. John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1959), pp. 545 - 622.

associationist psychology has discovered. These, in large, amount to the principle of utility and its complex manifestations. Mill envisions empirical regularities as particular observable behavior patterns, in effect, sequences of stimuli and responses (either overt or not) to them.

As mentioned above, Mill is particularly sensitive to the role that circumstances play in affecting human behavior patterns. Circumstances must be taken into account insofar as they directly influence behavior, but also insofar as they must be acknowledged in deducing confirmation instances of Laws of Nature. This rationale is behind Mill's attempted science of the operation of circumstances, or ethology.

Ethology supplements psychology by describing how individual personality is influenced by characteristics peculiar to the specific social context in which a person lives. In other words, psychology describes human behavior patterns in general, but ethology shows how these general tendencies become manifest in various ways depending on what the myriad circumstances of a person's life are.*

* Ordinary experience does appear to support Mill's belief that human psychology does manifest itself differently in varying contexts. For example, in order to understand Mill's point that psychology is inadequate to explain behavior and attitude variations from society to society, one can travel from France to Germany and compare the relative importance attributed to bathroom facilities versus dining facilities in each country.

Perhaps the following example from Mill's life will clarify the metaphysics and epistemology of his empirical positivism, and suggest how, as a Level Two category, it is reflected in his Level One political beliefs.

At seventeen, Mill became aware of the relationship between London's increasing population and the possibility of improving the overall living standard. He and a friend embarked upon a project of distributing birth control pamphlets. Their message, directed to working class women who barely managed to earn a subsistence wage was, essentially, "Why bear children you cannot feed, cannot educate? Better not bear them at all."⁸ In this example, an empirical correlation is observed between overpopulation and impoverished social conditions. Mill's approach to this situation involves his deductively perceiving this as an instance of a Law of Human Nature formulated in associationist terms - that people wish to minimize their personal discomfort.

Both facts - the correlation between overpopulation and poverty and the principle of psychology emanate from experience. Mill's recommendation, that population control be practiced, follows from these two facts along with ethological details concerning prevalent attitudes towards birth control, poverty, etc. In other words, ethology describes how the relevant laws of human nature can be instantiated to fit the circumstances under consideration.

It is important to realize that every claim which is relevant to Mill's policy recommendation rests on empirical study. Furthermore, Mill recognizes that the empirical correlation between overpopulation and poverty, as well as the general psychological law, are themselves part of a wider pattern of facts which can be rationally discovered.

All of this leads to the suggestion that experiencing, from the point of view of his Second Level, necessarily involves some interpretation, ordering, or selection of the data of sensation. That is how the deductive steps in Mill's epistemological procedure operate. They clearly do not provide any new information; rather, an interpretation of data takes place. This step is the mechanism through which a single correlation can be understood as part of a wider system of relationships which is not necessarily apparent from a description based only on induction. In other words, Mill's Level Two empirical positivism leads to a scientific model of the world which is based on and always verifiable through, but not identical to, the brute data of sensation. The full significance of this point will emerge as a point of comparison between Mill's empirical positivism and the corresponding concept of Oakeshott's Second Level, his version of idealism, to be subsequently discussed.

The network of interconnections Mill discovers suggests that the relationship between Mill's Level Two empirical positivism

and his Level One political theory is justificatory. In this capacity Mill's empirical positivism includes "reasons why" so to speak, for certain Level One claims. This justificatory connection is certainly not a formal one. It is an informal interlevel relationship which qualitatively strengthens Level One by providing its context or rationale. The following exemplifies how this relationship becomes manifest.

As previously mentioned, Mill envisions his political theory as not only providing a broad theoretical account of political reality but as affording a rationale, or a genuine explanation why, one complex of facts, rather than another, are true. He accomplishes this by showing that the causal patterns he has discovered are not accidental or spurious; and by showing that there is a minimal probability of the occurrence of counterinstances to any established correlation. The various steps in Mill's empirical positivism, which result in his being able to see how experiential patterns fit into a comparatively broad complex of natural relationships, justify his treating Level One as being (in Mill's sense) genuinely explanatory. In other words, Mill feels that his Level One political theory does a particular job, that of explaining why certain phenomena exist. His Level Two political theory justifies this, insofar as his Level Two empirical positivism leads to a picture of the world, about which there can be genuine explanation - which for Mill is a minimal

possibility of counterinstances and maximum possibility that the observed pattern is not spurious.

This justificatory function appears again, when we focus on the normative assertions that occur within Mill's Level One theory. In general, these prescriptions are stated as material implications that reflect a world which yields rational explanations. It is nothing but the rationality of the world which enables the prescriptions to be justified. And the rationality of the world is the outcome of Mill's empirical positivism.

This is illustrated by the high value Mill places on unfettered expression even to the point of idiosyncrasy, as a means of increasing the probability of the emergence of new, more utilitarian points of view discoveries, and inventions.⁹ "Respect, even cultivate, individuality and idiosyncrasy," Mill urges in the course of discussing social change and progress. This prescription rests on a connection - discovered through his empirical positivism - between unencumbered self-expression and increased socio-political satisfaction. It is crucial that this connection be stronger than a mere accidental correlation if it is going to be an adequate justification for the attitude expressed in On Liberty. If increased social utility could not be explained by the cultivation of personal expression, there would be no point, in this particular case, of defending it. And it is Mill's empirical positivism that provides

the basis for making this connection.

It can be maintained, then, that Mill's empirical positivism, by showing how the world is rationally comprehensible, justifies both his explanatory hypotheses and his recommendations.

A particular characteristic of the interlevel relationships of Mill's philosophy in general emerges in this case. There is an explicitness in the manner in which Mill's empirical positivism provides justification for his Level One claims which is specifically absent in the philosophy of Oakeshott. The very fact that Mill requires justification for his Level One claims distinguishes his approach from Oakeshott's. And, when he presents his justification, it can be "spelled out", so to speak, specifically. This makes it possible (at least in principle) to answer challenges to Level One claims. In other words, Mill's Level One views rest on a specific justificatory foundation which is logically independent from those very Level One views. Such an approach is, of course, consistent with his scientist's disposition. And, as has been suggested, the question of justification is dealt with quite differently by Oakeshott.

In exploring Oakeshott's particular kind of idealism, his Level Two concept which functionally corresponds to Mill's empirical positivism, this difference will be investigated. In spite of this, and other discrepancies, both Oakeshott's idealism and Mill's empirical positivism stress the importance of human experience in formulating

Level One political views. However, they diverge over what the nature of experience is like.

Mill's treatment of experience involves his "objectifying" it. He tends to view his experience as if it consists of a number of distinct experiential elements, which can be examined from an objective stance. He seems to look at these parts of experience as he would look at any one of his possessions, as, perhaps, a piece of furniture, or a book. He believes, of course, that his experience influences and affects him, but only in the way any object can.

A consequence of this approach is that Mill can treat his experiences as criteria for reaching conclusions about the world. Experiences, being objective with respect to him, can be treated as mediate and justificatory in making judgments about the external world. Mill's empirical positivism shows how he treats experiences in this way. Phenomena, both animate and inanimate, are known through their observable behavior. What can be experienced of something is a sign of its nature.

In sharp contrast, Oakeshott sees experiences not as objects belonging to the world external to oneself. Oakeshott seems to treat experience, in general, as a process with which one is inextricably intertwined and enmeshed. The experiential process contains subject and object in a relation such that separation into those distinct elements distorts the manner in which the process takes place. Any

description of experience should, strictly speaking, reflect the fact that the experiential event does not contain two discrete and discontinuous atomic units.

For this reason, Oakeshott tends not to present descriptive accounts of the elements of experience. Perhaps he feels that one cannot look at that with which he is intricably intertwined and that understanding any aspect of one's life means only comprehending it as a self-sufficient, internally related whole.

Oakeshott states that any explanation that relies on principles which are external to the material-to-be-explained is inadequate and distorted.¹⁰ Perhaps Oakeshott is suggesting that analyzing the contents of experience into elements which are then treated as if they are representative of something else, namely, nature (as Mill does) is improper. This is supported by his saying that the commonly made distinction between thought and the action that is seen as the result of thought is inaccurate. . . . "What happens' in . . . life is not the product of thought, it belongs to the world of thought; 'action' is not the product of thought, it is itself a form of thought."¹¹ Oakeshott is stressing that since the conclusions supposedly based on elements of experience are part of the all-encompassing experiential process, discoursing about experiences contributes to the nature of experience. Therefore, it is, strictly speaking, impossible to "look at" experiences, and this should be

acknowledged, at the very least, in the mistaken construction of descriptions which treat it as if it were an external phenomenon.

This helps in understanding why Oakeshott's political philosophy tends to ignore, or at best, play down, developing evaluation criteria or making judgments about aspects of political and social life. When he does introduce an evaluative method, such as his emphasis on coherence in one's life as a goal worth pursuing (which is discussed below), he does not describe the process so much as present it in use as a facet of the portrait of political experience that his philosophy can be interpreted as painting.

Comparing Oakeshott's method of presentation to portrait painting helps in understanding his idealism. The method presentation of an art work is as much part of its artistic nature as is its content. Therefore, to judge its content as either correct or incorrect is to artificially separate the mode in which the work occurs from its subject. On the other hand, a wholly objective judgment, such as a temperature measurement, is either correct or incorrect. The aspect of nature it reflects does not depend on the characteristics of its presentation, as is the case with a work of art. And central to Oakeshott's idealism is his belief that having experience cannot be, in fact, recognized as distinct from what experience is, just as the style of a painting is as essential to what it shows about the artist's view of nature as is its subject matter.

Further insights into Oakeshott's idealistic account of experience are suggested by what he does not say, as well as by what he makes explicit. His reluctance, for example, to present a general description of experiences necessary characteristics is clarified by pointing out that Oakeshott believes that experience is, in a special respect, subjective.

Obviously, all experience is subjective simply insofar as it belongs to a subject. However, Oakeshott's view interprets its subjectivity non-trivially, in fact, as essential to its nature. From the point of view of a theorist like Mill, the elements that stem from experience's subjectivity do not, necessarily, interfere with its public accessibility or its interpersonal communicability. However, Oakeshott sees experiential subjectivity as coloring its nature so that only the barest, and most minimal details can be shared. Furthermore, these details are not so much qualities of particular experiencings, but rather, the conditions of experiencing in general, from a metaphysical and epistemological point of view.

An earlier example, the snake confronted by a traveler in Morocco^{*}, illustrates this. Initially, it was experienced as horrible and frightening. These parts of the experience were described as just as much an integral part of the object as the shape, size, etc. of the snake and the location and time of the experience.

* P. 131.

The elements which would ordinarily be described as subjective, suggesting that they distorted the objective accuracy of the experience, are not seen as doing this by Oakeshott. Rather, they represent aspects of experiencing which vary among individuals and therefore impede sharing experience's myriad details. People differ in their interests, concerns, prejudices and personal histories. All these color their experience. For the person of the snake—example, the negative qualities are part of that person's world of experience, for that moment. For the snake charmer, trying to earn a few dirahms by playing his flute in time to the snake's motions, the world has other qualities. Neither is involved with the experience of the other, and different worlds of experience can never be perfectly shared among different subjects.*

Oakeshott's hesitancy to describe necessary qualities of experience can be interpreted in light of this. Experience's essential subjectivity makes it impossible to arrive at any sort of general description independent of concrete occurrences. Furthermore, since

* Oakeshott's view of the essential subjectivity of experience is both his bond to, and distinction from, other philosophical idealists. He believes that the world is actually confronted in processes of "experiencings", not that experience mediates between the subject and object. In this respect, he is an idealist, along with Berkeley.

However, Oakeshott does not reduce the concrete material aspects of the world to ideas. His identification of one's world with one's ideas rests on the belief that the world is identical to our subjective involvement in it.

describing the contents of experience suggests that its contents can be communicated, Oakeshott's attitude is, in this respect, unsurprising.

In effect, "the nature of experience" has to have an indefinite extension, for Oakeshott. Its qualities depend upon the qualities of the whole experiential occurrence. There are, therefore, no meaning restrictions placed on its content. It does not have to fit criteria that are empirical. The nature of experience is continuously being determined in the course of its taking place.

This functions in the Level Two role Oakeshottian idealism plays in influencing the contents of his Level One political theory.

It is possible to interpret Oakeshott's Level Two idealistic account of experience as justificatory, as is Mill's empirical positivism, with respect to Level One. However, this correspondence is balanced by significant dissimilarities.

Its justificatory function centers, in particular, over Oakeshott's characteristic reluctance to state or use any metaphysical or epistemological criteria for dealing with Level One political experience, which we have just discussed. As mentioned, because Oakeshott feels that in experiencing there is direct involvement with the world, and that experience is subjective and concretely personal, there can be no metaphysical limits which are set in advance and then applied.

For example, a scientifically oriented theorist is unable to treat a conviction of intuitive self-evidence (an "I-feel-it-in-my-bones" type conviction) as seriously as he would regard hard empirical evidence. Oakeshott feels that whatever nuances or modes experience takes are equally real. His comparing political education to becoming a chef (as opposed to an adept recipe follower) is a case in point. There are no objective criteria, publicly recognizable in advance, for being a chef. Neither are there for being politically knowledgeable. What is important in any one political context might be relatively insignificant in another. Oakeshott feels that this absence of hard and fast categories and the open-ended view of human life which goes along with it reflects the ways in which human experiencing actually does take place.

To return to an earlier analogy, one cannot categorically exclude particular styles of painting as being inherently inauthentic artistic expressions. And Oakeshott feels that one cannot present a description of nature and human involvement in it which is an application of categorical metaphysical criteria.

Another way in which Oakeshott's idealism is justificatory lies in its allowing Oakeshott to avoid making decisive evaluations or policy recommendations for Level One political phenomena. Ordinarily, a normative assertion can be justified, at least in principle, through criteria that often reflect beliefs about nature and how people

experience it. In other words, normative criteria rest on, in some way, a map of experience, so to speak. But this is exactly what Oakeshott's Level Two idealism precludes. His idealism tends to interpret nature as being indeterminable. Consequently, it yields no experience-reflecting criterion that can be applied to normative statements. If, contrary to Oakeshott's style, his Level One political philosophy were to stress recommendations, a conception of nature might be assumed which, according to Oakeshott's Level Two philosophy, cannot be known.

An illustration of this occurs in Oakeshott's philosophy of political education.* The relatively formal prescriptions that might be expected in this area are absent from Oakeshott's discussion. He speaks of political education as a kind of apprenticeship. As mentioned, it is the gradual process of becoming comfortable or "at home" in the recognizable context of politics. But, "how can this acculturation be enhanced?" one may ask. An Oakeshottian answer is as indefinite as the description that motivated the question. It emphasizes practice, trial-and-error, etc., but without describing a decision process for reaching evaluatory judgments. Oakeshott is prevented from reaching these by his idealism which sees experience as personally unique and as continuously being formed. In effect, his idealism says that experiencing experience, itself, influences

* This has been discussed in detail in chapter 2.

the nature of experience. A state-description is, consequently, bound to be distorting. Criteria for policy-making are, likewise, bound to be inappropriate, to some degree. His idealism, therefore, justifies the fact that his Level One political views are specifically non-normative.

Oakeshott's conservatism also reflects this. One would expect his conservatism to express specific recommendations concerning courses of action designed to stabilize social and political processes and protect the status quo. But, as in the above example, this is not the tone of his politics. Instead, Oakeshott cautions against instituting plans and programs which are goal directed. Perhaps this reflects his idealistic belief that because experience develops in an indeterminable way, it is inappropriate to take a more positive stand in this area, as well as to prescribe an evaluation method. He realizes that consciously instituted programs, like recipes for social and political improvement, are predicated upon descriptions of existing conditions and predictions of expected conditions, and that this involves enumerating empirical properties that accurately portray the nature of socio-political life. We have seen that Oakeshott's idealistic account of experience precludes such a description's being accurate. The mode in which each participating individual experiences the political dimension of his life is, actually, the way it is. General descriptive accounts of experience ignore this,

and, consequently, are misguided. So, Oakeshott's conservatism can be interpreted as a manifestation of his inability to present a rationale for consciously planned social change which stems from his idealism, rather than as a set of prescriptions for specific justifiable courses of action.

For both Mill and Oakeshott, then, Level Two includes a basic epistemological and metaphysical concept which serves to justify specific approaches on their respective first levels. Mill's empirical positivism and Oakeshott's idealism focus on the concept of experience. That is where the difference between the two concepts lies. The kinds of predications that each philosopher can make about experience are indicative of their wide disparity.

The next set of Level Two categories which we shall consider are Mill's naturalism and Oakeshott's account of the modes of experience. These both function metaphysically insofar as they refer to the nature of the world - the participating ingredients of experience. Thus, the structural correspondence encountered in our previous consideration of Mill's empirical positivism and Oakeshott's idealism is borne out in this context.

There is a relationship between these new Level Two categories and the earlier ones considered. Certainly, Mill's commitment to science evident in his empirical positivism will have some bearing on what he counts as belonging to nature. The same

can be expected to pertain to the characteristic vagueness of Oakeshott's idealism.

Characterizing Mill's metaphysics as naturalistic, focusses on his belief that all entities in the world are natural. That is, they are of the sort that can be known through ordinary sense experience. Very simply, Mill sees the world as populated by chairs, frogs, clouds, human beings, etc. - all empirically comprehensible objects. Furthermore, Mill sees these natural objects behave rationally or according to empirically perceivable patterns that facilitate prediction and systematization.

One way in which Mill's Level Two naturalism bears on his Level One political philosophy is in his view of human beings as being wholly naturalistic. People are, for him, collections of behavioral phenomena. He sees human behavior as encompassing a wide range of activity, from private psychological responses to external stimuli to overt acts. He believes that the details of human nature are completely revealed through the patterns of human behavior.

Mill tends to analyze all the various human behavior patterns into their ingredients which he sees as feelings and responses to the external world. In other words, the individual variables which he isolates in order to comment about human nature are people's feelings.

As pointed out in chapter 2's discussion of political education, the educative process is, primarily, a cultivation of certain feelings. Mill states that political participation's educational value stems from the fact that participatory activity leads to the participants' having increased satisfaction with the areas of government they have been involved in. In other words, political education through participation is directed towards producing feelings; and it is the readiness with which the feelings are produced that gives this method its efficacy. The identification of persons as being complexes of feelings is thus suggested.

The famous passage from Utilitarianism, where Mill states that "it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a fool satisfied, better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied,"¹² illustrates this same point, that human nature consists of patterns of feelings and responses. Among the characteristics which we can use to distinguish a pig or a fool from a human being or a Socrates is that members of each class have characteristically different feeling responses to the same stimulus. Mill emphasizes this difference between the two types of individuals. In the same context, he goes on to suggest that people who have been exposed to a relatively wide range of situations will tend to be more gratified by intellectual rather than sensual pursuits. It is plausible to interpret this as having consequences for education; a person is educable by sensitizing him, so to speak, to his capacity for having a certain type of

feeling. Again, we see that the entity named by "person" is a collection of actual and potential feelings.

Another example occurs concerning the final sanction of the greatest happiness principle. Mill believes that utilitarianism's effectiveness comes from the fact that people have consciences.¹³ By this he means that it is characteristic for persons to transfer their own feelings and responses to others. Therefore, moral choices will tend to produce social rather than private utility because of this characteristic inclination. This suggests, again, that human nature is composed of feelings. The moral dimension of human nature is a specific manner in which people feel.

In fact, Mill's approach to values provides an especially clear example of his naturalism. A focal point of his utilitarianism is the elucidation of normative ideas completely in naturalistic terms. In this way, he observes the limits of his commitment to naturalism by prohibiting any aspect of reality to transcend the limits of the natural world.

According to Mill's utilitarianism, people attribute value to that which produces the greatest happiness and-or the least pain. From this, he proceeds to the view that moral worth or value is a function of how much something is, in fact, valued. Morality is, thus, identified with the human behavior tendencies that are characteristic of the valuing process. Mill specifically rejects moral theories

which include references to ontological orders beyond the ordinary, everyday, natural one.¹⁴ He identifies "good" with the natural signs which signify its occurrence and thus develops an ethics which fits consistently into his Level Two naturalism.

Insofar as Mill's naturalism prevents him from referring to any properties of the world's inhabitants that elude wholly natural description his naturalism exerts a restrictive or limiting function on Level One. Certain modes of description are seen by Mill as incompatible with naturalism and the priority of his naturalism amounts to a prohibition of these modes. In effect, his naturalism is inconsistent with there being any nondissolvable mystery to human existence. If behavior patterns appear mysterious, they do so because of the imperfections of science (or because there has been no stroke of luck); but certainly not because there are essentially mysterious facets of reality.

All of Mill's Level One philosophy centers on descriptions of natural behavior of natural entities. Where his concerns become prescriptive, his recommendations reflect a value system which is, in turn, a reflection of the way people do, as a matter of fact, reach value decisions. Mill's Level One views lead to a somewhat optimistic, complementary portrayal of man's moral potential, but this is simply a consequence of his observations of natural phenomena. It is quite conceivable that within this naturalistic framework a value

system could emerge that is compatible with the preferences of a pig.

The category belonging to Oakeshott's Second Level which operates analogously to this one of Mill's is Oakeshott's view that there are a number of modes in which experience occurs. Just as Mill's naturalism tends to emphasize one metaphysical category, Oakeshott's picture of the ingredients of nature includes several separate ones. In fact, Oakeshott gives the impression that his multiple scheme is by no means an exhaustive enumeration.

Oakeshott's view that there are modes of experience reflects the central facet of his idealism, that experience is subjective and that it is impossible to give an accurate account of its nature as if it were an objective phenomenon. As mentioned above, where Oakeshott does describe general characteristics of experience, these are limiting conditions for its occurrence rather than properties experience have.

A mode in which experience occurs is, simply, its style or the manner of its occurrence. Oakeshott feels that the nature of an experience is influenced by the many details of its context with which it is intricately and inextricably interwoven. These include the particular point of view, interests, personal history, in fact, whatever constitutes the individuality of whomever is experiencing.

Oakeshott feels that the most comprehensive modes that

emerge in experiencing are the historical, the scientific, and the practical. Political and social experience both occur within the practical mode. That is, when a person's experience occurs to him as being about politics and society, he is oriented towards practice, or primarily action directed towards accomplishing goals. This contrasts strikingly with the scientific mode, for the world experienced scientifically is studied, contemplated, and analyzed. Scientific experience is basically intellectual, reaching descriptions which are contemplated for their own sake, and this is not the nature of involvement in the practical sphere. Where scientific conclusions are put to use, the experience of doing this is no longer scientific, but practical.

Science is important for understanding practice, Oakeshott thinks, particularly insofar as the former shows what the latter is not. Historical experience, also separate and distinct from practical experience, is not as crucial in understanding practice as is science. Because scientists tend to direct their scientist's eyes to political matters which properly belong to practice, attempting to propose solutions to problems and dissatisfactions in this area,* there is a tendency to ignore the distinctness of the modes.

Oakeshott thinks this is a serious mistake. Uppermost in his metaphysics is the view that the modes are completely separate

* Mill, of course, exemplifies this.

from one another and as such, are the means through which complete, self-contained worlds are experienced. Again, this reflects the part of his idealism which interprets experience as, literally, one's world rather than an indicator or a phenomenal signpost which points to the world. Individuals experience relative to their interests, personalities, in fact, in terms of everything which contributes to individuality. Just because persons are not identical, their experiencings, and thus, the worlds they find themselves in, cannot be assumed to be the same.

Among the implications of this is the view that the scientist's often-made assumption that there is an objective world which one can empirically discover is incorrect. Rather, the scientist's so-called "objective" world is simply his world, the sum of his scientifically-colored experience. But it is not objective in the wider sense, that is, commonly objective to all points of view. There is nothing that metaphysically fulfills that criterion.

As suggested, the modes of experience that Oakeshott does discuss cannot, consequently, be exhaustive. His selection of three represent to him the most comprehensive. Each reflects a relatively broad complex of individual characteristics. The significance of the three modes is that they exemplify what Oakeshott thinks the nature of experience is, and not that they present substantive information as to what experience's precise details are. Oakeshott thinks that he,

along with everyone else, cannot assume a position of priority which allows him to "get outside", so to speak, his own individually conditioned world so as to have an objective view of all the other worlds. Consequently, the specifics of the modes can almost be accorded secondary importance, while the fact of the modes reflects the essence of Oakeshottian metaphysics.

As has been stated, the mode of experience which includes political and social life is the practical mode. Oakeshott's very choice of this term calls attention to the fact that this area of experience is characterized by its concentration on practice, rather than comparatively passive contemplation. This latter characteristic is one of the important aspects of scientific experience, which Oakeshott emphatically contrasts with the practical mode.

We recall that it is fundamental to Oakeshott's thought that one's concrete, individual experience is all there is in one's world. However experience occurs is what the world is like. Therefore, focussing on the nuances of ordinary experience amounts to directing one's attention to the characteristics of the world.*

To experience a problematic situation or dilemma being

* In order to be faithful to Oakeshott's metaphysical and epistemological views, this procedure must be distinguished from analysis of the meaning of a concept or term by examining its commonplace uses in discourse. Oakeshott's philosophical theory deals directly with facets of human experience and he does not treat language as mediate in discovering the world of experiences.

dealt with "practically" is to be aware of the fact that the experiences represent reasonable or feasible means to specific ends. (When one's experiences embody a high degree of practicality one's paths are workable and efficient. As practicality decreases, one's path represents only a possible means of reaching a goal). All practical experience is concerned with change, and of modification of the status quo. In contrast, an impractical approach to a problem brings to mind a situation in which nothing is being done that appears to be capable of promoting an outcome which would be judged to be an improvement.* Only when this characteristic occurs within an experiential context to some degree (however minute) can the experience be recognized as belonging to the realm of practical concern. Oakeshott calls attention to this by saying

I suggest, then . . . that the differentia of practice is the alteration of experience; and that this implies a felt discrepancy between 'what is' and what we desire shall be; it implies the idea of a 'to be' which is 'not yet'. And practical experience is, in this sense, the world sub specie voluntatis.¹⁵

Another way in which experience can be practical is when a skill, such as medicine or a musical instrument is practiced. This illustrates Oakeshott's view that practice takes place independent of

* It is not difficult to illustrate this comparison with any number of everyday occurrences. The soufflé unexpectedly falls, for example; or the Thanksgiving turkey is accidentally dropped on the floor. Practicality begins when the chaos which is a likely consequence gives way to suggestions of "what to do to save the dinner."

contemplation and that it is an activity, a "doing" so to speak, involving participation, and does not involve any related intellectual theorizing, except perhaps, as ancillary. Insofar as a person practices a skill, his activity is unselfconscious. It does not involve following a set of directions step-by-step. In fact, its distinguishing characteristic is just that - its performance occurs almost as if it were a part of the performer's nature and the skillfulness cannot be analyzed into anything beyond the performer's activity, itself. In effect, what makes an activity a skill cannot be defined. Although one can be taught how to read music, position one's hands on the keys, and even how to properly strike them, the skill-dimension of playing the piano cannot be taught in this way. Because the teacher cannot isolate specific characteristics that are requisite for performing skillfully, he cannot teach the student how to do all of the above activities, skillfully. All he can do is recognize when they are.

That this unselfconscious, uncritical style of activity that is present in a skill is characteristic of practical experience in general is suggested by Oakeshott's commenting that

practical experience is without a critical conception of reality. The world of practice is a world of things and individuals which are designated, not defined.¹⁶

Practice, then, can be known only in the specific contexts in which it takes place. This, in turn, is relevant to Oakeshott's

position on the relationship (actually, the lack of it) between theory and practice.

We have characterized practice as usually being concerned with feasibility and with providing workable paths for modifying existing situations. Oakeshott believes that theory consists of principles. Thus, practice cannot be theory-guided. The very nature of a principle prohibits its having any bearing on practical activity. For one thing, principles are stated as propositions. Practice, being action or "doing", is not propositional. Propositional experience occurs as the understanding of assertions. But in a context requiring practical activity, concrete particulars are dealt with.* Individuals are the materials one confronts in practice. In pursuing a path of practice, one never focusses on propositions. This activity proceeds through doing, through manipulating, adjusting, even just thinking about objects that become individualized and personalized through the very activity of dealing with them. In contrast, propositional knowledge, by definition, involves abstract concepts which, although related to the concrete world of practice, are not the entities that one is interested in when concerned with a practical matter.

Another means of explaining this difference is to point out that the terms that theory includes are not entities in the world but

* Such as the soufflé or turkey of the earlier example.

names for them. As such, they are abstractions, unlike objects in the world - in their non-spatiality-temporality, stability, and ideality. For example, one confronts all sorts of tables in the world - wooden or steel ones, some with long legs, others with short - but never the idea of name "table". And, to reiterate, only individuals participate in practice.

By contrasting the relative stability of concepts with the fluidity of practical objects, Oakeshott's belief, that dealing with practical objects involves continuous change, emerges. This, in turn, supports his view that, in practice, the world is different for different persons. When one functions practically, his activities are purposive and comprise a process. And purposiveness is highly individualized. There is continuous modification so that at any point, the contents of the person's world is unlike what it was a moment ago. There is no stability in the world of practice.

In other words, because different participants in the practical sphere have various interests, concerns and are personally unique, and inasmuch as this individuality influences each practical experience, the objects confronted in practice are not objective but vary from person to person. Theories, in direct contrast, talk about ideal cases that perfectly embody whatever characteristics are under scrutiny, while practical life, being essentially interested in concrete particulars, never involves confrontation with one of

these ideals.

Oakeshott's views about the independence of theory from practice, an intricate facet of his Level Two metaphysics, does not mean there is no appropriate use for theory. Theory is useful in the scientist's pursuit of phenomenal knowledge. Nevertheless, theory-directed inquiry has a built in predilection to arrive at state-descriptions, consisting of objective, idealized, phenomenalized entities which are not at all like the concrete particulars dealt with in practice.¹⁷

The effect of this on Oakeshott's social and political theory is that the aspects of life belonging to the practical mode cannot be understood solely via science's pursuit of theory. Socio-political experience is goal-directed towards reconciling the status quo with what is judged desirable. This involves continuous adjustment. The participating elements are never in a constant state but are in process, so to speak. The scientist's theoretical description, being of a "state" rather than a process, is an inadequate guide to practical activity simply because of this characteristic. In contrast, political experience's practical essence rests on its capacity to reflect and cope with a life-style. The idea of a "life-style" connotes essential fluidity. In contrast, Oakeshott sees political theories as not providing for the continuous feedback of political experience on subsequent experience. This is not to say that

theoretical descriptions never get modified, but that their mode of modification is in terms of a succession of different state descriptions; and this is not the way in which political life progresses. Oakeshott's statement that "it is preposterous . . . to maintain that activity can derive from this kind of thinking"¹⁸ is a criticism of the belief that political life can be guided by science.

Perhaps all this can be summarized by returning to, and examining in depth, our suggestion that a society's practical activities can be said to embody a style. The core of Oakeshott's criticism is that it is impossible to isolate the elements that comprise a society's style. Even when manifestations of a life style are pointed out, it is impossible to explain why they contribute to it, or what about them makes them part of it. This sounds similar to what we have said earlier about a skill - that it is recognizable in its exercise but always eludes definition. Practice eludes definition. It cannot be understood as manifest consequences of theory. "Propositions are neither the spring of activity nor are they in any direct sense regulative of activity."¹⁹ The only thing functioning thus would be, says Oakeshott, other activity, i. e., practical experience.

The particular way in which Oakeshott's Second Level scheme of the modes of experience appears to influence his First Level is, as is the case with Mill's naturalistic metaphysics, restrictive. This function is performed in a number of ways.

One mode of restriction occurs insofar as the modes of experience, considered as a whole, "map out" a number of realms which persons happen to become involved with in the course of every-day life. Oakeshott's idealism, we recall, emphasizes that activity does not occur except as colored by the individuality of the involved participant. The modes of experience serve to show how, specifically, this tends to take place.

The modes of experience show that, metaphysically, there is not "a world" to be concerned with, but a number of worlds. To recall Oakeshott's idealism again, they show that the details of this plurality of worlds are internally connected to the nature of the person involved in the world. In other words, Oakeshott's modes of experience shows that there is a plurality of worlds, in general; and it shows what the nature of several of these tend to be like, in particular.

The restrictive effect of this pluralistic picture emanates from Oakeshott's constant insistence that it is a distortion of reality to ignore (or even, to treat casually) the lines separating the modes and to go back and forth among modes when attempting to understand or portray reality.

It is clear that, in light of Oakeshott's belief that experience always reflects the nature of the experiencer, the mode within which experience occurs is an essential part of the nature of that

experience. Any portrayal would be grossly incomplete without inclusion of the operative mode.

Perhaps a bit less clear, but just as important to Oakeshott, is the other facet of the restrictive effect of the modes, namely, that nature cannot be adequately grasped unless as being under the influence of a mode of experience. His metaphysical commitment shows why this is so. The modes of experience entail the following beliefs: (1) there is no nature"; rather, (2) there are natures - scientific nature, practical nature, historical nature. The prohibition that the aforementioned "map" requires is against moving, unawares, between the modes. If one's attention is directed towards political reality, for example, there is, figuratively speaking, a sign that says "No Trespassing" for the realm of scientific concern.

This prohibition is apparent in Oakeshott's Level One repeated warnings against treating politics as if it were part of scientific experience. In fact, Oakeshott sometimes gives the impression that this confusion is similar to a peculiar kind of category mistake.*

* The difference between this kind of "category mistake" and that which Ryle explicates in "Systematically Misleading Expressions," Proceedings of the Aristotelean Society 32 (1931 - 1932), is that for Oakeshott the confusion is genuinely metaphysical, taking place when different orders of reality are confused. Ryle uses the term to name a conceptual mistake, rather than a metaphysical mistake.

Science and politics are fundamentally different orders of reality according to the Oakeshottian scheme. Each has its own categories and concepts and these differ qualitatively. Therefore, attempting to conceptualize political life as if it were a scientifically understandable phenomenon is, for Oakeshott, not unlike mistakenly comparing objects which are, metaphysically, incomparable. Treating politics from the point of view of a scientist errs in the sense that the crucial point that politics is not scientific experience is completely missed. The following further clarifies the particular manner in which Oakeshott's modes of experience metaphysically function so as to restrain or limit the ways in which experience can be attributed significance.

Imagine that Mill embarks on a particular project which is supposed to modify some aspects of political and social life. His procedure would probably include collecting empirical data about the status quo and the proposed change. These facts, combined with a utilitarian value scheme, would justify specific steps designed to produce the predicted consequences. Oakeshott's evaluation of this project would point out that it is completely misguided. For one thing, it analyzes political life into atomic phenomenal units. Then, it treats these as the ingredients of political life so that understanding these objects amounts to understanding politics. Furthermore it imposes a value system upon the data and thus reaches recommendations.

Each step treats practical experience as if it were objectively knowable material and neglects every essential characteristic of practice, as discussed previously, that distinguish it from science. Oakeshott does acknowledge that this kind of procedure can, in fact, act as a stimulus to change. Oakeshott's specific objection is to its pretension of describing political life as it really is, and that the mistake is due to treating one type of reality as if it belonged to a realm that excludes it by its very nature. Attempting to treat politics scientifically is, then, thinking contradictorily in much the same way as treating the assertions, "Mr. X is red haired" and "Mr. X is fictional", as logically analogous.*

The restriction that Oakeshott's modes of experience places on dealing with political reality has an evaluative effect on his First Level. This is apparent in Oakeshott's commitment to a political conservatism which becomes manifest in his distrust of large-scale, sweeping reform movements where there is a motivation to eradicate the old and start from scratch.

Oakeshott believes that confusing science with practice, and thus dealing with political reality as if it were scientific data, tends to lead to reform movements of such scale. He feels these are natural consequences of analyzing a situation into variables whose

* This is also based on Ryle's article "Systematically Misleading Expressions", referred to above.

essential dynamism and continuous interrelationship are neglected in scientific description. If the participating atoms in a situation are seen as separate and discrete (so that they can be scrutinized apart from their relationships, and also from every angle, so to speak), it is much easier to imagine their being eliminated or, perhaps, rearranged. In this way the nature of the whole situation under consideration can be modified. In effect, such a procedure modifies the input, and thus, changes the output. According to Oakeshott, this is exactly the (incorrect) approach science tends to adopt when facing politics. Therefore, insofar as his conservatism represents a set of dispositions to face change cautiously it functions restrictively for his First Level policy recommendations. The differences between the scientific and practical modes prevent him, in effect, from having other than conservative attitudes.

The next set of Level Two categories to be examined is Mill's anti-intuitionist epistemology and its correspondent within Oakeshott's philosophy, Oakeshott's anti-rationalism. Again, both of these show an informal connection with the Level Two category of each thinker first considered - Mill's empirical positivism and Oakeshott's idealism.

In a sense, one can say that Mill's commitment to science prevents him from reacting any way but negatively toward intuitionism.

For Mill, intuition is a process of discerning truths,

completely independent of sense experience. Knowledge through intuition is, in contrast to that acquired empirically, immediately apprehended. It does not depend on inference from evidence or from any other justificatory basis. It is a strictly private conviction of what is believed to be true.

This explication, itself, explains its compatability with Mill's scientist's temper. His comments on the subject allow little doubt:

The notion that truths external to the mind can be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience is . . . the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions. By the aid of this theory, every inveterate belief and every intense feeling of which the origin is not remembered, is enabled to dispense with the obligation of justifying itself by reason, and is erected into its own all-sufficient voucher and justification. There never was such an instrument devised for consecrating all deep-seated prejudices.²⁰

In this statement, Mill emphasizes the difference between claims subject to justification and those presented in such a way that justification is irrelevant. What counts as adequate justification is important, for Mill's rejection of "justification by intuition", which Mill sees as pseudo-justification is the core of Mill's position. He feels that basing a belief on intuition is equivalent to its having no basis at all, and this is a very serious error for Mill. Rather, an intuitive belief is asserted simply as a manifestation of some internal prejudice or predilection.

There is no point in challenging an "I feel it in my bones" argument. Mill's whole orientation towards understanding social and political life stresses that empirical phenomena can be traced to observable causes - observable, in principle at least, publicly. The inherent privacy of intuition removes it from acceptable justificatory methods. The above quotation says, in effect, that intuition can be the pseudo-defense for any belief that one wants to support where genuine support is lacking. In fact, one of Bentham's strongest influences on Mill concerns just this point:

What thus impressed me was the chapter in which Bentham passed judgment on the common modes of reasoning in morals and legislation, deduced from phrases like 'law of nature', 'right reason', 'the moral sense', 'moral rectitude', and the like, and characterized them as dogmatism in disguise, imposing its sentiments upon others under cover of sounding expressions which convey no reason for sentiment, but set up the sentiment as its own reason.²¹

This turns our attention to moral claims - certainly important ingredients in Mill's Level One political theory, and supportive of his anti-intuitionism, as well. Observational evidence is the appropriate justification of these, as any other, assertions. He shows how moral judgments rest on experiential data by basing the objective truth of value judgments on their origins and consequences, both of which are empirical.

In particular, Mill is concerned with being able to justify a judgment of how well a particular value serves the interest of those

who hold it. His judgment reflects the way that the people holding the value see their own self interest. This reflects his Utilitarianism. Does this value system arise from the pursuit of happiness and does its use actually increase happiness?", are the kinds of questions he poses in evaluating values held by a society. A correlation between a value and utility amounts to its justification, according to Mill. In contrast, the intuitionist, to whom Mill sees himself opposed, interprets the worth of values as immediately self-evident and not necessarily derivable from their cause or effect.

The core of Mill's anti-intuitionism is, then, the rejection of any non-empirical attempt at justification. Regardless of whether a belief is valuational or factual, its justification is logically the same. An intuitionist, in contrast to Mill, does not require a distinct, publicly communicable sign in order to justify values - his intuition functions in this capacity for him.

Furthermore, because Mill's anti-intuitionism is incompatible with justification via any non-empirical criteria, understanding values becomes, to a significant extent, understanding how they are engendered in, and contribute to, overt and private behavioral contexts. The normative element that is functional in understanding values is the production of utility; and this, too, is a behavioral variable.

The occurrence of particular kinds of feelings among

people within the context of various political and social situations is, therefore, vitally important to Mill's theory. Feelings are, for Mill, basic behavioral elements that contribute to the shape of social and political life. They are empirically (thus, non-intuitive) discoverable mediating elements between the causes of social phenomena and those phenomena, themselves. In this capacity they participate in the Humean causal model that Mill's commitment to science demands.

Human feelings are, in general, positive or negative, approving or disapproving, with respect to a particular social situation.* In essence, when a social phenomenon is associated with positive feelings its development or at least perpetuation is enhanced. Association of a phenomenon with a negative response tends to engender changing that situation, or, at the minimum, limiting its development in the established direction. An example of this could be one of Mill's own "social causes", his advocacy of participation by a wide range of persons on the various levels of governmental administration, for instance. Mill felt that if opportunities for participation were enhanced, people would experience less dissatisfaction with government, partly because their understanding and identification of the processes would increase, and

* This obviously is an oversimplification, but one that does not distort the Second Level structure or content of Mill's theory.

partly because participation would tend to protect their own interests. In turn, as positive feelings about government emanated from such activity, the value of the activity would continue to increase for those involved. Feelings, then, are a key to explaining social phenomena. For Mill the anti-intuitionist, discerning and connecting feelings and overt behavior is tantamount to scientifically comprehending and rationally judging the quality of social life.

The effect of Mill's anti-intuitionism upon his Level One philosophy is directed towards the method Mill uses to arrive at Level One claims. In particular, the interlevel influence pertains to the justificatory methods Mill accepts and rejects in the course of his First Level philosophizing. His anti-intuitionism affects the structure and content of the arguments and lines of reasoning that takes place on Level One. It is in this sense that the relationship can be said to be methodological.

We recall that Mill's anti-intuitionism is expressed in his refusing to claim or advocate anything which is not justifiable through evidence that is (in principle) publicly accessible. His anti-intuitionism, then, affects his Level One political philosophy because an assertion is not permissible unless the steps leading it can be stated. Obviously, these steps must contribute, along with the claim, to a sound argument. They must cite reasons (or evidence) independent of the claim being made.

Our previous chapters bear this out. In chapter 2, it was shown how his views and policies concerning political education are constantly subject to the test of produced utility, which is empirically observable. In chapter 3, his broad theoretical picture of social change again reflects Mill's observations of social and political phenomena. His belief that socio-political progress is attainable is, again, justified in terms of increased utility. Finally, chapter 4's portrayal of human nature is psychological and behavioristic.

A hypothetical challenge to any Level One claim must be answerable, Mill feels, in terms of empirical data that provide grounds for the claim. He considers self-evidence of unshakable conviction only as directives to pursue genuine evidence.

In fact, Mill's commitment to utilitarianism, itself, can be interpreted as an additional manifestation of the methodological consequences of his anti-intuitionism.

Being a Level One social and political theorist, Mill is bound to deal with value questions. His goal, we recall, is developing a science of society. He sees this as emphasizing the function of values in society insofar as they can be empirically justified, and insofar as there exist patterns and consequences of value adherence. His anti-intuitionism requires him to reach justification empirically. And thus, his utilitarianism, fulfilling the dual

requirements of being genuinely normative and genuinely empirical, emerges.

A side effect of this is that Mill is predisposed to an egalitarian politics. His characteristic emphasis on justification by empirical evidence leads him to egalitarianism because empirical evidence is essentially available to anyone and is not privilege to any elitist group. This makes political and social understanding and policy design a function that anyone capable of making and comprehending observational data can participate in. The fact that there is no appealing an intuitionist approach to justification is just what Mill finds so unpalatable. So, his democratic point of view which is manifest throughout his Level One philosophy is, in part, a consequence of his anti-intuitionism: and more specifically, the requirements for justification which his anti-intuitionism emphasizes.

The Level Two concept that functions for Oakeshott is in an analogous manner as Mill's anti-intuitionism is Oakeshott's equally stringent rejection of what he calls rationalism in politics. Mill would probably accuse Oakeshott of intuitionism; and Oakeshott would definitely find Mill guilty of dealing with politics rationally.

Oakeshott does not identify "rationalism in politics" with "rational" as in rational conduct. If one is said to behave

rationally, he is able to give a reasonable explanation for his activity. Oakeshott is certainly not critical of striving for rationality, in this specific sense. In fact, he thinks that rational behavior is impossible if one approaches a social or political context as a rationalist does.

Rationalistic politics usually occur when "the excessive pursuit of one ideal leads to the exclusion of others, perhaps all others."²² Oakeshott's warning against this is that,

every admirable ideal has its opposite, no less admirable. Liberty or order, justice or charity, spontaneity or deliberateness, principle or circumstance, self or others . . . [The pursuit of ideals makes] us see double by directing our attention always to abstract extremes, none of which is wholly desirable.²³

Oakeshott believes that a symptom of rationalistic politics is exactly what the above quotation describes - a commitment to a broad social reform movement that pursues one ideal goal. The rationalism of such an approach is identified, by Oakeshott, with an approach by which political issues are treated intellectually, by describing a political situation as a static state, and then by prescribing fixed, detailed, formal steps that are supposed to lead to the desired goals. He sees at least two significant errors in this rationalistic approach, both of which are suggested in the above quotations.

The first is that rationalism tends to be ideological. By this Oakeshott means that it proceeds from a point of view that

gives absolute priority, unconditional commitment to an abstract idea. In Oakeshott's estimation this approach is inclined to be nothing less than fanatic and ritualistic. The kind of ideas that influence particular ideologies are exemplified in the above quotation - political decisions are justified in terms of "liberty", "justice", "human rights", etc. These ideas certainly function persuasively. However, so do their opposites. Everybody is in favor of both liberty and order. So, justifying a political program in terms of a single idealistic goal artificially distorts the interests people have.

Ideological politics suggests that goals such as the above are mutually exclusive. A political ideology's lauding liberty, for example, ignores the concrete details of political reality where neither "liberty" nor "order" exist in the abstract but where some aspects of life are relatively unrestrained and others take place as manifestations of adherence to rules.

Oakeshott blames these distortions on the fact that ideological politics puts the cart before the horse. It focusses on goals that are prescribed prior to the processes of politics. In direct contrast, Oakeshott feels that goals grow out of political experience and that they continually reflect the effect of ongoing experience. It is inappropriate to picture the political life of a society as being the manifestation of a straightforward, direct, efficient (even

optimal) progression toward one ideologically described goal.

Oakeshott sums up the salient features of rationalistic politics:

Activity would be bent towards the performance of actions in pursuit of preconceived and formulated ends, actions determined wholly by the ends sought and from which fortuitous and unwanted consequences have, so far as possible, been excluded. Its aim would be, first, to establish a proposition, to determine a purpose to be pursued, secondly, to determine the means to be employed to achieve that (and no other) end, and thirdly, to act. Human behavior would appear to be broken up into a series of problems to be solved, purposes to be achieved and a series of individual actions performed in pursuit of these ends. The unprejudiced consideration of every project would take the place of policy, precedent and prescription would be avoided . . . in determining enterprise, and the man who had a formula would come to oust the man who had none.²⁴

His point is, simply, that this methodology has very little relevance to what happens in political life. From the predictive to the action stage the picture the rationalist has in mind is false - it is nothing like the fluid, organic, responsive complex of a living political society.

The second major error of a rationalist politics is that it substitutes technical facility for skill in politics. Oakeshott regards skill as an essential ingredient in maintaining a society's political health. Skill is the lubricant of practical experience; it is that undefinable, although recognizable, mode in which all practice is, hopefully, exercised.

A rationalist has great difficulty understanding the

Oakeshottian interpretation of skill. The simultaneous concreteness and elusiveness of skills confuses the political rationalist. He sees these two qualities as incompatible. In fact, a rationalist has difficulty understanding any area of experience which cannot be subjected to and inspected under the clear light of reason. For these reasons, he interprets skills as cases of technical adeptness which he can incorporate into his point of view.

Technique is exercised when a set of rules is used as the basis for activity. Technical facility varies according to how well substantiated the rules are and how accurately they are applied to the situation under consideration. Both criteria, for substantiation and accuracy, belong to the canons of science and for Oakeshott this is at the root of the rationalistic error. One problem is that facile technical performance is prescribed in advance. Oakeshott points out that, on the contrary, practical skill is recognizable only through the context of doing. It develops and evolves as practice progresses. "A [skilled] cook is not a man who first has a vision of a pie and then tries to make it; he is a man skilled in cookery, and both his projects and his achievements spring from that skill."²⁵ Putting this another way, the ability to read a recipe and follow its directions precisely is not sufficient for being a chef.

Oakeshott's views on this point are, perhaps, best exemplified when considering the traditional dimension of political

life.

The importance of tradition is thematic throughout Oakeshott's Level One philosophy. Tradition initiates the educational process, is the connecting cement throughout social change, and sensitivity to its inescapability is a central element in human personality. The rationalist account of tradition would, most likely, treat it as a separable complex variable that can be propositionally unpacked as descriptions of selected activities, attitudes, and dispositions. Oakeshott feels that this would hardly touch the essence of tradition. Tradition is present in every nuance of a society's life. Yet the rational mind cannot grapple with it because once tradition is lifted out of its life-context to be placed as a causal variable in a descriptive model its essential "omnipresence-in-a-society's-life-style" is lost. Tradition becomes manifest through activities, attitudes, and dispositions. But it cannot be reduced to these and the rationalist is committed to performing just this sort of reduction.

Oakeshott's account of the rationalist temperament, which follows, summarizes the above points. All those characteristics and ingredients of life that are opposite to those the rationalist espouses are reflections of, according to Oakeshott, a healthy respect for tradition. The qualities which the rationalist values or which are pursued by him are those which operate against the perseverance of

tradition.

He stands . . . for independence of mind on all occasions, for thought free from obligation to any authority save the authority of 'reason'. His circumstances in the modern world have made him contentious: he is the enemy of authority, of prejudice of the merely traditional, customary or habitual. His mental attitude is at once sceptical and optimistic: sceptical, because there is no opinion, no habit, no belief, nothing so firmly rooted or so widely held that he hesitates to question it and to judge it by what he calls his 'reason'; optimistic because the Rationalist never doubts the power of his 'reason' (when properly applied) to determine the worth of a thing, the truth of an opinion or the propriety of an action.²⁶

This description bears some similarity to one of the scientist.

Especially insofar as the rationalist strives to liberate himself from all previously accepted opinions except in cases of justification by rational argument, the political rationalist shares the approach of the scientist. For both, nothing is unimpeachable and everything is equally subject to evidential justification.

It is important, in order to understand the connection Oakeshott makes between rationalism in politics and a scientific approach, to be precise about what he means by "reason". He does not mean intuition, or the ability to immediately apprehend self-evident truth without intermediary justification. He uses the terms "reason" and "rational" to name an approach whose central requirement is to demonstrate, step-by-step, by argument, a connection between some first principle and a political program designed to realize goals implicit in it.

Insofar as Level One is affected by Oakeshott's anti-rationalism, we can discover a connection that pertains, as does Mill's anti-intuitionism, to Oakeshott's method of constructing Level One arguments.

Oakeshott's political philosophy has been compared, in a number of instances in our Level One discussion, to portrait painting. This comparison rests on the assumption that an act such as creating a painting does not proceed rationalistically, in Oakeshott's sense. In fact, these two kinds of activities appear to be contraposed. It is even plausible to say that the degree to which an activity is pursued rationalistically is negatively proportional to its artistic authenticity.

Therefore, on Level One, Oakeshott does not present tightly constructed arguments which amount to "cases" for specific conclusions about the nature of political life, which would be a rationalistic approach. Rather, the feeling of his Level One philosophy is that political understanding is absorbed through non-specific involvement in the context and not by applying any program or set of rules.

Oakeshott never analyzes phenomena, for example; this is characteristic of his methodological commitment, conditioned, as it is, by his Level Two anti-rationalism. His views on political education are particularly clear examples of this. Nowhere is a

step-by-step program advocated. Similarly, there are no specific criteria set down for evaluating the political education in a society. The closest an Oakeshottian can come to describing the goal of political education is to compare it to the acquisition of a skill. Just as a skill cannot be described analytically, neither can the state of being politically educated.

Another place where this methodological effect is borne out is in Oakeshott's attitude towards tradition, more particularly, his political conservatism,²⁷ which he describes not as a doctrine, but as a temperament, becoming manifest in preference for

the familiar to the unknown . . . the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, the sufficient to the superabundant, the convenient to the perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss.²⁸

The terms he uses to compare conservatism with its opposite are pejorative. For example, "the superabundant", "the perfect", and "utopian bliss", seem to suggest idealistic, unrealizable goals. They are contrasted with the moderate, but realistic and attainable goals Oakeshott associates with conservatism. The picture of the non-conservative which emerges from this description is somewhat fanatical at worst, and certainly irrational at best. For Oakeshott, the constructive attitude of the conservative-minded person emerges in his commitment to enjoy what is available, to improve one's life gradually through modification of what one is used to rather than by

wholesale reform movements which are dedicated to starting afresh "from scratch", so to speak.

Furthermore, the qualities Oakeshott identifies with the non-conservative are the very qualities he would associate with the rationalist. Obviously, Oakeshott feels the conservative will never welcome change, especially on a grandiose scale. But the rationalist, always ready with his basic and explicit value criterion which serves as his complete justification for policy decisions, is, for this very reason, unhindered when it comes to initiating the kind of sweeping reform movements that the conservative is most distrustful of.

In other words, it is the rationalist's belief that his criterion is, in fact, adequate justification for proceeding to act that predisposes him to believe that "nothing is sacred". Every aspect of political life is regarded sceptically: if it is not rationally defensible, it is disposed of and-or replaced with a (rationally) acceptable policy or procedure.

The way in which Oakeshott's anti-rationalism affects his Level One method can be summarized by pointing out that, in spite of what the rationalist thinks, dealing with the intricacies of political life are in no way like planning a meal that has to meet set nutritional requirements. The very nature of political life makes it impossible to specify all desirable goals in advance, as it is, indeed,

possible to specify nutritional requirements. (Our previous discussion on Oakeshott's distinction between the scientific and practical modes of experience will serve to recall why he believes this is so). Setting out a planned path, consciously designed to reach a goal step-by-step, which is a typically rationalistic procedure, neglects the fluidity, dynamicism and non-formality of political life which, in Oakeshott's eyes, constitutes its very essence. And, the rationalist's commitment to demonstrative justification of each step as logically connected to his specified goal and the "nothing-is-sacred-without-this" attitude that accompanies a rationalistic commitment very likely leads, Oakeshott feels, to the design and subsequent application of grandiose plans as means for reaching political and social goals.

The methodological restriction engendered by Oakeshott's anti-rationalism prevents him from approaching demonstration, in presenting his political views. Nevertheless, not having a justification criterion forces him, he thinks, to turn all his attention to the particular details of a situation. These details constitute the flesh and blood, so to speak, of political reality.

The final Level Two category we shall consider functions metaphysically, describing Mill's and Oakeshott's beliefs about the variables that compose the world. Mill adopts a picture compatible, as are his other Level Two elements, with science. Unsurprisingly,

Oakeshott's scheme reflects his fundamental idealistic metaphysics and epistemology, specifically in his view that science cannot completely grasp the structure of reality.

Mill has an "atomistic" and "mechanistic" metaphysics. One way in which these characteristics of his Second Level thinking become apparent is in his adoption of a Humean model of causation. That is, he seeks to discover various types of correlations among individual empirical phenomena,^{*} and treats those which occur repeatedly as bona fide instances of cause and effect.

Mill's atomism entails the belief that complex behavioral phenomena can be analyzed successively into smaller and smaller parts until the elementary unit is discovered. There is no distortion resulting from this reduction. Social events are interpreted as combinations of people's activities (both overt and otherwise). These are, in turn, separable into complexes of feelings which, ultimately break up into psychological variables, or, in other words, single response tendencies of people to various stimuli occurring in a societal context.

Mill treats psychological states as the operative elements

* The precise details of the types of correlations are explored in Mill's elaboration of his methods of Agreement, Difference, Joint Agreement and Difference, and Concomitant Variation. These are discussed by Mill in A System of Logic, 8th ed., (London: Longman's Green and Co., Ltd., 1959), Book 3, Chapter 8.

in causal connections. At the risk of oversimplifying very complex facts (although not distortingly), Mill tends to interpret feelings as generally positive or negative, or as approving or disapproving, with respect to any particular social situation. This scheme reflects his utilitarianism, and this emerges even more clearly in his elaboration of precisely how causal connections between social phenomena are correlated with human feelings. In brief, he sees the positive complex of feelings as tending to be correlated with the continuity of an existing social situation; and, the negative type, as correlated with some sort of change in the status quo.

An example of this can be constructed in terms of the current concern of many people with professional opportunities for women. The negative feelings among people about prevailing employment patterns and prejudices against professional women have resulted in the widespread development of a new social phenomenon, affirmative action programs. However, if women felt satisfied with their professional status, there would have been no pressure to modify informal and formal behavior patterns and the status quo in this area of social life would have thus been supported. This explication illustrates the approach Mill takes in which empirically discernable variables, feelings and other behavioral responses, are correlated with socio-political phenomena.

The discovery of these social phenomena - events and

feelings elicited in response to events - , as well as the empirical connections between the variables, is tantamount, for Mill, to scientifically understanding social life and to rationally comprehending the emergence of some phenomena rather than others.

Each atom of political reality, the individual psychological response to political phenomena, is fully comprehensible either within its context or extracted and scrutinized out of context. Mill does not feel that such analysis distorts the nature of sociopolitical units; for the relatively complicated phenomena ordinarily identified as the elements of political life, namely, (1) formal and informal institutions, such as governmental functions, customs, traditions; and (2) the overt behavior patterns which are explicitly or implicitly associated with social life, are completely understandable as combinations of their participating atomic units. The metaphysical nature of these atomic units is analogous to ingredients in a recipe or the parts of an automobile engine, particularly in that each part can be extracted from its complex, held up and turned over, so to speak, in order to discover its properties. This is not to say that the same characteristics will be revealed in and out of association with other ingredients. However, it does imply that the nature of an atomic part does not qualitatively change in different circumstances. Mill's application of this to human psychology emerges on his view that although stimuli may be necessary to operationalize

certain potential characteristics, human nature is nevertheless empirically discoverable through analysis of behavior into associated patterns of feelings.

Logically connected to Mill's atomistic metaphysics is his belief that the specific mode of connection between each atomic element is strictly mechanical in its nature. This entails that relationships between the particular ingredients of politics can be understood in terms of their spatial and temporal proximity and that there is no internal connection between variables.

Mill often describes society as if he were describing a complex machine. He sees relationships between the various parts of this "socio-political machine" as existing only insofar as there are observable correlations between the variables. For instance, he straightforwardly adopts his father's view that the question of how government functions is actually a question of how its various participants adjust and adapt to forces.²⁹ Understanding these processes, what calls for adjustment and how it is accomplished, all in detail, is certainly characteristic of Mill - this, again, is his scientist's point of view.

His mechanism is apparent in the following comment, from

Considerations on Representative Government:

In all things there are very strict limits to human power. It can only act by wielding one or more of the forces of nature. . . . In politics as in mechanics, the power which is to keep the engine going must be sought for outside the machinery.³⁰

In Principles of Political Economy, he remarks that having ascertained how social variables tend to be correlated in stable society, "We have still to consider the economical condition of mankind as liable to change", and he describes this endeavor as involving the consideration of

what these changes are, what are their laws, and what their ultimate tendencies; thereby adding a theory of motion to our theory of equilibrium - the Dynamics of political economy to the statics.³¹

Mill's very language focusses on the literalness with which he sees society as exhibiting the structure of a mechanical device. Social processes begin as a series of goal-directed events. These are, obviously, causally connected; but ascertaining causal relationships involves discovering nothing beyond prevailing antecedent-consequent correlations which are structurally analogous to the patterns one would discover in examining the workings of a mechanical device. The particular mechanical model Mill seems to have in mind is what we would identify as a cybernetic model - this allows for (1) a feedback effect between variables (for example, the outcome of a series of events can certainly affect the way that series continues to operate); and (2) the strict mechanical interpretation of any and all relationships.

Discovering patterns of societal interaction requires observing temporal and spatial relationships between discrete entities that maintain their identities both within and outside their

social context. Our oft repeated example is again clarificatory: If the women's liberation movement were to be described by Mill, he would describe the individual acts directed towards desired goals. Steps people have taken concerning the Equal Rights Amendment would be included, for example, as would various formal (like law administration) and informal (like changes in fashion) events that people saw as being related to this movement. The ingredients of the activities and events would consist of individuals' psychological reactions consequent to various situations which, again, they felt were related to this aspect of social life. The term, "women's liberation" names this collection of events and is completely understandable by their enumeration, description and spatio-temporal relationships.

We turn, now, to the bearing of Mill's atomism and mechanism on his Level One political theory. These facets of his Level Two metaphysics appear to predispose him in a sense, to adopt a particular scheme of Level One values. To characterize this interlevel connection as predispositional suggests that this facet of Level Two provides Mill with a set of attitudes, prejudices, inclinations, and tendencies that make it easy, so to speak, or reasonable for him to philosophize on Level One as he does, rather than in any alternative manner.

After all, Mill's Level One political philosophy is certainly not value free; but the particular value orientation he is inclined

towards becomes, in part, reasonable and plausible for him because he is a Level Two atomist and mechanist. In other words, Mill requires a rationale for the values he espouses. Without this, he is subject to the criticism of arbitrariness. His Level Two atomism and mechanism contribute, essentially, to Mill's "good reasons" for his values.

For example, Mill regards society with great optimism. Mill always feels that wherever social life lacks utility, improvement can be achieved. For example, the impact of his Level One educational philosophy can be interpreted as being partially directed towards social amelioration. People experience dissatisfaction, pursue goals designed to lessen it, and finally judge how well their prescriptions have worked. Political and social education, encompassing both traditional school education and innovative methods such as assuming political responsibility and exploring individual idiosyncrasies, results in minimizing the gap between desired goals and those actually attained. Because Mill's utilitarianism tends to make the individual members of society both judges and juries concerning the quality of their social life, political education is especially important. It increases the possibility that these procedures will, indeed, result in social improvement. However, the very feasibility of this kind of a "societal tune-up" rests on the aspect of Mill's metaphysics that we have just been exploring.

Complex social phenomena reduce into empirically knowable atoms which exhibit no internally necessary connections. Thus, the non-utilitarian facets of life can be adjusted, with the prospects for success increasing with education.

Another example of a Level One value consequence is Mill's advocacy of political and social reform movements that can be called "starting-from-scratch" projects. Mill believes there can be utility in sweeping away the old and replacing it with the new. There is no value priority placed on tradition, as in the case of Oakeshott's philosophy; rather, Mill praises an experimental, "nothing is sacred" attitude for the flexibility and open-mindedness it engenders. And, because Mill's metaphysics sees all relationships as contingent and accidental, genuine innovation and reform are reasonable enterprises to undertake. In other words, there are plausible reasons to believe that the venture will yield the agreed-on goals.

In effect, the particular way in which Mill's atomism and mechanism have a predispositional function is through the aura of reasonability given to his Level One values by these parts of his Level Two. This is accomplished insofar as his atomism and mechanism help Mill claim, with credibility, that he can predict the consequences of political events; and then, he can cite evidence for the success of his prediction. We can recall, at this point, that

all his value judgments must be experientially analyzed in this way. If Mill felt this were impossible, he could not have espoused the values he did while maintaining an internally consistent scientific commitment. And a chink in the strength of his commitment to science certainly would have weakened the plausibility of his Level One philosophy.

In The Spirit of the Age, for example, he traces social evolution to individually felt dissatisfaction, as the atomic unit. Throughout the process of change the functionally constant factor is persons' feelings. Only by discovering their nature can the qualities of the social process be predicted.

Thus, the atomic role and the mechanical nature of human feelings and their relationships in the above context gives plausibility, in the sense explicated above, to Mill's beliefs about the attainability and recognizability of progress. These dimensions of his metaphysics enable him to construct a plausible practice-guiding theory. His practical recommendations reflect his values; and his having a theoretical picture of society gives these values their persuasive force.

Mill's comments on the nature and function of theory (adopted intact from James Mill) show that he, indeed, believed that his social values acquired credibility in this way.

The following, although stated in James' words, might

just have well been John's:

The fact is, that good practice can, in no case, have any solid foundation but in sound theory. . . . For, what is theory? The whole of the knowledge which we possess on any subject, put into that order and form in which it is most easy to draw from it good practical rules. . . . To recommend the separation of practice from theory is . . . to recommend bad practice.³²

John, himself, clearly states that it is only through practical application that theory acquires any importance:

The test of real and vigorous thinking, the thinking which ascertains truths instead of dreaming dreams, is successful application to practice. Where that purpose does not exist, to give definiteness, precision and an intelligible meaning to thought, it generates nothing better than the mystical metaphysics of the Pythagoreans or the Veds.³³

These two quotations, considered together, simply point out that practical activity depends on theory for its significance, and that theory, in turn, is vacuous without practical impact.

Insofar as Mill's value beliefs (corresponding to the level of practice, in the above context) can be substantiated empirically through the observation of people's feelings and responses to various social situations (corresponding to the level of theory), his values acquire plausibility. And, it is his Level Two atomism and mechanism which facilitate Mill's developing the theory to guide the practice. This is the specific manner in which Mill's predisposition to espouse the particular values he does in fact, espouse, is a partial consequence of his Level Two atomism and mechanism.

The properties described as characteristic of his atomism and mechanism are exactly those which contribute to the theoretical picture which provides the rationale for Mill's value attitudes.

The facet of Oakeshott's Second Level which functions analogously to Mill's atomism and mechanism, denoting a specific metaphysics of nature, is Oakeshott's belief in a coherent and organically connected world.

When Oakeshott observes political reality he simply does not search for the same kinds of factors as does Mill. From our exploration of Oakeshott's Level One political theory, the Oakeshottian notion that there is a "style of life" in society has emerged. Also, there has been a repeated comparison between exercising a skill and participating in the practical dimension of life. However, both these aspects of Oakeshott's philosophy have resisted analysis. In fact, Oakeshott never attempts to provide an analytical dissection, as Mill always tends to do when he uses a complex idea. Connected to Oakeshott's reluctance to analyze his complex ideas is his apparent lack of concern with criteria. His Level One discussion seems to studiously avoid matters such as ascertaining the degree to which political skill has been developed or judging the continuity of a particular social practice with tradition.* And, while this appears, at first, to be a serious difficulty,

* This particular point about Oakeshott's philosophy emerged from a discussion with Sir Isaiah Berlin at Wolfson College, Oxford University, in September, 1971.

Oakeshott's Level Two categories of coherence and organicism help in ameliorating the problem.

Oakeshott's organicism can be explained through the notion of a biological organism. This idea commonly refers to complex entities which consist of parts which behave in what can be called a mutually contributory manner. That is, each element of the organism contributes essentially to the life of the organism. Its life is not reducible to any or all of the parts taken separately. At the same time, the nature of its life depends on nothing but the way in which all these parts operate together. This "togetherness" is the crucial factor in determining the qualities of the organism's life. The parts contribute to one another; and thus, they contribute to the "life-ness" of the organism.

Oakeshott applies this kind of thinking to political life. He asserts that practical experience, which encompasses political and social life, is organic in structure.

The unity of experience . . . is neither a unity which revolves around some fixed point, not one derived from conformity to some original datum, nor one which involves mere abstractions. It is a unity congenial to a world or system in which every element is indispensable.³⁴

Each contributory element is equivalent in essentiality to the nature of the whole. And, in this case, the "whole" is the style of a society's political experience.

Of course, not every contributing part of a biological organism

is necessary for the continuation of its life process. Human organisms, for example, survive without limbs but not without hearts. Nevertheless, the character of a person's life, in effect, one's life-style, is affected by every organic constituent. Similarly, political life is affected by its individual experiential ingredients.

In effect, the nature of the whole cannot be fully comprehended without understanding the contribution made by each part. The converse of this is also maintained by Oakeshott. How, for example, can an organ of the human body be understood without understanding the role it plays in the maintenance of the whole body; and similarly, what is sought in attempting to understand what the body is but the contributory functions of the individual organs.

Oakeshott's refusal to involve himself in analysis can now be more clearly understood. All the above comments indicate why this would be an inappropriate technique for Oakeshott to use in exploring the nature of political life. Very simply, the results of analysis would be a distorted view of politics. Its organic dimension is central to its nature. Insofar as analysis involves breaking a whole into its constituent parts and observing these out of context in order to see how they function within their context, it is completely misguided when dealing with an organically related whole.

Crucial to Oakeshott's organicism is the belief that the

elements of political life are not fully comprehensible out of context. The nature of a particular style of political life depends, not only on the individual participatory units, but upon the manner in which they relate to each other. Modify any one and the character of the whole is changed.

Coherence is a characteristic of political life that goes hand in hand with its organic nature, according to Oakeshott. The connection between these two Level Two categories is, in the first place, conceptual. Saying that an entity has an organic nature is, according to Oakeshott, to call attention to the fact that its elements cohere. For Oakeshott, an organically related whole, is in essence, a coherent being. In addition, the conceptual connection between these two categories is indicative of a metaphysical connection. In this sense, coherence is a special kind of closeness among an organism's parts. It is the cement which is the metaphysical counterpart of the logical relationship just discussed. In fact, it is possible to interpret coherence as a kind of internal relationship. Although "coherence" is ordinarily used to denote internally consistent discourse, the metaphysical sense of this term goes beyond this meaning and suggests that coherence is the unifying force which locks elements together and gives them their unique character of singularity; in other words, it is what makes a complex of parts an entity that is recognizable as such.

Oakeshott's beliefs about coherence are best clarified through one of his own examples of how the idea functions. Politics, he says, is "the activity of attending to the general arrangements of a collection of people who, in respect of their common recognition of a manner of attending to its arrangements, compose a single community."³⁵ Here, Oakeshott speaks both of a "collection of people" and a "single community." The difference between these two situations is that the latter exhibits a quality which the former lacks. This quality is coherence.

Another point suggested by Oakeshott's comment is that politics, insofar as it is concerned with the maintenance of an organic body, has a purposive character. That is, political activity pursues coherence in the very fact that it is distinctively oriented towards an organic situation. The coherence belonging to a single community is that manner or style of life that is a central ingredient in political experience. And, this has special significance because it is at this point that Oakeshott makes a transition from treating coherence as a facet of metaphysics to interpreting it as a goal towards which political activity tends. Oakeshott believes that the steps that are taken in politics represent attempts to strengthen the manner or style of life, in effect, to increase its "manner-ness". Politics, then, becomes, in the Oakeshottian vein, the pursuit of coherence.

Now, insofar as we are speaking of a pursuit, the possibility of change is obviously an inherent dimension of political activity. However, when an individual seeks change in order to achieve coherence, Oakeshott believes there tends to be an emphasis on a return to "tried and tested" or relatively durable ways of doing things rather than on reform or innovation. Change might occur in the pursuit of coherence, but only insofar as adjustments are made to increase the internal unity (or organicism) of a life-style. In other words, this kind of change tends to eliminate those facets which appear to be out of phase, so to speak, with the general pattern of one's life-style.

In light of this, it is important, in order to accurately represent Oakeshott, not to confuse the quest for a more coherent way of life with a motivating force for action, at least, not in the ordinary sense. The search for coherence is neither antecedent to, nor is the acquisition of it the stopping place of, political activity. Rather, the search for coherence is what is occurring when political experience occurs.

We can now return to our previous remark concerning Oakeshott's failure to present anything that might serve as criteria for evaluating his Level One views. Although, as we mentioned, this appears to be a serious philosophical gap, it is not a problem for Oakeshott. Political life pursues coherence, and coherence is

not something which can be recognized and judged via an independent criterion. There is no empirical sign of coherence. It exists insofar as it is felt to exist by those involved in political activity. A more traditional criterion for political success* would be incapable of dealing with this absolutely essential dimension of political life.

An example, again concerning the status of women, will summarize our thoughts. Oakeshott addresses himself to this in his article, "Political Education."³⁶ The broader opportunities sought by women could be a simple pursuit of self-gratification. After all, it is certainly plausible to expect that higher economic status (to cite one specific goal) will be seen as desirable by women. But Oakeshott points out that, as thus described, a change in the status of women would not necessarily contribute to increased coherence. However, if this kind of change concretized a view of women that was already functional in society - in the responsibilities they assumed, for example, or insofar as the generally held image of women compared to that of men, the change would certainly be an instance of pursuing and reaching more coherence. In other words, the incoherence of sexual economic inequity depends upon a subjectively felt discrepancy or inconsistency between the manner

* Mill's approach to judging facets of political life would obviously be a case in point.

in which persons see themselves and the reflection of this image in the more formal areas of social experience. Coherence occurs as this gap is reduced. There is no appropriate way to appraise the value of the women's movement, according to Oakeshott, except in terms of its coherence value. This precludes using a criterion, in any conventional sense.

These points bring us to the relation that Oakeshott's organicism and coherence, as Level Two metaphysical categories, have to his Level One philosophy. Just as was the case with Mill's corresponding Level Two categories, this facet of Oakeshott's Second Level is primarily predisposition, particularly in how it affects his value scheme.

As we have pointed out, Oakeshott can neither analyze or evaluate; both are metaphysical implausibilities (if not impossibilities). However, his Level One views do reveal value attitudes. These have a reasonability that would otherwise be missing because his organicism and coherence enable him to avoid the problems engendered by neither analyzing nor evaluating.

We have, for example, described Oakeshott's characteristically cautious attitude towards political reform. In brief, he is distrustful of it. His organicist arguments make this attitude plausible. He believes reform might very well eliminate valuable traditions along with the less desirable ones. His organicism precludes

the possibility of modifying one area of experience while holding others constant. To rely on analogy, Oakeshott does not think that one can paint the walls of a room or refinish a piece of furniture while preserving the quality of the other ingredients in the room. He would maintain that the overall quality of the room, the general impression it makes on the observer, is different as a result of a change like either of the above.

We recall that coherence occurs when the various facets of one's political experience seem to be welded into a kind of single unit. This takes place where relatively little is "unnatural" or "doesn't fit in", according to one's subjective view. According to Oakeshott, this is far more likely to take place when a political policy stresses preservation rather than radical innovation. Thus, his Level Two account of coherence inclines his values towards conservatism.

A way of summarizing the connection between these aspects of Oakeshott's Level Two metaphysics and his political conservatism is by exploring the high value he places on tradition on Level One. Every aspect of Level One political reality is infused with tradition, regardless of its explicit recognition. Oakeshott identifies political education with apprenticeship to a skill, for example. The previous discussion of skills pointed out that their analytical elusiveness does not mean they are unreal. The qualities of skillfulness belong to the

traditional manner of practicing some activity. Grasping a tradition does not mean being able to give a discursive description. It is more of an unconscious "knowing how". Similarly, human nature, characterized by Oakeshott as comprehensible only in terms on individuals' self-images,* finds expression in the continuity of social traditions. As was pointed out, tradition works on a social level as does a person's grasp of his continuing personality for his understanding of himself. One's personality is what someone looks at, when he looks at himself. And, tradition is what gives a life-style to a social body.

Tradition can be identified with the cement of organicism and the forces that enable elements to cohere. It is present within the context of Level One political activity, as a concrete manifestation of the internal organic connections in society and the fact that the quest for satisfaction in society is intertwined with the choice of policies and courses of action which reflect this essential character of tradition.

Thus, it is quite plausible for Oakeshott to favor acknowledging, respecting, even, perhaps, honoring tradition. His metaphysics of nature amounts to a predisposition in this direction.

* Chapter 4.

Summary and Conclusion

The original rationale for taking a bifurcated path and analyzing Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophies into Level One political theory issues and Level Two metaphysics and epistemology was to broaden the focus of our inquiry from "What does Mill or Oakeshott believe about a particular Level One subject?" to "What is the philosophical commitment expressed in their Level One beliefs and how does this commitment shape these beliefs?" The ramifications and limitations of our answer to this question now must be considered. The sort of judgments that our approach can lead to will necessarily reflect the fact that specific Level One differences between Mill and Oakeshott are relational to Level Two differences. For example, the internal consistency of each philosophical system can be evaluated. Because Level Two influences or affects Level One, a comparison between Mill and Oakeshott can be made in terms of the specific manner, or even the relative tightness, with which the inter-level relationship is effected. It is consistent with this suggestion that a comparative examination of the Level Two's could show that the model of political life emerging from Mill's philosophy had a different type of utility from the Oakeshottian model. This type of analysis is a consequence of considering Level One in light of Level Two because it is through our bi-levelled exploration that what begins as the comparative

study of two political philosophies becomes the systematic development of two, generalized philosophical models that extend to the level of socio-political concerns.

Finally, this case study is by no means an exhaustive account of the political philosophies of Mill and Oakeshott, on neither Levels One nor Two. Our Level One issues were selected as representative of the traditional opposition between Mill and Oakeshott; another study might very well present a set of different issues leading to a modified Level Two. But this is a limit inherent in our case study approach.

The scope of our inquiry, thus limited, reflects Sir Isaiah Berlin's conception of political philosophy as interpreting specific issues in political theory as indicative of wider philosophical commitments. These commitments, Berlin says, concern "the all but permanent ways in which we think, decide, perceive, judge."³⁷ The two areas of inquiry implicit in his view have become, for us, Levels One and Two.

The significance of the differences already discovered on both levels, are summarized on table 3. Referring back to table 2, "Comparison Between Mill's and Oakeshott's Level Two concepts," we see that the correspondence revealed was not then explored in depth. The analysis of this chapter enables table 2 to be refined. The outcome is table 3. If we combine the conclusions

TABLE 3

THE ISOMORPHISM BETWEEN MILL'S AND OAKESHOTT'S
LEVEL TWO CONCEPTS

Philosopher	Level Two Concepts (from Table 1)	Relationship to Level One Issues
1. Mill Oakeshott	Empirical positivism Oakeshottian idealism	Justificatory - provides rationale or "reasons why" for Level One claims.
2. Mill Oakeshott	Naturalism Modes of experience	Restrictive for content of Level One - prohibits certain material being discussed in Level One
3. Mill Oakeshott	Anti-intuitionism Anti-rationalism	Restrictive for Method of Level One - prohibits certain reasoning procedures or inferences in Level One
4. Mill Oakeshott	Atomism and Mechanism Organicism and Coherence	Value Predispositional - sets up context of beliefs which gives reasonability or plausibility to values expressed on Level One

incorporated in both tables 2 and 3 we see that Mill and Oakeshott each have the following in their Level Two philosophy:

1. A key concept, which functions both metaphysically and epistemologically, and which justifies assertions, claims and the overall project of Level One. These are Mill's empirical positivism and Oakeshott's particular version of idealism

2. A metaphysical concept which restricts or limits Level One entities. Mill's naturalism and Oakeshott's modes of experience function in this way

3. An epistemological concept, also functioning restrictively, although in this case the restriction applies to Level One Method rather than content. These include Mill's anti-intuitionism and Oakeshott's anti-rationalism

4. A concept functioning both metaphysically and epistemologically which is predispositional in the adoption of each philosopher's particular Level One value scheme. The specific form the predispositional function assumes is that the plausibility or credibility of each philosopher's values is supported by these concepts. For Mill, atomism and mechanism function in this way, the counterpart for Oakeshott is his organicism and views on coherence.

We can now return to our Prologue's suggestion that Mill's and Oakeshott's Second Levels can have an influence on

their First Levels which is extra-logical, but nonetheless significant. The relationships summarized in table 3 exemplify the distinctive characteristics of what we there identified as contextual implication. Certainly, Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophies of nature and knowledge are logically independent of their beliefs concerning matters of political practice and policy. But it is just these philosophical beliefs that provide reasonability for making political claims, excluding material or argument procedures, and expressing certain attitudes rather than others.

We all know the rules of contextual implication that apply in the Prologue's tennis player - doctor example. Custom and tradition supply the rules which make the player's expectation reasonable. This is not the case with Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophical politics. Nevertheless, once Level Two is explored, along with Level One, its function in accordance with the rules of contextual implication emerges. There is a rational purposiveness that appears in Level One when it is considered in light of Level Two.

The Level Two functional correspondence shown by table 3 is significant, because it is possible to cite either philosopher's Level Two views as a paradigm of just what the other feels is the wrong approach. We have, therefore, a situation in which Mill and Oakeshott are prima facie trying to do similar jobs,

i.e., guide the development of social policy in corresponding areas of political life in a manner that reflects their underlying philosophies of nature and epistemology. They appear to agree even about what the proper roles of their respective philosophical commitments are in doing this. But they are diametrically opposed in their choice of tools.

This is analogous to a hypothetical situation in which there are two separate prescriptions for tennis elbow. One is to wear a band around the painful area. The other is to learn the correct way to swing a racquet. Both prescribers agree that the pain will be lessened by not stretching the tendons in the arm. But here the similarity ends. There would probably be strong disagreement over which cure was "right".

It is important to see that this illustration need not be characterized simply as a case of having competing answers to the same question, the most effective way to relieve the pain. Perhaps the disagreement represents different assumed values and goals which contribute to the rationale for each prescription. The person who suggests the band, for example, might be concerned with the player's immediate gratification, for using the band will enable continuation of play in the style to which the player is accustomed and presumably enjoys. The person who advocates relearning the basic stroke of tennis is concerned, instead, with producing a

theoretically correct game which, by definition, does not cause pain.

More than answers to the single question, "How can the pain be alleviated?" is being stated by the two prescribers. They are really asking two different questions to begin with - each directed, not towards "pain-alleviation", but towards "pain-alleviation-that-is-consistent-with-specific-broad-interests". The latter is qualitatively different from the former.

This suggests that Mill and Oakeshott might very well be asking two different questions, in a way analogous to the above example. This is consistent with the functional correspondence between Mill's and Oakeshott's respective Second and First Levels, as shown on table 3. Mill and Oakeshott agree on the philosophical jobs to be done by Level Two for Level One. Analogously, both persons of our tennis elbow example agree that the pain is to be alleviated. However, what they disagree on - and what Mill and Oakeshott disagree on - affects the whole situation so as to make it one of disagreeing over what is being sought, or as we have said, asking different questions.

As Mackay has shown, "no two propositions can contradict one another unless they are answers to the same question."³⁸ Another example shows the relevance of Mackay's point to Mill's and Oakeshott's disagreement. We can imagine two persons who appear to be

diametrically opposed to what is ordinarily denoted as "women's liberation". However, when their apparent differences are examined in detail, it emerges that the respective views on women's liberation reflect highly disparate concerns. For example, one individual's concern centers on economic potential; while the other's is over the societal application of the idea of equality as it applies to public toilet facilities. The fact that their respective concerns are different, and that their attitude differences reflect this has bearing on the sense in which they can be said to be antithetical. The crucial question is, clearly, What is the issue over which these hypothetical persons are opposed? And, if as suggested in our earlier example of the tennis elbow, Mill and Oakeshott are asking different questions, this same question can be asked about their disagreement: What is the issue over which Mill and Oakeshott are opposed?

A step in answering this question refers back to our consideration, in our Prologue, of Kuhn's notion of paradigms, or presupposed rules and models of scientific procedure, which shape the course of scientific investigation and "from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research."³⁹ Perhaps Mill and Oakeshott are developing their respective Level One social policy views under the influence of different paradigms. Furthermore, perhaps we can explain the nature of these different

paradigms as the assumed values, rules, and objectives which distinguished our two tennis-elbow-curers. An example Kuhn gives of how paradigms operate has a striking similarity to the above differences:

An investigator who hoped to learn something about what scientists took the atomic theory to be asked a distinguished physicist and an eminent chemist whether a single atom of helium was or was not a molecule. Both answered without hesitation but their answers were not the same. . . . Presumably both men were talking of the same particle, but they were viewing it through their own research training and practice. Their experience in problem-solving told them what a molecule must be. Undoubtedly, their experiences had had much in common, but they did not, in this case, tell the two specialists the same thing.⁴⁰

It would clearly be a mistake, if one acknowledges the role Kuhn attributes to paradigms, to treat the chemist's and physicist's answers as being contradictory. The paradigms each one takes for granted have the effect of making their interpretations of the question about the helium atom different. They are answering different questions, just as the tennis-elbow-curers are pursuing different goals, and Mill and Oakeshott are formulating their Level One policy views under the influence of discrepant Level Two philosophical orientations.

All this is pointing towards suggesting that Mill's and Oakeshott's Second Levels function like paradigms (as described in the above arguments). This sheds a new light on what has been

characterized as their traditional opposition. Now we are faced with competing paradigms, a notion we arrived at by exploring what the significance of their posing different questions could be. Therefore, the crux of our conclusions about Mill and Oakeshott has to pertain to the significance of these two paradigms, which are manifest in their respective Level Two philosophies. What, specifically, do they tell us about the Level One differences we have considered? More specifically, what kind of evaluative judgments can we make about Mill's and Oakeshott's philosophical politics, in light of our new way of seeing these two philosophers?

One characteristic to be kept in mind in considering forming evaluations is that Mill's Level Two, viewed as a whole, seems to accomplish justification, restriction and predisposition by imposing criteria, developed and agreed on in advance, upon the exploration that takes place on Level One. It does this simply in its thorough commitment to science. This is certainly not to say that the specific details of what is going to count as supporting evidence for a Level One political claim are specified in advance by Mill; but it is to say that Mill knows in advance of his actual Level One formulation that they will be justifiable in terms of independent criteria.

In contrast, Oakeshott does not proceed at all like this. We can recall a characteristic lack of criteria in both his levels.

This situation exists because Oakeshott believes that judgment criteria cannot be understood as such independent of their applicable context. It is artificial, he believes, to think one can set up a judging method with independent, non-contextual criteria for applying to social and political experience. What Oakeshott is certain of in advance of his exploration is only that general impressions will emerge from the noncritical participation within the social and political context.

Our consideration of the value consequences of each of these two paradigms will focus on the different utilities of each model of philosophical politics. Perhaps the most obvious difference of this kind is that built into Mill's system is a capacity for prediction. This is lacking in Oakeshott's philosophical politics. It is consistent with Mill's model that a hypothetical case study can be set up in which certain social variables are held constant so as to ascertain the effect of others' operating. Systems analysis, as it has developed in both contemporary business practice and political science, proceeds along lines such as these. As a technique, this supposedly minimizes having to proceed blindly. It can be said that Mill's philosophical politics can minimize the possibility having to develop or apply social policy without some idea of what the consequences are likely to be.

In sharp contrast, Oakeshott's philosophical politics

reflects a concern with the fabric of society, so to speak. This metaphor suggests why it would be inappropriate to apply the Millian systems approach to social questions when considered from Oakeshott's point of view - when the threads of a fabric are tampered with the whole integrity of the fabric's tightness is in jeopardy. Nevertheless, Oakeshott's view does have applicability in dealing with social problems, although its particular applicability differs from Mill's. An Oakeshottian model allows for societal modification but with the fringe benefit that social habits and social identity will be continued to be enjoyed during the process.

In effect, both paradigms have some utility for solving social problems. The advantages to Mill's approach is that it enables one to see in advance what the consequences will be; and Oakeshott, simply because he values the integrity of the fabric more than Mill does, tends to offer more protection against social discomfort during the problem-solving process.

Mill's approach is comparable to a diagnostic procedure. As we have just mentioned, his social policy is formulated within a context of empirical knowledge of antecedent-consequent correlations. Therefore, one of Mill's strengths is that he is significantly more oriented toward specific problem diagnosis and solution than is Oakeshott. The arguments given above about the

differences in predictive capacity are, clearly, applicable to this phase of comparison as well.

Although Oakeshott's approach does not lend itself to problem-solving as readily as Mill's does, he is not totally deficient in this area, as our previous exploration of his idea of social coherence has suggested. But Oakeshott's particular orientation, corresponding to Mill's diagnostic point of view, is towards recognizing broad areas of social life which are generally in a state of malaise or general ill health. This is not to say that Oakeshott would be able to point to specific signs of illness. Nevertheless, it is likely that he would become aware of brewing pathology in its most embryonic stages, even, perhaps, before Millian diagnosis is feasible.

For an example of this difference between Mill and Oakeshott, we can return to the women's liberation movement. A proponent of Mill might deal with the dissatisfaction of women by pointing out certain specific social variables that can be shown to have consequences for women's social attitudes. These can be as simple as unequal salary scales or professional advancement paths. Then the Millian can make a specific recommendation that, logically, is analogous to a medical prescription: "Take two table-spoons every four hours and continue to check temperature." For our example, the recommendation might be an affirmative action

program which defines job seniority so as to compensate for past sexual discrimination.

In contrast, the Oakeshottian would probably become aware of women's discontent before it was described concretely by the Millian, actually before it was recognized as a social problem in need of solution. He would become aware of an inconsistency of sorts, in this area of social life. This would not readily lend itself to analysis, although the Oakeshottian could point out to what he felt were imbalances between various dimensions of women's lives, which could subjectively be described as cases of tension or, more conservatively, disharmony. For Oakeshott, truly authentic solutions to social problems are those whose provisions are already present in the consciousness and awareness of persons even before they are consciously instituted. Oakeshott's approach to social policy formulation emphasizes sensitivity to these developing awarenesses. The practical value of this approach is its sensitivity to potential flaws in the weave of the fabric. His strength is not in diagnostics, but in prophylaxis, or even in health maintenance.

Our previous tennis-elbow case supplies a further point for evaluating these two paradigms. One outstanding difference between the proponent of the band and the advocate of relearning the stroke is the short term vs. long term utility of each

recommendation. If the decision is to relearn the stroke, the game of tennis is not going to be enjoyed for a definite time. In fact, participation in the sport will not take place during the process, because the style of play that has caused the pain will have to be completely unlearned. The corrective procedure amounts to starting from scratch; and while this will, in all probability, lead to the long term benefit of having a pain-free and band-free stroke, it certainly has short term limitations. If the band-alternative is chosen, more immediate results will ensue. However, the chances are that the player will become dependent on the band, and its use will become an inherent part of the player's game. Obviously answering a question like, "Which is the best prescription?" calls for far more than a straightforward choice.

And, analogously, choosing between paradigms for social policy formulation necessitates qualifying the choice with a statement of the interests that are at stake. Oakeshott's philosophical orientation embraces considerations that are closer to the band-prescriber's; Mill, the reformer who believes practice must always be explicitly justified by theory, thinks more like the tennis stroke reformer. We must not push the tennis example too far, and say that Mill would categorically reject all short term compensatory adjustments. He would allow them, but with the qualification that a higher level of societal health would exist when compensatory acts

are finally eliminated and each societal variable is, in itself, in a state of health. Mill's inclination is to believe that having to wait for long term, high level, relatively intense societal satisfaction is more desirable than securing more immediate satisfaction which will never quite reach the very high level or be as pure. Oakeshott's tendency is to pursue goals which do not embody the sense of aspiration that Mill's do, but that reflect a guiding principle that values continuity of satisfaction, or in Oakeshott's own words, "present laughter to utopian bliss."⁴¹

Perhaps we can bring together the various points that have emerged in our paradigm comparison by suggesting that Mill's philosophical politics can be used like a map; but that Oakeshott's works more like a combination of a gentle inspirer, an awakener of sensitivity, and a strengthener of confidence in oneself.

In constructing his map, Mill describes his goal:

The science of society would have attained a very high point of perfection if it enabled us, in any given condition of social affairs, . . . to understand by what causes it had, in any and every particular, been made what it was; whether it was tending to any, and to what changes; what effects each feature of its existing state was likely to produce in the future; and by what means any of those effects might be prevented, modified, or accelerated, or a different class of effects superinduced. There is nothing chimerical in the hope that general laws, sufficient to enable us to answer these various questions for any country or time with the individual circumstances

of which we are well acquainted, do readily admit of being ascertained; and that the other branches of human knowledge, which this undertaking presupposes, are so far advanced that the time is ripe for its advancement. Such is the object of the Social Science.⁴²

Oakeshott does not do what Mill does - he does not present signposts, label alternative directions, and supply data that enables one to calculate distance. Oakeshott encourages his follower to open oneself to the possibilities of political experience - on its own terms. For, in politics

men sail a boundless and bottomless sea; there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep afloat on an even keel; the sea is both friend and enemy; and the seamanship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behaviour in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion.⁴³

FOOTNOTES

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- 2 Ibid.
- 3 John Stuart Mill's discussion of causation as a principle of nature is in Book 6, Chapter 5 of A System of Logic, 8th ed. (London: Longman's, Green Co., Ltd., 1959).
- 4 John Stuart Mill, A System of Logic, p. 208.
- 5 Ibid., p. 210.
- 6 Ibid., p. 247.
- 7 There is a general discussion of this in John Stuart Mill, A System of Logic, Book 7.
- 8 Michael St. John Packe, The Life of John Stuart Mill (New York: Capricorn Books, 1970), pp. 56 - 59.
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- 10 Julian H. Franklin, review of Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, by Michael Oakeshott, in Journal of Philosophy, 19 December 1948, p. 813.
- 11 Michael Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p. 251.
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- 13 John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), p. 35.
- 14 Ibid., p. 37.
- 15 Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes, p. 259.
- 16 Ibid., p. 268.
- 17 Oakeshott, On Human Conduct (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 7.
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- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Oakeshott, "Rational Conduct," p. 88.
- 25 Ibid., p. 91.
- 26 Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, pp. 1 - 2.

- 27 Oakeshott's portrayal of the political conservative emerges in his essay "On Being Conservative," Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays, pp. 168 - 196.
- 28 Oakeshott, "On Being Conservative," p. 169.
- 29 Albert William Levi, A Study in the Social Philosophy of John Stuart Mill (Chicago: By the Author,; 1940), p. 82.
- 30 John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (Chicago: Henery Regnery Company, 1962), pp. 12 - 13.
- 31 John Stuart Mill, Principles of Political Economy, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 705.
- 32 Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., s.v. reprinted, "The Article, Education," by James Mill.
- 33 John Stuart Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, pp. 63 - 64.
- 34 Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes, p. 33.
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- 36 Ibid., p. 124.
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