

**AN AWKWARD RECTITUDE:
THE EVOLUTION OF WILLIAM HALE WHITE'S FICTION**

Lorraine Jocelyn Davies



Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy.

November 1994.

An Awkward Rectitude: the Evolution of William Hale White's Fiction

Lorraine Jocelyn Davies

Abstract

Mark Rutherford's work constitutes a highly individual group of novels written in the 1880's and 1890's. Though they have always been honoured critically, in practice they have been neglected. Often referred to, they have seldom been studied in detail and as a whole. The argument of this thesis is that the novels form a consistently developing study of a related group of issues, and that they involve a calculated innovation in the form of the novel. In other words, they constitute a whole. Rutherford's fiction has, on occasion, been patronized as clumsily conceived with flaws of structure and exposition, which has meant that whilst the work has been perceived as a good source of quotation and allusion, it has continued to be seen as naive. By detailed study of the texts, I hope to demonstrate that they deserve serious attention and that, in all cases, their strangeness and sudden changes in direction are the result of carefully considered choices on Hale White's part that are integral to the conception which governs each book. The range of his mind and concern with ideas mean that the novels need also to be set in the context of Hale White's non-fictional and even fugitive writings. He is an essayist of great force and distinction and I have drawn extensively on writings which both preceded and followed the novels in date.

To write novels at all was scarcely an expected enterprise for anyone with Hale White's origins in a dissenting household. In the introduction to the thesis I consider the route by which he came to fiction so late in his life. Chapter I considers the problems of the relationship between 'Mark Rutherford', Reuben Shapcott, and the prosperous, middle aged ex-Independent, Hale White.

The main body of this thesis presents an analysis of the six books as a continuing intellectual, emotional and moral exploration that begins with The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford. In chapter II I am concerned to show this first novel as a means by which Hale White writes his internal biography in fictional form establishing a gap between himself, the writer, and Mark Rutherford as character. The priority of feeling and idea over individualized character and event that Rutherford establishes in this first book, is qualified in Mark Rutherford's Deliverance where the narrative voice of Mark Rutherford is increasingly displaced by that of Hale White. In chapter III I argue that this new objectivity allows White to rewrite the inner story of Dissent as history in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane.

These earlier books take as their centre male figures and the reformulation of religious consciousness within secular terms. In the later novels, which have been even more neglected, Hale White deliberately refocuses his attention through female figures who approach these issues from the other direction: they are characters without strong religious convictions who need to discover in their lives the sense of order that the dissenting tradition had given. From Miriam's Schooling, the subject of chapter V, onwards, Rutherford's work presents women who are obliged to make serious moral choices. The two novellas, one about a female figure, the other about his most intensely devout figure, Michael Trevanion, form the hinge volume in Hale White's compositions. In Catharine Furze, the subject of chapter VI, the centrality of religious inheritance in the earlier novels is taken over by the strong charge of sexual desire and impassioned feeling which Rutherford both celebrates and anxiously seeks to place within a wider order of responsibility and social feeling. In Clara Hopgood, I argue in chapter VII, he finds a kind of solution to this problem in the comparison of two sisters, which means that this is not simply the last but the final novel.

If this reading is correct the novels, in sum, make a different meaning than if they are read singly and out of sequence. It also means that Hale White is, in many senses, a surprisingly experimental novelist, anticipating in significant ways such 20th century writers as D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.

CONTENTS

Preface		i
List of Abbreviations		ii
Introduction		1
Chapter 1	The Autobiographies of William Hale White and Mark Rutherford	10
Chapter 2	The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford	44
Chapter 3	Mark Rutherford's Deliverance	88
Chapter 4	The Revolution in Tanner's Lane	123
Chapter 5	Miriam's Schooling	170
Chapter 6	Catharine Furze	214
Chapter 7	Clara Hopgood	263
Conclusion		313
Appendix		322
Bibliography		326

Preface

I wish to acknowledge my debt to Jim Rand, my teacher and good friend, for introducing me to the work of Mark Rutherford and for his willingness to listen to and comment on my ideas. I thank Liz Tierney for reading parts of this thesis and for her unstinting support and encouragement throughout the past three years. Without the help of Cathy Rees and Barbara Smith I would never have mastered the intricacies of word-processing; even though hard-pressed with their own secretarial duties, Barbara and Cathy have always made time to sort out my muddles. I am indebted also to Lydia Moore for proof-reading the completed thesis. I wish to express special thanks to my supervisor, Brian Nellist, for his constant patience and support. Not only has Brian devoted much time to me but he has been a source of inspiration and motivation from the beginning of this research to the very end. Finally, I must thank my youngest daughter, Jennie Holmes, who has been a patient companion during many of the hours I have spent at my desk or in the library. When I was not sure that I would complete this thesis, Jennie was certain that I would - and told me so.

List of Abbreviations

<u>The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford: Dissenting Minister</u>	<u>Autobiography</u>
<u>Mark Rutherford's Deliverance: Being the Second Part of His Autobiography</u>	<u>Deliverance</u>
<u>The Revolution in Tanner's Lane</u>	<u>Revolution</u>
<u>Miriam's Schooling</u> the volume as a whole the novella	<u>Miriam</u> 'Miriam'
<u>Catharine Furze</u>	<u>Catharine</u>
<u>Clara Hopgood</u>	<u>Clara</u>
<u>John Bunyan</u>	<u>Bunyan</u>
<u>Pages from a Journal</u>	<u>Pages</u>
<u>More Pages from a Journal</u>	<u>More Pages</u>
<u>Last Pages from a Journal</u>	<u>Last Pages</u>
<u>Letters to Three Friends</u>	<u>Letters</u>
<u>The Early Life of Mark Rutherford (William Hale White), By Himself</u>	<u>Early Life</u>
<u>Ethic: Translated from the Latin of Benedict Spinoza</u>	<u>Ethic</u>

INTRODUCTION

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Aegean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.¹

In February 1895,² in a letter to his friend, Mrs Colenutt, William Hale White had this to say of 'modern' writing:

As to books, there is mercifully no need whatever to read anything new. We seem to be entering on another barren epoch in literature, and we must be thankful that we have lived through, or partly in, one of the most glorious periods of English poetry, philosophy and art. Excepting in the reign of Elizabeth, there has been nothing like the era from 1775 to 1895. Ruskin is now the last, and after him the deluge. To understand what we are coming to, you ought to borrow one of the widely-read novels. I don't mean the confessed trash, but one praised by 'culture'.³

The most important word in this extract in terms of understanding William Hale White as a man and a writer, is that final one, 'culture'. In a very real and painful sense Hale White felt himself to be caught between two opposing 'cultures', two different 'worlds'. The first, whose last breath expired with that of Ruskin, was founded for White in the spirit and speech and writing of men like John Bunyan, William Cobbett, Thomas Carlyle, Hale White's own father William

-
1. The Poems of Matthew Arnold, ed. by Miriam Allott, 2nd edn (London: Longman, 1987), 'Dover Beach', ll. 15-20, p. 255.
 2. This is the year that the final novel Clara Hopgood was completed.
 3. William Hale White, Letters to Three Friends (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), pp.71-2. Hereafter cited as Letters.

White and the preacher Caleb Morris. The second was represented by the 'deluge' of 'barren' literature that amounted to 'little better than an idle luxury' (Letters, p. 198), one that those who had to 'meet the doubts of the nineteenth century...suppress their tempestuous lusts...lift them above their petty cares, and...lead them heavenward!',⁴ could scarce afford. Hale White was 'brought up on the Bible' (Letters, pp. 176-7, author's emphasis). And yet it is not any sense of the Bible as containing absolute answers to the 'questions which most disturb us modern folk' that made him cling to its words for the whole of his life, but rather a recognition that its 'religion' lay in its method as much as its content, in the 'absolute, terrible purity ... the astonishing purity and nobility of the prophetic morality ... in the equally astonishing conception of a one God to whom justice and what we call right are dear' (Letters, p. 177). White believed fervently that human words might be invested with equal purity, nobility and morality. He knew, from his own experience of reading Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (1798), that it was not only through the Word of God that a soul might be 'saved'. There was a morality in the simple truth of Bunyan's prose that was truly akin to that of the Bible. For Hale White, the basis of any true 'culture' was necessarily that the written word should be the expression of beliefs and values seriously held at least by important groups in society. The 'merciful' release then that he pretends to gain from the discovery that there is nothing new worthy to be read, and his

4. Mark Rutherford, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford: Dissenting Minister, 1881 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), pp. 14-15. Hereafter cited as Autobiography.

'thankfulness' at having 'lived through, or partly in, one of the most glorious periods' of writing, is bitterly ironic. Never more than at the close of the 'doubtful' nineteenth century, when what 'we are coming to' could only seem to him a kind of moral and spiritual chaos, was there need of writers who could equal Bunyan and Wordsworth in seriousness. And yet, in dismissing contemporary literature, Hale White is careful to point out that it is not the 'confessed trash' that he condemns, as if one had at any epoch to expect a fair measure of that, but a kind of writing that resulted from what he saw as the growing prevalence of a particularly insidious turn of mind.

Of course, there can have been no period in history during which the cry that some 'Golden Age' was being superseded was not raised from some quarter. But Hale White's complaint comes not from any desire simply to stem the tide of time; he admits that a 'mere idealisation of the past' would be folly and that a 'child-like faith in the old creed' is no longer possible'.⁵ What concerns him is that in the clean sweep attempt to be free of the 'old creed' (as a system of religious faith, but also, and, as important for White, as a statement of shared moral and literary principles), it is too easy to overlook the fact that depth of feeling and intensity of mind might be lost along with the old restraints and dying conventions. White suggests that we merely 'flatter ourselves' in believing that we 'have secured a method and freedom of thought which will not permit

5. Mark Rutherford, 'Belief, Unbelief, Superstition', in Pages From a Journal; with other papers (London: Trubner, 1900), p. 86. Hereafter cited as Pages.

ourselves to be the victims of the absurdities of the Middle Ages'. 'Modern scepticism', he insists, is in reality 'nothing but stupidity and weakness'; what seems to be its cleverness, in truth, is no more than a disguising of the fact that, inevitably, 'truths have been lost, or at least have been submerged beneath it' (Pages, p. 86). Like Thomas Carlyle whom he greatly admired, White saw the past as the 'History of ... Great Men',⁶ principally of letters. What was worse for Hale White than the folly of the headlong dash to be free of the past, of the works of 'Great Men' like Bunyan, was the vanity of what was set in its place. The 'circulating library' ensured an increase in reading, but not primarily of Shakespeare, or Dr Johnson, or John Ruskin. Much modern writing, when it was not being silly was being far too clever. In The Early Life of Mark Rutherford, White quotes from a letter written to his father by John Ruskin, in the 1850's:

I never write with pleasure to myself, nor with purpose of getting praise to myself. I hate writing, and I know that what I do does not deserve high praise as literature; but I write to tell truths which I can't help crying out about, and I do enjoy being believed and being of use.⁷ (author's emphasis)

The idea, implicit in Ruskin's letter and in Hale White's criticism of 'new' writing as 'barren', that the benefit of authorship should extend beyond the writer, that what gratification there is to be gained from authorship ought to come from the satisfaction of having told a 'truth' that is of 'use' to others, or, to use George

6. Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History, 1841 (London: Ward & Lock, 1841), p. 3.

7. Mark Rutherford, The Early Life of Mark Rutherford (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), pp.8-9. Hereafter cited as Early Life.

Eliot's words, from a realisation of 'the moral qualities that contribute to literary excellence - patient diligence, a sense of the responsibility involved in publication, and an appreciation of the sacredness of the writer's art', rather than from the getting of 'pleasure' and 'praise' for oneself, is lost in the pursuit of the 'foolish vanity' of 'appearing' in print.⁸

The main criticism is not of the danger of a new Grub Street, however, but of a change in the condition of English 'culture'. The threat comprised what R. H. Hutton describes as a 'species of intellectual treadmill' whose only reward was the frustrating discovery that there was 'no mill turned after all, and that you are exhausting your intellectual feet on the ostensible steps called chapters in vain'.⁹ In a note included in More Pages from a Journal, Hale White sets forth what he believes is the 'glory' of the Bible:

There is but little thinking, or perhaps it is more correct to say but little reflection in the Bible. There is profound sympathy with a few truths, but ideas are not sought for their own sake.¹⁰

Hale White believed that the proliferation of ideas 'for their own sake' that Hutton writes of was far more dangerous than the silliest writing in creating a 'dilettante culture of ideas as an intellectual pleasure' (More Pages, p.260). In the final chapter of his study of John Bunyan, White admits that:

-
8. George Eliot, 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists', first published in Westminster Review, October 1856. Reprinted in George Eliot Selected Essays, Poems and other Writings (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 141-63 (p. 161).
 9. Spectator, 22nd February 1862, pp. 218-19.
 10. Mark Rutherford, More Pages from a Journal (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), p. 233. Hereafter cited as More Pages.

We read, even the best of us nowadays, in order that we may gain ideas, that we may 'cultivate the mind'. We do not read that we may strengthen the will or become more temperate, courageous or generous. The intellect undoubtedly has its claims, but notions have become idols. It is easier to get notions than to practise self-denial.¹¹

In place of 'profound sympathy with a few truths', readers sought out and were furnished with a profusion of 'ideas' with which to 'cultivate the mind'. Ideas became an end in themselves, or a means only to an 'intellectual pleasure' that in turn required yet more ideas to sustain it. This is what the 'culture' that Hale White resists in the letter to Mrs Colenutt amounts to, no more than a kind of 'idolatry' that overlooks the 'few truths' that might demand 'self-denial', in favour of the 'easy' worship of many 'ideas'. Far from having the Johnsonian power to 'strengthen the will', ideas, when valued as a kind of accomplishment merely, bred a confusion whose relativity ensures that nothing is ever resolved and that everything remains equally vague. Of infinitely more value than this endless 'reflection' is 'sympathy' and the 'few truths' necessary to differentiate right from wrong. Behind the irony of the letter to Mrs Colenutt, is a genuine fear that the kind of clarity he so admired in men like Bunyan and Ruskin and that formed the bedrock of the Bible was to be swamped by a flood of 'notions'.

In order to avoid what literature was 'coming to', it was necessary to return to the Biblical model:

Amos and Isaiah do not deal in ideas. Their strength lies in love and hatred, in the keenness of their division between right and

11. Mark Rutherford, John Bunyan, 1895 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1905), p.237. Hereafter cited as Bunyan.

wrong. They repeat the word of God the creator: chaotic sameness becomes diverse, the heavenly firmament mounts on high: there is light and there is darkness. (More Pages, pp.260-1)

There was need to reinstate 'division', to redefine the light and the dark, not as ideas but through experience of their 'diversity'. Bunyan had done this, in a life written not as story but as a struggle for faith, a pilgrimage of consciousness that could capture the inconsistency and immediacy of experience.

The way in which 'religion' and writing are inextricably linked for White becomes clear when we realize how close to that of 'modern literature' his criticism of 'modern religion' is. Writing in the Early Life, White suggests that:

Many mistakes may be pardoned in Puritanism in view of the earnestness with which it insists on the distinction between right and wrong. This is vital. In modern religion the path is flowery. The absence of difficulty is a sure sign that no good is being done...The great doctrines of Puritanism are also much nearer to the facts of actual experience than we suppose. (Early Life, pp.78-9)

The 'difficulty' then that is implicit in what Ruskin says of his writing, 'I never write with pleasure to myself...I hate writing...I write to tell truths which I can't help crying out about', and that Eliot and Hale White find wanting in 'silly' and 'idea-bound' modern literature, White finds missing from modern religion also. Its refusal to involve itself in the balancing of relative virtues and the determination not to shrink from 'difficulty' had been the life-blood of Puritanism, had made it vital, a dynamic creed. The criterion of faith was not passive assent to dogma, but truth to the 'facts of actual experience'. By the time of Hale White's boyhood this vitality had drained away, to leave in its place a bloodless acquiescence to form:

The old meeting-house held about 700 people, and was filled every Sunday. It was not the gifts of the minister, certainly after the days of my early childhood, which kept such a congregation steady. The reason it held together was a simple loyalty which prevents a soldier or sailor from mutinying, although the commanding officer may deserve no respect. (Early Life, p.16)

There is no 'earnestness' in this, either on the part of congregation or minister. The attendance is kept 'steady' not out of any sense of spiritual fellowship, but by the kind of thoughtless regimentation that so easily stands in for 'reason'. Where was the 'use' in such observance? What virtue was there in being loyal where respect was undeserved? Little wonder then that White's sympathies lay with the earlier epoch:

I sympathised more with the Calvinistic independency of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than with the modern christianity of church or chapel. (Early Life, p. 78)

Unlike the sceptical nineteenth, the faithful 'sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' provided conditions under which Dissent was compelled to be actively independent, to evolve certainly, but only so far as to keep faith with experience, in order to survive.

It is impossible not to see Hale White's rôle as writer as that of an antagonist, fighting the literary and intellectual assumptions of the late nineteenth century, with a conscious sense of responsibility towards the Puritan seriousness of his own tradition; yet also, as we have seen, constantly critical of the way in which that Puritanism had come to be represented in form as opposed to spirit. His earlier novels are about men born at the wrong time, they have the old seriousness of temperament but the beliefs through which they could express it

are no longer vitally held by anyone else, and they are left to accommodate themselves to this loss, with feelings close to despair, that they have nothing to believe in. For Hale White who, like George Eliot, could 'admire and cherish' the 'moral teaching of Jesus himself', but found the 'system of doctrines built upon the facts of his life...to be dishonourable to God and most pernicious in its influence on individual and social happiness',¹² and who was obliged to recognize that what people took from the Bible had become only its dogma, the novel looked like the best hope of 'rousing the nobler emotions, which make mankind desire the social right'.¹³ And yet, to do so much, the novel had to be more like the Bible in its purity of motivation, more like Pilgrim's Progress in its transcription of human experience, more like Ruskin's writing in its refusal to shun 'difficulty'.

12. The George Eliot Letters, ed. by G. S. Haight, 7 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), I, p. 128

13. The George Eliot Letters, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 7 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), VII, p. 44.

CHAPTER ONE

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF WILLIAM HALE WHITE AND MARK RUTHERFORD

When first I took my pen in hand,
Thus for to write, I did not understand
That I at all should make a little book
In such a mode; nay I had undertook
To make another, which, when almost done,
Before I was aware, I this begun.¹

In the opening chapter of his first work, a doubtful Mark Rutherford cites, as one of the two reasons why his particular autobiography might be 'worth preserving', the fact that it has 'some little historic value'. But 'some little' history, the documentation of the 'Dissenting minister of forty years ago' (even if 'a different being altogether from that of the present day'), does not suffice for long nor alone, as adequate pretext for such a life as his will be. Rutherford goes on to offer a second reason for allowing his manuscript to 'remain', one that is based on his own 'observation' that 'the mere knowing that other people have been tried as we have been tried is a consolation to us' (Autobiography, pp. 1-2). The movement here is from the general to the particular, from the relatively momentous to the potentially irrelevant, from 'history' as a continuous methodical record of public events to the commemoration of an individual insight, of personal experience collectively owned. The 'historic value' of the Autobiography, contained in the story of his 'race' and its social and religious organisation, is eventually of less account to Rutherford than is the authenticity of his own peculiar view. In the end depth matters more than breadth. It is the

1. John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress, 1678 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 43.

conviction that his autobiography will 'fit audience find, though few,² that 'justifies' the exposition of a life full of trial, 'a record of weaknesses and failures...the tale of a commonplace life, perplexed by many problems I have never solved; disturbed by many difficulties I have never surmounted; and blotted by ignoble concessions which are a constant regret' (Autobiography, p.1). The wider historical context is never abandoned, its position in time remains a vital consideration in all of Rutherford's writing, but always as a background to the personal.

In the preface to later editions of his translation of Spinoza's Ethic,³ first published in 1883, two years after the Autobiography, William Hale White refers to the Treatise on the correction of the Understanding defining its 'main drift and purpose' as the promotion of 'contentment, satisfaction, peace of mind':

in other words, the end is practical and ethical, as it always is with Spinoza. This peace of mind is to be obtained by a knowledge of nature or of individual things, which leads us to the contemplation of a fixed order or of God. The mind undertakes this quest, not as a task, but because it is its native office.⁴

From a 'knowledge of nature or of individual things' we might be led to the 'contemplation of a fixed order or of God'. Hale White shows how Spinoza endorses just that sort of 'practical and ethical' adjustment that Mark Rutherford instinctively makes in the first paragraphs of the Autobiography, where he leaves its 'history' behind the better to realize the 'peace of mind', what he calls the

-
2. Milton: Paradise Lost, ed. by Alastair Fowler (London: Longman, 1987), Book VII, l. 31.
 3. Benedict Spinoza, Ethic: Translated from the Latin of Benedict Spinoza, 4th edn. revised and corrected (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), trans. W. Hale White, revised by Amelia Hutchinson Stirling M.A. Hereafter cited as Ethic.
 4. Ethic, p.xli.

'consolation', in 'knowing that other people have been tried as we have been tried'. Rutherford confesses that:

Death has always been a terror to me, at times, nay generally, religion and philosophy have been altogether unavailing to mitigate the terror in any way. But it has been a comfort to me to reflect that whatever death may be, it is the inheritance of the whole human race; that I am not singled out, but shall merely have to pass through what the weakest have had to pass through before me. (Autobiography, p.2)

The 'fixed order' that Rutherford unwittingly identifies here, the reflection that death comes to us all and that even the weakest 'pass through' it, may not be a joyful one but it does serve to 'mitigate' (where religion and philosophy have proven useless), his 'terror'. The 'comfort' lies not in the discovery of any resolution that can dispel his dread but rather in the quietening effect of intellect upon emotion; in what Spinoza calls 'contemplation', the involvement of the mind in its 'native office'.

In the first paragraph of the Autobiography Rutherford himself feels obliged to voice the question that he feels 'many people' will be compelled to ask in response to his life, 'Of what use is it...to present to the world what is mainly a record of weaknesses and failures?'. By the close of the third paragraph the catalogue of personal failings that had seemed to disqualify him from authorship, actually constitutes the impetus to proceed. His Autobiography does indeed go on to reveal Mark Rutherford as uniquely qualified to render what Peter Allen implies amounts to a scientific or surgical examination of the 'anatomy of a failure'.⁵ And it is this same 'precision' of exposition that prompts Wilfred Stone, in considering the reader's response to Rutherford's life, to assert that the veracity

5. Peter Allen, 'Mark Rutherford The Anatomy of a Failure', in The View from the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers and Society, ed. P. T. Philips (Canada: Macmillan, 1978), 143-159. Hereafter cited as Allen.

of its 'agony' is such that we 'instinctively' apprehend it.⁶ These are strong claims for the truth of the Autobiography.

But Mark Rutherford is a fiction. The true author of The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, is the translator of Spinoza, William Hale White. Though it is certainly true that the Autobiography incorporates much of Hale White's own experience, Mark Rutherford is not, as E. A. Baker claims, 'the double of his creator'.⁷ Indeed to read him as such, even with 'certain reservations', as Baker directs, is to deny a substantial part of the work's power which is revealed only when we understand why Hale White was obliged to speak through someone so 'unlike' himself. The apparent circumstances of these two lives coincide only briefly at the beginning of the first volume, where, like White, Rutherford trains for the ministry (a 'calling' that each describes as being foisted upon him by an ambitious mother). But Rutherford's resultant 'commonplace' struggle to survive and to keep faith with his duty as a preacher, has no apparent precedent in White who, in a cause célèbre, was expelled from New College for heresy amidst a storm of controversy that drew to his defence eminent figures like Charles Kingsley and F.D.Maurice. Thereafter Hale White abandoned the ministry almost entirely to pursue a career in the civil service.

Wilfred H. Stone's exposition of the differences between Rutherford and Hale White is worth quoting at length in view of the care he takes in the delineation of the 'external facts' of Hale White's 'outer life':

Hale White never suffered seriously from material want; his father was a Bedford bookseller and a leader in public affairs and, though

-
6. Wilfred H. Stone, 'The Confessional Fiction of Mark Rutherford', University of Toronto Quarterly, 23 (1953-4), 35-57 (p. 37). Hereafter cited as Stone.
7. E. A. Baker, 'Mark Rutherford and Others' in The History of the English Novel, 10 vols (London: Riverside Press, 1938) IX, 97-121 (p. 97).

he was for a time deeply in debt, his family knew only the barest fringes of poverty and knew them for only a brief period. Hale White himself managed to maintain a solidly respectable middle-class income and position throughout his life. In the Autobiography and The Revolution in Tanner's Lane we get vivid pictures of the demoralising effects of unemployment and the pain of having a 'Damn your eyes' be the response to an application for work; but the facts seem to be that Hale White was out of work for only a few months in 1852 and that he spent much of his time vacationing with friends near the Isle of Wight. He was employed for most of his active life at the Admiralty and rose, just two years before his books began to appear, to the important position of Assistant Director of Contracts. In this position he never earned less than £300 and, after his promotion in 1879, considerably more. Nor can his spiritual maladies be attributed to that common Victorian source of trouble, hostility towards his father; William White senior was both a kind and an indulgent parent and an understanding friend. In fact, Hale White's outer life followed, in its main outlines, that of a comfortable, well-adjusted, successful middle-class Victorian. He was loved and respected by his own children; his work as a civil servant was given recognition and reward; he had the continual support and affection of his father; he was never without close friends; he had the leisure and means to take frequent trips to the continent and holidays in England; he was throughout his life physically robust. (Stone, p. 37)

For all of the Autobiography, and most of Mark Rutherford's Deliverance,⁸ Mark Rutherford is almost entirely alone and singularly unsuccessful at whatever he attempts. Strictly speaking then, the Autobiography and Deliverance ought to be referred to as novels, as works of fiction. And yet it is impossible to deny the 'truth' that Wilfred Stone identifies, or to escape the sense William Dean Howells notes, that:

When you have read the books you feel that you have witnessed the career of a man as you might have witnessed it in the world and not in a book.⁹

-
8. Mark Rutherford, Mark Rutherford's Deliverance; Being the Second Part of His Autobiography, 1885 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936). Hereafter cited as Deliverance.
 9. Gerry H. Brookes, 'Fictional Forms in William Hale White's Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverance', Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly, 9, (1986), 247-268 (p. 247). Hereafter cited as Brookes.

There is something of 'real life' in Rutherford's autobiography that has to do with more than its author's skill at verisimilitude or with the inevitable inclusion of 'real' experience in fiction. Whether we think, then, of these volumes as 'amorphous fictionalized autobiography' (Brookes, p. 247), as autobiography 'under a semi-transparent disguise' (Early Life, p. 5), or as 'dramatising a typical experience',¹⁰ it is clear that, even if they are not 'straightforward' autobiography, then neither are they fictions in any simple sense.

When his old and intimate friend, Mrs Colenutt, enquired of William Hale White about the authorship of The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, he sent a sharp reply:

It is very good of you to take an interest in anything you imagine to be mine. I should like to know what induces such an imagination? I have never owned the book you name, and should be quite justified in denying its authorship...Tell --, not as a message from me but as one from yourself, that you understand I disclaim it and that he had better not say a word to me about it.
(Letters, pp. 10-11, author's emphases)

This must be as near as it is possible to come to downright lying without actually telling an untruth. White's evasiveness is the more disturbing when we consider that only a short while before he had written to the same friend of his great regard for straightforwardness. In a letter dated April 1882, Hale White praises Froude's Reminiscences of Carlyle (1881), in these terms:

Carlyle was so thoroughly truthful that we may be sure he would never assume a self not his own, even in the presence of his orthodox mother. (Letters, p. 7)

10. Basil Willey, 'Mark Rutherford' in More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 186-247, (p. 213). Hereafter cited as Willey.

The tribute is a dual one, to Froude as much as to Carlyle, to the former's 'shattering frankness'¹¹ in representing the life as much as to the latter's uncompromising honesty in the living of it. Later, writing in the Early Life of his father, White recalls his exemplary honesty. William White senior declared that:

If the truth is of serious importance to us we dare not obstruct it by phrase-making: we are compelled to be as direct as our inherited feebleness will permit. The cannon ball's path is near to a straight line in proportion to its velocity. 'My boy,' my father once said to me, 'if you write anything you consider particularly fine, strike it out.' (pp. 30-1)

Excepting his father, Thomas Carlyle was perhaps the man that Hale White most revered. Carlyle was too 'thoroughly truthful' to adopt a disguise. William White dare not obstruct the truth by 'phrase-making' or to produce a 'fine' effect. It is difficult to reconcile this genuine respect for the honesty and directness of Carlyle and his father, both as men and as writers, with the disingenuousness of the 'denial' of the Autobiography. It is more difficult still to realize that Hale White's own wife did not know until nearly ten years after its publication (by which time she was blind and could not read it), that her husband was the author of Rutherford's first work (Stone, p. 43). And if Carlyle was to be commended for refusing to 'assume a self not his own', how then could Hale White possibly 'justify' the double subterfuge he quite deliberately employs in the Autobiography?

The problem to which Hale White's recourse to and denial of Mark Rutherford bears witness was one that continued to confound him until the close of his life. At seventy-six he was still asking the same question implicitly voiced, through Rutherford, at fifty: How was one faithfully to represent one's own life

11. The Oxford Companion to English Literature, ed. by Margaret Drabble, 5th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 372.

in autobiography? The enduring complexity and persistence of this dilemma is the subject of a letter written to Miss Edwards in 1907:

Mr Harrison's advice about writing your own life may be good but the difficulty is to be faithful without saying what may give pain. If you soften things down the value of autobiography is destroyed. If you try to avoid the danger by long postponement of publication, much of the interest will disappear. Then again it is impossible, for me at least, not being gifted with Rousseau's shamelessness - to speak the truth about one's self. It is exactly what I cannot bring myself to disclose which would not be worthless. What is the use of recording the commonplace experiences which everybody knows? Besides, a record of these only would not only be inexpressive: it would mislead. So, although I have been asked to write my own life, I have decided it cannot be done. I am not sorry. I am base enough to acknowledge that one reason for my indifference is that I should get nothing out of it, for of course it must be posthumous, and as to the world I am not so vain as to suppose its course would be changed by my self-revelation as a warning or example. It has Moses and the Prophets.¹²

There are several comments here that point to the reason why the same man who praised directness and plain-speaking as virtues without peer, could submit to publish 'a good deal' of his life 'under a semi-transparent disguise' with much added that was 'entirely fictitious' (Early Life, p. 5). For Hale White 'faithful' autobiography has an intrinsic 'value', it is of 'worth'. The true 'value' of autobiography is, for him, personal and not primarily historical; its 'worth' proportionate to the immediacy of its appeal. Postpone publication too long and the 'interest' of the story will diminish, the questions out of which it was conceived will have been superseded. Resist the 'hardness' of autobiography (its exposure of unpalatable truths) and its value is 'destroyed'; by a perverse, if comprehensible 'law', what is most difficult to 'disclose' will be precisely what is of most worth. To achieve these aims directly, would require the

12. Unpublished letter, the original of which is in the Shorter Correspondence, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, 11190-07. See appendix.

'shamelessness' of a Rousseau. By his own admission Hale White was not so 'gifted'.

In his Memories of Mark Rutherford, W. Robertson Nicholl gives an account of his (Nicholl's) discovery and announcement of the real author of the Autobiography. But Nicholl goes on to disclose a 'strange fact':

For long I was firmly persuaded that I had been the first to pierce the thin veil which shrouded Mark Rutherford's personality. He was of the same opinion and was by no means pleased when the announcement was made. But not long ago I had occasion to turn up the Westminster Review for July 1883. The periodical was published by Trubner, and Hale White, in his youth, had some connection with it. In the philosophical reviews published at the end, the authorship of which I do not know, I find the following sentence: 'Not long ago Mr. Hale White published a remarkable little book, which attracted very much less attention than it deserved, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford Dissenting Minister. He now comes before the public with a translation of Spinoza's Ethic. In Mark Rutherford Mr. White discloses not only a power of treatment of a singularly sincere and sympathetic character, but a very good style.' So the mystery almost from the first was no mystery, only there were very few who cared in the least to solve it.¹³

That there were 'very few who cared in the least to solve' the 'mystery' of the Autobiography could not have been due to the book's unpopularity (as the many editions prove), but had rather to do with its being read predominantly in the same spirit in which it was written - as a convincing representation of a life, one with which it was desired that the reader might find cause to identify to a greater or lesser degree. The 'mystery' was not only not a 'mystery', it was never intended to be one. The Autobiography was written, whether with unreasonable naivety or not, with the expectation that it would appeal to only a very select audience, though not one that would have reason to 'turn up the Westminster

13. W. Robertson Nicholl, Memories of Mark Rutherford, 1924 (London: Fisher Unwin: [n.d.]), pp.14-16.

Review for July 1883'. The 'few' that the author of the Autobiography had in mind when he had finished the work was one that would gain satisfaction from precisely what was not enigmatic about the book.

Though Hale White did not 'own' the book generally, neither did he totally deny it; he confided its authorship to G. J. Holyoake and to the Scottish philosopher James Hutchinson Stirling. He was, without doubt, extremely reluctant to have his authorship widely recognized, but his reasons were not wholly evasive. In her biography of Hale White, Catherine Macdonald Maclean explains that:

Although Hale entrusted his secret to one or two of those who were not closely connected with his family life, he was very unwilling that friends who were intimate with his family, like the Colenutts, or the various members of his family, should know him to be the author, lest anything in the autobiographical passages might vex or jar them.¹⁴

Maclean's attempt at tactfulness obscures what anyone who has read the Autobiography and who knows even a little about Hale White's background, must recognize. Far from 'vexing' them, or 'jarring' upon them, the discovery of the 'autobiographical passages' in the Autobiography would have absolutely astounded Hale White's family and close friends. In her eagerness to attribute to Hale White only the purest motives in the suppression of his authorship, Maclean not only misrepresents him but does the Autobiography a great disservice too. Though the protection of his family and friends would have been a strong consideration, at least part of the reason why he resisted identification with Rutherford must have been because to have done so would have been personally not just painful, but humiliating ('It is exactly what I cannot bring myself to

14. Catherine Macdonald Maclean, Mark Rutherford: A Biography of William Hale White (London: Macdonald, 1955), p.222.

disclose which would not be worthless'). To fail to see this is to deny much that makes the Autobiography unique, and its confessional element so moving. There is nothing in the literature of this period quite like Rutherford's first work. James Antony Froude's The Nemesis of Faith (1849) comes closest perhaps, and, significantly, 'suffered from similar confusion in its readers' minds about the true identity of its protagonist' (Brookes, p. 248). Froude was compelled eventually to put an end to speculation by including a note in his text making clear that his hero's experience was not his own. That Hale White never did this, that in time he actively allowed the confusion (the journals are autographed Mark Rutherford), must say something about the degree to which, eventually, he was obliged, personally and artistically, to admit to his synonymity with Rutherford.

It is in William Dean Howells' repeated use of the word 'witnessed' that our best clue to the success of Hale White's 'fiction' as autobiographical 'fact' lies. Peter Allen takes us a step closer to the truth when he claims that, in Rutherford, Hale White captures 'the emotional reality, the human meaning, of a significant form of Victorian social experience' (Allen, p. 159). But, like Gamini Salgado, who says of the Autobiography that, though it 'may be accurate in a general sense', as a 'detailed factual record of one man's life' it is not 'true',¹⁵ Allen seems to confuse the 'commonplace' with the 'general'. In Rutherford, Hale White does more than generalize, he creates more than a type, presents more than a 'form of Victorian social experience'. Hale White is prepared for Rutherford to own that his life is 'commonplace', Rutherford admits that his

15. Gamini Salgado, 'The Rhetoric of Sincerity: The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford as Fiction' in Renaissance and Modern Essays presented to Vivian de Sola Pinto in celebration of his seventieth birthday, ed. by G. R. Hibbard (London: Routledge, 1966), 159-168 (p. 161).

sufferings are not 'special and peculiar', but to do so is not, in his terms, to deny their specificity, nor to say that they are not felt as unique. The famous opening sentence to Tolstoy's Anna Karenina might help to show where Allen and Salgado misconceive:

All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.¹⁶

Happiness claims kin, by nature it is gregarious, this is the resemblance that Tolstoy notes in all 'happy families'. Conversely, there is something in the very constitution of unhappiness that isolates; discontent, turning in upon itself, shuns all identification. Rutherford bears witness to this imposed self-isolation in Hale White, a man whose 'unique' unhappiness he could not hope to justify in terms of the 'external facts' and 'outer life' that Wilfred Stone details.

In the Autobiography the difference in external circumstances between Rutherford and White matters less than their interior coincidence. Paradoxically, the fiction is made necessary in terms of the problem of conveying the internal truth of a life. How could Hale White, as a 'comfortable, well-adjusted, successful middle-class Victorian' gentleman - one 'loved and respected by his own children', blessed with the 'continual support and affection of his father', given 'recognition and reward' by his employers, and 'never without close friends' (Stone, p. 37) - lay claim to the kind of suffering experienced by a Mark Rutherford, one totally bereft of the benefits that White enjoyed, and to whom such advantages would have seemed a guarantee of happiness? The probable causes for Mark Rutherford's discontent are as clear as day. The external details of Hale White's life could not but render any straightforward account of his

16. Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina, 1874-6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 1.

despair ironic. The prosperous man as emotional malcontent could have only a spurious interest for the reader, how could such a one offer 'consolation' or hope to convince the reader that he knew how it felt to 'have been tried [as they had] been tried'? (Autobiography, p. 2).

Writing to Miss Partridge on 3rd March 1895, Hale White makes the following comments:

I understand that you are reading Virgil. I cannot tell you what I feel about him. No relationship is certainly so tender and so intimate. He has gone closer to me than any other man living or dead, and his pathos is all the more affecting because it is masked by a remote and antique story. It may be, and is indeed often the fact - witness Milton's 'Epitaphium Damonis' - that the more intricate the folds of drapery, the more intense is the life underneath. What is too much a part of ourselves to be spoken directly may be said obliquely by Dido or Thyrsis or put in the form of a myth. Virgil, too, is so modern. His hopes, his despairs are those of to-day, more so than any of the authors of to-day, at any rate, can give expression. (Letters, pp. 152-3)

'Masked by a remote and antique story', the Autobiography provides yet the most 'expressive' means of conveying what is 'too much a part' of its author to be 'spoken directly'. The primary obstacle to be overcome by any autobiographer for whom sincerity matters more than self-display, is subjectivity. The only way that Hale White could come at his own autobiography - a life that, in spite of success, of father, family, and friends, was both afflicted by doubt and 'monomania' and full of self-contempt that it should give in to such weakness - was through Rutherford, one in whom such failings might at least be understood if not forgiven. In Rutherford, Hale White leaves all those things that ought to have made him happy, but were in truth no help against the real inner sense of despair he battled against, behind. Through the metaphor of Mark Rutherford, Hale White conveys the truth about himself in a way that what G. H. Brookes calls 'pure autobiography' (Brookes, p. 248), could not so powerfully nor so

convincingly manage. Rutherford has no friends, no family, his life is even more nomadic and solitary than is that of the character whose influence was more enduring and profound than any other for Hale White, Bunyan's Pilgrim. The degree to which Rutherford's isolation exceeds even that of Christian adds to the sense of his loneliness and the restlessness of his journeying, to the pathos of his brief, unsatisfactory encounters with others, whilst at the same time, far from being hyperbolic, it accurately conveys the essential truth of what 'progress' felt like for an advanced free-thinker like Hale White, compelled continually to move intellectually and spiritually on, even though that might mean leaving people like his father behind.

The thought upon which Mark Rutherford is finally prepared to commend the Autobiography to its literary fate is this:

So it is not impossible that some few whose experience has been like mine may, by my example, be freed from that sense of solitude which they find so depressing. (p. 2)

What we are given in Hale White's 'creation' of Mark Rutherford, and in Rutherford's agonizingly inclusive transcription of his life, is an example, par excellence, of the mind pursuing what Spinoza calls its 'native office' (Ethic, p.xli). 'It is not impossible' that the exercise of the mind (in the act of writing and again in reading), might bring consolation, even to the most dreadful of existences. From the first paragraphs of the Autobiography (actually composed after the body of the work was achieved, in other words, after the 'contemplation' that it comprises), Rutherford implicitly reveals a sense of some 'fixed order' and (though yet intuitively), the means by which it might be discovered. Rutherford is not merely a vehicle for Hale White's pain and despair, he is the means by which that distress is mitigated.

There is though another reason why the 'differences' between the outer lives of Hale White and Mark Rutherford ought not to detract from our apprehension of the fundamental truthfulness of the Autobiography. Hale White professed little sympathy with the 'assertion of individuality':

As we move higher, personality becomes of less consequence. We do not live in the 'I', but in truths. (More Pages, p. 232)

He claimed that 'peace' (one of the benefits that Spinoza cites as a product of 'contemplation'), lay 'beyond the notion of personality':

Nothing of any value is bound up with it: it is an illusion. (More Pages, p. 236)

In the Autobiography Rutherford finds comfort in the thought that as human beings we share a common 'inheritance', that we are not 'singled out' (Autobiography, p. 2) to endure what it will be beyond our strength to bear. For Hale White, the 'truth' about human being, the element that unites us in our diversity, lies less in the petty 'I' that at times might faint and despair, than in something larger than the self, something that continually reasserts itself in Rutherford's writing:

In every man there is something of the Universal Spirit, strangely limited by that which is finite and personal, but still there. Occasionally it makes itself known in a word, look, or gesture, and then he becomes one with the stars and sea. (More Pages, p. 240)

This spirit is evident in the endurance of Zachariah Coleman, in the untutored wisdom of Mrs Bellamy or Mrs Caffyn, in the many examples of willing selflessness that characters like the "ordinary woman" (Deliverance, p. 128) Mrs Taylor represents, and, supremely, Clara Hopgood, exhibits. It is there too in the dull child of Ellen Butts, Marie, who finds 'what she is born to do' (Deliverance, p. 129), and is transformed, and in the 'actual joy' that Mark Rutherford himself briefly realizes, against all odds, at the close of Deliverance (p. 133). In this sense

the Autobiography was not written merely to express the limitation and potential of one life, but rather to exemplify the endurance in every man and woman of the 'universal'. The Autobiography was written, to borrow John Ruskin's words, 'to tell truths' which Hale White could not 'help crying out about'. William Hale White had no need to invent Mark Rutherford; even before his literary conception, the eponymous author of the Autobiography was only too intimately known to his creator.

We have to distinguish between the events and shape of the life therefore and the voice that speaks in it for certain ideas and feelings. In the Autobiography and Deliverance, 'Mark Rutherford' acts for Hale White more or less as 'George Eliot' does for Marian Evans: there is no significant discrepancy of thought or feeling or inner experience between the two. The situation is different though in the third novel, The Revolution in Tanner's Lane.¹⁷ From having been a conscious though anonymous mouthpiece for his author, Rutherford's voice becomes subsumed in that of Hale White as novelist. It is almost as though, caught up by the momentum of the writing, White forgot the fiction of the name. Perhaps, in moving from 'veiled' autobiography to what Rutherford insists on calling 'biography' and 'history',¹⁸ White felt that there was no longer any pressing need to protect his own identity. The Revolution is further from, though still founded upon, Hale White's personal life. But its being less explicitly his own story means that White no longer needs Rutherford, with his peculiar personal history, to justify the consciousness represented. In Zachariah Coleman too, we

-
17. Mark Rutherford, The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, 1887 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936). Hereafter cited as the Revolution.
18. Mark Rutherford, Miriam's Schooling, 1890 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 119. Hereafter cited as Miriam in reference to the complete volume, and 'Miriam's Schooling' in reference to the novella.

are presented with a character much more likeable, and more recognisably noble (and thus more comfortable to be identified with), than is the protagonist of the Autobiography.

The Revolution was published in 1887, just a year before the first two novels were collected in one volume as The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverance.¹⁹ To this volume was added: 'A Mysterious Portrait', a short story inserted at the end of the Autobiography; and, at the close of the Deliverance, 'Notes on the Book of Job', a commentary on the biblical text; and 'Principles', a philosophic essay. The later novels develop out of the idea of these occasional writings which, whatever their status, scarcely prepare us for the enormous retrospective increase in the literary ambitions attributed to the author of the Autobiography. It is as if, the confessional, disguised autobiography giving way to a 'genuine' novel, there developed an unpremeditated conflict between the consciousness that Hale White could legitimately claim for Rutherford and the one implicit in the additions. However, if this was unpremeditated, it was not entirely accidental. As the work becomes more than confessional, and, as early as Deliverance, begins to concern itself with self-persuasion, of the necessity for resignation for example, the two registers become essential to the writing. Even 'Principles' and 'Notes on the Book of Job', though they are in no sense out of place beside the narrative of the Autobiography and Deliverance, are in a decidedly different key. They complement the original work but do not blend with it.

19. Mark Rutherford, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverance (London: Trubner, 1888). Hereafter cited as Autobiography and Deliverance.

If it could be said that the additions to the Autobiography and Deliverance signify a desire, on Hale White's part, to add some supplementary comment or intellectual weight to Rutherford's 'Life', or to make it the basis of a representative wisdom (an important idea for him), then in Miriam's Schooling this desire becomes primary. Miriam opens with three short pieces, 'Gideon', 'Samuel' and 'Saul'. Here the positioning transforms commentary into context, altering the tone when we come to the subsequent narratives, unlike the Autobiography and Deliverance, where their positioning marks them apart as appendages (important but secondary) to the narratives.

The title story of this fourth volume, 'Miriam's Schooling', is called by Rutherford a 'biography':

A man now old and nearing his end is known to Miriam's biographer. ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 119)

The 'man now old' is presumably Hale White himself, the actual author, and the 'biographer' the fictional Rutherford. To increase the complexity, whilst he seems confident enough in the Autobiography that the reader will not question its genre, from the Deliverance onwards Rutherford jealously shuns the name of novelist, insisting that he is an 'historian' and 'biographer'. The title of the first edition of the second volume: Mark Rutherford's Deliverance; Being the second part of His Autobiography, leaves the reader with no excuse for confusion on the matter of form. To be quite sure the narrative itself reiterates what the title states, 'this is an autobiography, and not a novel' (Deliverance, pp. 55-6). One of the signs of this 'truth' is inconsistency, something that it is claimed that a novel cannot do justice to. Characters are presented as unconvincing because they are 'real'; '[Miss Leroy] was a person whom nobody could have created in writing a novel, because she was so inconsistent' (Deliverance, p. 37). From standing behind

Rutherford, so to speak, in the Autobiography, White moves alongside him in the Deliverance. This is the beginning of a move which will result in the supersession of Reuben Shapcott, whose contributions diminish in length and importance after the Deliverance. In place of Shapcott's objective editorial commentary comes first the 'learned' additions of the Autobiography and Deliverance which give the reader a different relation to Rutherford from his own confessions, and later the merging of White's with Rutherford's voice in Catharine Furze²⁰ and Clara Hopgood²¹.

Hale White's fiction is much more than confessional then. If the sole purpose of the fiction were to re-member and confess, if the writing was intended chiefly as a purgative, then the sobriquet would have sufficed in its original form. But the volumes as they emerge reveal a relentless movement away from confession as an end in itself. The later novels are emphatically not works of personal memory or of psychological stasis. Though their initial impetus comes from a profound sense of the past and tradition, the books push on all the time, imagining and analysing situations and questions beyond (though always related to) the narrow compass of the Autobiography and Deliverance.

'Self-confession' is crucial to the first two works, and it is a vital component of the subsequent writing, but it soon becomes secondary. Having said this though, there is cause to believe that, to begin with at least, self-confession was White's main concern, and that he intended the Autobiography to be his first and last foray into 'story' writing. It is at this initial point that Dr Stone's

-
20. Mark Rutherford, Catharine Furze, 1893 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, [n.d.]). Hereafter cited as Catharine.
21. Mark Rutherford, Clara Hopgood, 1896 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907). Hereafter cited as Clara.

argument is most convincing. White was fifty when the first novel was published.²² He had a demanding job at the Admiralty, several children to support, and an invalid wife who was nearing death after a prolonged illness. Far from being pleasurable or even diversionary, the idea alone of adding the composition of a novel to an already punishingly heavy workload,²³ must have seemed like a species of self-torture. The fact that White waited so long and chose such an unpropitious moment to embark upon his first work of 'fiction', one so heavily weighted with his own 'autobiography', suggests that the push came more from some intimate, personal need than any thirst for literary notoriety.

White despised what he described as the 'dilettante culture of ideas as an intellectual pleasure' (More Pages, p. 260), that he felt much of the 'literature' of his own day amounted to. The Autobiography in particular, but the Deliverance also, make far from pleasurable reading: there is little joy in them, and when they are not painful they are embarrassingly self-denigratory or self-congratulating. They have the character of the 'spiritual' journal with which White would have been completely familiar and at ease. Though he would have been vehemently opposed to contributing to an increase in 'easy' reading, White could 'justify', personally and theologically, the production of a short 'confessional' work. And yet, in spite of himself, it seems, or as a result of the differentiation of his and Rutherford's voice, the one volume enforced on him the production of a second, though, as the second edition shows, their nominal

-
22. By this age Thomas Hardy had completed all but Tess of the d'Urbevilles and Jude the Obscure of his major novels.
23. In addition to his work at the Admiralty, White contributed weekly articles to The Birmingham Post and Journal from 1866 to 1880, and The Norfolk News from 1872 to 1883, often sitting up all night to complete them.

distinction did not last for long. After the Autobiography confession is no longer the exclusive 'theme', the writing of the Deliverance signifies a desire not merely to represent a 'victim' but to delineate a 'progress'.

Only part of the confessional urge that the novels implicitly divulge is to do with purgation or self-castigation. White is too inquisitive, too strict, to settle for what would seem the mere indulgence of his own penitence, one might add too economical and succinct a writer, to allow himself the luxury of six volumes solely to purge himself, to show one particular (religious) form of resignation and progress. More compelling than this circumstantial evidence, though, there is a statement at the close of the final chapter of the first edition of the Autobiography, significantly omitted from the second and all subsequent editions, that shows clearly that White thought that he was adding the finishing moral touches to what he believed would be the one 'fiction' that the world would have from him:

I will just add what my opinion of Rutherford was up to this point in his life. He was emphatically a child of his time. He was perpetually tormented by the presentation of difficulties which he could not resolve, and he could not put them on one side. The old order of things had gone, and a new order of things had not arisen. Unfortunately, too, for him, these difficulties were not merely speculative, to be taken up and put aside at pleasure. They haunted his whole existence, and prevented his enjoyment of it. The thought of our mortality, of the cessation in vacancy of the noblest men and women, preyed upon him incessantly, and seemed to rob him of a great deal of the natural interest which most men feel in human affairs. So too with the thought of God. It was his main business to wonder and despair over it. He could not abandon it and say, 'It does not concern me', and yet he never obtained any certainty about it; nor could he ever in the least degree reconcile what he thought he ought to believe about God with the actual and apparently cruel facts of nature. Again I say he was the child of his time, of a time of transition, of a time when the earth under our

feet rocks and the foundations of everything are shaken, of a time of intense misery to all those who pine to be assured.²⁴

This authoritative and apparently objective statement, delivered as a coda to the subjective life, urges us to accept (what no doubt was true at that point), that the representation of a 'child of [the] time' and the admission of its distinctive struggles were the chief aim of the Autobiography and that, this being achieved, there remained nothing more that could or would be said. In a letter that White wrote to George Jacob Holyoake - 'one of the few who knew him as an author in this early period' - he again states his purpose in writing the Autobiography as being to present Mark Rutherford as a 'victim of the century' (Stone, p. 44). The omission of this page was presumably the result of the subsequent novels; the Revolution was published in 1887, a year before the Autobiography and Deliverance were revised and collected as one volume and the passage above omitted. Though the writing of the Autobiography and Deliverance satisfied White's need for self-confession, in so doing it exposed another need, more intellectual than confessional, to make larger sense of the experience that Rutherford represents. The editorial comment that seemed so apt when White had intended to lay down his 'fiction' pen, turns out to seem too final to be allowed to stand in the light of the different and continued struggles that the later fiction presents.

The effects that the omitted passage describe as being peculiar to a precise point in time - perpetual torment, irresolution, obsession with mortality, uncertainty, misery - far from being buried with the past, actually persist into the

24. William Hale White, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverance: edited by his friend Reuben Shapcott, introduction by Don Cupitt (London: Libris, 1988), pp. 119-20.

author's present. They will not be purged at a stroke, either personally, in a confessional novel, or universally, in real life, and the 'child' of transition survives only to become the man who discovers that the so-called new 'foundations' are no less shaky for being different. This recognition seems to have been something that White did not wholly calculate when he penned Shapcott's conclusion to the first edition of the Autobiography. Ironically, the lesson that he imposes on some of his characters (Miriam and Catharine in particular), that is of the danger of too certain a faith in the autonomy of the will, Hale White has to learn here. Out of the 'mistaken' conclusion of the Autobiography, a mistake compounded of a certain arrogance, it is true, but also, as for Miriam and Catharine, of integrity too, comes an unexpected growth. It becomes clear that this is not the end of the 'story', that more need be written, had to be written.

What happens, literally, in the time between the completion of the Autobiography (1881) and Deliverance (1885), and their amalgamation as one volume in 1888, is that, in the midst of a household undergoing the most desperate human trauma, Hale White not only writes the Revolution, he completes his translation of Spinoza's Ethic. Artistically, the composition of the new fictional work signifies an unpremeditated implicit momentum within the writing that asserts itself even in defiance of personal suffering and the kind of desired closure that the omitted passage implies, and that might be expected from writing whose intention is solely confessional. More than this though, the conjunction of the Revolution and the Ethic reveals how Hale White's writing is much more than the consequence of his century and his connection or disconnection with the Bunyan Meeting. Spiritually he is as much the child of the seventeenth century, in that, to him, writing could never be an end in itself, but

only one means by which the mind performed what Spinoza designates its 'native office'. The fiction is most powerfully realized when read, as it was written, with an implicit acknowledgement of the presence of Spinoza.

The more closely one reads Rutherford the clearer it becomes that the novels develop out of each other, addressing concerns previously established, but always from a different perspective, and crucially, an altered consciousness. The confessional voice is an important one within the work but it soon becomes subordinate to the intellectual impetus and the rigours of self-enquiry. The novels were written over a period of fifteen years, the most difficult years it is possible to imagine: amid the decline and death of a partner, the flight of children from the parental home, the onset of old age. One would need to be driven to write under these circumstances. Hale White was driven, though not, after the composition of the Revolution began, entirely by a need to confess, but rather to make sense of an existence in which there was much undeserved suffering and that would not conform to expectations. What began as self-confession develops into a literary quest for some way of understanding the randomness of life.

The writer of an article in the Academy, published near the end of the period to which Rutherford is consigned and that we call 'Victorian', asks:

Why are the novels of Mark Rutherford like none others that we know?

To this first question, he adds a second:

Why do we place them on the same shelf as Spinoza's Ethic, and refer to them a good deal oftener? ²⁵

On a superficial level the answer to the first question is obvious. Rutherford's novels are, compared with the conventional triple-decker of the era, remarkably

25. Academy, 4th February 1899, pp. 161-2.

short; they are not as densely peopled, nor do they involve the elaboration of plot that we find in the work of Dickens, Trollope or Eliot; writers to whose time, chronologically at least, Rutherford belongs. The reason why we place Rutherford's novels on the same shelf as Spinoza's Ethic would again seem obvious, and yet we do so not merely because Rutherford's author is the translator of Spinoza, but because, in a vital sense, the novels present a fictional/practical working out of Spinoza's ideas. If, allowing the connection between Rutherford, Hale White and Spinoza, we do indeed refer to the novels a good deal oftener than the philosophical tome, it is undoubtedly because, in a sense, they translate the translation, they 'illustrate' Spinoza's ideas, make them immediate and accessible.

The writer of the Academy article answers his own questions thus:

Because they are informed with a wisdom austere and sweet, a magnetic sympathy, an altruism which rejoices in contact with life. Because without them the blacks and duns of life for us remain untranslated, affronting the eye with mere dowdiness.

What, from his position in time, the questioner could not possibly have realized, even though his curiosity unconsciously admits it, was that his enquiry contained within it some sense of a more profound and far-reaching difference in the novels than could be explained simply in terms of their sweetness, austerity or magnetism. What the writer of the article was actually noticing, even without knowing it, was a germ of early modernism.

In his journal, Arnold Bennett passes judgement on the Autobiography and Deliverance. He writes that though they show an 'original wisdom' and a deep understanding of the subject, they nonetheless prove that their author has 'no

notion of fiction'. According to Bennett, Rutherford 'simply cannot construct'.²⁶ The critic in the Academy would argue that if Bennett failed to discover the 'structure' of Rutherford's work, it was probably because he was looking for the wrong kind of 'organization'. And yet, in spite of the fact that they are 'unmoulded by plot', Bennett finds in the novels a 'fine symmetry'. This use of 'symmetry' is interesting, it argues for the transcendence of balance, congruity and harmony between the parts and whole over the extensive and self-contained design of the conventional Victorian novel.

It is certainly accurate to say that the Autobiography has no explicitly coherent narrative (though that is not to say, as does Bennett, that it is without 'structure'), nor has it any characters in the sense that they exist in a novel by Charles Dickens or George Eliot. The purpose of his representation of Snale, the Mardons, the Arbour sisters, Theresa Wollaston and Ellen Butts is to elucidate some crisis or dilemma of Rutherford's: the Autobiography realizes, in effect, only one character - Rutherford - the rest exist only to 'characterize' him. It is because of this that, though his novels are just as thoroughly narrated as Eliot's, we do not sense in Rutherford that break in momentum that is noticeable when the discussion turns from circumstance or general commentary to character. Characters in George Eliot retain some autonomy, in Rutherford they are always under the narrator's total control.

What Bennett seems to dismiss as ineptitude or as a disregard for convention is actually what makes Rutherford a unique and genuinely experimental novelist, even though he himself would have disclaimed any other

26. Arnold Bennett, The Journals of Arnold Bennett 1896-1928, ed. by Newman Flower, 3 vols (London: Cassell, 1933), III, pp. 15-16.

interest than the extension of the formal language of fiction. Bennett couldn't, of course, have known that, though the extensively narrated quality of his fiction and the unremitting presence of the authorial voice meant that Rutherford's work could indeed be compared with George Eliot, in its 'construction' his writing has far more in common with early twentieth century works like Lawrence's Sons and Lovers (1913), or Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1914-15), than with the traditional Victorian triple-decker novel.

The Autobiography exhibits a similar selectivity to that employed by Joyce in the Portrait. As we are given only those events and emotions and relationships relevant to Stephen's development toward an artist, so we witness in the Autobiography only those episodes that exemplify Rutherford's laboured 'progress'. In a manner that makes of the reader an extension of the protagonist (as character and author); like both Stephen and Rutherford we are conveyed through the narrative without the advantage of the usual consistent or omniscient interventions that make the reader's view of life a privileged one, and allows us to comprehend the implications and proper proportions of the protagonists' experience. The 'older' speaker in the Autobiography helps us out intermittently but his interventions are spasmodic enough to ensure that we gain little confidence as readers from his experience. As if we were in the novel, we can order the fragmentary narrative only in retrospect. Rutherford's 'epiphanies': his first look into the Lyrical Ballads, the discovery that the sea was 'a corrective to the littleness' around him (Autobiography, p.39), the realisation, at Mardon's death, of the 'surpassing splendour' of the dawn (Autobiography, p.160), are in this manner ours too. In much the same way as does Lawrence in Sons and Lovers, Rutherford in his fiction gives us a sense of the novel as ideology; the

novelist in discussion with himself, the reader involved by implication as much as election.

Hale White's divergence from the usual novel form of his day, though not premeditated, must have become a conscious, not to say daring one; compared with the 'big baggy monsters', the Deliverance offers less than 150 pages. Given the extent to which, in the Autobiography and Deliverance, he foregrounds his narrator, and the way in which the narrator becomes the action, the conventional novelistic 'mechanics' are rendered superfluous. The subsequent novels centre themselves similarly around a single personality and a particular struggle. Though partly a matter of content, the novels' concision is also a consequence of their peculiar, and for their time, experimental narratorial method. In his essay 'The Author of Mark Rutherford',²⁷ Charles Swann quotes David Daiches' comments on the Autobiography and Deliverance as a 'new kind of novel':

a kind of fable that is much richer and more complex than a fable, that is autobiography yet which transcends autobiography, that is Bildungsroman without the obvious schematic development of most examples of that genre, that is 'a novel of ideas' while remaining a quietly honest narrative deeply human in its significance and genuinely moving as a human document. (p. 277)

Swann himself goes further, asserting that 'it is not pushing too hard' to say that:

the six books make up an even newer and more original kind of 'novel' which evidences a radical experiment with form. (p. 227)

What is most original and radical about the six books is the way in which their continuity depends less upon character or narrative than upon their author's peculiar relation to his public. Rutherford's relation with the reader assumes a remarkable intimacy and shared understanding. We see this at the beginning of

27. Charles Swann, 'The Author of Mark Rutherford', Yearbook of English Studies 11 (1979), 270-8. Hereafter cited as Swann 1979.

Clara Hopgood, where he declines to describe the novel's location, confident that 'we are already familiar with Eastthorpe' and that its peculiarities 'will be remembered' (p. 1). Swann insists that 'as the very first sentence of a novel' this is an 'astonishing one'. He goes on to explain that:

The only way we can be familiar with Eastthorpe is if we have already read Catharine Furze, the novel immediately preceding Clara Hopgood in the series. That reference back implies very strongly that Catharine's situation should be compared to that of Clara and Madge Hopgood. In a similar fashion The Revolution, having begun in London, ends in Cowfold while Miriam's Schooling begins in Cowfold before moving to London. (p. 274)

Rutherford assumes that the reader is not only collecting his novels but is all the time comparing them one with another, and thus implicitly acknowledging their status as:

one interrelated and independent fictional world; one where we can see a theory of fiction and a theory of history coming together and mutually illuminating each other. (Swann, 1979, pp. 277-8)

Indeed there is a sign, in chapter VI of Catharine Furze, that the author is concerned that the reader might become so engrossed in and familiar with this 'world', so dazzled by the 'mutual illumination' that one work throws upon another, that the fact of their narration might be overlooked. How else is one to explain the presence of the signature at the close of this short paragraph inserted into the narrative of Cardew's sermon?

Curiously enough, the conclusion was a piece of the most commonplace orthodoxy, lugged in, Heaven knows how, and delivered monotonously, in strong contrast to the former part of the discourse. - M.R. (Catharine, p. 113)

This 'aside' would be unremarkable were it not for the manner in which it is differentiated by Rutherford, both explicitly and implicitly, from the narrative in which it is embedded. To begin with there is that alteration in register from what now emerges as the 'formal' narratorial voice that we have heard thus far, to one

that is unashamedly intimate and confidential ('Curiously enough', 'Heaven knows how'). The speaker of this voice is confident enough in its readers' empathy not to worry about the colloquial language that is 'lugged in'. As a kind of 'editorial' intervention, such an extract would warrant little attention if it were signed with the initials of the book's nominal editor, Reuben Shapcott. But it is autographed 'M.R.'. The same M.R., we are to assume, who wrote the paragraph preceding and, just as curiously, the one that follows it. The subsequent paragraph refers to what has gone before as 'notes', made by the 'writer of this history', who remembers the privilege of listening to another great speaker besides the 'eloquent' Mr Cardew. This other orator, whose 'power over his audience' was enough to 'sway them into a passion', is undoubtedly the Welsh preacher Caleb Morris, of whom Hale White claimed 'He made me'.²⁸ If this is indeed the case, then the 'writer of this history' (my emphasis), the author of this paragraph, is neither Rutherford as 'formal' narrator, nor even the same in confidential or chatty mood, but William Hale White himself. Only after the conclusion of this second interventionary paragraph does the narrative resume at the point and in the 'voice' with which the description of Cardew's sermon was suspended. And yet, in again taking over the narrative, this voice does not merely ignore, but effectively sweeps aside the intervening paragraphs and their 'different' speakers. As far as the story is concerned, these interruptions about the relative eloquence of Cardew and the mysterious 'great speaker' can make little difference:

Whether it was the preacher's personality, or what he said, Catharine could hardly distinguish, but she was profoundly moved.
(Catharine, p. 114)

28. The Groombridge Diary, ed. by Dorothy V. White (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), p.27, author's emphasis.

Such speculations as the preceding narratorial 'asides' comprise matter nothing to Catharine (or to Rutherford's story as opposed to his relation with the reader); she is 'profoundly moved' by something entirely other than Cardew's oratorical skill. This stepping in and out of narratorial character allows Hale White scope to include within Catharine's 'history' a comparison not only with Rutherford's but, by implication, with his own. What emerges is less simple narrative than monologue spoken in different voices. The effect is at times that of a modernist play but the relation with the reader is really the opposite of Bakhtinian dialogue;²⁹ behind all the voices there is a single voice which cannot obey the narrative niceties and seeks to address us directly.

Because of his peculiar narratorial method, Rutherford has no need of the vast tracts for which the triple-decker makes room. And yet, as both Swann and Daiches contend, his 'purpose' was never, could never, be fulfilled by any one novel. Hale White wrote to understand himself, in order that he might live more wisely. His novels as a whole comprise a progress no less than they do individually. Far from being discrete and self-contained, such is their organic connection that, in writing all six novels, Rutherford in a sense, wrote only one. The distance travelled between Mark Rutherford in the Autobiography and Clara in Clara Hopgood is indeed vast, and yet it is true to say that in his continuous quest to realize, for himself as much as his reader, some means of personal 'salvation', the creation of Clara was as much a necessity as was that of the protagonist of the Autobiography.

29. M. M. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the novel' in The Dialogic Imagination, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp.259-422 (p.263).

Though they begin with the representation of a victim of the nineteenth century, Rutherford's novels conclude with an implicitly prophetic look forward to the twentieth, and an intuition of the very different trials to which its inhabitants might be subject. Though so rooted in his tradition and his time, Hale White's gaze was always resolutely focused upon the future, his mind upon the human potential to endure disappointment and change and still to go on to discover better ways of living. Lionel Trilling, in his foreword to Irvin Stock's William Hale White (Mark Rutherford), can, with the benefit of hindsight, 'place' Mark Rutherford in a way that neither the anonymous writer of the Academy article, nor Arnold Bennett could have been expected to:

To the writers who make the context in which we may talk of Hale White's modernity, Shaw, Lawrence, Forster and Gide, the question of their salvation is of the essence of their enterprise.³⁰

In 1908, Hale White emphatically denied that he lived in a 'world' of 'art for art's sake.' His was a 'religious world', he insisted (The Groombridge Diary, p. 15). One effect of this religious seriousness was to make him write novels in his own way and to be more, rather than less, conscious than more purely secular writers of the context of his own inventiveness. It also means that the scenes he selects for attention in his writing are always justified by the discussion they produce: his events are at once realistically conveyed and justified by their significance. What Hale White was in fact doing in authorising Rutherford was inventing by his own route the symbolist novel. In this he can be compared with the later Hardy who, in coming to Jude the Obscure (1896), is seen to forgo the elaboration of scene, and the narrative crammed with a multitude of little

30. Irvin Stock, William Hale White (Mark Rutherford): A Critical Study (London: Unwin, 1956), p. ix.

incidents, that is so evident in the earlier Mayor of Casterbridge (1886). Thomas Hardy wrote in the preface to the first edition of Jude the Obscure that the novel was 'an endeavour to give shape and consequence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions'.³¹ Jude's presence 'At' Marygreen, Christminster, Melchester and Shaston is to be understood less as signifying an itinerant narrative than a psychological and social commentary upon his troubled progress. This greater selectivity and symbolism is a vital element in the realization of the 'tragedy' of Jude Fawley. The narrative voice in this novel seems less to tell than to endure the story. No less so than is the case with Hale White and Rutherford, there is something of Hardy's 'autobiography' in the representation of his final protagonist. What is registered as an increased selectivity in the narrative of Jude the Obscure is in fact the result of the greater presence of Hardy's own voice in the book.

Amongst the first pages of his autobiography, the young Rutherford reveals how he longs for 'a friend who would sacrifice himself to me utterly, and to whom I might offer a similar sacrifice'. A few lines later the elder narrator confesses that 'a friend of the kind that I wanted never appeared'. He admits that no mistake ever cost him more than this inordinate desire. And yet, he protests 'I must record' (my emphases), that the longing was 'a mistake for which, considering everything, I cannot much blame myself' (Autobiography, p. 29). From the want of a friend 'of the kind' that the young Rutherford felt that he might have found, and from the compulsion of the older man to 'record' that mistaken self and also to establish its blamelessness, Mark Rutherford is created. Towards

31. Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 39.

the end of his life, in a note contained within the Last Pages from a Journal, Hale

White writes:

We pine for a friend to whom we can unbosom our thoughts and emotions and we are disappointed. We think only of ourselves in our discontent. Ought we not to think a little of others and allow some small consideration of doing good? The friendship which proceeds from unselfishness will be firmer and more intimate than that which is, after all, mere selfishness refined.³²

Until the very end of his life (and his marriage to his second wife, Dorothy Vernon Smith), Hale White could find no better 'friend' to whom he could unbosom his thoughts than his fiction. But in making use of this solitary refuge his thoughts were never entirely wrapped up in himself, nor in his own 'discontent', as profound as that was. There is, about the intimacy and honesty with which Hale White reveals not just Rutherford, but himself through Rutherford, a genuine 'unselfishness' and no 'small consideration of doing good'.

32. Mark Rutherford, Last Pages From a Journal: with other Papers ed. by Dorothy V. White (London: Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 304. Hereafter cited as Last Pages.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MARK RUTHERFORD

To each is given a certain inward Talent, a certain outward Environment of Fortune; to each, by wisest combination of these two, a certain maximum of Capability. But the hardest problem were ever this first: to find by study of yourself, and the ground you stand on, what your combined outward capability specially is.¹

Near the beginning of the Autobiography, Mark Rutherford declares that, 'nobody more than myself could desire self-revelation' (p. 27). At the close of the book, Rutherford's editor, Reuben Shapcott, delivers his verdict upon Rutherford's attempt to fulfil his 'desire': 'I am afraid that up to this point he has misrepresented himself' (p. 165). Out of its exposition of Rutherford's failure to reveal himself, or indeed, fully to understand or accept what 'revelation' would really mean; and in its presentation of the idea of 'misrepresentation' in its most inclusive sense, emerges the shape of the novel and the shape of the life.

But there is another sense in which the shape of this work exemplifies the life. There are, in fact, two 'openings' to the Autobiography. One of them commences:

I was born, just before the Liverpool Manchester Railway was opened, in a small country town in one of the Midland shires...
My father and mother belonged to the ordinary English middle class of well-to-do shopkeepers...
My life as a child falls into two portions, sharply divided - week-day and Sunday... (pp. 2-3)

1. Thomas Carlyle, Sartor Resartus, 1836 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 93.

These paragraphs comprise a kind of inventory of the life, a rational exposition of uncomplicated facts. A single voice narrates, one at ease with its matter, confident and authoritative. The chronology, in its progression from birth to childhood, establishes the kind of movement that we take to be natural in autobiography, whose predominating direction we expect to be forwards into the present. And yet, although this quotation is taken from the opening chapter of the Autobiography, it does not introduce to the reader the 'life' of Mark Rutherford.

The opening paragraph of the Autobiography has an altogether different character:

Now that I have completed my autobiography up to the present year, I sometimes doubt whether it is right to publish it. Of what use is it, many persons will say, to present to the world what is mainly a record of weaknesses and failures? If I had triumphs to tell; if I could show how I had risen superior to poverty and suffering; if, in short, I were a hero of any kind whatever, I might perhaps be justified in communicating my success to mankind, and stimulating them to do as I have done. But mine is a commonplace life, perplexed by many difficulties I have never surmounted; and blotted by ignoble concessions which are a constant regret. (p. 1)

The chronology so evident in the paragraphs quoted earlier is disturbed by this, as what, in terms of form, ought to have been an epilogue or, at least, separated from the opening as prologue, encroaches upon the body of the work. We are obliged to accept that, having completed the writing, Rutherford quite deliberately returned to the beginning, not to endorse the work, nor to commend it to his reader, but to register at its inception, his 'doubt' as to whether, after all, the life was 'justified'.

Linda Peterson in her discussion of Victorian autobiography draws attention to the fact that the way in which the reader (or writer) thinks of autobiography can condition his or her response to the life it presents:

For most literary historians, the history of autobiography as a genre begins with either a mirror or a book. Those who choose the mirror tend to see the genre as one of self-presentation; for them autobiography begins when Renaissance man learns to make mirrors and receives a reflection back from the glass he has created. Those literary historians who, in contrast, choose the book tend to treat the genre as one of self-interpretation; autobiography begins for them in the act of reading, initially the book of Scripture but later other books of autobiography, and this act of reading provides the versions of history that autobiographers then use to interpret the lives they tell.²

Curiously, for so obvious an inheritor of the bookish tradition (the Bible and Bunyan), for most of the Autobiography, Rutherford actually prefers the mirror. He seems to offer an apologia but has to settle for a confession. His overwhelming concern (leaving aside the retrospective paragraphs with which the book opens), is indeed with the 'presentation' of self, both to himself and to his reader. Peterson calls this view of autobiography 'essentially French', identifying its 'full[est] expression' (p. 3), in Rousseau's Confessions. For Hale White, the ability to 'speak the truth about oneself' depends upon the kind of 'gifted... shamelessness' that he recognizes (half in admiration, half in disgust) in Rousseau. But Rousseau's was a forthrightness that White feared he could never live up to. And yet, in spite of the concern with outward appearance that is made explicit in episodes like that in chapter II of the Autobiography, where the author, even as he admits the foolhardiness of his pursuit of a 'perfect' friend, makes a plea not just in mitigation but for sympathy:

I don't know any mistake which I have made which has cost me more than this; but at the same time I must record that it was a mistake for which, considering everything, I cannot much blame myself, (Autobiography, p. 29, my emphases)

2. Linda H. Peterson, 'Introduction: The Hermeneutic Imperative', in Victorian Autobiography (Yale: Yale University press, 1986), 1-28 (pp. 2-3).

Rutherford's account remains highly introspective, as, given his temperament and tradition, it must have been. This conflict of interests within the Autobiography, between the 'self-presentation' that is so easily and dangerously confused with disinterested analysis, and the 'self-interpretation' that Peterson traces back to Grace Abounding and characterizes as 'typically English', is manifest in Rutherford's two openings.

What emerges from the first paragraph of the Autobiography then, is almost anti-autobiography; autobiography writing against itself in a sense. In foregrounding the doubt Rutherford creates a kind of antagonism within the work, even as a part of it. The autobiographical undercurrent that this antagonism comprises, the sub-narrative of his event-full/less life, is thus given a peculiar prominence. So at the same time as it involves 'self-presentation' and 'self-interpretation', the Autobiography also contains a kind of exploration or rewriting of the agenda of autobiography. Rutherford's is primarily a noetic autobiography, it presents the narrative of the mind of the autobiographer, a commentary upon what it feels like to be compiling the life. The subjectivity necessary to such an account has obvious pitfalls. Amongst the several faults that Edmund Gosse identifies as endemic to autobiography, he complains that it is too often 'falsified by self-admiration and self-pity'.³ However, what S.M.Ellis fails to realize when he/she dismisses the Autobiography as the 'record of spiritual travail of one who is super-sensitive and with his ego too prominent',⁴ is that Hale White's intention in his authorization of Mark Rutherford is precisely to present a character

3. Edmund Gosse, Father and Son, 1907 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 33.

4. S.M.Ellis, 'Three Centenaries', Nineteenth Century, 109 (1931), 753-7 (p.755)

'falsified' in the manner that Gosse laments, but that he wanted even so to explore the falsehood, to go beyond the petty construction of 'self', to discover something real in or from it.

The 'true' story of a life is not so easy to come upon as Gosse thinks. Hale White describes, to Mrs Colenutt, how what we usually take to be the essential framework of autobiography, might, in the sense of conveying the reality of a life, actually matter least:

This week I was telling your story, not the story of events, but of your real life, to somebody of whom you have never heard, and it will do good. (Letters, p. 107, my emphases)

The inventory of 'events' is not 'real' for White because, in his terms, it represents little more than a meaningless surface. 'Real' life happens beneath the level of events, in what is felt and endured, that is, not in the smooth transition from one landmark ('I was born', Autobiography, p. 2) to the next, but as a series of seeming completions that bring one no nearer to any conclusion, 'Now that I have completed my autobiography...I doubt...'. This is the kind of 'real' life-story that 'will do good'.

However, what is clear from the outset is that, given their shared background, it is impossible that Hale White could have allowed Rutherford to use the word 'revelation', even in its hyphenated form 'self-revelation', lightly, or without intending it to carry some religious significance:

The revelation which comes to the prophets is revelation of what God has done, is now doing and yet will do. It is not man's discovery, but God's gift; not man's intuitive genius, but God's gracious action. When the prophets speak of Yahweh's righteousness, or justice, or steadfast love, they do not refer to ethical

principles or ideals or norms but to the ways of divine activity in history.⁵

Revelation, Hale White knows, is not something that can be independently achieved by humans, even if they be prophets. In its original usage, revelation never belongs to humans in the way that Rutherford assumes he might have it. The 'self-revelation' that he seeks is therefore, in the religious sense, a contradictory term. More than this though, his 'desire' signifies a kind of pride in the earlier Rutherford, that stands in direct contradiction to the genuine humility of the retrospective opening of the Autobiography. However, if at first he appropriates the theological language, an implicit 'non serviam', the experienced Rutherford ends (at the beginning), not simply by relinquishing all claim to it, nor by reintroducing its divine context, but by using it as a means of conveying a sense of the value of secular reading and writing. In his opening paragraph, Rutherford speaks also of 'justification'. But the means of 'justification' here is not granted by God but rather by the reader. In terms of the conclusion of the Autobiography (delivered in the opening paragraph), the reader is made to stand for God. It is not in being exemplary, but in being read, that Rutherford's 'life' is 'justified' and preserved, its struggles implicitly realized, and its worth recognized. The reader becomes Rutherford's means of salvation, his autobiography a sacred testimony.

In his appropriation of 'revelation' in chapter II, what Rutherford actually shows then is not so much a 'desire' to reveal but a capacity to 'desire', a tendency to want too much, too consciously. It becomes clear as the

5. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. by Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1962), pp. 480-2.

Autobiography unfolds that his chances of having or being able to settle for anything on a human scale are jeopardized by his superhuman desires. At one point in chapter III, Rutherford speaks of his delight in the sea because it is 'a corrective to the littleness around [him]' (Autobiography, p. 39). Part of the progress in which the Autobiography culminates is the realization that the 'littleness' does not merely surround him, it includes him. The Autobiography shows how this realignment is achieved, how, from an implicit identification with the divine and a 'desire' to present himself in a manner that might serve to mitigate his mistakes, Rutherford comes to number himself among the ungodly and, so doing, to admit his faults without excuse or self-depreciation: 'mine is the tale of a commonplace life, perplexed by many problems I have never solved; disturbed by many difficulties I have never surmounted; and blotted by ignoble concessions which are a constant regret' (Autobiography, p. 1).

To begin with at least, Rutherford shows a fondness for drawing the kind of elevated parallel that is implicitly suggested by his desire for 'self-revelation'. In telling of the discovery of Wordsworth during his despair at college, Rutherford likens his experience to that of St Paul on the road to Damascus yet, ironically, in rejoicing in the comparison, Rutherford misses the personal message that it contains for him. The 'light' of the Lord robs Saul of the 'sight' to which he had been accustomed, he is blinded to see anew.⁶ According to Paul, God 'justifies the ungodly',⁷ not by their works or merit, but rather by their faith in Christ, in what God has done to put them right with himself. Rutherford is 'justified'

6. Acts 9. 8-10. 18.

7. Romans 4.5.

eventually by his faith in humankind (his readers) to comprehend his failure, and so to establish relationship where he had feared rejection ('Of what use is it, many persons will say', Autobiography, p. 1). Throughout the Autobiography (including the first paragraphs, added after its completion), the first person dominates. Only in the third paragraph does Rutherford admit, in using 'we', his connection with the reader and the community for which his readership stands. It is in recognising his true 'place' among 'other people' that Rutherford realizes his right relationship to God. 'Self-revelation' is no longer a 'desire', instead he gladly accepts the 'comfort' brought about by the acceptance that, far from being singular, he is one with the 'weakest'.

Even if it were something that could be achieved solely by human effort, 'self-revelation' would have to be given and not simply 'desired' in order to be genuinely revelatory. Whatever was revealed as the consequence of 'desire' would be bound to be what was 'looked for', that is, to some degree self-selected and self-serving, and not disinterestedly discovered. The very fact of Rutherford's wanting 'self-revelation' denies its possibility; if it came at all it would have to emerge as a result of the suspension or sacrifice of the 'wanting' consciousness. Rutherford wants the right thing but he wants it in the wrong way. What should come out of humility and resignation, he thinks can be conjured out of 'desire'. What he must learn will only be achieved in spite of himself, in a smaller, slower, more painful, less grandiloquent fashion, he first wishes to gain consciously and by supernatural means. The secret narrative of this book is an attempt to find the right words to describe his condition, having started with the wrong words.

Understanding Rutherford demands close reading of his mental process through crucial passages of the book.

The confusion seems to have its origins in the failure of Rutherford's 'conversion' at fourteen:

Nothing particular happened to me till I was about fourteen, when I was told it was time I became converted. Conversion, amongst the Independents and other Puritan sects, is supposed to be a kind of miracle of the Holy Spirit, by which the man becomes altogether different to what he was previously. It affects, or should affect, his character; that is to say, he ought after conversion to be better in every way than he was before; but this is not considered as its main consequence. In its essence it is a change in the emotions and increased vividness of belief...

But conversion, as it was understood by me and as it is now understood, is altogether unmeaning. I knew that I had to be a 'child of God', and after a time professed to be one, but I cannot call to mind that I was anything else than I had always been, save that I was perhaps a little more hypocritical; not in the sense that I professed to others what I knew I did not believe, but in the sense that I professed it to myself. I was obliged to declare myself convinced of sin; convinced of the efficacy of the atonement; convinced that I was forgiven; convinced that the Holy Ghost was shed abroad in my heart; convinced of a great many other things which were the merest phrases. (Autobiography, pp. 10-12).

By the time that Rutherford was 'told' that he ought to become converted, though conversion was 'supposed' to be a 'kind of miracle', its emotional essence was lost. Conversion had become something to be 'understood' rather than felt. Rutherford 'knew', like many others no doubt, what was expected of him in the matter and 'after a time' duly conformed to requirements. The second paragraph above gives vivid illustration of the way in which a technical vocabulary, of 'sin...atonement...forgive[ness]', had taken the place of the once living experience. The sentence upon which the whole passage turns is the one that introduces the second paragraph:

But conversion, as it was understood by me and as it is now understood, is altogether unmeaning.

'Understood' but 'unmeaning': this paradox haunts Rutherford. That faith, in being intellectually apprehended, 'understood', should therefore cease to exist or to continue in any meaningful or useful sense, is an idea that the earlier Rutherford has great trouble coming to terms with. He does not see that not only is conversion not a product of the 'understanding' but that it is only real when it is not understood, that is, not 'seen' with the intellect. Tennyson's 'freezing reason' is melted in In Memoriam when the heart stands up and declares "'I have felt'",⁸ but feeling seems hardly a part of the younger Rutherford's spiritual vocabulary. Of course, the later Rutherford, the narrator of the book, is aware that conversion is primarily a matter of feeling. But as a boy, he knew and believed in conversion only as a technical word, and lacked the faith to abandon himself to it as an experience. Because he did not recognize that division between belief and faith until after the non-event, Rutherford went on trying to have things, and thinking he could or did have them at the moment, merely by saying the words, enunciating the idea. He goes on and on, too, discovering how the word alone turns out to mean little, though this realization seems never to cause him to question the integrity of words as things in themselves, or their ability wholly to contain ideas as he would have them do; rather it spurs him on to search for more words.

Rutherford moves further and further away from intuition or insight in his endeavour to give concrete expression to spiritual experience. He believes that,

8. Tennyson: A Selected Edition, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Longman, 1989), In Memoriam, CXXIV, 1.16.

in conning the words he captures the feeling, and fails to see how much is lost in the translation, even at the point where he is describing 'authentic' conversion:

Conversion, amongst the Independents and other Puritan sects, is supposed to be a kind of miracle wrought in the heart by the influence of the Holy Spirit, by which the man becomes something altogether different to what he was previously.

This sentence begins with the word for the spiritual experience: 'conversion'. It goes on to define the word, emphasising the spiritual character of the experience, 'wrought in the heart', influenced by the 'Holy Spirit'. There is, implicit in this, an unconscious or instinctive endeavour to admit that, in calling conversion a 'miracle', all that is attempted is the mutual adaptation of one thing to another and not a re-presentation. The two things are kept separate, the two 'worlds' - that of the prose and that of the miraculous - are held apart. What gets in the way of this separation and blurs the distinction is the 'supposed'. The nature of this word, hypothetical and tentative, destroys the sense of simple (not precise) correspondence between the word 'conversion' and the idea 'miracle' at the same time as it creates a sense of doubt and confusion that attaches to both.

In the Early Life the following note appears:

What was conversion? It meant not only that the novice unhesitatingly avowed his belief in certain articles of faith, but it meant something much more, and much more difficult to explain.
(p. 58)

Rutherford repeats what is more or less the same comment he makes in the Autobiography, to show how, here again, what is 'unhesitatingly avowed', is the novice's 'belief in certain articles of faith'. Once more we can trace that compulsion to give material status to the unseen: the 'articles' precede 'faith', render 'faith' secondary. Implicit in the word 'article', is the assumption that

conversion needs to be justified in words ('article' as a clause or term in a contract), or recast ('article' as an item, a commodity or object), before it can be deemed properly to exist. All this manipulation to balance 'something much more, and much more difficult to explain'.

Rutherford refers to this drive to name and make concrete as the 'gregarious instinct' in humans:

Our gregarious instinct is so strong that it is the most difficult thing for us to be satisfied with suspended judgement. Men must join a party, and have a cry, and they generally take up their party and their cry from the most indifferent motives. (Autobiography, p. 18)

What makes us human is the ability to hold our words in common, but the exchange of conversation becomes here a slogan, a 'cry'. The most important thing to the fourteen years-old Rutherford, standing at the threshold of 'conversion', was that by it he should be able to 'join a party', gain a sense of fellowship. The veracity of his profession of conversion can have mattered little to him next to the 'instinct' for some kind of status and connection. Through fellowship, the membership of this particular group, Rutherford could hope to achieve self-definition in terms of faith, historical tradition and conduct, and of expression. Later in his life Rutherford comes to see the disproportion of those inherited words:

Looking at the history of those days now from a distance of years, everything assumes its proper proportion. I was at work, it is true, amongst those who were exceptionally hard and worldly, but I was seeking amongst men (to put it in orthodox language) what I ought to have sought with God alone. In other, and perhaps plainer phrase, I was expecting from men a sympathy which proceeds from the invisible only. Sometimes, indeed, it manifests itself in the long postponed justice of time, but more frequently it is nothing less than a consciousness of approval by the Unseen, a peace unspeakable, which is bestowed on us when self is suppressed. (Autobiography, p. 54-55)

Within this paragraph 'orthodox language' is scaled down to 'plainer phrase', a movement from the doctrinaire to the human. This seems to have made possible for Rutherford a turn of mind from the formal perception of 'God' as a certainty, with all the limits that human certainty imposes, to the acceptance of something much more akin to Tennyson's 'slender shade of doubt',⁹ 'Invisible', 'Unseen', indefinite and undefinable, an act of faith in, or through, doubt. It is as if the loosening up, or surrender of the technical 'language' he inherited, in releasing thought from the obligation of verbal expression, makes way for the idea of unresolved being which makes doubt a means of actually admitting faith. When 'language' gives way, the need to have things as absolutes abates, there can be a return to the 'consciousness' of things. This is much more akin to 'revelation', in being 'bestowed', than anything that mere 'desire' could produce. Only when the socially constructed self is 'suppressed' and the 'gregarious instinct' subdued, it seems, do words cease to matter and therefore come spontaneously; as if the words one had thought were merely selected out of necessity, had never been the independent and unbiased things they seemed, but were self-interested, produced by and created from, self-consciousness. The 'unspeakable' then is not the result of the failure of words but comes out of the liberating recognition of their limitedness and of the existence of all that is unspeakable.

The instinct for companionship, the need to 'have a cry', produces for Rutherford a world made up only of what words can define. There is nothing 'vital' about his life, only the recurring illusion of some new 'phrase'. What he offers as his genuine conversion experience is the reading of Wordsworth:

9. In Memoriam, XLVIII.

During the first two years at college my life was entirely external. My heart was altogether untouched by anything I heard, read or did, although I myself supposed that I took an interest in them. But one day in my third year, a day I remember as well as Paul must have remembered afterwards the day on which he went to Damascus, I happened to find amongst a parcel of books a volume of poems in paper boards. It was called Lyrical Ballads, and I read first one and then the whole book. It conveyed to me no new doctrine, and yet the change it wrought in me could only be compared with that which is said to have been wrought on Paul himself by the divine apparition. (Autobiography, p. 21)

Rutherford thinks that because it is outward-looking, or, more properly speaking, without insight, his life is not self-centred. In truth the last thing that his life is, is 'entirely external', even though his heart is largely 'untouched'. Though he cannot see it himself, Rutherford's life is entirely introverted.

Rutherford relates the experience that reading the Lyrical Ballads produced in him, twice over, firstly implicitly and then explicitly. There is something in Rutherford that wants simply to be able to accept the 'change' as implicit feeling. This is conveyed partly in his use of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus as a 'gloss' for his own emotional response to the Wordsworth. The unimpeded immediacy of its impact as conversion can simply be inferred, it needs no explanation. But partly also he uses Paul to preface: 'a day I remember as well as Paul must have remembered', and to conclude: 'the change it wrought in me could only be compared with that...wrought on Paul himself by the Divine apparition', that part of the writing that relates specifically to his own experience: 'I happened to find...wrought in me', almost as if it might hide or disguise what, though it looks at first to be just a re-writing of Paul's narrative in his own (Rutherford's) words, comes to seem more like a confession, a repudiation of the authenticity of his own experience.

Though he may want to, Rutherford can't simply rest in the mystery of the 'change'. He can't 'suspend judgement' (Autobiography, p. 18) or simply allow himself to stop at saying 'it was like Paul's' and be content. When it comes to the actual re-presentation of his own experience, the explicit narrative, written down, as opposed to what the 'gloss' implies, then the sense of direct connection between the Lyrical Ballads and the 'change' is blurred, the connection becomes far from immediate, clear or direct. The 'change', related literally rather than figuratively, comes not as unmediated 'revelation' (the product of the inoperation of the consciousness), but as the conclusion of a process of reasoning, loaded with reservations:

I happened to find amongst a parcel of books a volume of poems in paper boards. It was called Lyrical Ballads, and I read first one and then the whole book. It conveyed to me no new doctrine, and yet the change in me...

Having 'happened', accidentally, to make the random discovery amongst a 'parcel of books', of a volume of poems, in inauspicious 'paper boards', Rutherford tells us, not without a degree of incredulity, how he was compelled to 'read first one and then the whole book'. The force of this commentary works against that of the implicit one (rendered through Paul's experience) to replace unreserved affirmation with suppressed scepticism, anticipating his later qualifications of the experience.

The temporal layers of Rutherford's writing, as of his life, though they seem discrete and lucid, break up and combine as he tries to separate them, so that there is no enduring stability. The life that is 'entirely external' turns out to be introverted, the 'heart' that professes itself 'altogether untouched' can only have felt itself to be so, the mind that 'supposes' suggests, almost in spite of the

author, some degree of unity between itself and the external things heard, read or done that the 'interest' attaches to. Rutherford compartmentalizes himself; he tries to take the 'heart' out of action, the thought from 'interest'.

When it comes to isolating the 'change' that the Lyrical Ballads provokes in Rutherford, one finds that as fast as one clears away the matter that surrounds it, it buries itself beneath something else. Not only is it embedded in Rutherford's memory ('a day I remember'), but in Paul's also ('as well as Paul must have remembered'). The layers go back in time, are sunk in the mind, deep within the heart, and yet despite their belonging to different media these strata are irrevocably interrelated. Each stratum reveals little in isolation and, combined and constantly in motion, what they reveal fleetingly is reclaimed or superseded almost immediately. What seems the vital phrase, the key to meaning, identified in one 'layer' at one instant, is hardly discernible viewed through or from another:

Looking over the Lyrical Ballads again, as I have looked over it a dozen times since then, I can hardly see what it was which stirred me so powerfully, nor do I believe that it communicated anything which could be put in words. But it excited a movement and a growth which went on till, by degrees, all the systems which enveloped me like a body fell away into nothing. Of more importance, too, than the decay of systems was the birth of a habit of inner reference and a dislike to occupy myself with anything which did not in some way or other touch the soul, or was not the illustration or embodiment of some spiritual law. (Autobiography, p. 21-2)

Rutherford confesses to going back to the Wordsworth, again and again, not to relive or enliven or unearth the experience of that first reading, but to worry how it can possibly have had such an effect upon him. He can 'hardly see' what had moved him, wanting, in the absence of primary feeling, some sort of secondary,

objective manifestation, some sustaining 'doctrine'. He is perplexed that the Lyrical Ballads did not communicate 'much that could be put in words'. That 'much' works two ways; it acts as a spur for Rutherford to carry on his attempt to formulate the missing words whilst, simultaneously, it argues against there having been any real change in the first place. Rutherford does not realize that he 'can hardly see' because he is facing the wrong way, trying to substitute seeing for insight, 'Looking over' and not 'into', the Lyrical Ballads. He manoeuvres himself into the position of having almost to deny the vision, the 'change', for lack of reason or words to justify it.

What Rutherford can safely cite as change, 'all the systems which enveloped me like a body gradually decayed...fell away into nothing', is really only reorganization. After the Lyrical Ballads the 'systems which enveloped [him] like a body' were discarded only to be replaced by a 'habit of inner reference' (my emphasis), another outer garment and the product of a re-disciplined mind rather than one that is released from old speculations. The force of the words 'illustration' and 'embodiment' serves to re-emphasize the secondary nature of his rationalized explanation of what the 'change' was. Rutherford has merely exchanged one system for something that, though it might be made to look and sound unlike system by the use of words like 'inner' and 'soul', remains fundamentally methodical rather than intuitive, wanting 'illustration...embodiment...law', definition.

It comes, consequently, as a great relief for Rutherford to be able to add:

There is, of course, a definite explanation to be given of one effect produced by the Lyrical Ballads. God is nowhere formally deposed, and Wordsworth would have been the last man to say that he had lost his faith in the God of his fathers. But his real God is not the

God of the church, but the God of the hills, the abstraction Nature, and to this my reverence was transferred. Instead of an object of worship which was altogether artificial, remote, never coming into genuine contact with me, I had now one which I thought to be real, one in which literally I could live and move and have my being, an actual fact present before my eyes. God was brought from that heaven of the books, and dwelt on the downs in the far-away distances, and in every cloud shadow which wandered across the valley. Wordsworth unconsciously created my supreme Divinity; substituting a new and living spirit for the old deity, once alive but gradually hardened into an idol. (Autobiography, pp. 22-3)

Though he can only get so far as to define 'one effect' produced by Wordsworth, that much is sufficient to make Rutherford feel more secure. There is much at stake in that 'of course'; its certainty lends justification to his compulsion to continue to seek, for the subjective, some objective correlative.

Rutherford declares that in Wordsworth 'God is nowhere formally deposed'. Even though his 'real God' is not that of the 'Church', but an 'abstraction', Wordsworth leaves the established form intact, has it both ways, so to speak. This is both a liberating and a terrifying thought for Rutherford. What he doesn't go on to say at the end of the sentence that begins, 'Wordsworth would have been the last man to say that he had lost his faith in the God of his fathers', is no less obvious for its omission. That 'But' at the beginning of the following sentence evades announcing what remains implicit, that though Wordsworth didn't 'say' he had lost 'faith' in the 'God of his fathers', in reality he had. It is as though the 'but' loses courage and substitutes the positive thought, 'But his real God is...', for the one that won't bear thinking about. I have been arguing so far that Rutherford thought that merely by their enunciation words like 'revelation' and 'conversion' were in some sense realized, or partially realized. What seems to be happening here is that Rutherford is trying very hard

not to pronounce Wordsworth an 'apostate',¹⁰ not to realize the implications of the failure to 'formally depose' the 'established' God and 'say nothing' about where one's true loyalty lay. Rutherford can settle for the Wordsworth idea, so long as he doesn't have to put a corrupting name to it.

The effect of this idea then is very like the later one of:

It was always a weakness that certain thoughts preyed on me. I was always singularly feeble in laying hold of an idea, and in the ability to compel myself to dwell upon a thing for any lengthened period in continuous exhaustive reflection. But, nevertheless, the ideas would frequently lay hold of me with such relentless tenacity that I was passive in their grasp.

(Autobiography, p. 90, author's emphasis)

Wordsworth simply had the idea. But for Rutherford nothing comes simply; he cannot 'lay hold' of the idea confidently, but must qualify and release it. Like Mardon's 'negative criticism' (Autobiography, p. 61), the Wordsworth idea 'preys' upon Rutherford's thoughts without stimulating definite opposition or agreement; it leaves him able neither to affirm or deny but 'passive'. Primarily the appeal of the idea of no 'doctrine' and that of the silent and personal 'selection' of one's own God, is emotional; but Rutherford cannot sustain the feeling, and as soon as he attempts articulation what had seemed so promising is lost, 'I had now one which I thought to be real' (Autobiography, p. 22). It is the past tense he uses here, signalled by the suspect 'thought'. For all his conscious

10. William Hale White took considerable pains to defend Wordsworth against any charge of apostacy. He wrote in 1898: 'There is a widely-spread opinion that Wordsworth towards the middle of his life underwent a great change, and that he apostatised from his earlier faith both in politics and religion. I shall attempt to show that there is no real foundation for this charge against him.' An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy against Wordsworth (London: Longmans, 1898), p. 1.

resistance to 'doctrine' and all that it represents, Rutherford's faith is not an 'imaginative' one; it needs a system.

Later on, in the Deliverance, Rutherford will assert that 'the real meaning of the word faith' is:

permanent confidence in the idea, a confidence never to be broken down by apparent failure. (Deliverance, p. 64)

The permanence of his confidence would depend, for the younger Rutherford, either on the ability to sustain the emotional impact of the idea or simply to accept its mystery, but as I have tried to show, at this stage in his life, he is incapable of either, and, in attempting to subject what primarily exists as emotion to reason, 'apparent failure' becomes inevitable because the two are not interchangeable. Because the idea of the Lyrical Ballads retains, after its initial emotional impact, predominantly an intellectual hold upon him: 'I had now [a God] which I thought to be real...' (my emphasis); Rutherford can ascribe the 'failure', the fact that when 'increasing age had presented preciser problems and demanded preciser answers' (Autobiography, p. 23) it collapsed, to the idea itself, to there having been no real 'change' to begin with, when what is at fault is his apprehension of it. Rutherford tries to have as a thought what he acknowledges that Wordsworth had as an emotion; Wordsworth comes to seem false to him measured against his system of thought when all Wordsworth attempted was to be true to his own emotion.

Together these ideas offer to Rutherford what he believes and claims that he sorely lacks, that is, an entirely fresh perspective on religion. He wants his faith to be a matter of personal apprehension rather than dogma, of imagination rather than knowledge, of individual conviction rather than institutional authority. And

yet the irony is, that this new perspective offers so little of what Rutherford, from the professors at college, claims to have had too much of, that is the kind of 'systematic theology' that 'unfolded the scheme of redemption from beginning to end' (Autobiography, p. 16), that he cannot bring himself to trust it.

There is a dual movement in these crucial paragraphs. First is that which, as the writing progresses and time passes, takes Rutherford further and further away from the memory and acceptance of what had been the primary effect of the Lyrical Ballads, that is the disclosure of an 'inner' life, discovered through intense feeling. Opposed to this 'linear' progression there is what might be called an erasing movement, manifested in the obliteration of the palimpsest that bore, not only the archetypal experience (Paul's conversion) but the traces of a 'change' - 'a day I remember as well as Paul must have...', 'the change it wrought in me could only be compared with that...wrought on Paul...' (my emphases) - that, unsustainable as feeling alone and subjected to reason, is progressively explained away. Superimposed on the original experience is secondary, disappointed analysis.

The movement of the narrative of the Autobiography takes us from Rutherford's 'Childhood' (chapter I), through 'Preparation' (chapter II) at theological college, and then on to the 'Water Lane' (chapter III) chapel and the experiences of his first ministry. Thus far the centre and 'progress' of the work rests exclusively in Rutherford's life. However, beyond the 'Water Lane' chapter there follow three others in which this emphasis is subtly modified. This alteration is signalled most obviously in the fact that the titles of the chapters take on, not

the names of landmark events in Rutherford's life, but those of other people: 'Edward Gibbon Mardon', 'Miss Arbour', and 'Ellen and Mary'.

One notices also how, to the familiar voice of the younger Rutherford, whose narration is delivered so as to seem to be contemporaneous with the events it discloses, and the elder man's retrospective commentary, is added, in this second triplet of chapters, a third inflection. This third Rutherfordian 'voice' is distinct from those already established in two important senses; firstly in that it seems to add another level of experience to the narrative and, secondly, in that the kind of consciousness it implies is unrecognized by either of the established voices, both of which are highly self-conscious. As a consequence of the presence within the narrative of this additional voice, albeit unacknowledged, there begins to emerge what seems like another time strand to the autobiography. Alongside the remembered there runs an unremembered text, the story of the unrecognized, unconscious life delivered in the slips and chinks of language that are self-revealing precisely because they are neither consciously recognized or recorded.

So, whilst these chapters persist in keeping up the established chronology of the work, that is the exchange between past and present, the naive and the experienced Rutherford, they seem also, at intersecting points, through the agency of this extra voice, to operate outside the time scheme of Rutherford's conscious character in revealing a progress not evident, despite their determined and explicit onward movement, in the first three chapters.

I have deliberately attempted to number these points in order of their effect upon what we understand of the character of Rutherford. They are, however closely interdependent, between one and the other they mark what I will

go on to show is a subtle but significant movement in both the authorization and characterization of Mark Rutherford.

The Autobiography is extremely scarcely peopled. The first three chapters, which take us from Rutherford's birth to the first experiences of his adult life, yield not a single 'developed' character. Even the portrayal of the author's parents in the opening chapter is limited to their furnishing indispensable elements in his genealogy. Chapter II similarly concludes without revealing anyone more closely related, either historically or personally, to Rutherford, than St Paul or William Wordsworth. Chapter III looks, at first, more promising, but the 'four deacons' turn out to be little more than four types of religious hypocrisy: the 'old farmer' exhibits a mechanistic, habitual observance of his religion; Mr Catfield the blind and unquestioning acceptance of dogma; Mr Weekly commercial dependence on the chapel; the insidious Mr Snale shows how all that is cowardly, self-seeking and corrupt might be safely hidden behind a religious pose.

In view of what we know of his characterization of the members of the cast of his earliest life, the fact that Rutherford should name the three chapters that form the very centre of the autobiography after the characters they introduce, is at once surprising and, in a manner that later strikes one as typical of the kind of layering that persists in the Autobiography as a whole, somehow predictable also. What surprises at first is that the author should so alter the focus of his narrative as to disrupt the self-centred chronology set up in 'Childhood', 'Preparation' and 'Water Lane'. Yet it soon becomes clear that even though Edward and Mary Mardon and Miss Arbour and Ellen are given more conspicuous exposure than Rutherford's parents, their inclusion in the first instance, and their subsequent

portrayal, continues to be firmly determined by the extent to which they illuminate Rutherford's character and conduct.

However, whilst this remains accurate as far as the explicit function of the characters within these chapters is concerned, there is a way in which, implicitly, their very presence upon the stage of Rutherford's life, in providing a distraction from the relentless concentration on his self, allows for just those slips that I have suggested most reveal what he is really, unself-consciously like, for the entry of the third voice. Paradoxically, what emerges from this is a sense of the extent to which, even during outbursts like that of the 'self-sacrifice' speech in chapter II, Rutherford remains quite definitely in control of the self he portrays. Only within the crowd, even if the crowd is no more than one other character, does Rutherford, for isolated instants, lose sight of the self he so meticulously maintains.

We begin to realize how markedly different is Rutherford's use of character from that of a novel like Charles Dickens' Great Expectations (1861), for instance, throughout which the narrative is carried forward by its characters, whose relationships become the plot. The characters with whom Rutherford comes into contact do not move the narrative forward in the same way as those that Pip encounters do; on the contrary, Rutherford's are largely unconnected with the events of his life. Rutherford's story, far from being full of events like Pip's, is predominantly internal, it is the story of the passage of his mind through life.

The kind of movement that the relationship between characters like Magwitch and Estella instigates and the pace that this imposes upon Dickens's

narrative, would be counterproductive (for Hale White) in the Autobiography. The revelation of Mark Rutherford depends largely upon the fact that he is a man without connections, getting nowhere, and upon the possibility of his being given enough time to fully reveal himself. Hale White so constructs the Autobiography that Rutherford can access, through the agency of his different voices, not only the conscious past, but, most importantly, the unexpurgated, unremembered undercurrent of past experience that is the basis of all that Rutherford writes or fails to write. In this autobiography editorial control rests neither with Mark Rutherford as author, nor with the titular editor Reuben Shapcott, but with Rutherford's sub-conscious.

The fact that characters like Snale, the Mardons and Miss Arbour actually impede what momentum the Autobiography does exhibit is a positive device. Through his encounters with these people, we are allowed to glimpse in Rutherford the onset of a process of self-discovery, not in the manner of conscious retrospect, as has formerly been the case, but both liminally and consecutively. One might be tempted to dismiss the characterization of Mr Snale as a rather unimaginative portrait of the religious hypocrite were it not for the fact that he presents Rutherford with a kind of mirror in which the logical progression of his own religious bankruptcy is inescapably reflected:

Although I despised Snale, his letter was the beginning of a great trouble to me. I had now been preaching for many months, and had met with no response whatever. Occasionally a stranger or two visited the chapel, and with what eager eyes did I not watch for them on the next Sunday, but none of them came twice. It was amazing to me that I could pour out myself as I did, poor though I knew that self to be, and yet make so little impression. Not one man or woman seemed any different because of anything I had said or done, and not a soul kindled at any word of mine, no matter with what earnestness it might be charged. How I groaned over my

incapacity to stir in my people any participation in my thoughts or care for them! (Autobiography, p. 54)

Just as Snale's 'piety' reveals itself as chiefly a matter of self-aggrandizement, so Rutherford's ministry emerges as comprising primarily a means of effecting not divine, but self, revelation. The 'trouble' for him is, not that he might be failing properly to convey the word of God, but that he should 'pour out [himself] as [he] did' to the congregation only to have that self ignored. Rutherford's incredulity that nobody should have been 'any different because of anything I had said or done' and that no 'soul kindled at any word of mine', is shown here to be of a piece with the arrogance that compels Snale to write to the newspaper. It is the semi-realization of this perhaps that makes Snale's letter not merely an annoying irritation but the 'beginning of a great trouble' to Rutherford. That final 'groaning' sentence reveals how Rutherford has, in effect, appropriated the congregation into his own service. He speaks of them as 'my people', hopes to 'stir' in them 'participation in my thoughts or care for them!'. In terms of the progress of the Autobiography, Snale presents one of a number of sticking points, obstacles of which Rutherford can neither fully comprehend the significance, nor escape or evade.

In chapter IV, 'Edward Gibbon Mardon', Rutherford explains how Mardon's 'negative criticism', his arguments as an assured atheist, leaves him with 'no reply to make'. Significantly, the halts that Snale and Mardon impose upon their author's ability to allow even the immature Rutherford simply to talk his way through the Autobiography, gives the younger man just sufficient time for unconscious reflection:

This negative criticism, in which Mardon greatly excelled, was all new to me, and I had no reply to make. He had a sledgehammer way of expressing himself, while I, on the contrary, always required time to bring into shape what I saw. Just then I saw nothing; I was stunned, bewildered out of the sphere of my own thoughts, and pained at the roughness with which he treated what I had cherished. (Autobiography, p. 61)

Mardon introduces a 'new' line of thought and argument into Rutherford's life. In the face of Mardon's words all that formerly was so clearly visible is temporarily obscured: 'Just then I saw nothing'. This fleeting interference with his ability to 'see', leaves Rutherford 'stunned', mentally paralysed, unable to go on with his self-conscious narrative. What he calls the 'sphere of his own thoughts' is that parasitically circular rhythm in which a highly self-conscious past is used to call forth the present and an equally self-conscious commentary which unfailingly leads back into a selective memory.

The most vital result is that, in examining Mardon, Rutherford catches a glimpse of himself without consciously registering (and thus burying) the fact:

He had a sledgehammer way of expressing himself, while I, on the contrary, always required time to bring into shape what I saw.

In recognising the crushing directness of Mardon's expression, Rutherford begins to realize his own 'contrary' mode of utterance as requiring 'time' and 'shaped'. He sees briefly that his own self-characterization is neither spontaneous nor natural, but, compared with Mardon's 'way of expressing himself', artificial and indirect. Whilst Rutherford is conscious of all the feelings that this intelligence stimulated, of being 'stunned' and experiencing 'bewilderment' and even 'pain' in its grip, he can't sustain for more than an instant the realization of what that intelligence means in terms of his own character, or, more specifically, to his self-characterization. In this sense, the kind of self-knowledge that Mardon provokes

in Rutherford takes place within a time frame that is distinct from his conscious life and self-conscious autobiography.

It might seem perverse of Rutherford to identify, in the man who so consistently and neatly dismisses the beliefs in which his self-consciousness is invested, his only real friend. Though the relationship owes its establishment to Mardon, who recognizes, long before Rutherford himself does, his friend's unorthodoxy,¹¹ its continued survival depends upon what Rutherford would have us believe, and perhaps believes himself, is his inability to 'resist' Mardon (Autobiography, p. 64). What keeps them together also ensures their polarization. Despite all that he might protest to the contrary, Rutherford will only tolerate friendship so long as it presents no threat to his self-esteem. With Mardon, a man so obviously (theologically) dissimilar, Rutherford can cast himself in the rôle of defender of his faith. With the likes of Snale or other members of his congregation Rutherford might find that, in identifying their numerous little hypocrisies, he is forced to acknowledge his own; there is more to Snale's criticism of him than he is prepared to admit.

Clearly, the positive affirmation of the existence of God or of an afterlife by Rutherford is no more tenable than their outright dismissal by Mardon. Because, either way, their argument admits of no final resolution, both Mardon and Rutherford can remain together whilst continuing to maintain and defend their respective beliefs, each having his own point of view reinforced, if anything, by the other's fervour.

11. 'A purely orthodox preacher it was, of course, impossible for [Mardon] to hear', Autobiography, p. 60.

Yet if Mardon could be said to provide the means by which the systolic pulse of Rutherford's character is accentuated, the extent to which he is instrumental also in maintaining the diastole should not be underestimated. Chapter IV introduces Mardon, showing the continual challenges to which his society subjects Rutherford. One reads this chapter certain that, if anyone is to do so, Mardon must prefigure some radical alteration in Rutherford's character. And yet the opening sentences of the subsequent chapter, 'Miss Arbour', show how little difference Mardon has actually made to the established rhythm of Rutherford's personality:

For some months I continued without much change in my monotonous existence. I did not see Mardon often, for I rather dreaded him, and I shrank from what I saw to be inevitably true when I talked to him. (Autobiography, p. 64)

Despite the difference that meeting Mardon has made to him, Rutherford still manages to sustain, largely undisrupted, what he admits is the old 'monotonous' existence. Caught mentally between the irresistible, if confounding, attraction of Mardon's 'truth' and the parallel 'dread' of its implications for him personally, Rutherford's external 'existence' drags on with the same self-suppressing uniformity as before.

Rutherford admits that though he 'shrank' consciously from Mardon, his effect upon the 'process of excavation' which has always been a part of Rutherford's psychological predisposition, though he chooses to identify it by the less sinister and grander, 'self-revelation', is one of continuous incitement. This intensification is countervailed, however, by the fact that, in the end, all that Mardon's stimulation does is to furnish Rutherford with additional matter for

what he later recognizes has been his most damaging habit, that of 'meditative indecision' (Autobiography, p. 114):

'I do believe in God,'

'There is nothing in that statement. What do you believe about him? - that is the point. You will find that you believe nothing, in truth, which I do not also believe of the laws which govern the universe and man.'

'I believe in an intellect of which these laws are the expression.'

'Now what kind of an intellect can that be? You can assign to it no character in accordance with its acts. It is an intellect, if it be an intellect at all, which will swallow up a city, and will create the music of Mozart for me when I am weary; an intellect which brings to birth His Majesty King George IV, and the love of an affectionate mother for her child; an intellect which, in the person of a tender girl, shows an exquisite conscience, and in the person of one or two religious creatures whom I have known, shows a conscience almost inverted. I have always striven to prove to my theological friends that their mere affirming anything or nothing of God is of no consequence. They may be affirming anything or nothing. The question, the all-important question is, What can be affirmed about Him?'

'Your side of the argument naturally admits of a more precise statement than mine. I cannot encompass God with a well-marked definition, but for all that, I believe in Him...'

(Autobiography, pp. 103-4, author's emphasis)

This 'argument' is both self-perpetuating and irreconcilable. Mardon's demand to be provided with definite 'affirmation' can elicit nothing more 'precise' or profound than Rutherford's restatement of 'belief'.

Despite their apparent inertia, his exchanges with Mardon do disturb Rutherford greatly:

Often I have felt thoroughly prostrated by you...

And yet their effect is short lived:

...and yet when I have left you the old superstition has arisen unsubdued. (Autobiography, p. 105)

However, if the theological challenge that Rutherford's relationship with Mardon provokes is less dramatic than might be expected, its result is certainly more

complex than that of simple incredulity. Under persistent pressure from Mardon's logic, Rutherford's 'belief' comes, surreptitiously, though no less genuinely for that, to seem to him like mere 'superstition'. He uses the word 'belief' as a sort of charm, by means of which he avoids having to examine the nature of his religious conviction. This comes about, not because Mardon has bullied Rutherford into thinking so, but because he has created the climate in which thought achieves viability.

The idea that what Rutherford had been used to call his 'faith' had been nothing more than 'superstition' emerges, without premeditation, at the close of an argument with Mardon, within which it is Rutherford's purpose to reassert and defend what, at this point, he perceives unquestionably as 'belief'. Within the statement: 'I do believe in God', the auxiliary verb 'do', whose purpose, ostensibly, is to give emphasis to what (grammatically and psychologically), ought to be the principal verb 'believe', is allowed, by the additional emphasis endowed in its italics, to infringe on 'belief'. Typically, the right thing, 'belief', comes, for Rutherford, from the wrong place, from the sphere of conscious assertion. By the time Rutherford becomes aware of the futility of his attempts to justify belief and can see that the only possible answer to Mardon's request to be told 'What' can be 'affirmed about' God, is: 'I believe in Him' the assertion has lost authority for Rutherford. A little further on, in prefixing 'superstition' with the word 'old', he further distances himself from all that he now begins to see had been buried under cover of what he had thought of as belief, making space for the intimation of the, until now, unperceived emergence of something more honest and

wholesome, even though it comes nowhere near 'belief', than that to which he had been habituated to avow.

It might be said then that the character of Mardon both acts upon and is utilized by Rutherford. His exposition of Mardon's character presents Rutherford with just sufficient distraction from his conscious self to allow for the exposure of aspects of his own personality without his being conscious either of their existence or of his revelation of them. Conversely, Rutherford exploits Mardon's opposition to his beliefs as a means of bolstering convictions that, left to himself, he finds difficult to contemplate and has trouble justifying.

This peristaltic rhythm of revelation and suppression in Rutherford ought to be self-defeating: consciousness drowning sub-consciousness, sub-consciousness flooding consciousness. Yet within it there is a movement forward. Almost in spite of himself, in the language and grammar with which he charts his relationship to Mardon, Rutherford realizes his own strategies of avoidance and is honest enough to acknowledge them, if only implicitly.

The character of Edward Gibbon Mardon is then the absolutely essential component of the Autobiography. Rutherford's sense of himself depends heavily upon Mardon, without whom, it would be impossible for us to know Rutherford, or for Rutherford to characterize himself. Of the few characters that the Autobiography accommodates, Mardon and his daughter Mary alone are granted a reappearance. Apart from the chapter in which he is introduced and that bears his name, Mardon returns at the opening of chapter V, where his relationship with and effect upon Rutherford is the subject of the introductory paragraphs, so that subsequently he remains as an implicit contrasting presence in a chapter that

goes on to examine the very different manner in which Miss Arbour effects Rutherford's thoughts and actions. Chapter VI, despite its title 'Ellen and Mary', retains Mardon as its motivating spirit, as he is reflected in Rutherford's thoughts about him and about what he might think. Rutherford disappears at the close of the book, or rather, less dramatically, he fades away. Remarkably, it is in Mardon's death and funeral oration that the Autobiography culminates. The justified life towards which Rutherford has been moving throughout the book is realized in the powerfully moving end of the unbelieving Mardon. In this novel with a single voice and character, in which places and people become only metaphors for Rutherford's state of being, this central presence is finally displaced by the reality of Mardon, who has so consistently contradicted everything the book was fighting for.

In terms of the kind of realism that Mardon's portrayal produces, allowing Rutherford to give away clues to his character without knowing himself to have done so, in other words to duplicate the 'creation' of character outside the literary world, Hale White anticipates later writers like Virginia Woolfe and James Joyce. Those conscious time frames that are obvious within the narrative from its inception are not merely supplemented by the utterances delivered during what I have called Rutherford's unconscious time but, periodically at least, displaced by it, so that, paradoxically, their true perspective is revealed, not as authoritative but secondary. Those flashes of insight that Rutherford registers unconsciously, as if on the one hand they weren't even a part of his story whilst on the other, as virtual asides in the drama of his conscious character, they are the most substantial, open and honest declarations of selfhood, are perhaps the

ultimate that autobiography can aspire to discover. Those minute glimpses of what consciousness masks are as near as it is possible to get to self-revelation.

The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, even when combined with its companion volume Mark Rutherford's Deliverance, remains a short work. Curiously for autobiography, which, by its very nature, would seem to need to hold the life as a big thing, what Rutherford forces us to do is to look down the wrong end of the telescope, so that everything gets smaller and smaller until we are obliged to see in the most minute and seemingly insignificant detail, not just context but substance. There is a tension in the Autobiography that has much to do with the fact that Hale White is writing to rationalists; the rational man wouldn't need to write autobiography, life would simply be the kind of inventory that John Stuart Mill largely makes of it and that the conscious part of Rutherford strives to achieve. For Hale White the most profound meaning of the 'I' exists beyond what happens to it and what it does, in the unconsidered asides it makes to itself.

The Autobiography is a kind of Pilgrim's Paralysis then, in which every discovery dissolves into reflection and so leaves Rutherford exactly where he has always been. The book becomes a history of false starts in which the external career is interrupted by interior disappointment. The first sermon at the Water Lane chapel should be a signal stage in the life of the would-be evangelist. Yet even when he takes the 'opportunity to say something', Rutherford does not listen to his own words:

I began by pointing out that each philosophy and religion which had arisen in the world was the answer to a question earnestly asked at the time; it was a remedy proposed to meet some extreme pressure...

Unless there had been an antecedent necessity there could have been no religion; and no problem of life or death could be solved except under the weight of that necessity. (Autobiography, p. 40)

By concentrating always on the future, Rutherford avoids asking the questions that would otherwise arise as the inevitable consequence of recognizing difficulties or discrepancies arising 'at the time'. The way in which the narrative is told makes all the speaker's 'necessities' self-generated: there is little sense of the daily and constant pressure of people and events, of life itself, upon his mind. He consistently evades the 'extreme pressure' of present events and feelings by fixing his attention upon what he can always manage to hope will be 'before' him. Implicit in this avoidance is the fear that if he ever allowed himself a full look at 'now' as well as the 'Better' he might have to realize the 'Worst'.¹² Hardy felt that our only hope was in recognizing the 'Worst': it is almost as if, in the Autobiography, Rutherford thinks that to face up to the 'Worst' would be a kind of despair.

What Rutherford ends up with by means of the kind of periphrasis I have suggested he engages in, is indeed less dramatic than despair, though no less destructive for that. One feels that 'active' despair would be an advantageous thing in Rutherford; it might rouse him from his terrified complacency. It would take just such 'extreme pressure' as despair would constitute to provoke the questions that might help to begin to solve, or even properly to realize, the 'problem[s] of life or death'. But Rutherford is careful to ask only those questions he knows to be answerable, just as he is careful to keep ahead of the life he is

12. The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy, ed. by James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1989), 'In Tenebris II'.

living. Because he only really sees life in the present as a means of gaining the 'stimulation' necessary to discover some happily remote 'prospect', that 'antecedent necessity', without which the questions of life are unpronounceable, never presses upon him. Indeed, the idea of anything 'antecedent' seems incompatible with Rutherford's consciousness, his need is always invested in the future, he has continually to disown the past in order to be able to be able to keep coming up with 'new' beginnings.

Only much later, as retrospective commentator upon his own life, does Rutherford see life as a continuum:

I managed to get through my duties, but how I cannot tell. Fortunately our calamities are not what they appear to be when they lie in perspective behind us or before us, for they actually consist of distinct moments, each of which is overcome by itself. (Autobiography, p. 116)

Though this passage as a whole is spoken by the elder Rutherford, the first sentence is an echo of the younger man talking. Two things combine to suggest this, the preoccupation with wanting to be able to 'tell' and the implicit view of time. The structure of the sentence is a kind of reflection of the remembered Rutherford's habit of mind, the action of the first clause being undermined by the incapacity of the second. This kind of discontinuity of thought is part of the drive to seek new beginnings. Rutherford can't stop at his first clause and, here at least, can't get beyond his second. Not being able to 'tell' somehow seems to deny for him the fact of achievement. He can never stop at the first clause, the first thought, but is compelled to go on to sound the secondary, disappointed thought.

The suggestion that this opening sentence must come from the younger man is reinforced by the phrase 'getting through' to describe the manner in which

he perceives the discharge of duties. The fact of duties being an opening to something else and not the very basis of morality, is typical of Rutherford's habit of viewing life as a series of doors that cut off the past as swiftly as they open onto the future. 'Getting through' implies a vision of time, not as a fluid and flowing thing, but as an oppressive barrier holding one back, threatening to trap one. 'Getting through' means 'getting away from', if only physically.

In contrast to the first thought/second thought structure of the opening sentence and its resultant impasse, the second sentence has a tripartite structure, within which is allowed sufficient time for thought to develop. As a consequence the sentence is more relaxed and, though it has the tone merely of an aside, from the point of view of the autobiography, we get from it a much closer insight into Rutherford's character as a whole. It is as if the two sentences, their structure, timing, tone and content, were two psychological 'snapshots' of Rutherford, taken years apart but presented here in conjunction. As an older man Rutherford can look back and see the 'distinct moments' in connection, 'each...overcome by itself', with each other. The 'calamities' that time throws up are not, for the mature man, merely 'gone through' but are 'overcome', though significantly, not by dint of any effort of his own, but simply by their having passed, unaided, into the past.

There is less of what seems like a compulsion to achieve a conclusion, to take control, in this second 'experienced' sentence and more willingness to wait and see, to allow conclusions to present themselves. For the younger man 'moments' lose all distinction in being overlooked in favour of some distant 'prospect', they are not attached to time as a process but compartmentalized as

if by a series of bolted doors. Similarly, the 'moments' the younger Rutherford continually looks forward to either never arrive or, if they do, their arrival is denied in an effort to keep in motion.

Because the younger man continually blocks himself off from what is uncomfortable or irreconcilable in his past, he misses out on the comfort of seeing his 'calamities...overcome by [themselves]', of realizing how it is entirely consistent that something that seems, at one particular moment, to be of vital or devastating importance can, at a later, pale into insignificance. If, by his habit of looking forward and his strategy of instituting 'new' beginnings to his life, Rutherford avoids the painful and embarrassing necessity of having to see his 'calamities' laid out 'in perspective' behind him, having to admit that he was wrong; he misses the solace and satisfaction of having them diminish as time cancels them out. Because he can not yield to the idea of life as a continuum, nothing in it can be effectively concluded, the past lingers on, though buried. 'Calamities' like that of his 'conversion' continue to weigh him down many years after it has temporally been consigned to the past.

The Autobiography comes increasingly to look more like an argument looking for a resolution than a questioning life. Rutherford's 'explanations' come to seem more and more like evasions of questions:

It occurs to me here to offer an explanation of a failing of which I have been accused in later years, and that is secrecy and reserve. The real truth is, that nobody more than myself could desire self-revelation; but owing to peculiar tendencies in me, and peculiarity of education, I was always prone to say things in conversation which I found produced blank silence in the majority of those who listened to me, and immediate opportunity was taken by my hearers to turn to something trivial. Hence it came to pass that only when tempted by unmistakable sympathy could I be induced to express my real self on any topic of importance. (Autobiography, p. 27-8)

I have called the Autobiography a history of false starts and suggested that Rutherford is careful to ask only those questions that he knows to be answerable. And yet the opening paragraph of this retrospective passage seems to deny both of these assertions. Here the elder Rutherford 'offer[s] an explanation' of an admitted 'failing'. At first sight this seems like a radical development. Yet, on closer inspection, one realizes that though the 'explanation' is in place, the question is still wanting. There is no evidence of Rutherford's having met the question 'Why am I secretive and reserved?' head on; it certainly does not appear as an explicit part of his text. Not only does the question remain unasked but the phrase 'of which I have been accused' throws doubt upon its integrity in the first place by turning it into an 'accusation'. Viewed in this light the 'explanation' begins to look far more like a defence. The habit of self evasion is difficult to break, even for the elder Rutherford. By pre-empting questions in this manner he is able to offer 'explanations' that avoid more exacting enquiry.

The phrase 'real truth', like the 'self-revelation' that follows it here, is tautological in a way typical of Rutherford. I discussed earlier the way in which phrases such as these expect too much. One is, in simply being oneself, self-revelatory; the self-revealing self is something else entirely, it is the self once removed, not revealed but recreated. In the same way the 'real' is the 'truth'; in doubling up one does not add but detract. Such phrases might actually be a means of avoiding what they purport to seek. The result of constructions such as 'real truth' and 'self-revelation' is not greater precision but confusion, even suspicion. Rutherford wants 'good' things to excess, so that they begin to seem like evils. There is a disturbing sense, in this paragraph and in the passage as a

whole, of Rutherford being caught (or deliberately placing himself) somewhere between not saying (avoiding questions), saying too much and saying the wrong thing.

This hyperconsciousness of speech and the kind of intensity that phrases such as those just quoted imply, not only defeats its own object but is self-defeating for Rutherford:

I was always prone to say things in conversation which I found produced blank silence in the majority of those who listened to me, and immediate opportunity was taken by my hearers to turn to something trivial. (Autobiography, pp. 27-8)

The liability to 'say things' is indeed one of Rutherford's biggest problems. This is a matter of timing as much as anything else, of the determination to 'get through' and the drive to control or manipulate situations rather than to await outcomes. He seems incapable of accepting that there is a limit to what words alone can do and that the deficit in communication has sometimes to be made up silently in time and with sympathy and perception. Rutherford wants to treat all conversation as self-confession, with his listeners as confessors. What he considers 'trivial' here may well be an attempt by his 'hearers' (an unusual way to describe the people that one engages with in conversation), to turn to some less contentious or embarrassing matter. He cannot seem to reconcile what, on one level, he undoubtedly recognizes as the meanness of his external life with that inner sense of himself.

Strangely enough, when relating his earlier sermons,¹³ Rutherford appears both spontaneous and entirely at ease, as if he could only relax when operating

13. Autobiography, pp. 25-6; p. 40; pp. 56-7.

within an established framework. As a minister in a pulpit the problem of self-explanation would not arise (either for him or his 'hearers'), whilst the sermon provides a circumscribed form to discourse, an agreed weight to words and a predictability to interpretation. In 'secular' conversation Rutherford is deprived of what is at once the status and the anonymity he enjoys as a consequence of his religious rôle. When he leaves off being the 'minister', it is as if Rutherford feels the exposure of a rawly unfamiliar self, of which he is neither wholly in contact or control. The over-compensation implicit in 'self-revelation', and in the citing of 'peculiar tendencies' and 'peculiarity of education', is the sign of a frantic attempt to fill or excuse the vacuum that the 'absence' of the minister leaves in him.

One wonders what it could have been that Rutherford said in order to elicit the response he complains of, and yet, if it was anything like that admitted in pursuit of the friend in chapter VIII, one can well understand the apparent rebuff:

I have overstepped all the bounds of etiquette in obtruding myself on him, and have opened my heart even to shame.
(Autobiography, p. 130)

This clearly shows that Rutherford knows where the 'bounds of etiquette' lie, and that he knows what belongs within the province of silence, but that he is compelled by a kind of 'habit', 'I was always prone...', to transgress these limits. Worse than mere gaucheness, Rutherford knows, before he opens his mouth, that whatever relief the 'saying' will bring will immediately be followed by rejection and 'shame'.

The sub-text of this important moment of self-analysis (perhaps of the Autobiography as a whole) is something like 'I want to be able to show my true self', but the 'explicit' text, despite what it says, far from facilitating revelation, seems constantly to put forward barriers that fend off the possible realization of the 'real self', undermining its viability with impossible conditions. Even if the obstacle of 'unmistakable sympathy' could be surmounted, one realizes that what is posited through its agency is not the thing itself but only the 'expression' of the 'real self'. What is offered is in fact not the isolation of an essential self but the institution of another verbal intermediary (like Henry James's characters). Rutherford seems so afraid of himself that what seems (to him and to us) at first glance to be self-seeking is really self-avoidance.

What is typical of the book is Rutherford's need to offer the same analysis of himself twice over, as he fastidiously picks at the problems of his own character. So he offers a second paragraph using another perspective:

It is a curious instance of the difficulty of diagnosing (to use a doctor's word) any spiritual disease, if disease this shyness may be called. People would ordinarily set it down to self-reliance, with no healthy need of intercourse. It was nothing of the kind. It was as excess of communicativeness, and an eagerness to show what was most at my heart, and to ascertain what was at the heart of those to whom I talked, which made me incapable of mere fencing and trifling, and so often caused me to retreat into myself when I found absolute absence of response. (Autobiography, p. 28)

In comparison with the preceding paragraph, which might be called 'emotional' in that it is centred around extreme feelings and needs ('nobody more than myself could desire'), this latter seems eminently rational in its pursuit of a precise language. It is as if this is a second try, in technical language, at what the first paragraph, in a more explicitly self-centred way attempted (and failed to get

right). The tone changes, the 'I' being held back for most of the paragraph, only appearing at the end. And yet despite the apparent differences between the paragraphs, that word 'diagnosis' seems deviously akin to the 'explanation' it purports to supersede. This is a 'doctor's word' Rutherford admits, as if trying if it might be possible to understand his feelings by assuming another persona. His choice of persona must be significant; it allows a covert 'self-diagnosis' of 'disease' and '[un]health', and yet, because it is not made in his name, it allows Rutherford to deny involvement in its determination and responsibility for its accuracy. Indeed, as soon as this 'diagnosis' is issued Rutherford does his best to limit its effect by making the 'disease' a 'spiritual' one and then at once dropping it in favour of the less contentious, social word 'shyness'. Rutherford, in all honesty, can't stop here though, as the 'if' and 'may' show. Finally he opens the difficulty up to a wider anonymous audience, 'People' would 'set it down to self-reliance'. The paragraph moves from 'dis-ease' to 'self-reliance', that is, typically for the earlier Rutherford, away from confrontation and back into 'self'. In the end he blusters, 'It was nothing of the kind', only to fall back upon the old habit of intemperate language:

It was an excess of communicativeness, an eagerness to show what was most at my heart and to ascertain what was at the heart of those to whom I talked... (my emphases)

The word 'ascertain' is telling, not only because it is so typical of the kind of idealistic scale of knowledge of which Rutherford is in constant pursuit, but because it implies a certainty that Hale White himself reckoned impossible:

I have a strange fancy - that there is one word which I was sent into the world to say. At times I can dimly make it out but I cannot speak it. Nevertheless it serves to make all other speech seem beside the mark and futile. (Last Pages, p.289)

In so far as he declares that the inability to say that 'one word' renders 'all other speech...futile' (that is his own speaking, all of his words), this is a deathly thought for a writer. Hale White, like Matthew Arnold in the 'Buried Life' (1852), recognizes (and connects) both the inadequacy of secular or social speech and the existence of some primal drive that language cannot express. The authority of 'sent into the world to say' as a condition of being is a quasi-religious reformation of 'There rises an unspeakable desire', from the 'buried' life in Arnold. It is as if the state of 'modern' consciousness precluded real being:

But hardly have we, for one little hour,
 Been on our own line, have we been ourselves -
 Hardly had skill to utter one of all
 The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
 But they course on for ever unexpressed.¹⁴

Arnold could be describing Rutherford here. It is because he is so skilled at (self-misleading) 'utterance' that Rutherford can sometimes overlook those 'nameless' things that lie beneath the surface of his life, as though if he can't name a thing he can't comprehend its existence, except, of course, as inexplicable 'feeling'. Strangely enough, it is not primarily the 'feelings' that trouble Rutherford so much as their 'namelessness'. In the face of all that Hale White and Arnold identify as without name and verbally inexpressible, Rutherford keeps hammering away at words.

14. The Poems of Matthew Arnold, 'The Buried Life', ll. 59-63, p. 290.

CHAPTER THREE

MARK RUTHERFORD'S DELIVERANCE

Be no longer a chaos, but a world, or even Worldkin. Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it then. Up, up! ¹

Taken on the terms on which it was originally published (that is as a single volume and without Reuben Shapcott's editorial note which was added to the revised edition when the Autobiography and Deliverance were re-issued as a single volume in 1888), Mark Rutherford's Deliverance is an extraordinary novel. Even if we take into account its explanatory sub-title: 'being the second part of his Autobiography', the reader is still left with a work that presupposes not only the knowledge of an earlier volume, but one whose narrative, to a substantial degree, depends upon a thorough understanding of the shape, tone and 'philosophy' of the life before the Deliverance opens. Understanding what the Deliverance means in terms of the life as a whole, and seeing how the second volume does indeed represent for Mark Rutherford a 'deliverance', depends entirely upon the Autobiography.

For most of the Autobiography Rutherford's life is shown as one that persistently over-reaches itself so that the limited progress it does achieve can only be comprehended as failure. Peter Allen summarizes the existence that the Autobiography presents thus:

Not only does [Rutherford] fail to establish a meaningful place in society, but that society defeats and discards him without even appearing to notice

1. Sartor Resartus, p. 149.

that it has done so. This is the Diary of a Nobody with all the humour gone. As a dramatisation of the sensation of social meaninglessness, Hale White's work is brilliantly successful - even disturbingly so - as we realize a little uneasily that we are being called upon to identify an ineffectual nonentity whose promised 'deliverance' proves to be no more satisfactory than the rest of his life. (Allen, p. 146)

It is remarkable that Allen should recognize the brilliance of the dramatization of social meaninglessness that the Autobiography, by his own admission, so disturbingly accomplishes, and yet fail to see how, precisely because of the nature of this earlier success in the delineation of what he describes as an 'ineffectual nonentity', the 'deliverance' of the Deliverance is rendered not merely as 'satisfactory' but as a genuine and hard won triumph.

Even John Goode who, in his essay 'Mark Rutherford and Spinoza',² is prepared to acknowledge that any apprehension of Rutherford's 'deliverance' is bound to be complicated by the 'difficult' philosophy of Spinoza,³ can still go on to ask:

What is Mark's deliverance? Is it the release from the isolation of the countryside and the purposeful life in the city? Is it release from the grinding horror of work through the reconstituted family and the holiday? Is it death itself? Nowhere in this text are we told that Mark is definitely delivered nor from what he is delivered. (Goode, p. 439)

Because we are not 'told that Mark is definitely delivered' Goode suggests that the 'title Deliverance is a manifest tease'. But in Rutherford's work both the not 'telling', and the 'indefinition' that Goode rightly identifies, are never the result of simple playfulness, or mere teasing. Rutherford's refusal to represent the

2. John Goode, 'Mark Rutherford and Spinoza', English Literature in Transition, 34, pp. 424-53. Hereafter cited as Goode.

3. In the essay cited above, Goode says of Hale White that 'No other writer in English fiction has so strong a relationship to a specific philosophic enterprise', p. 424.

'deliverance' in terms of the kind of commentary that George Eliot's narrative involves, is part of a deliberate attempt to leave questions like those above, open, and to ensure that answers evolve from the reader's consciousness. Goode virtually admits this when he describes the failure of the book to provide 'definite' answers, as an 'interrogative silence' (Goode, p. 439). And yet, even recognising this much, he can still speak of that 'silence' as something that needs to be 'healed'. The only prescription that Goode can offer, he admits to be merely a palliative. The Ethic will not help in the procurement of answers but might 'help us identify' more questions. This 'propensity to entangle himself in problems which he had not the power to solve',⁴ by formulating 'new' questions, is precisely what is superseded in the Deliverance. What Goode seems to overlook is that far from being susceptible to remedy, the acceptance of dis-ease in Rutherford is an indispensable element of the 'cure'. Though the answer to the questions Goode asks as to the precise nature of the 'deliverance' is that it proceeds from all of the things he mentions, the most profound response that the book makes to these enquiries is that Rutherford's 'disentanglement' finally lies in the suspension of the compulsion to ask spurious questions and the resolve to live as best he can alongside the insoluble problems that life inevitably brings to light.

John Goode's admission that Rutherford's 'deliverance' is neither a simple thing in itself nor one easy to explain, and his subsequent attempt, if not to 'heal' then at least to alleviate the 'silence' that it (purposely) provokes, is a symptom of what Hale White would call the 'struggle[s] to put everything into words' (Letters, p. 287). In a sense the reader is called upon (at the level of narrative)

4. Deliverance, Reuben Shapcott's preface, p. v.

to do what Rutherford himself has learnt to do, that is to leave off questioning its content and to comply with its form. At its most profound the book's explication of the 'deliverance' is located in something 'wordless and purely symbolic' (Letters, p. 287).

Nevertheless, the very fact that the 'deliverance' of the second volume should prove so problematic, says something about the way, as readers, we expect meaning to be rendered in terms of definite answers. The difficulty of comprehending meaning in Rutherford is not that he does not offer answers but that they are evolutionary and contingent, dependent upon forward as well as backward reference. Rutherford's writing aspires neither to the sibylline certainty of George Eliot nor to the 'defeatism' of Thomas Hardy. In the 'world' that the Autobiography and Deliverance represent there is precious little room for 'improvement' and yet Rutherford does find some; if we have difficulty in identifying where that improvement lies it is because we are more attuned to the work of an Eliot or Hardy. The 'scale' of Rutherford's meaning requires that we look very closely to discern it.

Stated bleakly, the movement that Rutherford's first two volumes represent is one from self-evasive disappointment to disappointed self-recognition. Resignation and acceptance of limitation do underpin the Deliverance, though not, significantly, in any cowardly or self-defeating way. Rutherford knows by now what lies on the other side of such restraint, and he knows how to evaluate it:

The instinct which leads us perpetually to compare what we are with what we might be is no doubt of enormous value, and it is the spring which prompts all action, but, like every instinct, it is the source of greatest danger. (Deliverance, p. 119)

The phrase 'constantly to compare' has a circularity about it that makes it seem like another species of the 'poetic yearnings' familiar from the Autobiography (p.

63), potentially endless and self-involved. The kind of action that this 'instinct' prompts has no real goal but is directed at what 'might be'. And yet, the very structure of this sentence, acknowledging the thought and then putting it behind him, epitomizes the movement from the Autobiography to Deliverance. The Deliverance insists upon knowing and founding action upon 'what we are', here and now, without restless speculation.

Rutherford's 'conversion' in the Autobiography is an admitted sham. What happens in the Deliverance is that he is involved in a series of unconscious conversions and reconversions. The technical jargon of the 'first' conversion:

I was obliged to declare myself convinced of sin; convinced of the efficacy of the atonement; convinced that the Holy Ghost was shed abroad in my heart; and convinced of a great many things which were the merest phrases, (Autobiography, pp. 11-12)

gives way in the second work to:

I remember the day and the very spot on which it flashed into me like a sudden burst of the sun's rays, that I had no right to this or that - to so much happiness, or even so much virtue...Straightway it seemed as if the centre of a whole system of dissatisfaction were removed, and as if the whole system collapsed.
(Deliverance, p. 119)

The transformation effected here is natural not forced; the enlightenment comes as from 'the sun's rays', comforting and warm. It involves a stripping away of 'rights' that, paradoxically, leaves Rutherford freer. That 'whole system of dissatisfaction' ('The instinct which leads us perpetually to compare what we are with what we might be'), that had confined and 'obliged' and imprisoned him for most of the Autobiography, simply gives way here. No longer compelled to be dissatisfied, he can afford to relax, to take life as it comes, to be what he is.

At the centre of Thomas Carlyle's 'biography' of Professor Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, Sartor Resartus, a work which, like Hale White's 'biography' of

Mark Rutherford, is in some measure indebted to its true author's life, there are three chapters: 'The Everlasting No', 'Centre of Indifference' and 'The Everlasting Yea'. The first describes the spiritual nadir of its protagonist, who has come to see himself as 'A feeble unit in the middle of a threatening Infinitude' (p. 126), and for whom the universe has become, 'all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition' (p. 127). In the second Teufelsdröckh's attention shifts towards the world outside him and finally, in the third, a process is completed without explanation when 'the heavy dreams rolled gradually away, and I woke to a new Heaven and a new Earth' (p. 142). This 'awakening' is the culmination of something that Carlyle terms 'the first preliminary moral Act': the 'Annihilation of Self' (p. 142).

It is typical that Carlyle's famous reinterpretation of Puritan autobiography, a reference rather old-fashioned by the 1880's, should have had so much influence on the fifty year-old Hale White. It is in the terms of a work published in 1833 that Rutherford struggles to overcome his self-preoccupation in the Autobiography and forces upon himself a more objective understanding of the world. The Deliverance is a more social work than its companion volume, with a more urgent sense of work to be done and the significance of relationships, of colleagues, friends and family.

In my first chapter I discussed the way in which, viewed by both author and reader, from the perspective of its conclusion (in the first paragraphs), Rutherford's autobiography assumes an entirely different tone as he shows, in the comments made after the book's completion, how he has come to look upon his life with a new humility. This process of enlightenment, achieved through the contemplation that the writing comprises, is repeated again by means of the new

point of view that the Deliverance creates for us. John Goode describes well the way in which Rutherford's conclusions alter the way we come to see not only his beginnings but the space in between:

The abrupt and untidy end of The Autobiography and the quantum leap into a whole different way of relating to the world in Deliverance is not merely the fictional guarantee of 'authenticity' but also a different aspect of something that is positively emerging in the earlier text. (Goode, p. 439)

Though in calling it 'abrupt and untidy', Goode shows that he has taken the conclusion of the narrative in the final chapter of the Autobiography for the 'end' of the writing, what he says about the way in which these two works 'overlap' so as to reiterate with a subtle difference, a 'positive' movement rooted in the earlier predominantly 'negative' text, is exactly right. The second new perspective that the Deliverance offers, obliges the reader to make yet another revision of the earlier novel. The two works, taken as the whole that they soon became (in 1888), far from being what Allen implies is a reiteration of hopelessness, actually represent the progression from claustrophobic introspection, a psychological still life, to an open landscape with figures. The peopling of the narrative, with all it implies, is sustained from the Autobiography into the Deliverance, in the latter however the characters are allowed more life and narrative of their own. McKay, Clem Butts and Ellen are given 'cameo' parts in the Deliverance, where they stand out in relief from Rutherford's narrative instead of existing only as extensions of his own thought process.

In order to see how the Deliverance is both distinct and yet develops out of its predecessor we must look briefly at the Autobiography. The first three chapters (excluding the first paragraphs of the opening chapter) of the

Autobiography : 'Childhood', 'Preparation' and 'Water Lane', show Rutherford rather as Thomas Carlyle presents Professor Teufelsdröckh in Sartor Resartus:

disappointed, bemocked of Destiny...All that the young heart might desire and pray for...denied; nay, as in the last worst instance, offered and then snatched away. (p. 123)

Rutherford, in his opening, disguises as autobiography, a form directed outwards at an audience, what might otherwise seem, at times, in its inwardness and self-pity, more like a private or spiritual journal. But in the second triplet of chapters, his eye, once distracted from its inward stare and obliged to direct itself outwards, can admit (if only surreptitiously), a new vision of its self. Rutherford begins to catch momentary glimpses of what Teufelsdröckh calls the 'whole me', the being whose existence comprehends more than its own 'Fear or whining Sorrow' (p. 129).

It is true that Rutherford is by no means transformed by the 'outsight' that the people who inhabit these central chapters provide for him. His appreciation of Mary Mardon's quiet endurance of suffering, for example:

It turned out that all the afternoon and evening she had suffered greatly from neuralgia. She had said nothing about it while I was there, but had behaved with cheerfulness and freedom...

does not immediately diminish the urge in Rutherford to announce his own:

...if I had a fit of neuralgia, everybody near me would know it, and be almost as much annoyed by me as I myself should be by the pain. (Autobiography, pp. 61-62)

Nevertheless, the experience of having come into contact with the Mardons creates new psychological and literary space in Rutherford's 'Life'. He begins to foreshadow the release from egotism in which the writing will culminate.

In the central chapters of the Autobiography, through the challenge of having to write about himself in relation to others, Rutherford the autobiographer

begins to discover Rutherford the man in relationship, and in so doing begins to glimpse, as a writer, what he is up against. The closing chapters of the Autobiography: 'Emancipation', 'Progress in Emancipation' and 'Oxford Street', sustain the movement tentatively begun in the middle chapters, away from the self as ineluctable centre. Rutherford's 'Emancipation', though ostensibly that from the constraints of a dogma which he can neither endorse nor summon up sufficient courage to escape, is rather, in its most profound sense, that from the self-defeating subjectivity of the opening of his 'Life'. Significantly, it is not until the penultimate chapter of the Autobiography ('Progress in Emancipation'), that Rutherford can justify the idea of his 'Life' as 'progress' in either the literary or human sense.

The final chapter shows how Rutherford begins implicitly to realize the distinction between making an 'Autobiography' out of his existence and disclosing his life. His usual reserve overcome by emotion, he describes how he surrenders his self to Theresa Woolaston:

With a storm of tears, I laid open all my heart.
(Autobiography, p. 156)

He 'laid open' his heart like a book. The heart is an open book only when it contains nothing that needs hiding, or nothing that is deemed too discreditable to expose. Rutherford describes the 'precious' service that Theresa does for him as 'healing' him of 'self-despising'. Not needing to scorn himself and to respond to self-despite by manufacturing an alternative persona, Rutherford can 'open his heart' with impunity.

The close of the Autobiography heralds another momentous event. Edward Mardon's death marks a similar point of both deprivation and empowerment as

had the move from Stoke Newington. As long before as the sixth chapter Rutherford had been competent to admit that:

I was a victim of that weakness which impels us to seek the assistance of others when we know that what they offer will be of no avail.
(Autobiography, p. 102)

The death of his friend releases Rutherford from the status of 'victim' by liberating him from the obligation of accepting that antithetical 'unavailing help'.

In his essay 'Talking About Our Troubles' Hale White writes:

We may talk about our troubles to those persons who can give us direct help, but even in this case we ought as much as possible to come to a provisional conclusion before consultation; to be perfectly clear to ourselves within our own limits. Some people have a foolish trick of applying for aid before they have done anything whatever to aid themselves, and in fact try to talk themselves into perspicuity. The only way in which they can think is by talking, and their speech consequently is not the expression of opinion carefully formed, but the manufacture of it.
(Pages, p. 66)

Rutherford had no 'provisional conclusion[s]' before he consulted Mardon, nor was Mardon the man to give him 'help' in the manner he required it. Rutherford needed the kind of assistance that Miss Arbour in chapter V 'provided' him with; he needed someone to confirm what, deep down, he felt to be right, not to tell him how wrong he was; he knew that too well already.

The withdrawal of Mardon's dubious 'assistance', however, leaves that other 'weakness' of Rutherford's: his tendency to use 'expression' not to elucidate but to 'manufacture', unresolved. When, in the concluding chapter of the Autobiography, Rutherford describes the way he delivers his story to Reuben Shapcott, the contrast is marked:

I waited till his return, and told him my story.
(Autobiography, p. 138)

The story here is a means to an end, a necessary prelude to action. There is nothing contrived about its relation; it is the product of a mind that is 'made up', determined, reconciled to the 'actual' and not obsessed with some 'ideal'. That he should have reached such a pitch of determination is something unprecedented in Rutherford as we have found him so far. That he should have achieved such a state as a result, not of the culmination of what we know by now to be his habitual speculation, but because he realizes now that speculation is pointless (he has left the school in Stoke Newington), is doubly surprising. Once set in train, action, leaving the school, relating his biography without extenuation, sets in motion its own momentum, instigates another set of priorities, imposes a different mode of being and writing on Rutherford.

The Deliverance proceeds along the lines of the ninth chapter of Sartor Resartus, that is, on the basis that one ought to strive for the 'utmost', regardless of how paltry that might seem. Speaking of what he and his friend McKay hoped to achieve at the room in Drury Lane, Rutherford shows no compunction in admitting that it was little enough:

We aspired to save nobody. We knew no salvation ourselves. We ventured humbly to bring a feeble ray of light into the dwellings of two or three poor men and women. (Deliverance, p. 96)

The expansive language of the beginning of the Autobiography: 'self-revelation', 'sacrifice', 'conversion', is entirely absent here. Rutherford's 'aspirations' now have much more of a human scale to them. And yet, recognising his own and McKay's limitations and their inherent 'feebleness' is, in the Deliverance, a spur to action and not, as often in the Autobiography, a prelude to despair. Strangely enough, the realization of how little might be achieved instils a confidence in Rutherford unknown in the Autobiography.

The precise nature of his new won confidence can be seen in Rutherford's relationship with McKay. McKay is another 'strong' man, like Edward Mardon. He is certain of himself and assertive, more than a match for the Rutherford we knew in the Autobiography. Like Mardon too, McKay has a tendency to see everything in terms of black and white but, what is significant is that not only is Rutherford now able to recognize this tendency, he recognizes it now as a flaw, so that in setting forth his relationship with McKay there is a new sense of equality, even superiority. With Mardon, Rutherford was constantly cowed into uncertainty and submission, whereas, speaking of McKay, his voice takes on a tone of knowingness, even benign condescension, 'McKay had a passionate desire to reform the world' (Deliverance, p. 23). Though McKay undoubtedly exhibits characteristics typical of Edward Mardon, he reminds us too of Rutherford's own unreasonable enthusiasm at the opening of the Autobiography. McKay's 'passionate desire' towards the world is an echo of Rutherford's own for friendship, recognition and 'success' in the earlier volume. By now, however, Rutherford has gained some conception of how passion and desire can, in their inevitable self-centredness, actually impede progress, become self-serving ends in themselves. The two men share also a similar religious background:

McKay had been brought up on the Bible. He had before him, not only there, but in the history of all great religious movements, a record of the improvement of the human race, or large proportions of it, not merely by gradual civilisation, but by inspiration spreading itself suddenly. He could not get it out of his head that something of this kind was not possible again in our time. He longed to try for himself in his own poor way in one of the slums about Drury Lane. (Deliverance, p. 24)

The implication here is that Rutherford knows, from bitter experience that the kind and scale of change that McKay seeks is not possible in the manner or by the means that he intends. The Rutherford of the Deliverance is by proxy able to

understand at last the Rutherford of the Autobiography. Human nature was no longer amenable to 're-formation' by 'supernatural' means; if 'regeneration' were to take place, it would come through 'school and science', by appeal to human reason and not fear of personal salvation. Rutherford's relationship with Mardon, even though one of friendship, was always antagonistic and reactionary, desperately trying to retain belief on negative grounds. His sympathy with McKay as his (Rutherford's) younger self, leaves Rutherford time enough to achieve a disinterested assessment of his friend's ideas:

I sympathised with him, but I asked him what he had to say. I remember telling him that I had been into St Paul's Cathedral, and that I pictured to myself the cathedral full, and myself in the pulpit. I was excited while imagining the opportunity offered me of delivering some message to three or four thousand persons in such a building, but in a minute or two I discovered that my sermon would be very nearly as follows: 'Dear friends, I know no more than you know; we had better go home'. (Deliverance, p. 24)

It is a rueful 'sympathy' that Rutherford bestows here, well aware of what he realizes from his own experience must, in the end and however well intentioned, be admitted as the 'vanity' of McKay's wishes. In remembering the imaginary 'picture' of himself in the pulpit at St Paul's, the focus of an audience of thousands, Rutherford acknowledges at once, the danger of the preacher's ambitions and the reasons for it. This preacher is really at the same level as his congregation; the home is not heaven but the ordinary home of earth to which 'we' are all bound.

There is then a strange feeling of déjà vu in Rutherford's description of McKay's enthusiasm, as if he were reappraising and rejecting as impractical all his old ideas in describing McKay's:

His earnestness was rather a hindrance than a help to him, for it prevented his putting certain important questions to himself, or at

any rate prevented his waiting for distinct answers.
(Deliverance, p. 25)

McKay's rigid allegiance to the idea that, could they only be exposed to 'the apostles and Bunyan', then 'depraved men and women' might see how to 'recast' their lives, ignores, as Rutherford himself had previously been prone to ignore, the overriding force of the practical. In order to be moved by St Paul or Bunyan, the inhabitants of Drury Lane would need to be freed from overwhelming necessities such as the procurement of food, warmth and shelter. McKay's initial theorizing, as Rutherford describes it (his practice is revealed as far more sensible), seems like a reflection of what now Rutherford can regard as the fundamental impracticability of his own ministry, based as it had been upon his need to establish some sort of authority for himself and derived, however remotely, from a tradition whose vitality was spent and whose gospel had been smothered beneath the weight of its dogma.

Significantly and properly, it is through the shock of the 'actual', in the shape of the Drury Lane slums, that Rutherford comes to integrate art, religion and expression. Describing the first Sunday that he and McKay visit the 'room' off Drury Lane, Rutherford makes no attempt to disguise his disgust at the scenes they pass through:

As we walked over the Drury Lane gratings of the cellars a most foul stench came up, and one in particular I remember to this day. A man half dressed pushed open a broken window beneath us, just as we passed by, and there issued such a blast of corruption, made up of gasses bred by filth, air breathed and rebreathed a hundred times, charged with odours of unnameable personal uncleanness and disease, that I staggered to the gutter with a qualm which I could scarcely conquer. (Deliverance, p. 26)

The slums of Drury Lane are represented as a vision of Hell on earth for Rutherford, whose reaction is expressed in suitably 'religious' language ('foul

stench', 'blast of corruption', 'bred by filth', 'uncleanliness' and 'disease'). Rutherford is speaking from a position above the squalor he witnesses, he is not just shocked and saddened by what he sees but actually appalled, made physically sick with a 'qualm' that we cannot help suspect is as much psychological as physiological.

But the passage continues:

The wholesome practise which amongst the decent poor marks off at least one day in the week as a day on which there is to be a change; when there is to be some attempt to procure order and cleanliness; a day to be preceded by soap and water, by shaving, and by as many clean clothes as can be procured, was unknown here. There was no break in the uniformity of squalor; nor was it even possible for any single family to emerge amidst such altogether suppressive surroundings. All self-respect, all effort to do anything more than to satisfy somehow the grossest wants, had departed. (Deliverance, p. 26)

The emphasis upon 'wholesomeness' and 'cleanliness' is not here merely a continuation of that 'corruption' and 'filth' from the opening. The 'order' that 'soap and water...shaving [and] clean clothes' constitute comes to seem to him less of a spiritual than a practical one. The residents of Drury Lane are not in want of soap and water as a means of becoming more 'Godly'. Their want of them has far more to do with the breaking of the 'uniformity of [physical] squalor' that suppresses all but the 'grossest' impulses.

In the middle of this 'real' vision of Hell, palpably different to what could only be imagined in the Autobiography, Rutherford comes to a more profound realization of what the 'salvation of the soul' might really involve:

The undertaker had not yet put up his shutters. He had drawn down a yellow blind on which was painted a picture of a suburban cemetery. Two funerals, the loftiest effort of his craft, were depicted approaching the gates. When the gas was alight behind the blind, an effect was produced which was doubtless much admired. He also displayed in his window a model coffin, a work of art. It was about a foot long, varnished, studded with little brass nails, and on the lid

was fastened a rustic cross stretching from end to end. The desire to decorate existence in some way or other with more or less care is nearly universal. The most sensual and the meanest almost always manifest an indisposition to be content with mere material satisfaction. I have known selfish, gluttonous, drunken men spend their leisure moments in trimming a bed of geraniums, and the vulgarest and most commonplace of mortals considers it a necessity to put a picture in the room or an ornament on the mantelpiece. The instinct, even in its lowest forms, is divine. (Deliverance, p. 27)

The voice of the Autobiography would have despised the model coffin; it could never have called it a 'work of art'. The coffin would have represented all that the earlier Rutherford felt to be discreditable in terms of the meaningless display of a dubious piety. More especially, Rutherford could not have conceived of the motivation behind the manufacture of the coffin. The voice of Deliverance however, not only recognizes the impulse behind the production of this 'work of art', but sees that the 'instinct' it signifies is 'divine'. Stifled by the expansive language in which the Autobiography so mistakenly exulted, Rutherford could neither embody it himself or find anything to live up to it. What happens in the Deliverance is that the whole vision is inverted, so that he is able to locate the 'divine' even in something so apparently trifling and vulgar as the undertaker's advertisement. Small though the coffin is in relation to the immensity of the degradation of Drury Lane, Rutherford now sees it as a 'symbol of victory' in representing even so minute (yet at the same, time spiritually substantial) a 'triumph' over human limitedness:

It is the commentary on the text that man shall not live by bread alone. It is evidence of an acknowledged compulsion - of which art is the highest manifestation - to escape. In the alleys behind Drury Lane this instinct, the very salt of life, was dead, crushed out utterly, a symptom which seemed to me ominous, and even awful to the last degree. The only house in which it survived was in that of the undertaker, who displayed the willows, the black horses, and the coffin. These may have been nothing more than an advertisement, but from the care with which the cross was elaborated, and the neatness with which it was made to resemble

a natural piece of wood, I am inclined to believe that the man felt some pleasure in his work for its own sake, and that he was not utterly submerged. The cross in such dens as these, or, worse than dens, in such sewers! If it be anything, it is a symbol of victory, of power to triumph over resistance, and even death. Here was nothing but sullen subjugation, the most grovelling slavery, mitigated only by a tendency to mutiny. (Deliverance, p. 27)

The 'divine' and 'art' are spoken of here as part of the same 'instinct'. The word 'escape' stands where, in the Autobiography, the phrase 'to be saved' would have had to. How life stands in need of such resources, dangerous as they may be, is the subject, for example, of 'The Mysterious Portrait', one of three short pieces included in the collected edition of the Deliverance as the miscellaneous papers of Mark Rutherford. It tells the life-story of a lonely man haunted by a vision. The man speaks of his need for expression:

with me expression in some form or other, if the thing which should be expressed is to live, is an absolute necessity.
(Deliverance, p. 180)

The 'form' here is less important than the 'absolute necessity' that the thing which 'should be expressed', should be made to 'live' like the 'necessity to put a picture in the room' that Rutherford recognizes as a universal need. The vision of the beautiful woman appears to the man at significant times, the first time when he was 'beginning life', intent upon, even obsessed with, getting started in business, making his fortune:

I was alone, without much capital, and my whole energies were utterly absorbed in my adventure.
(Deliverance, p. 173, my emphases)

The woman's face is 'exquisite'; it represents, is the necessary expression of, another 'ideal' from the one he single mindedly pursues. Later, when he is 'so depressed that [he] hardly cared what became of [himself]', the face appears again and is 'as lovely and as inspired as ever'. The morning after this second visit the

man was 'a little better'; his blood had been 'stirred' by the previous day's encounter, and he was sufficiently 'self-possessed and sensible' to call upon a friend and ask for 'help', the precursor to a recovery in 'health and spirits'. But the mysterious face becomes more than a necessary form of expression to the man. In time, after disappointment, it comes to embody all that the man desires. He 'could have married, but [he] had not the least inclination' to do so, even though he could 'not believe in the actual reality of his vision' and knew that he had 'no hope of ever meeting in the flesh the apparition' that haunted his life.

What the newly opened eyes of Rutherford enable him to recognize is not only that in the man's loneliness the memory of the beautiful face keeps at bay all 'inclination to any baser pleasure', but that if it prevents 'all licentiousness' it removes 'all pleasure' too. The recognition of the ideal is only of benefit so long as it is a consolation within the irresistibly real. When, years later, 'a man on the wrong side of fifty, shy, reserved, with a reputation for constitutional melancholy, a shadowy creature of whom nobody took much notice',⁵ the man in 'The Mysterious Portrait' comes across a crayon drawing he is 'amazed beyond measure' to recognize in it 'the face which had been [his] companion for so many years'. So intent is he upon consigning reality to his vision that the man can't realize the terrible waste and emptiness of the 'company' he has kept. In 'The Mysterious Portrait' what the man experiences as a 'vision', to the artist becomes a 'portrait'. Both express a moment of released feeling, but the man's 'vision' does not afford him a means of healthy 'escape', unlike the undertaker's model coffin.

5. This could almost be a description of Hale White's vision of himself at the time of writing.

Religion in any organized or orthodox form could not touch those condemned to live in the virtual sewers of Drury Lane; it was too esoteric, too remote. Rutherford calls the 'instinct' behind the making of the model coffin, 'the commentary on the text that man shall not live by bread alone'. In Drury Lane the word of God⁶ is made to live, not through scholarly exposition and argument, but, as Rutherford confronts his own devil, in that 'indisposition', nascent even in the degraded, 'to be content with mere material satisfaction'. The Rutherford of the Autobiography would have agonized about how, precisely, this 'text' ought to be interpreted only to succeed in raising unanswerable questions. Here and now, 'where there was nothing but sullen subjugation, the most grovelling slavery, mitigated only by a tendency to mutiny', that is, during Rutherford's own temptation in the wilderness, the original context, the text is rendered renascent.

And yet if, in the Deliverance, Rutherford escapes from the 'religion' that oppresses him in the Autobiography, he does so only to be made to realize that it is not devoid of use or virtue. Speaking of one of the attendants at the room in Drury Lane, Rutherford expresses this regret of Taylor, that he:

had never been a very ardent attendant at any of the places of religious worship in the town, and he had therefore no organization to help him. (Deliverance, p. 70)

Rutherford begins to perceive religion in terms of a human 'organization', as primarily a support network whose theology and dogma is secondary and dispensable to the living out of its spirit. This liberation allows Rutherford to claim of the task that he and McKay face at the room:

6. Matthew 4.4.

Here was a strength of circumstance to quell and dominate which neither Jesus nor Paul could have overcome - worse a thousandfold than Scribes or Pharisees, or any form of persecution. The preaching of Jesus would have been powerless here; in fact, no known stimulus, nothing ever held up to men to stir the soul to activity, can do anything in the back streets of great cities so long as they are the cesspools which they are now. (Deliverance, p. 28)

This 'strength of circumstance' has nothing to do with faith or the willingness of people to embrace what Jesus and Paul taught. It is to do with the practical conditions of existence, the suppression of that 'instinct' to transcend the temporal and material. The 'uniformity of squalor' in which the Drury Lane residents are condemned to exist ensures that they remain grovellingly earthbound. The 'cesspools' referred to here have nothing to do with that hellish language of 'filth' and 'corruption' noted above. These are literal, not metaphorical cesspools. Jesus and Paul would be 'powerless' not because they have nothing to offer, but because their appeal would have to be to the better 'instinct' in humans, an appeal to which no response was possible so long as the 'soul' of the people was 'quell[ed] and dominate[d]' by their 'slavery' to physical and temporal 'circumstance'.

In the Autobiography, Rutherford asks, incessantly, 'why?'. 'Why can I find no friend who will sacrifice himself to me?', 'Why can I find no peace in religion?', 'How am I to live?'. In the Deliverance, the futility of such a response is implicitly stated as Rutherford describes McKay's reaction to Drury Lane rather as 'What could he do?' (Deliverance, p. 28). Where once Rutherford had bound himself up in thought, he recognizes now the efficacy of action, the need to do something, if only as a means of breaking out of thought. Yet the scale of possible action is circumscribed by a realization of all that, humanly, can not be achieved:

He [McKay] could not buy up the hovels. He could not force an entrance into them and persuade their inhabitants to improve themselves. He had no great talents wherewith to found a great organisation or create public opinion. (Deliverance, pp. 28-9)

This process of deduction would have led Rutherford to despair earlier, but here it feeds 'determination', 'He [McKay] determined after much thought, to do what he was now doing'. The 'conversion' that Rutherford had looked for in the Autobiography comes, unbidden, in the Deliverance, 'It was very little, but it was all he could undertake'. The 'little' here is justified in the 'all'. McKay's offering is as humble as the widow's mite,⁷ and yet, aware now of his own and McKay's 'penury', Rutherford recognizes how, measured in terms of devotion and sacrifice, its value is incalculable. The thought that humbly to do one's 'utmost' (Sartor Resartus, p. 149), to cease to strain after the impractical or, what has been far worse in Rutherford, the impossible, might be 'all' that was required of him, is a kind of enlightenment, a liberation, a genuine conversion that allows Rutherford to begin to accept, in turn, the 'little' that life might seem to have to offer.

When Shapcott says, in his note at the opening of the Deliverance, that the last thing he had thought to do was to set Rutherford up as a 'hero', we can believe him. The kind of heroism that, taken as a progress, the autobiography reveals, is neither conscious nor apparent. Ellen, the woman Rutherford had thought unsuitable as his wife in the Autobiography and whom he now meets as a widow, had learnt such heroism, though only in part, from the Epistle to the Corinthians, 'charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (Deliverance, p. 63). She interprets this to mean that 'she

7. Luke 21, 1-4.

was to hope for nothing again from her love, and that she was to be merciful, as her Father in Heaven is merciful' (Deliverance, pp. 63-4). Ellen's steadfast acceptance of suffering and her determination to endure is echoed later in the commentary on Job, the first of the miscellaneous papers. Writing, in his 'Notes on the Book of Job', of the last verse of the twenty-first chapter, a bleak comment on death, Rutherford says:

There is not even a hint of hope. All is drawn from within, and is solid and real. To this we can come when religion, dreams, metaphysics, all fail.
(Deliverance, pp. 149-50)

What sustains Ellen, as it sustained Job, is not an uncritical adhesion to current orthodoxy, but something 'drawn from within', something that pre-dates 'religion, dreams and metaphysics' and is deep grounded in the experience of life as it is. Job's questionings are intimately related for Rutherford to those of the unbeliever; the difference being not in their source and character, but in their outcome. Ellen's faith is portrayed by the earlier Rutherford as a facile one, 'no questions about orthodoxy or heresy ever troubled her head' (Autobiography, p. 66). Yet both Ellen and Job are engaged in a process of struggle toward an answer of faith that conforms with experience. The certainty of a final resource, 'To this we can come' (my emphasis), is analogous to that of the grave and the release it represents is as 'sweet'.

But then Ellen was always wiser than Rutherford; like Miss Leroy, she 'believed implicitly' in the Bible (Deliverance, p. 37). It was not the 'literal' but the practical aspects of the texts she read that impressed her. The early Rutherford was prone to a fault identified later in life as the tendency to see the Bible as 'mere literature' (Deliverance, p. 61). Ellen is undeterred by what is explicit from making practical use of what she reads. Hers is an 'inward born'

heroism sustained by a 'permanent confidence in the idea [of the gospels], a confidence never to be broken down by apparent failure, or by examples which by ordinary people prove that qualification is necessary' (Deliverance, p. 64). Ellen's life is not transformed by her 'confidence', 'The way through the desert was not annihilated; the path remained stony and sore to the feet' (Deliverance, p. 65); but she is helped to live it without bitterness. This is the level at which life must be endured in the second volume: striving for some kind of ease, if not 'better', comprehending fully all the time Hardy's 'Worst'.

In a real sense the Deliverance re-writes the Autobiography from a different perspective. The second chapter of Deliverance actually pre-dates chapter I of the Autobiography, it interrupts the established chronology to go back in time to re-tell the story of Rutherford's childhood and youth. This time however, Rutherford uses the narrative to allow us to look out, through his eyes, at his external world. He is no longer, as was the case in the Autobiography, the inescapable focal point of the narrative, but rather, by making himself a bystander to the action, Rutherford relieves himself of the need constantly to explain himself and allows the reader far more scope to come to his or her own conclusions. The Autobiography seems miscellaneous, even though it is actually highly structured; the Deliverance is less troubled by digression. It lets life happen and is more concerned to adapt, after the event, to what are often accidents, as its epigraphs indicate.

At the beginning of the second part of Pilgrim's Progress Bunyan launches his work into the world with these words:

Go, now my little book to every place, Where my
first Pilgrim has but shown his face.
(Pilgrim's Progress, p. 223, author's emphasis)

Rutherford 'sends forth' the Deliverance in similar spirit:

I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without the arrogance of honour, without the assault of arguments.⁸

The voice here is that of Christ in Thomas à Kempis. The chapter is on 'Vain and Secular Knowledge' and it ends with the claim:

I am the Teacher of Truth, the searcher of the Heart.

The appeal in both cases is to an inner feeling for right, a 'search[ing] of the Heart' without 'confusion of opinions', something that is deeply personal and certain and yet at the same time disinterested, concerned solely with 'Truth', shunning the 'arrogance of honour'. To this quotation Rutherford adds two more:

Come what may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.⁹

and:

Having death for my friend, I tremble not at shadows.¹⁰

Free from 'noise of words' and 'assault of arguments', bound by 'Time', knowing 'death'. With these epigraphs Rutherford situates the Deliverance as part of a vast tradition, a progress that stretches far beyond any one life, one book. He asks, in earnest now, that we see his life as 'justified' in its revelation of what is the 'inheritance of the whole human race' (Autobiography, p. 2). In his 'Notes on the Book of Job' Rutherford asserts that 'the book is not a philosophy, but a record of experience' (Deliverance, p. 160). There is no false humility (conscious or otherwise), in this second, implicit plea for the value of his

8. De Imitatione Christi (London: William Pickering, 1851) transl. T. F. Dibdin, Book IV, chapter xliii.

9. William Shakespeare, Macbeth, ed. by Nicholas Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), I, iii, ll. 148-9

10. Unknown Greek Author.

autobiography. We are asked to acknowledge how, in a real sense, Rutherford's life is not 'special and peculiar' but 'common to us with many others'.

This determination to re-evaluate reading and writing in the Deliverance, to see things as they are and to abandon all thought of the 'ideal', is evident too in the way that Rutherford speaks of the woman who, in the Autobiography, he had treated with mild contempt:

She [Ellen] had a smiling, pretty face; was always somehow foremost at school picnics, and chapel-work, and she had a kind of piquant manner, which to many men is more ensnaring than beauty. She never read anything; she was too restless and fond of outward activity for that, and no questions about orthodoxy or heresy ever troubled her head.
(Autobiography, p. 66)

That 'somehow' in the opening sentence works (in a manner typical of the duplicity of the Autobiography) two ways. To begin with, it expresses a slightly contemptuous incredulity that it should be a 'Martha' who is 'foremost'. It also says much about Rutherford's failure to comprehend the way things actually fall out, as opposed to how, ideally, he might wish them to be ordered. Rutherford's incredulity in the Autobiography is grounded in the idea that Ellen should achieve prominence merely by 'outward activity': in the Deliverance such activity is positively revalued. The thought that others may have been well disposed to Ellen because they could see something in her that he could not, or have felt her 'smiling pretty face' to be a reflection of some corresponding inner demeanour, does not even occur to the younger Rutherford. Again, in his use of 'manner', Rutherford shows an inability to read below the lines. He takes Ellen (and everything else) at face value. He is incapable of sympathizing with those who do not experience the same difficulties as himself.

In the Autobiography, Reuben Shapcott called the kind of affectation that 'reading books to which he was not equal' comprised, Rutherford's greatest 'folly'; Ellen's refusal to fall into the same trap is seen in the same volume by Rutherford as proof of her shallowness. In the Deliverance, Rutherford values living less tightly, lives more openly, letting things happen:

She had never been a great reader, but in her frequent solitude she was forced to do something in order to obtain relief, and she naturally turned to the Bible. It would be foolish to say that the Bible alone was to be credited with the support she received. It may only have been the occasion for a revelation of the strength that was in her. Reading, however, under such circumstances, is likely to be peculiarly profitable. It is never so profitable as when it is undertaken in order that a positive need may be satisfied or an enquiry answered. She discovered in the Bible much that persons to whom it is a mere literature would never find.

(Deliverance, pp. 60-1)

Earlier the charge had been 'She never read anything'. In saying, now, that Ellen had 'never been a great reader', Rutherford is not simply qualifying the earlier statement. It is almost as if he is having to reappraise the self that made it. He discovers that he had expected books to do too much for him. Out of her 'nature' Ellen had turned to the Bible, and in it she was given 'a revelation of the strength that was in her', of something she already possessed. Ellen's conversion was a 'reality' (Autobiography, p.11) because her 'religion' was always a personal, inner thing and not, as it had become for Rutherford, or as he had inherited it, a fossilised institution enshrouded in dogma and hide-bound by social nicety. Ellen's reading was, similarly, a 'natural' pursuit, carried out in the midst of life's demands, and not a form of affectation.

The natural practicality of Ellen's reading extends to her 'theology':

Mrs Butts' Calvinism, however, hardly took the usual dogmatic form. She was too simple to penetrate the depths of metaphysical theology...She adapted the Calvinistic creed to something which suited her. (Deliverance, pp. 64-5)

In the Autobiography 'too simple' would have been a slur, here it stands for 'good' and 'wise'. A penetration of the 'depths of metaphysical theology' could not have helped Ellen to endure her trouble, as Rutherford himself bears out, so she never attempted it, she was wise enough not to attempt it. Ellen survives because she is able to 'adapt' the Calvinistic creed in a way that Rutherford himself could not. The Darwinian language is apt. Those who could not do as Ellen had done, that is find something to believe in, to justify living (if only the need to work to support her child), but were overcome by the 'doubt' of the nineteenth century, as Rutherford so very nearly is, were condemned to a kind of living extinction.

The fourth chapter of the Deliverance ends thus:

Just about the time that we began our meetings near Drury Lane, I heard that Clem [Rutherford's childhood friend and husband of Ellen] was dead; that he had died abroad. I knew nothing more; I thought about him and his wife perhaps for a day, but I had parted from both long ago, and I went on with my work.
(Deliverance, p. 66)

What is clear here is the manner in which Rutherford is now prepared to limit thought, 'I thought about him and his wife for perhaps a day'; to allow the past to pass, 'I had parted from both long ago'; to get on with doing something, 'I went on with my work'. There was a time when the mere memory of Clem and Ellen would have laid Rutherford low for days, when every trauma brought a halt to his existence: a new continuity is established in the Deliverance; no longer overcome by 'thought', Rutherford pauses and then goes 'on' with his 'work'.

The kind of movement that this last quotation implies is not that of the automaton however; it involves a strength of character that demands from the reader all the more sympathy knowing Rutherford's natural predisposition to melancholy. Simply going on for Rutherford is like treading 'a narrow plank

placed across a gulf, which yawns on either side' (Deliverance, p. 116). It is only by dint of great thought-control that he makes progress:

I tried to think about nothing which expressed whatever in the world may be insoluble or simply tragic. A great change is just beginning to come over us in this respect. So many books I find are written which aim merely at new presentation of the hopeless. The contradictions of fate, the darkness of death, the fleeting of man over this brief stage of existence, whence we know not, and whither we know not, are favourite subjects with writers who seem to think they are profound, because they can propose questions which cannot be answered. There is really more strength of mind required for resolving the commonest difficulty than is necessary for the production of poems on these topics. The characteristic of so much that is said and written now is melancholy; and it is melancholy, not because of any deeper acquaintance with the secrets of man than that which was possessed by our forefathers, but because it is easy to be melancholy, and the time lacks strength.

(Deliverance, pp. 116-7)

One wonders if, among the 'many books' he refers to here, Rutherford may have been thinking of two in particular which appeared between the Autobiography and Deliverance: Hardy's Two on a Tower (1882), and Gissing's The Unclassed (1884). In the preface to the former novel Hardy announces his purpose as being:

...to set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe, and to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be the greater to them as men.¹¹

In the Deliverance Rutherford learns to take comfort from the 'contrast' between the 'stupendous...universe' and the exiguity of human being:

The provision in nature of infinity ever present to us is an immense help. No man can look up at the stars at night and reflect what lies beyond them without feeling that the tyranny of the senses is loosened, and the tyranny too, of the conclusions of his logic.
(Deliverance, p. 90)

11. Thomas Hardy, Two on a Tower, 1882 (London: Macmillan, 1975), preface to first edition.

Hardy's preface, written in 1885, would have represented to the later Rutherford an attempt to reinstate, not only an out-dated idea (that humanity was the centre of creation, and the 'stupendous...stellar universe' merely 'background'), but one that was fatally mistaken. The Deliverance affirms rather Spinoza's idea of humanity as 'not a mere transient, outside observer of the universe, but the...soul or law, which is the universe'. It is not its contrast but its unity with the universe that makes human being 'the greater' because through unity there is created 'a relationship with infinity which will emancipate'.¹²

Rutherford, in the Deliverance, recognizes himself as a child of his time and sees how he has shared its lack of 'strength'. The 'melancholy' that had seemed so hard in the Autobiography, he now sees in all its easy self-centredness as a typical expression of its own time. It is much more difficult to endure in silent resignation, to 'subdue' one's self as Mary Mardon and Ellen Butts had done and as Rutherford was now learning to do, than to cry out in despairing 'eloquence' (Autobiography, p. 62).

Speaking in chapter IV of the Deliverance of Clem Butts, Rutherford describes the manner in which he avoided recognizing what he was:

I believe he defended himself with the weapons which were ever ready when self rose against self because of some wrong-doing. He was not as other men. (Deliverance, p. 55)

Clem is like the self-righteous Pharisee in Luke who justifies himself in terms of his assumed difference:

God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.¹³

12. 'Spinoza' in Pages from a Journal, p.39.

13. Luke 18.11.

And yet Rutherford might just as accurately have applied these words to his conflicting sense of self in the Autobiography. In the Deliverance, where 'destiny...prescribed', so that Rutherford was 'no longer agitated by ignorance of what [he] ought to do', and where necessity dictates that he expend his energy only upon priorities, 'My present duty was obviously to get my own living', these warring selves are curbed:

I cut off my office life in this way from my life at home so completely that I was two selves, and my true self was not stained by contact with my other self...I was not the person who sat at the desk downstairs and endured the abominable talk of his colleagues and the ignominy of serving such a chief...I was a citizen walking London streets; I had opinions upon human beings and books; I was on equal terms with my friends; I was Ellen's husband; I was, in short, a man. (Deliverance, p. 110)

Instead of having to contain two selves, Rutherford can now differentiate his 'true', unassailable, self (identified now by objective factors, 'citizen', 'opinions', 'friends', 'husband') from the automaton who is obliged to endure the obloquy of the office. By this 'scrupulous isolation' Rutherford 'preserved' himself. This is self-discovery, not the kind of self 'rising' against self that Clem Butts exhibits. The unregenerate Lear asks 'Is man no more than this?' He sees the ultimate in wretchedness in being reduced to 'the thing itself', man 'unaccommodated'.¹⁴ Rutherford's metaphorical stripping down, 'I was Ellen's husband; I was, in short, a man', repeats in miniature Lear's purgation:

For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia, (King Lear, IV, 6, ll. 66-7)

and its new sense of human relationship.

I have spoken about the way in which the Deliverance embodies the kind of 'progress' that the Autobiography strove for but never quite achieved.

14. Shakespeare, King Lear, III, iv.

However, to imply that this sense of making ground was not discontinuous would be wrong. Even protected by this revived sense of what it means to be a man and to be alive, Rutherford, like Christian, is assailed by trials. Despite all he can claim to have learnt about the necessity of acceptance, there endures in Rutherford the urge to shape life to fit his own desires. Ellen's child is a sore test:

I was irritated at her slowness in learning; it was, in fact, painful to be obliged to teach her. I thought that perhaps she might have some undeveloped taste for music, but she showed none, and our attempts to get her to sing ordinary melodies were a failure. She was more or less of a locked cabinet to me. I tried her with the two or three keys which I had, but finding that none of them fitted, I took no more pains about her. (Deliverance, p. 122)

All the old faults come to the surface again here. He suffers 'painful' and 'irritating' impatience at having to take what life doles out. He is determined to alter, to attempt to find something 'undeveloped', rather than to accept with humility. He tends to think of others less apparently gifted as suitable only for 'ordinary melodies'. His honesty admits the final unmeant arrogance of 'I took no more pains'. He tries the 'keys' he knew would not fit and so the child was a failure.

Marie never fulfils her step-father's hopes in the manner he would have wished her to. She surpasses all that he could have dared to hope. During her mother's illness, Rutherford relates what to him seems to be the 'change' that came over Ellen's child:

All at once she seemed to have found what she was born to do. The key had been discovered, which unlocked and revealed what there was in her, of which hitherto I had been altogether unaware... Faculties unsuspected grew almost to full height. (Deliverance, p. 129)

All his attempts to find something for Marie to do well are shown as the folly they were; the key was not to be 'found' but 'discovered'. What Marie reveals

in this crisis is 'in her' all along, if Rutherford, or anyone, had possessed the means to be 'aware'. The moral is one of patience and humility, to wait in acceptance of how little we can know. His experience with Marie recalls a 'text' to Rutherford:

I had seen the Kingdom of God through a little child. I, in fact, have done nothing more than beat out over a page in my own words what passed through His mind when He called a little child and set him in the midst of his disciples. How I see the meaning of those words now! and so it is that a text will be with us for half a lifetime, recognised as great and good, but not penetrated till the experience comes round to us in which it was born.
(Deliverance, p. 131)

'Words' take on, become, 'meaning'; 'text' is rendered as 'experience'; reading is 'recognition' of something known previously only incompletely.

We see then how the tendency endures, even in the elder Rutherford, to believe that he had the measure of life and of people. Though this is something he only ever succeeds in keeping imperfectly under control, the evolution, in the Deliverance, of a new 'religious' resource gives him the sense of distance which increases his capacity for patience. A great source of support in the battle is his contemplation of the sky, which is to become a recurrent reference in his later work:

The provision in nature of infinity ever present to us is an immense help. No man can look up to the stars at night and reflect upon what lies behind them without feeling that the tyranny of the senses is loosened, and the tyranny too, of the conclusions of his logic. The beyond and the beyond, let us turn it over as we may, let us consider it as a child considers it, or by the light of the newest philosophy, is a constant, visible warning not to make our minds the measure of the universe. Underneath the stars what dreams, what conjectures arise, shadowy enough, it is true; but one thing we cannot help believing as irresistibly as if by geometrical deduction - that the sphere of that understanding of ours, whose function seems to be to imprison us, is limited. (Deliverance, p. 90)

Between the Autobiography (1881) and the Deliverance (1885), Rutherford published his translation of Spinoza's Ethic. The contemplation of the sky in the Deliverance affords Rutherford access to a Spinozan sense of calm and indifference that he could never have attained in the Autobiography because of its intense inwardness and self-concentration. There is a serenity in the sense of distance and littleness that the sky imposes that amounts practically to a new religion in the Deliverance. Spinoza is the new voice in the novel, an authority, unlike those in the Autobiography, which is never questioned. As it is for Mr Armstrong in 'Miriam's Schooling', the universe and its inexorable laws becomes for the later Rutherford not merely a substitute for self or escape from reality but a means of actually knowing God. Armstrong's understanding of the divine character and will is shaped through the lens of a telescope as is Rutherford's by reflecting that the 'infinity' of the stars is a 'warning not to make our minds the measure of the universe' or of the divine.

Considering the struggle in consciousness that the autobiography as a whole comprises, there is an almost painful irony in the fact that the 'one thing' that his contemplation of the heavens impresses upon Rutherford, the only thing he ever had need to know, was that he could never know: the 'sphere' of human understanding is 'limited'. In a note included in More Pages from a Journal, Hale White writes:

The worship of the idol is often more passionate than that of God. People prostrate themselves in ecstasy before the idol, and remain unmoved in the presence of a starry night. A starry night does not provoke hysterics. The adoration of the veritably divine is calm.
(p. 254)

The Deliverance substitutes a stillness for the relentless wandering of the Autobiography, a calmness for its 'hysterical passion'. The liberation of

consciousness that the realization of the precision and infinity of the universe offers, the sense of consolation that is gained by its attribution of a scale to human being, is an idea that Rutherford insists upon again and again in the novels.

Ellen made a good recovery from her illness and the very real terror that had gripped Rutherford, that he should lose for a second time the woman he loved, is proven, as have been so many others of less moment, groundless. Another excursion is planned to Hastings, and, though the weather in London was 'foggy', Rutherford tells how his 'long experience' told him that they should 'escape' it. The final words that Rutherford writes are these:

We were all completely happy. We strained our eyes to see the furthest point before us, and we tried to find it on the map we had brought with us. The season of the year, which is usually supposed to make men pensive, had no such effect upon us. Everything in the future, even the winter in London, was painted by Hope, and the death of the summer brought no sadness. Rather did summer dying in such a fashion fill our hearts with repose, and even more than repose - with actual joy. (Deliverance, p. 133)

When Rutherford writes that 'We strained our eyes to see the furthest point', we feel at last that he is looking forwards. Freed from the obligation to feel as ought to have been 'usual' or as was 'supposed' fitting, this strange, isolated family is 'completely happy'. Yet theirs is no thoughtless happiness; rather it is a kind of blessedness since they know well that all around them there is ample cause, should they choose to notice it, to be otherwise: the 'winter in London', the 'death of summer', 'summer dying'. It is the 'fashion' that all this death, and the life too, has taken on for them, that fills them with a sense of 'repose', of rest and ease, that is at the same time active, 'actual joy'.

Reuben Shapcott's voice jars after this:

Here ends the autobiography. A month after this last holiday my friend was dead and buried. He had unsuspected disease of the heart, and one day his master, of whom we have heard something, was more than usually violent. Mark, as his custom was, was silent, but evidently greatly excited. His tyrant had left the room; and in a few minutes afterwards Mark was seen to turn white and fall forward in his chair. It was all over! (Deliverance, p. 133)

In truth Rutherford's 'tyrant' had all but 'left' him long before this, it left him at the moment he embraced Ellen Butts at Cowfold:

My arm was around her in an instant, her head was on my shoulder, and my many wanderings were over. (Deliverance, p. 105)

This unpremeditated 'instantaneous' action, brings to a conclusion Rutherford's 'many wanderings' in thought. From this point on he is more content to live a life of 'unsuspected dis-ease'. Rutherford's death is the result of life taking over at last.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE REVOLUTION IN TANNER'S LANE

When in the congregation, bending all
To their great Father, prayers were offer'd up,
Or praises for our country's victories,
And 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance,
I only, like an uninvited Guest
Whom no one own'd sate silent, shall I add,
Fed on the way of vengeance yet to come?¹

Just as, in the Autobiography and Deliverance, the autobiographical form, or self-history, is used more to reveal an overall process, or progress of mind, than a series of events, so in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane the historical form is as much concerned with changing habit of mind and ideas as with politically radical events. Indeed it could be argued that the Revolution is hardly an historical novel, in the way that we might at first take it to be, at all.² Ideally, what the historical novel does or should do is to show the past of the present, as so often in Scott:³ but what is distinctive in the Revolution is its concern to examine history as consciousness rather than action. The novel suppresses event

-
1. William Wordsworth, The Prelude, X, ll. 269-75.
 2. This is perhaps why R.J.Rayson, in his essay 'Is the Revolution in Tanner's Lane broken-backed?' can say that though in 'intention' the novel is 'historical', in 'achievement' it is not, Essays in Criticism, 20, (1990). Charles Swann's reading of the Revolution is much more perceptive than is Rayson's in recognising that Rutherford's concern with history 'is based at least as much on politics as a way of living in the world as it is on religious belief or the linguistic remnants of such belief', 'Reforming the Novel: Politics, History and Narrative Structure in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane' in English Literature in Transition, 34, (1991), 41-69. Hereafter cited as Swann 1991.
 3. Hale White writes of Scott: 'Everything follows in his stories like a process in Nature; each event, each development, necessarily issuing from that which has preceded it.' Last Pages, p. 274.

into the characteristic rather than the special in order more clearly to study the changes of the individual mind as the tissue of history.

Though the narrative presents us with the experience and struggle of Zachariah Coleman from April 1814 to the 1840's, its true vantage points are those of Mark Rutherford, 'who must be read as dead by the end of the 1870's'⁴ and Hale White in 1887. In expressing that 'long withdrawing roar' of Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach', and acknowledging how, even as long ago as 1815, it was 'at least a century and a half too late' for Zachariah Coleman's 'courage' to win over his lack of 'conviction' (Revolution, p. 60), the novel declares, in the present, yet more acutely, the continued ebbing of 'The Sea of Faith'.

E.J.Hobsbawm in Primitive Rebels writes, of the tradition to which Zachariah Coleman belonged:

What was Voltairean in 19th century France, was Nonconformist in 19th century Britain.⁵

He goes on to speak specifically of Zachariah as maintaining 'the hard core of passionate and intellectual Leveller Puritanism', describing him as 'a moderate Calvinist, a great reader of Bunyan and Milton, a great arguer and Republican' (p. 146). Zachariah embodies all that was best in Nonconformity, politically and theologically, passionately and intellectually. Marxist historians like Hobsbawm and Christopher Hill, though not unaware of its social and emotional aspect, do

-
4. Charles Swann, 'Re-Forming the Novel: Politics, History and Narrative Structure in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane', English Literature in Transition, 34 (1991), 45-69 (p. 47)
 5. E.J.Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), p. 146.

tend to see dissent as predominantly a political movement; but Zachariah experiences the history of dissent from within, so that with him we see also the personal tensions, losses and pain involved in relating the new secular ends to the old religious hopes.

In the 1805 version of The Prelude (a work that also recreates history as consciousness), William Wordsworth writes with rapture of the promise that the French Revolution had seemed to signify. For liberals and idealists of every kind the events of 1789 were taken as confirmation of the freedom predicted by Rousseau, and begun in the establishment of the American republic in 1776:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
 But to be young was very heaven! O times,
 In which the meagre, stale forbidding ways
 Of custom, law and statute took at once
 The attraction of a country in romance -
 When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights
 When most intent on making of herself
 A prime enchanter to assist the work
 Which then was going forwards in her name.
 Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,
 The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
 (To take an image which was felt no doubt,
 Among the bowers of Paradise itself)
 The budding rose above the rose full-blown.
 What temper at the prospect did not wake
 To happiness unthought of? The inert
 Were roused, and lively natures rapt away.⁶

By 1814 that 'Bliss' was dissipated, revolutionary 'Reason' had been pushed aside to make way for what was more or less the reintroduction of the old order with its 'meagre, stale forbidding ways / Of custom, law and statute', and all sense of 'going forwards' was arrested. With the restoration of the Bourbon Louis

6. William Wordsworth: The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850, ed. by Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, Stephen Gill (London: Norton, 1979), X ll. 671-708, p. 396.

XVIII, a great tide of radicalism had been stemmed. The Revolution is set against the background of the extraordinary events in France the better to show how, for people like Zachariah Coleman, what followed was a period not just of disappointment and 'inertia', but of impotence, when there was nothing big enough to justify their zeal.

Rutherford is always looking backwards in his novels, though perhaps never more explicitly so than in the Revolution. The novel is written so that there is always a past to which allusion has to be made in order to explain the present we are shown. It is not insignificant then that the novel opens in 1814,⁷ nor that our first glimpses of its 'hero' should reveal him with nose bloodied by one of the 'people', and having to come to terms with the fact that, as result of some unidentified 'change' in his relationship with his wife:

Henceforth all that was said and sung about love and home would find no echo in him. (Revolution, p. 11)

The personal and political are interfused. Zachariah is changing from a trust in love and home that he must once have had, though we don't see it, and looking unconsciously for a new sort of trust. 'Love and home', as a set phrase that automatically associates one with the other, is being questioned here, as later will be other platitudes that form the life-assumptions of the work's major characters.

The opening of the book makes clear then that the present comes after a decline from Evangelical fervour, Revolutionary hope and Romantic idealism so that it has in effect two movements: one continues this process of diminishment,

7. That is, a quarter of a century after the French Revolution and Zachariah's thirtieth year, the year he had hoped to settle down to wedded bliss.

the other involves a reassessment of and divergence from previous norms. We have to read Zachariah Coleman, standing among 'the people' (Revolution, p. 3) on 20th April 1814, in the light, or rather in the shadow, of Wordsworth's enthusiasm, one with which Zachariah would have been in complete sympathy.⁸

At the same time, however, as we are referred back in time, beyond the novel's opening, we are obliged also to read the narrative from the point of view, not only of Mark Rutherford, a young man of some twenty or so years in 1840, and someone who had lived through his own period of 'enthusiasm' to emerge a different person, but of William Hale White, living and writing at the close of the century, and thus even more conscious than Zachariah or Rutherford could have been of the progressive atrophy of a once robust tradition.

An acknowledgement therefore of the importance of the past, of previous forms, and of the memory of both, is crucial to understanding this novel. Yet the work does more than bear witness to the inevitable passing of great times, deeds, and men; it addresses, in a manner that is typical of Rutherford's method throughout his work, a problem first mooted in Deliverance:

The main obstacle to our success is a success which has preceded us. We instinctively follow the antecedent form, and consequently we either pass by, or deny altogether, the life of our own time because its expression has changed.
(Deliverance, p. 25)

The Revolution is about the undermining of the 'instinct' in Zachariah to adhere to his 'antecedent form'. Historically, religious dissent had reached a stable

8. Swann (1991) notes how Rutherford makes Zachariah 'follow the same emotional sequence that he saw in Wordsworth', even though his hero had never read the Lyrical Ballads, p.62.

position in the national life. In his book, W.B.Selbie describes the period during which the Revolution is set as one in which:

it was impossible to go any further in the direction of seeking the removal of disabilities, and Nonconformists could do nothing but bide their time.⁹

Zachariah has to overcome the 'obstacle' of what threatens to become a negative reverence and loyalty towards his religion, a complacency born of ease and respectability, something that, by the second part of the novel, and exhibited in the characters of John and Thomas Broad in particular, has become a fatal disease.

When first he realizes what a nonsense it is to condemn 'good' people like Major Maitland, Caillaud and Pauline (his radical friends), as 'Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction' (Revolution, p. 58), merely because they do not observe the same creed as he does, Zachariah does indeed learn positively to 'bide his time'. Although he knows he can not 'pronounce such a sentence' as his belief demands upon his 'heathen' friends, neither can he explicitly question that belief. Instead of taking this perplexity 'farther', Zachariah falls back in his confusion upon what Rutherford calls those 'phrases' which 'had been invented or discovered which served to express modern hesitation to bring the accepted doctrine into actual, direct, week-day practise' (Revolution, p. 60). Zachariah quotes St Paul, "'Who art thou that judgest?'" but he does so at this point not to 'express' conviction but to legitimise 'hesitation'.

9. W.B.Selbie, Nonconformity: its Origins and Progress (London: Thornton Butterworth, [n.d.]), p. 198. Hereafter cited as Selbie.

And yet, ironically, even though his is a belief which, to himself, he cannot press to its ultimate logic, the fervour with which Zachariah can speak of his faith impresses the Major and arouses the attention of the Caillauds. It is chiefly through his association with the Caillauds and Major Maitland that Zachariah is forced to play an active part in 'the life of [his] own time', where formerly he had been able to hold himself aloof from it. As a result of this greater involvement in the life beyond his congregation, Zachariah slowly comes to realize how 'religion' might find expression in secular pursuits and how those things he had been used to think of as integral and exclusive to the system of his faith, a 'fierceness of temper', sense of 'struggle', and 'earnestness', had been replaced for many 'devotees' by a mere following of 'form', and, worse, one which took a kind of pride in its exclusivity. The only way in which Zachariah can relocate that initial fervour is to be 'mixed up with politics' (Revolution, p. 95). The kind of struggle that politics involves him in replicates the antecedent religious struggle without which Zachariah cannot truly 'feel' his faith; and yet, in its obligation to admit and counter opposition, to remain 'open' to the world, politics inevitably becomes mixed up for him with more personal feelings of sexual attraction and vitality that, whilst they contribute to a genuine growth in Zachariah, serve nonetheless to further complicate religious principle.

Rutherford has made clear from the opening of the Revolution the way in which Zachariah's political convictions have been contained within and given form by his theology, 'He was Dissenter in religion, and a fierce radical in politics'. This traditional synthesis is something that Zachariah's experience of life and people in 'The World Outside' (the title of chapter I), puts hard to the test.

Religious Dissent is concerned with the distinct group of believers but radicalism is concerned with the people collectively. Zachariah is pulled distractingly between exclusive and inclusive terms of reference. At the opening of the novel it is clear that Zachariah considers anyone who is not with him to be against him. It is, so he first believes, his status as one of the 'elect' that separates him from the 'hooraying multitude':

'As for the people so-called', quoth Zachariah, 'I doubt whether they are worth saving. Look at the mob we saw the day before yesterday. I think not of the people. But there is a people, even in these days of Ahab, whose feet may yet be on the necks of their enemies.' (Revolution, p. 13)

Zachariah cannot sustain even that grudging concession, 'the people so-called', for more than an instant. He refuses to recognize a 'people' that is not religiously constituted or to accept the radical idea of a fellowship of simple humanity. These 'people so-called' are swiftly transformed into 'the mob', a body that, it seems to him, in being unworthy of 'salvation', are unworthy too of the benefits of reform. The only 'people' he will 'think' of is one theologically defined, an 'elect', whilst, in the language and with the justice of the Old Testament, he can blithely consider trampling under foot those who, by now, he has transformed into the 'enemy'.

Having so much invested in the idea of himself as, primarily, a 'religious' man, what seems like the re-encroachment of 'politics', feels threateningly irreligious to Zachariah. In his account of Nonconformity, Selbie stresses the fact that 'There is no need to apologise for the fact that Dissenters acted politically'. What he can see as a historian is that 'If they were to remain true to their principles, and if they were to advance the cause they had at heart, they could do

no other' (Selbie, p. 201). Zachariah doesn't have the benefit of such hindsight. What he cannot perceive in the first half of the novel is that the attraction of politics is, for him, as Selbie insists, a means to 'advance the cause...at heart', and is therefore fundamentally religious and not merely rational. Ironically, the reformation of his 'religion' into something applicable to 'actual, direct, week-day practise' (Revolution, p. 60), depends upon Zachariah developing a more politic approach to the life beyond his sect. His inability to realize this 'mix-up' makes the evolution of Zachariah's 'faith' seem to him, at first, like apostasy at the same time as it makes the hesitancy of his 'politics', feel something like hypocrisy.

The problem for characters in Mark Rutherford is often that, in identifying with any group, they feel that the pressure of their individual ideas compel them to recognize their disagreement; belonging becomes dissent. Yet they are equally conscious that to live from their separateness produces discouragement and despair, as in the Autobiography. The Radical Club that Zachariah joins has, in its secrecy and fear of persecution, something of the heroic age of Dissent yet the bourgeois respectability and religious orthodoxy of the chapel where he is deacon fill him with misgivings about his new associates. Religious dissent, despite its political sympathies, is now a conservative force. Asa Briggs comments in The Age of Improvement, of the Nonconformists in general:

Their main weaknesses were an inability to do justice to the opinions of individuals or groups with whom they disagreed...and their emphasis on the moral side

of life at the expense of the intellectual and cultural.¹⁰

The Revolution is not primarily a book about the loss or corruption of faith, however. Rutherford is anxious to show how, even in spite of what is a kind of religious chauvinism, the fact that Zachariah's religion is truly 'a part of himself' and not a mere appendage as is his wife's, proves in time and through struggle, to be his saving grace. But he means to show too, how, even though Zachariah's faith is sincerely and earnestly rooted in him, his piety is too dependent upon outdated presuppositions and habit, upon 'Childish association and years of unquestioning repetition', things that too easily instil in Zachariah the illusion of 'absolute certainty' (Revolution, p. 59) about matters that prove, with wider experience, to be far more complex than he has realized. It is the difficulty of the transformation of religious into political thought rather than its ease, which makes the book so subtle and convincing an historical study.

His religion, the fear of change it instils, is Zachariah's greatest weakness, as well as the source of his greatest strength, his spiritual confidence. Indeed, this balance of contraries is something that Hale White cites as a prerequisite of humanity:

A human being is an indivisible unity, and his weakness is his strength, and his strength is his weakness.¹¹

It is his 'absolute certainty' that creates the 'disunity' that weakens Zachariah.

There is too much unquestioning 'faith' in it and too little compulsion to ensure

10. Asa Briggs, The Age of Improvement: 1783-1867 (London: Longman, 1959), p. 468.
11. Mark Rutherford, 'Byron and Goethe', in Pages from a Journal, p. 145, author's emphases.

that it 'agree[d] more or less with the facts' (Revolution, p. 6), to test it against everyday life. Ironically, this 'certainty' prevents Zachariah from engaging the dogma of his faith 'with such rigorous activity' as had his less prosperous predecessors to do by necessity, so ensuring its 'expression' was compatible with 'the life of [their] own time'. And yet, as we have seen, Zachariah's 'certainty' is not the result of mere bigotry, but of inexperience of the world and the lack of anything solid to test it against.

I will argue that there are many 'revolutions' in Rutherford's third novel. Not least of these is Zachariah's gradual realization of a 'world outside' and the test to which, increasingly, this puts his 'religion'. In On Compromise John Morley speaks of 'the slow transformation now [1886] at work of the whole spiritual basis of thought' (my emphases). Typical of the Revolution as a whole is the apparent paradox that 'revolution' or 'transformation' is effected, not only without cataclysm, but almost without its subject's awareness. Admitting that every age 'is in some sort an age of transition', Morley adds:

...but our own is characteristically and cardinally an epoch of transition in the very foundations of belief and conduct.¹²

The action of 'slow transformation' and 'epoch' seems contradictory, and yet what Morley asserts expresses exactly the movement behind the Revolution. In the novel revolution becomes only the name for some incident which, by cutting across social habit, reveals how far things have already evolved. Rutherford's is much more of an evolutionary than a revolutionary book; it is less about change than about how change comes about, how the present comes into being. In this

12. John Morley, On Compromise, 1874, 2nd edn. (London: Macmillan, 1888), p. 36. 2nd edn.

sense Zachariah is a harbinger. He shows how transformation is never just revolutionary or iconoclastic (discontinuous), but how it is dependent always upon an 'antecedent form' (Deliverance, p. 25), not merely in a reactionary sense but because transformation is only effected, and indeed only becomes recognizable, as a result of the force of a multitude of minor unrecognized changes that provide an underlying, unconscious continuity to 'revolutionary' events. When Major Maitland presents Zachariah with a copy of Byron's Corsair, supposing that it is 'Not exactly, perhaps, in [his] line', it becomes clear that, even though no apparent 'transformation' has taken place, Zachariah's 'line' is not so well defined as it has been:

He went on with the Corsair, and as he read his heart warmed, and he unconsciously found himself declaiming several of the most glowing and eloquent lines aloud. He was by nature a poet; essentially so, for he loved everything which lifted him above the commonplace. Isaiah, Milton, a storm, a revolution, a great passion - with these he was at home; and his education, mainly on the Old Testament, contributed greatly to the development both of the strength and the weakness of his character.
(Revolution, p. 15)

The lack of definition that Zachariah's immediate warming to Byron apparently signifies might be seen as a positive thing. Part of Zachariah's trouble has been his 'certainty' and his reluctance to grapple with the 'indefinite'. Zachariah would never have taken up the Byron himself, indeed Rutherford tells us that he 'took no interest in him' (Revolution, p. 14). 'Mad, bad and dangerous to know', Byron would hardly have recommended himself to Zachariah. The benefit of his unpremeditated engrossment in The Corsair is in its ability therefore to answer questions that Zachariah didn't know he wanted or needed to ask. The usual sources from which he might have sought support and counsel would be well

known to him, the questions applicable and possible answers almost pre-ordained to be of a certain 'line'. In one of his essays on Byron, Hale White, in praising the poet for his morality, asserts that:

We must, of course, get rid of the notion that the relative magnitude of the virtues and vices according to the priest or society is authentic. (Pages, p. 129)

The Corsair by-passes 'priest [and] society' so that Zachariah finds in it 'exactly what answered to his inmost self, down to its very depths' (Revolution, p. 15). Byron sounds Zachariah's buried life and reveals, as it satisfies, the need of love that his 'education...on the Old Testament' as a book of law, and the institution of marriage, had left wanting. The Byron comprises fresh thought for Zachariah; it does what his religion ought to have done and what he had failed so far to realize that, in its present form, it no longer could:

The vision of Medora will not intensify the shadow over Rosoman Street, Clerkenwell, but will soften it. (Revolution, p. 16)

Though his religion can provide the reason why he ought to endure the absence of love in his life, his suffering being part of 'God's purpose' (Revolution, p. 70), the argument has ceased (without Zachariah's realizing it) to satisfy him emotionally, to offer consolation or provide a focus for depth of feeling.

If Byron unsettles him, then the 'infidel' Caillaud represents a further challenge to Zachariah's habit of belief. He asks Zachariah what he thinks of the 'Friends of the People':

'Not much', quoth he. [Zachariah]

'Not worse than our virtuous substitute for a sovereign,?'

'No, certainly'.

'You object to giving them votes, but is not the opinion of the silliest as good as that of Lord Sidmouth?'

'That's no reason for giving them votes.' (Revolution, p. 24)

Caillaud responds to Zachariah's detached unconcern with an implicit demand that he forget the presuppositions that his faith makes necessary. In urging Zachariah to 'study...the Declaration of the Rights of Man', Caillaud's appeal is not merely to his friend's reason and powers of logic, but to his fundamental humanity. Caillaud functions like Mardon in the Autobiography; there is much in what he says that challenges Zachariah's complacency. Formally too we might draw a comparison with the earlier book. The first part of the Revolution, a 'history' seen almost exclusively through the consciousness of Zachariah, is like autobiography, setting the internal confusions of mind and consciousness of a representative figure in the context of events. The third novel sets out to capture the peculiar temper of the times by examining what it might feel like to inhabit history from the inside and experience its indefiniteness as opposed to the historian's sense of clarity. The question at the centre of Caillaud's speech about Paine's Rights of Man (1791-2) in chapter II: 'What is the real difference between him and you?' (Revolution, p. 24), puzzles Zachariah because, at the level of memory, the answer is so obvious, yet somehow, since his contact with the world, 'Outside Pike Street' Meeting house, the rehearsed response seems, intellectually as well as emotionally, not to fit. He ought to have been able to declare without hesitation that the difference was 'I am saved!', but he finds that he cannot. Caillaud makes Zachariah feel Morley's time lag between his habit of mind and developing consciousness.

The unexpected complexity that Jean Caillaud's question awakens him to, does indeed act with the force of a revolution in Zachariah's thought, turning it back upon itself so that nothing seems as straightforward as it once had done:

Sunday came, and Zachariah and his wife attended the services at Pike Street Meeting-house, conducted by that worthy servant of God, the Reverend Thomas Bradshaw. He was at that time preaching a series of sermons on the Gospel Covenant, and he enlarged upon the distinction between those with whom there was none, save of judgement. The poor and the weakest, if they were sons of God, were more blessed than the strongest who were not. These were nothing: 'they should go out like the smoke of a candle with a ill favour; whereas the weak and simple ones are upholden, and go from strength to strength, and increase with the increasings of God.' Zachariah was rather confused by what had happened during the week, and his mind, especially during the long prayer, wandered a good deal, much to his discomfort.

(Revolution, pp. 25-6)

In the light of Caillaud's words, Zachariah's former sense of his own 'distinction' and the 'strength' gained from it, is made to seem spurious. He is 'confused' by 'what had happened during the week', that is by the impingement of present time, of secular pursuits and contact, on his spiritual confidence. Zachariah has not been used to question his status, so that to do so inevitably seems like doubting it. The implications of that doubt, for one who has held to the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, are immense; they amount to no less than personal transformation. Bradshaw's doctrine appears to coincide with the politics of Caillaud but terms like 'weak' and 'strength' have different meanings - 'weak' is a good word in the chapel and the 'strength' is not political here but 'strong in God's favour'. Hence the confusions; one set of words with two meanings. Typically, what seems like a disingenuous response, a confirmation of his fears in the fact of his mind 'wander[ing]' during the long prayer, is actually a sign of his integrity in grappling with this 'confusion'. Zachariah's ability to acknowledge, even in so oblique a manner, Caillaud's question, 'What is the real difference...?', and to feel the challenge posed by his faith, liberates him from the bondage of

the kind of systematic observance that is all that people like his wife will ever attain:

Poor wretch! he thought he was struggling with his weakness; but he was in reality struggling against his own strength.
(Revolution, p. 71)

Here 'weak' and 'strong' are different again; they are personal now. Even mistaken 'thought' is superior to the lip-service to which Zachariah has been in danger of becoming habituated. Indeed, this sentence exemplifies what I have suggested is the true 'underground' process of revolution: thinking you're doing one thing whilst, 'in reality', another is happening all the time.

It is through the engagement of his intellect with the question of his faith that Zachariah is aligned (typically for this book) with the 'infidel' Pauline Caillaud:

She [Pauline] had one redeeming virtue...She had an intellect, and it was one that sought constant expression... (Revolution, p. 44)

Though she is patently not one of the 'elect', in the restricted terms that it has been Zachariah's habit to apply the word, Rutherford insists on that religious word 'redeem' to describe the precise quality of Pauline's 'intellect'. It is not their convictions:

They were not atheists, nor had they entirely pushed aside the religious questions which torment men's minds. They believed in what they called a Supreme Being, whom they thought to be just and good; but they went no further. They were revolutionary,
(Revolution, p. 44)

so much as the 'vivacity and force' of the thought by which they were forged, that 'redeems' Pauline and her father. Their refusal to be restricted by the necessity of aligning themselves with any one creed ('they had not pushed aside the questions which torment men's minds'), ought to appal Zachariah, and yet 'they

were drawn to Zachariah, and Zachariah was drawn to them'. Despite all that ought to prevent it, there is a sense of spiritual fellowship between them that has much to do with what, paradoxically, is the secular 'belief' that all three share.

It is this sense of some shared, yet inexplicable belief with the Caillaud's that by turns compels and intimidates Zachariah at those moments when he recognizes that, according to the system of his faith, he ought to bear witness to his convictions and attempt to 'convert' the Caillauds:

Zachariah, although a firm believer in his faith, and not a coward, was tempted to be silent. He was heavy and slow in action, and this kind of company was strange to him. Furthermore, Pauline was not an open enemy, and notwithstanding her little blasphemies, she was attractive. But then he remembered with shame that he was ordered to testify to the truth wherever he might be, and unable to find anything of his own by which he could express himself, a text of the Bible came into his mind, and, half to himself, he repeated it aloud - (Revolution, p. 48)

That 'tempted to be silent' seems as though it comes from a fear of Pauline's unorthodoxy but it actually points to the way that Zachariah is having to struggle with his own confused sense of what he can now believe. The excuses he makes for not behaving like a 'firm believer', that 'he was heavy and slow in action', that 'this kind of company was strange', are no more than a means of delaying the action, not of immediate conviction, but of 'memory'; he 'remembered that he was ordered to testify...'. Faith here is rendered as habit. Even though he could find nothing of 'his own' to 'express himself' and still keep faith with the rigid code he was beginning to have to question, Zachariah felt that he was 'ordered' to testify. This sounds more like religious conscription than conscientious affirmation. When the Bible text comes into his mind, Zachariah repeats it, 'half to himself', as if he was as needful of its guidance as he assumes Pauline must be:

'I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.'

'What is that?' said Jean. 'Repeat it.'

Zachariah slowly repeated it. He had intended to add to it something which might satisfy his conscience and rebuke Pauline, but he could not. (Revolution, p. 48)

It is as if Zachariah is encountering the text for the first time, with an entirely new awareness of its significance and implication. He repeats it 'slowly', as if wanting to listen carefully to it himself. His 'intention' in using the text had been to 'add' to it, not just some commentary which might have illustrated its specific relevance, but 'something which might satisfy his conscience'. The vicariousness of this kind of 'satisfaction' becomes clear after the experience of uttering it however, as Zachariah discovers that, far from needing 'adding' to, the text defies appendage. Any addition would be a kind of 'blasphemy'. He could do no more, or less, to 'satisfy' his conscience: it is 'satisfied', though in becoming open to the kind of 'dissatisfaction' that Rutherford describes in chapter II:

it so often happens that if we go on [questioning and thinking] we are dissatisfied; we cannot doubt each successive step, but we doubt the conclusion. (Revolution, p. 25)

This could well stand as an epigraph to the whole book. The 'steps' that Zachariah takes in the novel towards a greater openness and flexibility of faith, seem inevitable as a means of progress as opposed to perpetuation, but, even as he takes them, he is haunted by the dread of the 'conclusion' that they might foreshadow and the fear that they are a journey away from confidence rather than into it.

More and more Zachariah finds that things that ought to appal him and that he thought he knew to be wrong and sinful, instead of provoking moral outrage and condemnation, engender confusion in him:

Pauline retired for a few moments, and presently came back in a short dress of black velvet, which reached about half-way down from the knee to the ankle. It was trimmed with red: she had stuck a red artificial flower in her hair, and had on a pair of red stockings with dancing slippers probably of her own make. Over her shoulders was a light gauzy shawl. Her father took his station in a corner, and motioned to Zachariah to compress himself into another... Pauline began dancing, her father accompanying her with an oboe. It was a very curious performance. It was nothing like ordinary opera-dancing, and equally unlike any movement seen at a ball. It was a series of graceful evolutions with the shawl, which was flung now on one shoulder and now on the other, each movement exquisitely resolving itself, with the most perfect ease, into the one following, and designed apparently to show the capacity of a beautiful figure for poetic expression. Wave fell into wave along every line of her body, and occasionally a posture was arrested, to pass away in an instant into some new combination. There was no definite character in the dance beyond mere beauty. It was melody for melody's sake. A remarkable change, too, came over the face of the performer. She looked serious; but it was not a seriousness produced by any strain. It was rather the calm which is found on the face of the statue of a goddess. In none of her attitudes was there a trace of coquettishness, although some were most attractive. One in particular was so. She held a corner of the shawl high above her with her right hand and her foot was advanced so as to show her whole frame extended, excepting the neck; the head being bent downwards and sideways.

(Revolution, pp. 49-50)

We need to remember, in reading this, that 'The theatre and dancing in 1814 were an abomination to the Independents' (Revolution, p. 27). Zachariah's response to the 'abomination' he experiences (he does not merely witness it), at the Caillauds' ought to be uncomplicated and assured. That it is anything but that is due partly to the operation of that 'redeeming virtue intellect', which keeps Zachariah's mind and heart open here, where his wife's would have been clamped tight shut. But it is due also to something that his religion, in its overwhelming respect for the 'intellect' and 'understanding' at the expense of the instinctive and affective, has caused to become deeply buried - a refreshing sensuality.

Like his wife, Zachariah 'had been brought up in a school which would have considered such an exhibition [Pauline's dance] as the work of the devil' (Revolution, p. 50), and yet, unlike Jane Coleman, he cannot find it in his heart to 'denounce' Pauline. Because he wants not to acknowledge (or doesn't realize) that his response to Pauline's dance is primarily sensual, Zachariah is anxious to attribute some absolving motivation, 'some kind of an excuse' (Revolution, p.50), to the 'exhibition'. And yet honesty compels him to admit that he can't; there was no 'definite character in the dance beyond mere beauty' (Revolution, p. 49). Despite his desperation to find some, there appears no purpose in the dance other than her display and, what seems far worse in someone 'trained in every weapon in the chapel armoury' (Revolution, p. 51), his secret pleasure.

Yet Pauline's dance does no more than express the same human drive for delight as does the Butterfly catcher in the Autobiography (chapter VIII). Rutherford makes clear that Pauline deserves no censure for the dance. He tells us that there was not a 'trace of coquettishness' in any of her attitudes. Zachariah thinks the dance should be wrong and that his response to 'wrong' ought to be consistent. But the way that Rutherford presents Pauline implies that what Zachariah feels is right, even if wrongly attributed. Zachariah has to learn (as had Rutherford to do in the Autobiography before him) that, even setting aside its delightfulness, Pauline's dance is as 'pious', in its celebration of the 'mere beauty' of God's creation, as is his own austerity in the observance of law.

Asked by her father what he thinks of Pauline's dance, Zachariah stammers that it was 'very wonderful' adding, as he was obliged to do, that 'we

are not used to that kind of thing'. Pauline is quick to note the significance of this 'we':

'Who are the "we" ?' said Pauline. 'Ah, of course you are Puritans. I am a - what do you call it? - a daughter - no, that isn't it - a child of the devil. I won't have that though. My father isn't the devil. Even you wouldn't say that, Mr Coleman. Ah, I have no business to joke, you look so solemn; you think my tricks are satanic; but what was it in your book, 'C'est moi, l'Eternel, qui fais toutes les choses la?'. (Revolution, p. 51, author's emphases)

In confronting Zachariah with what seems to her simple common sense, Pauline makes the language he uses sound absurd. And yet she shows also, by her inability to penetrate to the idea behind the assumption of a personal devil (the sense of evil as a real presence, solid and palpable), that she has as little understanding of the genuine and beneficial force behind what seems to her mere childish superstition, as Zachariah has of his response to her dance.

In the Deliverance, set in the 1840's, Rutherford writes that even 'The shallowest of mortals is able now to laugh at the notion of a personal devil' (Deliverance, p. 95). He is careful to point out that it is the 'shallowest' who are 'able' to laugh at the notion, suggesting, implicitly, that there is something, not just lazy, but dangerous, about their derision. The figure might seem quaint to Pauline but the sense behind it remains worthy of deadly seriousness. Her gentle mockery reveals as much about Pauline's own prejudices (shaped by an upbringing that is as peculiar as Zachariah's), as it does of Zachariah's. The Caillauds readiness not only to do without, but to 'laugh' at things such as the 'notion of a personal devil' is part of what makes Zachariah suspicious of them even whilst he is drawn to them. In his relationship with the Caillauds then, we are given a sense of the 'dissatisfaction' that impedes Zachariah's progress and

also of the awful 'doubt' that accompanies transformation. Might not the logical 'conclusion' of Pauline's inability to see through the 'notion of a personal devil' have seemed to Zachariah to be symptomatic of a weakening of the sense of evil as a distinct force to be striven against? The worry for Zachariah is that the Caillauds' commitment to 'politics', to collective good, in putting too little emphasis upon self-government, may devalue the struggle for personal improvement. In the 'revolution' being described, Puritan earnestness is as important an element as French Rationalism.

The Revolution is set some twenty years before the Deliverance and is a novel of transition and not, as might be said of the second book, one of disengagement from disappointment. In this sense Pauline and her father are important figures; as free-thinkers they are prophets of the 'freedom' of thought that is to come, of its range and spontaneity but of its potential 'shallowness' too. Given this, Pauline's words, though they reveal the pitfalls involved in the easy dismissal of proven forms, still imply that, for all its sincerity, Zachariah's thought may yet be backward and too deeply embedded in a system whose interpretation is no longer straightforward. Somewhere between Zachariah's 'depths' and the 'shallows' implied in the Deliverance, is the optimum level.

Before he came into contact with the Major and the Caillauds, Zachariah had no cause to doubt that his idea of right and wrong 'agree[d] with...the facts' (Revolution, p. 6) of life because, within the confines of his own field of action, it plainly did (or seemed to). What we see happening as the Revolution progresses is a growing awareness in Zachariah that so strict and unthinking a division between 'good' and 'evil' as he has retained, far from being a sign of

integrity, might actually amount to a kind of fraud in its failure to realize complexity. The time when such a simple concept as a 'devil' could usefully be used to embody or dissuade from evil, has long passed.

Pauline chaffs Zachariah about his own words, but there is a deadly earnestness ('I have no business to joke') in her reference to the Biblical text Zachariah quoted earlier. She turns those words back upon him, 'I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things', and, in so doing, suggests that Zachariah's 'repetition' of them might not, in intention if not in actual practise, have been so very far removed from the 'dead ecclesiastical reiteration' that fell from the mouths of Job's comforters.¹³ If Zachariah truly believes that God created 'adversity', then, Pauline implies, he has to recognize and confront the consequences of that belief, however difficult or challenging that might be to his established faith. He needs to live from the Job perplexity, as he had shown himself capable of doing earlier, when he was under no obligation to uphold his faith for the benefit of non-believers:

Only thirty years old, and only three months a husband, he had already learned renunciation. There was to be no joy in life? Then he would be satisfied if it were tolerable, and he strove to dismiss all his dreams and do his best with what lay before him.
(Revolution, p. 12)

This is faith in operation: an active submission like that attributed to Job.

Zachariah's understanding of good and evil, as it stands at this point, will not allow for the detection of the true nature of his attraction to Pauline:

From his youth upwards he had been trained with every weapon in the chapel armoury, and yet he now found himself as powerless as the merest novice to prevent the very sinful occupation of dwelling

13. 'Notes on the Book of Job' in Deliverance, p. 149

upon every attitude of Pauline, and outlining every one of her limbs. Do what he might, her image was for ever before his eyes, and reconstructed itself after every attempt to abolish it, just as a reflected image in a pool slowly but inevitably gathers itself together again after each disturbance of the water.

(Revolution, p. 51)

For Zachariah the feeling that watching Pauline evokes in him can only be the product of unadulterated sin, something that his 'training' ought to have been proof against. He cannot see how it is that the 'weapons' of the 'chapel armoury' are 'powerless' because, in this instance, they are targeted against what is a natural (and complex) human response as much as simple misconduct. The 'sin' in what Zachariah feels seems to him to attach to his response to Pauline itself and to the fact that, being no longer a 'novice' in the chapel, he ought to have been able to put the 'old Adam' behind him. Zachariah is, of course, right in thinking this because feeling the way he does towards Pauline inevitably involves disloyalty to his wife. And yet Rutherford makes quite clear the perfunctory nature of Zachariah's marriage:

The courtship between Zachariah and the lady who became his wife had been short, for there could be no mistake, as they had known one another so long. (Revolution, p. 6)

Little hint of tenderness is allowed to escape through that 'short courtship', or through the boredom suggested by 'they had known one another so long'; the emphasis is on the negative making a mistake, rather than the delight of courtship. Rutherford does not encourage sympathy with Zachariah's wife as a person, presenting her instead as a functionary, 'the lady who became his wife'. That 'there could be no mistake' seems to be borne out in the implied lack of thought (let alone passion) that seems to have accompanied the 'question' of their marriage. There is too a feeling of (not fortuitous) randomness about the

joining together of these two people whose marriage is presented as the inevitable consequence of an apparent theological similarity (which is what 'mistake' would be, to marry a mis-believer) and the passage of time, rather than the growth of any human sympathy or affection.

In revealing Mrs Coleman's coldness and the emptiness of his marriage however, Rutherford's purpose is not to exonerate Zachariah. Charles Swann notes how George Allen shows himself a 'more generously loving man than Zachariah', in that he attempts at least to explain his political position to his wife Priscilla, something, Swann adds, 'which is more than we ever see Zachariah doing' (Swann 1991, p. 62). It is not solely Pauline Caillaud's politics that heighten Zachariah's dissatisfaction with his wife and distract him from his Bible:

Zachariah, having read about a dozen verses, knelt down and prayed; but alas! even in his prayer he saw Pauline's red stockings.
(Revolution, p. 52)

It really is shocking that those red stockings should intrude upon Zachariah's prayer. But they could be said to be partly responsible for what might be seen as the continuation of a positive failing in him. We can see this because, like historians, we're wise after the event. The problem for Zachariah is that at the time he can't know that this isn't just temptation. Rutherford is interested in what it is like to live through a moment of change without being sure either if the disturbance is development or, if it is, what form the growth will take. Zachariah is finding it increasingly difficult to use prayer as a means of evading or obscuring troubled thought.

What Rutherford actually does here is something 'revolutionary'. He makes the transformation of Zachariah's belief and the possible reformation of

his ethical system, dependent upon an increase of sensual consciousness. Hale White himself can appeal directly to that theatre language that was anathema to Zachariah to make the point:

In Romeo and Juliet the highest attainable is reached, not through an abstraction or idea, but through the sensuous and never leaving it. Through the sensuous, in the sensuous, we come to the divine, awful, pure, as the stars at night, and crowned by death.
(Last Pages, p. 311)

By the time we reach chapter V Zachariah can admit how, 'when he had been with sinners he had been just what they were' (Revolution, p.53), the whole nature of his understanding of his own existence, and that of others, is beginning to alter, even though he may not fully realize the fact. By the close of chapter VI, even though Zachariah 'thought he was so far' (Revolution, p. 62, my emphasis) from Pauline, Caillaud and the Major, Rutherford insists that 'The three were infinitely nearer to one another than they knew' (Revolution, p. 62). That 'infinite nearness' is like the sympathy that D.H.Lawrence, another writer in the Puritan tradition concerned with how old words are accommodated to new meanings, writes of in his essay called 'Love':

In love, all things unite in a oneness of joy and praise.¹⁴

What lies behind the old religious language is redirected into a new recognition of the creative force of passion:

Love is the hastening gravitation of spirit towards spirit, and body towards body, in the joy of creation. (Lawrence, p. 151)

14. D.H.Lawrence, Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence, ed. by Edward D. Mc Donald (London: Heinemann, 1936), 'Love', p. 151. Hereafter cited as Lawrence.

Significantly, in the Revolution, this spiritual and intellectual 'closeness' is registered physically:

The man rose up behind the Calvinist and reached out arms to touch and embrace his friends. (Revolution, p. 62)

That force that had drawn the Caillauds to Zachariah, and he to them, that had seemed so opposed to religion as Zachariah had known it, Lawrence argues, is the very essence of the religious impulse:

Love is a progression towards the goal...Love travels heavenwards...Love is at last a positive infinite.
(Lawrence, p. 152)

The 'Calvinist', implicitly, is something less than the 'man'. The Calvinist can stand in the man's way, preventing genuine contact ('touch and embrace') with others. It is the man who asks:

Could anyone be better for not being loved?
(Revolution, p. 70)

In formulating this question Zachariah begins to appreciate how to believe 'generally' was one thing, but to believe such a doctrine 'as a truth for him was another' (Revolution, p. 71). He is beginning to feel the need for his belief to be aligned with his intelligence and with his own sense of justice. He is discovering that the blind acceptance of externally imposed authorities is less easy to maintain and that he needs, as did Job, to 'hold fast to the law within' as the 'candle to light his path' (Deliverance, p. 159). We are given a keen sense of the tremendous resistance of the old form of belief to change, in the manner in which Zachariah 'cursed himself for permitting [the questioning of the old form] believing it to be a sin'. Yet, in spite of his own resistance, Zachariah is compelled by his 'reason' to push on: that 'fatal why, the protest of his reason' (Revolution, p. 71,

author's emphasis) would assert itself. If the 'why' is 'fatal' to that old understanding of what it means to believe, it is the life-blood of what will be the new:

Poor wretch! he thought he was struggling with his weakness; but he was in reality struggling against his own strength.
(Revolution, p. 71)

Zachariah's weakness ('For such as he are weak as well as strong', Revolution, p. 15), has given way to strength, even if at present he struggles against it. Zachariah's is becoming, like Job's, a questioning faith, one determined upon its connection with experience.

The first 'half' of the Revolution (of Zachariah's biography) closes, as does the first volume of Mark Rutherford's autobiography, with the death of a figure who has been instrumental in the 'transformation' of the protagonist. Caillaud's death represents the culmination of a series of 'interior moments' (amongst them the confused discovery of his alienation from the chapel and of a capacity for sexual passion), in which Zachariah's expectations are turned upside down. When Zachariah enters the condemned cell it is with a consciousness that he should be the comforter:

The three friends spoke not a word for nearly five minutes. Zachariah was never suddenly equal to any occasion which made great demands upon him. It often made him miserable that it was so. Here he was, in the presence of one whom he had so much loved, and who was about to leave him for ever, and he had nothing to say. That could have been endured could he but have felt and showed his feeling, could he but have cast himself upon his neck and wept over him, but he was numbed and apparently immovable. It was Caillaud who first broke the silence.
(Revolution, p. 151, author's emphasis)

Those first 'five minutes' cannot but seem to us like the culmination of the 'drawing together' in chapter V (p. 45), and recall also that 'infinite nearness'

that Rutherford cited in chapter VI (p. 62). Lawrence describes such love, freed from all other considerations, as the 'gravitation of spirit towards spirit'. But this spiritual communion is abbreviated by Zachariah's sense of 'inequality' to the occasion. It is restraint and dignity, 'Here he was in the presence of one whom he had so much loved, and was about to leave him', that keep Zachariah from quite knowing his feelings; 'could he but have felt and showed his feeling'. Contrary to all his expectations it is not Caillaud the unbeliever who seems to be put to the test by the 'demands' of the occasion, but he himself. Zachariah cannot be content with the silence because, partly at least, he knows it comes from the failure of his own religious language. Caillaud is not one of the elect; the formula that he could repeat, Zachariah recognizes, as surely as does his friend, would be wholly inappropriate. And, in any case, the old, easy 'them' and 'us' division has grown increasingly confused for Zachariah. For as long as he has known the Caillauds Zachariah has found that when compelled to do so, 'He could not face the question' (Revolution, p. 60) of their 'theological' status. And yet, even if prohibited from doing so on 'religious' grounds, Zachariah needs, in simple humanity, to be able to testify to his intense yet suppressed feeling for Caillaud. He does not know that this is one of those times when words are nothing. Zachariah is distracted from feeling by the fear that he hasn't 'put everything in words'. There ought, he thinks, to be something said and yet he can only feel 'nothing to say'. From this lack of words Zachariah infers a lack of feeling. And yet what he takes to be a failure in sensitivity and display, 'could he but have felt and showed his feeling', is really the humanly 'vital' part of his response to Caillaud, the part that shows profounder insight by knowing, even

unconsciously, and silently testifying to what 'words cannot do' (Letters, p. 287).

In all of his novels Rutherford is concerned in getting his serious Puritans past their need for words so that they find the thing they must do.

Earlier, Mrs Coleman had asked Zachariah if he meant to call 'unconverted infidels' (the Caillauds), his friends. Zachariah evades answering, but Rutherford speaks on his behalf:

They were his friends - he felt they were - and they were dear to him; but he was hardly able as yet to confess it, even to himself.
(Revolution, p. 113)

The few minutes he is allowed in the prison cell comprise the last opportunity that Zachariah will have to 'confess; explicitly, to testify, not only to his friendship but his 'love' for Caillaud. It is precisely because he is not a dispassionate man, like Caillaud, that Zachariah can sustain neither the implicit sympathy nor the silence of the occasion (registered in Zachariah's feeling that it makes a special 'demand' upon him) and his incapacity to say anything adequate to it produces in Zachariah a self-consciousness which he knows is inappropriate but can do nothing to break. He can't find the simple, Biblical response and 'cast himself upon his neck' and weep.

The silence has been precious and necessary to Caillaud, and yet it is he who 'breaks' it, to 'console' Zachariah. Caillaud takes command, as if he anticipates what Zachariah, like Job's friends, will have to find to say:

'Speak! What need is there of speaking? What is there which can be said at such a time? To tell the truth, Coleman, I hardly cared about having you here. I did not want to imperil the calm which is now happily upon me; we all of us have something unaccountable and uncontrollable in us, and I do not know how soon it may wake in me. But I did wish to see you, in order that your mind might be at peace about me. Come, good-bye.'
(Revolution, pp. 152-3, author's emphasis)

This is the death of a non-believer but how tactfully Caillaud reassures Zachariah; what might have been for him guilt or fear of God is turned by Caillaud into 'something unaccountable' which couldn't destroy the actual peace he feels. Caillaud knows what is passing through Zachariah's mind (there is courage in his visiting Caillaud in prison at his own danger, as we soon discover), Caillaud takes the responsibility for speaking off Zachariah's shoulders - after all what could he say? It is Caillaud's self-sacrifice in risking the 'calm' that is upon him in order to secure 'peace' for his friend that shows the terrible irony in Zachariah's thinking himself a 'brute' for not speaking (Revolution, p. 152), for believing that it is only through words that one is heard. That Caillaud feels this irony is registered in the sense of exasperation contained in his initial response to Zachariah's distress:

'Speak! What need is there of speaking? What is there which can be said at such a time?'

And yet, even as he expresses that exasperation there is an admirable restraint in Caillaud; what anger there is in this remark is assumed to divert the intensity of Zachariah's feelings. The condemned man's is an easier position in a way; Caillaud realizes, as soon as the words are out, that Zachariah is unable to respond without the necessary religious words. What Zachariah thinks is his insensitivity is actually a greater tact, as was the first silence of Job's friends (Deliverance, p. 137). Caillaud understands this even though Zachariah can't.

Caillaud's existence is practical, Zachariah's belief passionate. Zachariah will never be like Caillaud but the difference between them is not, as seemed at

the novel's opening, fundamental, but one of degree. In Literature and Dogma,¹⁵ Matthew Arnold asks if there is no difference between 'what is ethical, or morality, and religion?' (p.20). Arnold determines that the 'true meaning of religion is...not simply morality, but morality touched by emotion' (p. 21, author's emphases). There will always be a religious tone to Zachariah's life, what Arnold calls 'morality touched by emotion', where Caillaud holds his 'morality' as a series of principles.

From the start of the novel Rutherford has prepared us to appreciate this implicit heroism:

the divinest heroism is not that of the man who, holding life cheap, puts his back against a wall, and is shot by Government soldiers, assured that he will live ever afterwards as a martyr and saint: a diviner heroism is that of the poor printer, who, in dingy, smoky Rosoman Street, Clerkenwell, with forty years before him, determined to live through them, as far as he could, without a murmur, although there was to be no pleasure in them. A diviner heroism is this, but divinest of all is that of him who can in these days do what Zachariah did, and without Zachariah's faith. (Revolution, p. 12)

Rutherford never gets inside the humanist Caillaud as he does Zachariah. He is far more comfortable, one feels, with the confusions of mind and consciousness that Zachariah exemplifies than with Caillaud's passionless rationality.

The historical context is reflected in the personal. Zachariah and Caillaud represent in small the kind of problems that arose out of the diversity of the radical spirit. E.P.Thompson describes this diversity:

At one end, then, the London Corresponding Society reached out to the coffee-houses, taverns and dissenting churches off Piccadilly, Fleet Street and the Strand, where the self-educated journeyman

15. Matthew Arnold, Literature and Dogma: An Essay Towards a Better Apprehension of the Bible, 1873 (London: Smith Elder, 1873)

might rub shoulders with the printer, the shop-keeper, the engraver or the young attorney. At the other end, to the east, and south of the river, it touched those older working-class communities - the waterside workers of Wapping, the silk weavers of Spitalfields, the old dissenting stronghold of Southwark. For 200 years 'Radical London' has always been more heterogeneous and fluid in its social and occupational definition than the Midlands or Northern centres grouped around two or three staple industries. Popular movements in London have often lacked the coherence and stamina which results from the involvement of an entire community in common occupational and social tensions. On the other hand they have generally been more subject to intellectual and 'ideal' motivations. A propaganda of ideas has had a larger audience than in the North. London Radicalism early acquired a greater sophistication from the need to knit diverse agitations into a common movement.¹⁶

Rutherford is anxious to show how Radicalism that comes from very different sources has to accommodate internal divisions. The 'revolution' in the novel comes from Dissent, rationalist continental politics, aristocratic Republicanism, working-class intellectuals. Zachariah and Caillaud exemplify both the need and the possibility of forging a 'common movement' out of 'diverse agitations'.

It was the judgement of Walter Allen that the Revolution is 'broken-backed', the leap forward of twenty years is 'very clumsily' managed, he contends, so that what comprises the second part of the work seems 'almost a separate novel'.¹⁷ R.J.Rayson is right to point out however, that if leaping forward were in itself evidence of clumsiness then 'The Winter's Tale and Wuthering Heights would both stand condemned'.¹⁸ And yet, though Rayson identifies the mode of

-
16. E.P.Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 23.
 17. Walter Allen, The English Novel: From Pilgrim's Progress to Sons and Lovers (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 287.
 18. R.J.Rayson, 'Is The Revolution in Tanner's Lane broken-backed?', Essays in Criticism, 20 (1990), p. 71.

Rutherford's 'history' as one of 'parallelism and contrast', he still insists that as an 'historical' novel it fails. For a more perceptive reading of this novel we must look to Charles Swann who, in arguing for a 'considerable sophistication about fictions on Hale White's part', refutes Allen's charge of discontinuity:

The two parts exist in a dialectical tension which is exhilarating in its formal excellence - though it demands considerable alertness to enable the reader to move backwards and forwards in time to recognize the reciprocal interrelationships which are so much a part of Rutherford's web of meanings. (Swann 1991, p. 56)

The second half of the Revolution relates to the first through a series of parallels. The action of the novel moves from London to the Provinces, its temporal and political frames from the aftermath of the French Revolution to agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, its religious focus from the serious, felt gospel of Bradshaw to the pallid, unbelieving orthodoxy of John Broad. But the most important parallel is that of Zachariah and George Allen, of their marriages and the differing influences to which each is subject.

There is, in the movement from the first to the second half of the novel, a definite alteration in scale: we move from the cosmopolitan stage of the French Revolution to Tanner's Lane and the purely tactical issue of the repeal of the Corn Laws. Rutherford is always most interested in the minutiae of being, his vision is always keenest when focused upon the relatively trivial and uneventful. The action and locus of the second half of the Revolution, leading up to the events of 1846, is made to seem exiguous not only because it follows the first but also because it takes place against the background of international unrest leading to the 1848 revolutions in Germany, France, Hungary and Italy. The intention behind such staging however, is to show how all of these 'revolutions', whether

internal or international, momentous or apparently trifling, are in a sense cognate. The argument implicit in all of Rutherford's work is that we oughtn't to despise what is little and internal because it appears messy and confused.

By writing an historical novel with a break of twenty years in the middle of it, Rutherford consciously questions the nature of historical continuities. If the scale of the second half is smaller that is because Rutherford is redeeming the absurdity of the book's title; Tanner's Lane writes big issues, revolutions, small. That is not because in Arnold's terms England has been left behind in the march of the mind; manners and customs are as valid indicators of fundamental change as are large ideas for Hale White. Rutherford is concerned to acknowledge those people that Thompson, in The Making of the English Working Class, defines as suffering the 'enormous condescension of posterity' (p. 13); Rutherford's is the history of 'unhistoric acts' as George Eliot calls them.¹⁹ Zachariah is a huge presence in the novel, even in the second half when he is largely absent. But Rutherford's apostrophe to Zachariah in chapter I, 'O, my hero!' (Revolution, p.12), ought not to distract us from taking George Allen seriously. The book has been waiting for George, a man in whom, even though in stature he is 'inferior' to Zachariah, that 'divine[st] heroism' earlier attributed to Caillaud, will be re-embodied. Zachariah always has his belief, no matter how strongly it is challenged. George, precisely because he exists, historically and theologically, after the time of struggle and transition that consolidated Zachariah's faith, has been able to grow up simply believing himself a believer, without having encountered any challenge to that assumption.

19. George Eliot, Middlemarch, 1871-2 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 896.

Zachariah is a channel for the 'righteousness' and fervour of men like Bradshaw in the first part of the novel. It is the essence of this spirit that is passed on to George Allen in the second part. That George is an entirely different man from Zachariah, shows how Rutherford founds his history not just on the individual life but on the collective spirit. The transition to George raises again questions of what sort of novel the Revolution is. The second 'half' of the book has a similar nexus - religion, politics, and passion - to the first. For George however, unlike his predecessor, the three things are indistinguishable, though the way in which they interfere with each other is experienced in much the same way as for Zachariah.

When at length George is faced with 'the first wrench...given by the Destinies to loosen us from the love of life', when he first realizes the mistake that his marriage comprises, and that 'there are worse things than death!' (Revolution, p. 207), he discovers, unlike Zachariah (whose faith could at least teach him resignation), that his religion is a hindrance; 'the gospel according to Tanner's Lane did nothing for him, and he was cast forth to wrestle with his sufferings alone' (Revolution, p. 243). Zachariah was disabled by an 'antecedent form', George has to start at the beginning and from what turns out to be nothing, he has to fight to forge, for himself, something real to believe in.

The true connection between the first and second halves of the Revolution is the spirit of Mr Bradshaw. Rutherford has George as well as Zachariah hear Bradshaw preach (even though by George's time Bradshaw is an 'old man' and semi-retired, Revolution, p. 266). Both Zachariah and George come to embody the spirit that Bradshaw exemplifies, though in markedly different ways. It is

Bradshaw's emphasis, implicit throughout the novel, upon the importance of making religion 'fit' individual experience that redeems first Zachariah and then

George:

'Here is a word for us this morning: "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place thou seest" Ah! what a word it is. You and I are not idolaters, and there is no danger of our being so. For you and me this is not a warning against idolatry. What is it for us then? Reserve yourself; discriminate in your worship. Reserve yourself, I say; but what is the implication? What says the next verse? "In the place which the Lord shall choose"; that is to say keep your worship for the Highest. Do not squander yourself, but, on the other hand, before the shrine of the Lord offer all your love and adoration. What a practical application this has! ... I desire to come a little closer to you. What are the consequences of not obeying this Divine law? You will not be struck dead nor excommunicated; you will be simply disappointed. Your burnt offering will receive no answer; you will not be blessed through it; you will come to see that you have been pouring forth your treasure and, something worse, your heart's blood - not the blood of cattle - before that which is no God - a nothing in fact. "Vanity of vanities," you will cry, "all is vanity." My young friends, young men and young women, you are particularly prone to go wrong in this matter. You not only lay your possessions, but yourselves, on altars by the roadside.'

(Revolution, pp. 218-19, author's emphases)

It is Mr Bradshaw, a man who, like Zachariah, is largely 'left behind' by the second part of the novel, who determinedly forces his text, and, by implication, the 'Divine law' and inspiration - the religion - it embodies, into the present. He makes his text contemporary: 'For you and me this is not a warning against idolatry'. He shows the way in which its surface must be penetrated: 'but what is the implication?'. Above all he urges the 'practical application' of both text and religion. Earlier he had insisted, 'If your religion doesn't help you, it is no religion for you; you had better be without it' (Revolution, p. 217). As a minister of religion he would recommend 'no religion' before one that doesn't function.

The counterpoise of Bradshaw's all or nothing integrity with John Broad's apparent adhesion to a 'via media' (Revolution, p. 245), that merely masks self-interest, cowardice, and reaction, is repeated (in a manner typical of Rutherford), on a smaller, more personal scale, within George Allen. In narrowing his focus thus, Rutherford alters the stake from the heavenly to the earth-bound. He shows how what Bradshaw refers to as 'your own religion', one that you 'make yourself' (Revolution, p. 218), might 'save' one temporally as well as spiritually, and that to be saved in this sense is as beneficial as the striving after that other 'salvation' that might be (or often is, Rutherford would contend), at best, a distraction from right living, whilst at its worst, as illustrated by John Broad, it could be a means merely of avoiding responsibility.

Bradshaw's sermon touches George in a way that Broad's never had or could:

It was the first time that George had ever heard anything from a public speaker which came home to him, and he wondered if Mr Bradshaw knew his history. (Revolution, p. 219)

More than this though, George comprehends Bradshaw's example:

He interpreted the discourse after his own way, and Priscilla was ever before him. (Revolution, p. 219)

He makes the text come home in more than one way; 'Priscilla was ever before him'. George applies the text to his marriage and, in doing so, discovers his own 'idolatry'. Those words of his mother's before his marriage, 'I hope you will be happy, my dear boy. The great thing is not to have a fool for a wife', and about which he had 'felt nothing at the time', even though they 'somehow remained with him', begin to rebound upon him now with 'black intensity' (Revolution, pp. 201-2). He had 'squandered' himself. He had not '[kept] his worship for the

Highest' but had betrayed his 'believing' self in favour of an erotic, sexual self. When Priscilla had tried his patience to the limit with her inability to respect or understand him, George had, many times, laid himself on the 'altar':

he went to her; his anger was once more forgotten, and once more he was reconciled with kisses and self-humiliation.
(Revolution, p. 227)

The repetition of 'once more' makes a habit of the sacrifice of his 'heart's blood', as Bradshaw calls it, not for the 'Highest' but for mere 'vanity'.

Mr Bradshaw makes clear the penalty for the waste of the best that one has to offer:

'You will not be struck dumb nor excommunicated, you will be simply disappointed.' (author's emphasis)

Again there is that inversion of scale so typical of Rutherford in general and this part of the Revolution in particular. The inversion ought to reduce the misery, but what actually happens is that the sense of shame is increased in direct proportion to the reduction of the penalty. It is this implicit absence even of the merest possibility of the heroic that the characters in the second part have to suffer; at least Zachariah had lived in a world where one could be 'struck dead' by the authorities for one's beliefs. Next to death or excommunication, 'disappointment' ought to seem benign, but seen in terms of George's recent apprehension of the complexity of life, "What does it all mean?", and his encroaching enlightenment, its impact is crushing:

'Would to God it were either one thing or another! I could be happy if I really cared for [Priscilla]; and if I hated her downright, I could endure it like any other calamity which cannot be altered; but this is more than I can bear!' (Revolution, p. 227)

George can neither 'really care' for nor 'endure' his life at home, and his efforts to act in the world are frustrated by the apathy and self-interest of others as much as by his own sense of limitation. There is nothing substantial for him to do if, as is the case, he is not content merely to accept and enjoy his financial prosperity. What it seems he must content himself with amounts to no less than the pouring away of his life's blood and, what is worse now that he can see it, a recognition of that fact.

Earlier, Zachariah aligned the failure of his marriage with 'the Jewish curse of excommunication':

'...the anathema wherewith Joshua cursed Jericho; the curse which Elisha laid upon the children; all the curses which are written in the law. Cursed be he by day, and cursed be he by night; cursed be he in sleeping, and cursed be he in waking: cursed in going out, and cursed in coming in' (Revolution, p. 11)

The extent and inclusiveness of 'excommunication', especially expressed in the language that Rutherford makes available for Zachariah here, manages, though it is attributed to the same 'affliction' (the failed marriages), to seem dignified compared with the deliberately prosaic feebleness of George's 'disappointment'.

As a result of the novel's peculiar structure, the trajectories of George and Zachariah are ironically juxtaposed. Zachariah's struggle centres around the necessity to disengage himself from a fixed, authoritative and yet fossilised form, in order that he might transform what is in danger of becoming a dogmatic faith into a personal one. Zachariah had assumed that God endorsed his beliefs, he wakes out of his complacency to realize God as a hard and harsh reality, an intelligence requiring one to make choices, not just between good and evil but sometimes between evil and evil. George can inhale only the afterbreath of

Zachariah's religion; he has to learn what it is not (i.e. 'the gospel according to Tanner's Lane', Revolution, p. 243), in order to see that there is something to be derived from it, regardless of what might be thought to be its intrinsic truth.

George is subjected to the dead sermonizing of John Broad on the one hand and, on the other, is the child of unconventional parents. His parents are friends, as Tanner's Lane would have it, of the convict and 'disciple' of Voltaire, Zachariah Coleman, and are considered by Broad as 'questionable members of the flock', even though 'No word of heresy ever escaped them, no symptom of disbelief was ever seen' (Revolution, p. 187). Their faith is as 'political' as it is 'religious', but they are prepared, nonetheless, to accept Broad's ministry. George has to struggle to find the fervour to believe. When Zachariah remembers his struggle of 'five-and-twenty years ago', he is conscious that George knew 'nothing about those times'. George's reply is direct and immediate:

'I wish I had,' said George with an unusual passion, which surprised his father and caused Pauline to lift her eyes from the table and look at him. 'I only wish I had. I can't speak as father can, and I often say to myself I should like to take myself off to some foreign country where men get shot for what they call conspiracy. If I knew such a country I half believe I should go tomorrow.' (Revolution, p. 222)

Implicit in this is a fear that true or real conviction is born only of the kind of persecution and resistance that belonged to a past era, an earlier generation. George can't 'speak' as his father and Zachariah can because he is both indebted to them and, through that same indebtedness, deprived of what he believes is the only medium in which a similar conviction might be exercised. It is in that final clause, however, that Rutherford conveys, not only a sense of the dilemma facing not George alone, but the epoch in which he lives. If he knew of a place where

such heroism as he can conceive would be possible, George 'half-believe[s]' (my emphasis), he would go tomorrow. This is where Rutherford excels, in his representation of those painfully demeaning 'half-states'. We might say the same of George, though with more sympathy and less censure, as Rutherford does of John Broad:

He could not doubt, for there was no doubt in the air; and yet he could not believe as Harden believed, for neither was Harden's belief in the air. (Revolution, p. 170)

'Respectable Cowfold' (Revolution, p. 158), Rutherford tells us, had long since renounced as ungentle almost all claim to struggle or doubt of any sort. Politics, a matter of life and death (literally so for Major Maitland and Caillaud) in the first half of the novel, becomes the subject of comic derision in the second, with the earnest efforts of George and his father publicly ridiculed by the town 'buffoon' and a joke about an old grey mare (Revolution, p. 223).

The riot that accompanies the election result in chapter XXV, seems small beer compared with the Blanketeer's march in the first part of the book, not only because the matter is made to seem of less import, but because it lacks all spirit. The 'innocent confidence...in the justice of their contention' (Revolution, p. 121) that spurred the Blanketeers only serves to emphasize the cynicism that underpins the Corn Law controversy as manifested in Cowfold. As George wanders around after the 'reaction' of the election night, his 'ardour' was 'quenched' by the sights that assail him, 'he saw the men for whom he had worked filthily drunk' (Revolution, p. 238). George's 'ardour' is unsustainable, practically or ideologically, without support. The Blanketeers may have been held culpable by Zachariah for the misguidedness of their 'confidence', but there was never any

suggestion that they were not worthy of the reforms they sought, nor that they lacked true commitment to their cause. Nothing can redeem the mob that turned, in drunken frenzy, against the Broads' house, only to show 'no sign of their existence' (Revolution, p. 237) or, by implication, their supposed conviction, the next day. That George, in making the one real stand that the novel allows him, should be unjustly associated with the mob he took no little risk to subdue, seems somehow an index of the potential for right to miscarry given the medium in which it must fight to assert itself.

But in the end it is not the Corn Laws that put paid to Tanner's Lane Chapel but the 'broadness' of its minister, who is revealed to have no real convictions beyond self-interest. The Reverend John Broad is a Dissenter by ambition rather than conviction (as was his predecessor James Harden, M.A.). He became 'tired' of the wool trade and went to a Dissenting College in order that he might do 'something more respectable'. A 'moderate' in almost everything, Broad translates Bradshaw's 'vision' into mere 'views' (Revolution, p. 170). In one thing however, the minister of Tanner's Lane was incapable of moderation, and that was in his bitter hatred of the Allens, a hatred, Rutherford tells us, that was 'so intense as to be almost inconsistent with Mr Broad's cast of character' (Revolution, p. 187). The aftermath of the election night debacle furnishes Broad with the means by which his hatred might be sanctioned by his 'duty'. The Allens must be brought to book for what is termed their 'apostasy' (Revolution, p. 245), though all that they have in fact renounced is the hypocrisy of Broad's ministry and of a predominantly social communion that insists on calling itself religious and so justifying action or reaction, on that basis.

It is the charge against George however, that precipitates Broad's downfall:

Mr George Allen had been in constant intercourse with a female in an infidel family - yes, before his wife's death he had been seen with her alone! Alone with an infidel female!
(Revolution, p. 255, author's emphases)

Had he been content to pursue the charge of apostasy alone, Broad may well have succeeded, there being sufficient support for mere social conservatism masquerading as religion within the church. But the decision to arraign George disguises a special kind of duplicity. Rutherford describes Broad's self-conscious propriety in nicely selected terms:

On some points he was most peculiar, and no young woman who came to see him with her experience was ever seen by him alone. Always was a deacon present, and all Cowfold admitted that the minister was most discreet. (Revolution, p. 171)

A little later, when Mrs Broad relates, or rather insinuates to her husband, the tale of Fanny Allen's supposed dalliance with their virtuous son and heir Thomas, Rutherford comments that:

Mr Broad inwardly would have liked her to go on; but he always wore his white neckerchief, except when he was in bed, and he was still the Reverend John Broad, although nobody but his wife was with him. He therefore refrained. (Revolution, p. 174)

Broad's 'discretion' then, is very much an outward, assumed thing; only the public 'neckerchief' constrains a sexual prurience that has no internal sense of holiness to contain it. The inner life has become something now to be suppressed, 'Broad inwardly would have liked [his wife] to go on'; he refrains from urging her to do so, not out of honour, but because his special status, 'he was still the Reverend John Broad', compels him, 'except when he was in bed', to do so. Broad is content 'inwardly' to indulge that buried sensuality whose discovery had so taxed Zachariah's conscience.

What is suggested in the father is defined in the son. Thomas Broad can indulge the 'carnal mind' (Revolution, p. 191) even when wearing his 'white neckerchief', as he does when he assaults the younger Pauline Coleman (Revolution, p. 196). After his assault upon her however, Thomas is literally a marked man, he bears the knife wound she has implanted on his hand. Within the chapel half-knowledge of his intemperance might well have been suppressed or explained away (as almost happens), but Pauline is not subject to such loyalties; she tells her father. It is the kind of openness implicit in the fact of Pauline's informing on Thomas Broad that effectively sets the seal on his destruction and that of the chapel itself. But Thomas's confidence in agreeing to testify against George Allen in the first place, especially since he was aware that George and Pauline were acquaintances, must surely be seen as a sign of a change in manners where it becomes a greater offence to refer to sexual licence than to commit it. Thomas Broad shows no sign that he fears he might compromise himself by speaking against George. Like his father's, Thomas's hypocrisy is so internalized, as to cease to be acknowledged. Thomas and John Broad become figures for the chapel itself.

The extraordinary action promised in the title of the novel The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, apparently doesn't happen. Ironically, it is Thomas Broad's non-confession and the Allens' integrity that saves him from disgrace:

Mr Allen always resolutely repelled all questions, saying that it would be time enough to go further when he was next attacked.
(Revolution, pp. 258-9)

The Broad s are not exposed for what they are; they merely break down and disappear. If anything, Thomas retains the advantage because, unlike George, no

charge is ever named against him. Cowfold might speculate as much as it pleases, but (left to himself and the Allens), it would never know. George is less fortunate, Thomas Broad's fainting fit releases him but only after George has been left with much to live down, regardless of the injustice of the claims made against him. George will serve his sentence despite his acquittal:

forty years before him, determined to live through them...without a murmur, although there was to be no pleasure in them.
(Revolution, p. 12)

Only at the very close of the book are the true implications of that 'divinest heroism' made clear. At the end though, even George's obscure heroism receives some reward, echoing Matthew X, xxii: 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved':

One bright June morning, therefore, saw them, [the Allens] with their children, on the deck of the Liverpool vessel which was to take them to America. Oh, day of days, when, after years of limitation, monotony, and embarrassment, we see it all behind us, and face a new future with an illimitable prospect! George once more felt his bosom's lord sit lightly on his throne; once more felt that the sunlight and blue sky were able to cheer him. So they went away to the West, and we take leave of them. (Revolution, p. 261)

The Allens leave England behind for the New World and a fresh beginning.

At first glance, one might not be inclined to align George with a 'heroine' like Dorothea Brooke in Eliot's Middlemarch, and yet in a sense both George and Dorothea are similarly disabled. Eliot wrote to her friend Sara Sophia Hennell shortly after the publication of Middlemarch, warning her that she ought to 'Expect to be immensely disappointed with the close', but that she should

'look back to the Prelude'.²⁰ Looking back with the idea of 'disappointment' in mind, the following paragraph gains peculiar force:

Many Theresas have been born who found for themselves no epic life wherein there was a constant unfolding of far-resonant action; perhaps only a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of opportunity; perhaps a tragic failure which found no sacred poet and sank unwept into oblivion. (Middlemarch, p. 25)

The 'medium' out of which the 'ardent deeds' of figures like Saint Theresa, Zachariah Coleman and Issac Allen were wrought is 'forever gone' according to Eliot. To 'wish' for its restoration (as does George) is futile. Like Rutherford, Eliot, even whilst she laments the passing of such times as forged the Saint Theresas of the world, resists the kind of regretfulness that amounts to mere wishful-thinking:

the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs. (Middlemarch, p. 896)

20. The George Eliot Letters, vol. V, p. 330.

CHAPTER FIVE

MIRIAM'S SCHOOLING

O Lady! we receive but what we give
And in our life alone does nature live:
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
And would we ought behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth -
And from the soul itself there must be sent
A sweet and potent voice of its own birth
Of all sweet sounds the life and element! ¹

Fundamental to the Autobiography and Deliverance is the idea of the 'peace' (Autobiography, p. 165) and 'blessing' (Deliverance, p. 120) that is achieved as a result of the suspension of the kind of restless, striving consciousness that characterizes Rutherford there and then Zachariah Coleman in the Revolution. The novella, 'Miriam's Schooling', is in those terms far from being merely supplementary, and becomes absolutely central to the thought that seems literally to have driven Hale White from the production of the single 'confessional' novel apparently projected to the more objectively thoughtful works that follow.

In the Revolution, Rutherford writes of the 'inconsistency' that Zachariah Coleman finally achieves, not as a failure but rather as a 'free[dom] to think at large', a release from the obligation of being 'subsidized...to defend a system' (Revolution, p. 219). 'Miriam's Schooling' re-enacts this process but for the first time in a secular context.

1. Coleridge: Poems and Prose, ed. by Kathleen Raine (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 'Dejection: An Ode', ll. 47-58.

In More Pages from a Journal Hale White writes that:

Religion has done harm by assigning an artificial urgency to insoluble problems. We are told that we must be certain on matters concerning which the wisest man is ignorant. When we begin to reflect and to doubt, the urgency unhappily remains and we are distressed. (p. 222)

It is towards the elimination of just this type of 'artificial urgency', born out of the understandably human, if futile, desire to be 'certain', to anticipate time in finding solutions, that all of Rutherford's work tends. The folly of this manufactured urgency is one of the conclusions that origin for much of Rutherford's thinking, the Deliverance, presses us to see:

How foolish it is to try and cure by argument what time will cure so completely and so gently if left to itself. As I get older, the anxiety to prove myself right if I quarrel dies out. I hold my tongue and time vindicates me, if it is possible to vindicate me, or convicts me if I am wrong. Many and many a debate too which I have had with myself alone has been settled in the same way. The question has been put aside and has lost its importance. The ancient Church thought, and seriously enough, no doubt, that all the vital interests of humanity were bound up with the controversies of the Divine nature; but the centuries have rolled on, and who cares for those controversies now? The problems of death and immortality once upon a time haunted me so that I could hardly sleep for thinking about them. I cannot tell how, but so it is, that at the present moment, when I am years nearer the end, they trouble me very little. If I could but bury and let rot things which torment me and come to no settlement - if I could always do this - what a blessing it would be. (pp. 119-20)

It is difficult to resist the sense of satisfactory closure that this paragraph, the final one in the penultimate chapter of the 'last' work of Mark Rutherford, almost wills itself to convey. And yet, the achievement of 'As I get older, the anxiety to prove myself right...dies out. I hold my tongue and time vindicates me', obscures the double contingency of 'If I could but bury and let rot things which torment me and come to no settlement - if I could always do this - what a blessing it

would be'. This is not the end of the story, nor yet of the struggle. Rutherford has, in effect, arrived at his conclusion before the case is adequately or variously proven. We have come to the 'end' only to be obliged to go back, via Miriam's Schooling, to reiterate, not the solution but the problem - how are we to discover some means that would be more than temporary or contingent, of living with some degree of integrity and serenity? The problem is indeed more urgent to the irreligious Miriam than it was for her more devout predecessors. The 'solution' for Miriam, so far as one exists, is gained by dint of no less of a struggle for its being conducted in a secular context or for being centred upon self as opposed to religion.

It is clear then, that the idea of the 'blessedness' that the Deliverance finally endorses, has a much longer and more complex gestation than first appears. Mark Rutherford's novels correspond much more faithfully to Hale White's time than to that of their eponymous author. The time it took to learn the lesson with which the Deliverance concludes actually incorporates the lives of Zachariah and Catharine Furze, of Clara and Madge Hopgood as well as those of Miriam Tacchi and Michael Trevanion. Miriam's Schooling, despite its formal and ideological divergence from the earlier volumes, belongs squarely within the progress that the Autobiography and Deliverance map out.

This is how Mark Rutherford is presented to us at the beginning of the Autobiography:

Now that I have completed my autobiography up to the present year I sometimes doubt whether it is right to publish it. Of what use is it, many persons will say, to present to the world what is mainly a record of weaknesses and failures? (Autobiography, p. 1)

The main protagonist of the third novel, the Revolution, is first glimpsed thus:

Amidst the hooraying multitude that Saturday April morning was one man at least, Zachariah Coleman by name, who did not hooray, and did not lift his hat even when the Sacred Majesty appeared on the hotel steps. (Revolution, p. 3)

The contrast that Giacomo Tacchi, a clock maker and father of Miriam and one exemplar of the quiet 'heroism' that 'Miriam's Schooling' presents, offers to his predecessors is difficult to miss:

It might have been supposed that his occupation would have inclined him to melancholy. Far from it. He was a brisk, active creature, about middle height, with jet black hair, and a quick circulation. He was never overcome, as he might reasonably have been, with meditations on the flux of time. He never rose in the morning saddened by the thought that the day would be just like the day before...on the contrary, he always sprang out of bed with as much zest and buoyancy as if he were a Columbus confidently expecting that before noon the shores of a new world would rise over the ocean's edge. ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 49)

Zachariah and Mark Rutherford are members of a community and a tradition that ought to be sustaining, and yet what these brief glimpses reveal is not any sense of confidence or serenity gained from their belonging to a particular sect but rather their isolation from the great mass of humanity outside it. The 'believer' Rutherford is racked with doubt and fear of the exposure of his 'worldly' failure, whilst Zachariah, 'the fierce Radical on politics', is so appalled by the credulity of the 'mob' that he stands apart, inert.

Zachariah and Rutherford lack what Hale White, in his essay 'Patience', calls the 'moral peace' that 'religious people of the earlier type' enjoyed; a peace founded upon 'certain convictions, a certain conception of the Universe, by which they could live' (Pages, p. 74). Though 'encompassed with darkness', earlier religious minds made what they knew sufficient, and they were confident that time would resolve their ignorance. This confidence is something that both Rutherford

and Zachariah lack; when not burdened with the past they are preoccupied with anxiety for the future, so that the present seems to exist for them primarily as a kind of referred pain, in which all accomplished and anticipated troubles converge. In his contrast to Rutherford and Zachariah, Giacomo is presented, paradoxically, as being far closer to the earlier religious people. Significantly Rutherford deprives Giacomo of a history:

How a man with such a name as Tacchi came to settle in Cowfold
was never understood. ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 49)

He merely exists in the time of the story. Indeed there is a timelessness about 'Miriam's Schooling' that resists attempts to date it. The story contains no definite temporal landmarks, though Miss Dashwood, who seems an echo of Florence Nightingale, would place the narrative pre-Crimean war, in the early 1850's, whilst the reference to the playing of Verdi on a barrel organ would suggest 1860-70. What is important about the temporal ambiguity of 'Miriam's Schooling' is the way in which it allows Hale White to re-examine, for once not writing historically, the central problem that all of Rutherford's work addresses; how to find a way to live with truth to oneself and what one can believe. Giacomo is quite purposely cut off from all that has gone before, 'He was never overcome...with meditations on the flux of time', so that he can face the future 'with the zest and buoyancy [of a] Columbus' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 49). Unlike Zachariah and Rutherford whose quest was to reformulate the tradition to which they were tied, Giacomo's and Miriam's progress will take Hale White into unexplored secular territory. Nothing is certain in Miriam's Schooling as it had been in the earlier novels. The message that emerges with unflinching

consistency from the fourth volume is that the future is to be 'discovered' rather than reformulated from the past.

'Miriam's Schooling' is about the process of discovering new grounds for living. The things that Miriam desires and pursues, for example, escaping the 'vegetation' of life in Cowfold, finding a lover in the man Montgomery, becoming a nurse, something worthwhile on which to spend one's life, all invariably turn out to be unsatisfactory or false. What Miriam has to learn through trial and error, and without any antecedent external authority, is the means to what would be called in the earlier books, her 'salvation'. In this secular story salvation comes from the kind of humility that the surrender of exclusively personal desire comprises. 'Miriam's Schooling' begins therefore from an entirely different point to that of the earlier 'religious' novels, and its progression is towards self-reconciliation and the identification of a rational self, freed from desire, a personal sense of law.

In an important way, the 'world' of 'Miriam's Schooling' is a new one for Rutherford. If Zachariah and Rutherford are hampered by inherited forms, then the difficulty for Miriam is partly her lack of any authoritative external form. The problems that Miriam has to face develop from within herself and can only be resolved from within. Without religion or tradition, Miriam is her own mistress, a law unto herself. It is towards the proper exercise of this 'authority' that her 'schooling' leads.

This is how we are introduced to Miriam Tacchi:

She was a big girl - her father was rather short and squat - with black hair and dark eyes, limbs loosely set, with a tendency to sprawl, large feet and hands. She had a handsome, regular face, a little freckled; but the mouth, although it was beautifully curved,

was a trifle too long, and except when she was in a passion, was not sufficiently under the control of her muscles, so that her words escaped not properly formed. Generally she was rather languid in her attitudes, sitting in her chair in any way but the proper way, and often giving her father cause of correction on this point as she grew up, inasmuch as he properly objected that when she came to be thirteen or fourteen she ought to show that she duly appreciated the reasons why her frocks were lengthened. Her room was never in order. Nothing was ever hung up; nothing was put in its place. Shoes were here and there - one might be under the dressing-table and the other under the bed; but with an odd inconsistency she was always personally particularly clean, and although bathing was then unknown in Cowfold, she had a tub, and used it too with constant soap and water. With her lessons she did not succeed, more particularly with arithmetic, which she abhorred. Sometimes they were done, sometimes left undone, but she never failed in history. Her voice was a contralto of most remarkable power, strong enough to fill a cathedral, but altogether undisciplined. She was fond of music, and the organist at the church offered to teach her with his own daughters, if she would sing with them on Sundays; but she could not get through the drudgery of the exercises, and advanced only so far as to be able to take her proper part in a hymn. Here, however, she was almost useless, from incapability of proper subordination, the sopranos, tenors, and basses being well nigh drowned. ('Miriam's Schooling', pp. 51-2)

Everything about Miriam appears 'naturally' undisciplined. Yet, beyond the surface that we see, Rutherford implies an equally natural, if unexercised, restraint. Almost everything here is qualified; The 'loosely set' limbs, potentially a sign of healthy flexibility, produce in Miriam instead a 'tendency to sprawl'. The 'handsome regular face', suggests, especially in that 'regular', an inclination towards conformity until that 'but' (only the first of several), intervenes to frustrate it. Similarly, although 'nothing was ever hung up', Rutherford assures us that Miriam was 'always personally particularly clean'. If sometimes Miriam left her lessons undone, 'she never failed at history'. The positives here are individual rather than social. Her preference of history is ironic in a novel singularly without a sense of history. Despite her obvious indiscipline we are not

allowed to doubt that there is something 'unfailing', constant, and orderly, in Miriam. With an 'odd inconsistency' that reflects his subject, Rutherford alternates the 'good' and 'bad' clauses so that we are never sure what it is that is presented as a virtue. The disorder of her room, for instance, is surely a cause for censure, and yet seen in terms of Miriam's 'personal[ly] particular[ity]', it seems less of a fault, if in the end it is a fault at all. In much the same way, those features that cannot be excused, like the mouth that allows words to 'escape' rather than to be articulated, 'properly formed', are made to seem not incapable of amendment. The laxness of Miriam's 'words' might be corrected given 'sufficient[ly]...control'. Though the general movement of the paragraph tends to the conveyance of an overall sense of waste, especially in the squander of the beautiful voice that might have 'fill[ed] a cathedral', there is an unmistakable undercurrent that maintains that, given a 'proper form' within which to operate, a 'proper way' to control her impulses, and the 'proper subordination' of her will, Miriam might not be the lost cause she first appears.

'Miriam's Schooling' is intensely interested in this kind of disproportion, in the perception, late in the story, when her husband is making an orrery, that it might take only a 'chip' or sliver of wood to 'upset the whole solar system' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.51). The story itself is a deliberate scaling down, even from George Allen's in the Revolution, which was in turn a scaling down of Zachariah's. The smaller the mechanism, the more crucial absolute truth becomes. Miriam possesses all the qualities necessary for the smooth running of her life, but their balance with her faults is wrong. She resembles her father, Rutherford tells us:

Knowing that she was Giacomo's child, it was easy for the observer to trace the lineage of some of her qualities; but nevertheless they reappeared in her on a different scale, in different proportions, so that in action they became totally different, and there were others not inherited from Giacomo which modified the rest.
(*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 147)

Like the wheel 'whose revolution was not in a perfect plane' (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p.146), that slight alteration in 'proportions' from those of her father is enough to make Miriam's 'action...totally different' to his. Every minute difference in the relative 'scale' and 'proportion' of one trait increases in the next, so that eventually, like the orrery, 'it sets the whole thing wobbling' (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 146), there is nothing firm or true in the whole structure.

It is in the person of Giacomo Tacchi that the degree of adjustment required to 'correct' Miriam is revealed:

Giacomo did not occupy the same position as his daughter. His eyes were screwed very nearly, although not quite, to the conventional angle; but he loved her, and had too much sense not to see that she was often right and Cowfold was wrong.
(*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p.56)

That 'very nearly, although not quite' is absolutely typical of Rutherford; it is so like the 'hair's breadth' and the 'half a dozen thicknesses of wool and linen' that we will come across in chapters IX and XIX of Catharine Furze, where, as here, technical imprecision actually contributes to emotional apprehension. Despite the disdain that Miriam exhibits for the 'conventional' view of justice as represented by the Cattle family when a neighbour is accused of burning down his shop for the insurance money, Rutherford reveals how protocol can be a useful instrument, especially where prejudice is a factor and intellect not overwhelming, as with Mrs Cattle and her daughters. To the unlearned Mr Cattle the 'principle of not

passing sentence till both sides are heard' is as a 'great thought to him', held to with genuine 'earnestness' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 57). Convention might be laughed at, as it is by Miriam, in some of its guises, but its underlying value is disregarded at peril. In any case, the degree of correction that conventional ideas might require is far less than some unorthodox persons, Miriam among them, might suppose. In the next novel Dr Turnbull will advise another headstrong young woman, Catharine Furze, that she ought to think less of being Catharine and more of being 'a piece of common humanity and bound by its laws' (Catharine Furze, p. 334). In its endorsement of the law of common humanity, a law that gains precedence in the later volumes, Miriam's Schooling makes explicit what, given the context and personalities of the earlier protagonists, could only be suggested in the previous books.

The progress of Rutherford's work involves an evolution from religious to human law, though not as a reimposition but as an organic and necessary development in time. Giacomo represents 'very nearly...the conventional angle', he comprehends but is no slave to custom. Though he has 'too much sense' to disregard the claim that those who occupy Miriam's 'position' have to a fair hearing, Giacomo nonetheless embodies the idea that convention, because it is overwhelmingly the result of experience and 'common humanity', requires only minute adjustment to bring it into proper alignment. Miriam, seeing that Cowfold was sometimes wrong, too easily convinces herself that she must be right. The angle of adjustment that she would impose is a measure of her own arrogance and obtuseness; she does not understand 'how society necessarily readjusts the natural scale' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 56)). Individualist that she is, Miriam does

not understand how people collectively, who have to live together and get along, must 'necessarily readjust' to achieve a workable compromise.

Far from being capable of the kind of intellectual generosity and precision that her father exhibits, Miriam, with the self-confidence of the very young, will 'not notice...argument'. Her thought takes the form of 'musing' so that imagination takes the place of reason in her championing of the suspected arsonist Cutts:

He may have been very poor, and may have lost all his money.
(*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p.58)

There is more romanceful thinking in this than substance. Yet Miriam's musings are seductively realistic:

Miriam went to bed; but not to sleep, for before her eyes, half through the night, was sailing the ship in which she thought poor Cutts would be exiled. (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 58)

Imagination here becomes ocular proof; 'before her eyes' the evidence of her senses becomes 'thought'. Lacking the 'continuous training' that might have enabled her to 'think upon a given subject, and step by step disentangle its difficulties', 'ideas' present themselves to Miriam with 'great rapidity' but they are completely disconnected (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 59). Miriam has to impose an ad hoc kind of logic on what she takes to be her thought. It is typical of Rutherford's narrative method that he should select a single incident, the case of Cutts, from all Miriam's story as she grows up in Cowfold, to give the reader an image of her state of mind. She may well have shared her father's 'antagonism' to the Cattles, 'of whose intellect he had not, as a clock and barometer maker a very high opinion' (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 57). But what begins in her as mere reaction to the Cattles' simple stance, 'the case had not struck her till they and

she had begun to talk about it', swiftly assumes the status of a 'cause' for Miriam. Out of almost nowhere 'plans presented themselves to her' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.59), so that the indulgence of wilfulness comes to seem like altruism in the end. Yet when she visits the lawyer, to swear to Cutts's innocence, after perjuring herself, she goes back to Cowfold 'without any self-accusation or self-applause' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.64). Her own thought presents itself to her with the intensity of truth - she has no grounds for self-criticism, other than eventual consequence. Perhaps Miriam desires a cause less as a means of self-aggrandizement than of self-purpose?

This is the first time that Rutherford has taken a woman as his central figure. Later we will meet other women (notably Catharine Furze and Mrs Cardew) who, not unlike Miriam, lack any satisfying purpose in life. Miriam is the first glimpse we are given of the kind of woman whom Rutherford will return to, to show as disabled primarily by a spirit for which her time and circumstances allow little stimulation or outlet. Miriam is like a kind of bridge between Rutherford and Zachariah and the women who are to come after her, she embodies the struggles of the Autobiography, Deliverance and the Revolution in the sense that she has to undergo personal regeneration after disappointment, though in an exclusively secular form, whilst at the same time she anticipates the later novels Catharine Furze and Clara Hopgood, whose concern is with the particular experience of women faced with difficult moral choices. For the former the problem is fundamentally religious; how to do what you know you should do? Whilst for the latter it is secular; how to know (from within yourself), what you should do.?

Miriam feels that she is certain about what she ought to do for Cutts:

She did not doubt that it was her duty to go, although Cutts was no more to her than to any other person in Cowfold, and she had no notion of what she was going to say to the lawyers when she saw them. ('Miriam's Schooling', p.59)

In this as almost always, one senses that, fundamentally, Miriam has the right instinct: she wants to 'help', and she plainly recognizes and is prepared to accept what she sees as 'her duty'. And yet the way in which Rutherford constructs this sentence pulls the reader two ways at once, much as the actual experience does Miriam. Rutherford makes Miriam's willingness seem, at first, to be all the more exemplary by the inclusion of that second clause which denies personal motive: it reiterates a tongue-in-cheek comment voiced only a page earlier, 'Let it not for a moment be supposed that Mr Cutts was a young man, and that Miriam was in love with him. He was about fifty' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 58). As if further to reinforce this, the 'although' that introduces the clause must act an echo of the paragraph quoted above ('Miriam's Schooling', pp. 52-3), in which we are first introduced to Miriam, and where the repetition of 'but' and 'although' serves as an indication of the potential for right conduct that her indiscipline masks. However, the inclusion of the third clause and its particular positioning, undermines these others; it typifies the manner in which Miriam, apparently from the surest footing, her desire to defend, in the face of so much hostility to Cutts, what might be the good in him, consistently manages to get out of step. Her action is founded in the end upon the mere 'impression' of 'what seemed to be Cutts's certain fate' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.59). Rutherford shows how, in standing up for Cutts, Miriam lets herself down embarrassingly because the impulse under cross-examination so excludes reason. The 'and' that introduces

the third clause further modifies our understanding of those it precedes; instead of allowing us to continue to see Miriam's lack of hesitation in coming to Cutts's aid as unquestionably benevolent, it makes it seem only a little less foolish than the lack of any notion as to what she would say to his lawyers. It is typical of the sharp edge to the writing in this book that the third clause should carry more force than the earlier ones. The effect of the sentence is retrospective: it is achieved by our recognising its cumulative meaning, the consequence of clause upon clause, rather than by an incremental apprehension that separates impulse from reason.

The order of this sentence, and of the integrity of Miriam's logic, is strangely inverted. By the time we arrive at its close, it is impossible to ignore the fact that Miriam's apprehension of 'duty' is the result simply of not thinking or attempting to decide rationally. Looking back from the end of the sentence, the process it rehearses assumes a negative aspect: where there is 'no doubt', 'no obligation', 'no notion', it ought to result in no action. What is true for the sentence holds for the story and the life itself. Miriam is led by accident and circumstance, reacts spontaneously, but doesn't see where her emotions lead her. Later she is to go to London because she resents her step-mother, though for no discernible reason; she falls in love with Montgomery, though he is the first youngish man she has met; she later marries simply because she is asked. This is a life that is casual, spasmodic, lacking any purpose but overtaken by momentary wants, a kind of parody of the trust in time that Deliverance recommends.

The incident with Cutts is one of those representative incidents, disconnected causally from the narrative, but exemplary of the life, that are typical

of Rutherford's narratives. It has no consequences in the novel and exists at the level of anecdote yet as a revelation of the central character's moral condition it is of fundamental importance. In her bedroom Miriam had 'brooded' over Cutts, until that 'brooding' gave way to what Miriam was prepared to accept as the 'thought' that it would be a 'grand thing...to save him' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 60). Unlike her brother Andrew, 'a fairly average mortal...distinguished by no eminent virtues nor eminent vices, no eminent gratitude nor hatreds' ('Miriam's Schooling', pp. 50-1), there is something 'grand' about Miriam that is not entirely tied up in either her own will or the romantic language she uses with regard to the 'saving' of Cutts. Miriam is a 'yearner' in a way that Andrew never could be, and her yearning has, even in its mistakenness, more of the quality of wanting to count for something in the world, to do something 'grand' not just for one's own glory but in order to make a difference. This is no more than natural in someone 'distinguished' by Miriam's 'originality' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.53). Yet what we see, by the episode in which Miriam changes Cowfold's conception of a well known landmark from a nose to a mug ('Miriam's Schooling', pp.53-4), is just how narrow a scope her environment provides for creativity. What counts as original thought in Cowfold, that is Miriam's 'little bit of not very brilliant smartness', is something that has the power to effect, nonetheless, a 'small revolution' ('Miriam's Schooling', pp. 53-4), a conscious reduction to absurdity of the title of the previous novel.

Without religion or 'tradition', something 'which often takes the place of religion' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 62), according to Rutherford, Miriam has no predetermined pattern with which to reconcile her actions, so that her 'veracity

rested on no principle' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 62). Without some kind of regulating force the line between duty and impulse is too difficult for Miriam to distinguish. Instinct alone is not enough to guarantee right action: 'although hatred of oppression and of harsh dealing is a very estimable quality, and one which will go a long way towards constructing an ethical system for us, it will not do everything ('Miriam's Schooling', p.62). Hatred of oppression is a fine sentiment but without system or framework to sustain it, Miriam's 'thought' is abbreviated, in the manner that Rutherford describes; pleading for Cutts she assures his solicitor:

'I thought and I thought over it, and it is so wrong, so unfair, so wicked, and I know the poor man so well!
('Miriam's Schooling', p. 60)

Thought here becomes lost in emotion, it fails to push on to principles. The idea of truth as an absolute or of just deserts doesn't even appear on Miriam's moral horizon, so that when she asks herself a little later 'Who would be the worse...?', if she lied to save Cutts, the answer that emerges, in spite of her 'instinctive tendency to directness', is not 'I would', or 'Truth', or 'Cutts', but 'Nobody' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.62). Lacking the clearly defined purpose that religion or tradition might have provided for her, or the maturity to discriminate for herself between right and desire, Miriam's action is bound to be random and extreme. Without the discrimination and the discipline of some system (that is 'religion' or 'tradition', 'Miriam's Schooling', p. 62), mere 'impulse' can seem like sufficient justification. The irony is that without any of Miriam's generous impulses or random courage, the law produces the result she had wanted. Cutts

is acquitted for lack of evidence; her momentarily intended perjury during the interview with Mortimer is not needed after all.

The need to identify some 'purpose' to life figures large in the stories of both Rutherford and Miriam. Rutherford and Zachariah had both been rather naive but intellectually alive characters who moved from inherited principles to find, eventually, the right way to live. Miriam is a new kind of central figure for the novelist, a strange mixture of innocence and knowingness, who keeps on doing extraordinary things. Her story almost resists resolution even as it is resolved. The absence of specific religious or social issues here, coupled with the change of protagonist, alert us to a new interest on Rutherford's part, that of the 'purpose' of a life that recognizes neither temporal reconciliation nor eternal salvation as motivating forces - a secular life. Where previously Rutherford had presented his readers with two earnestly pious men who were spiritually predisposed to question their own judgement in deference to their faith, we encounter in 'Miriam's Schooling' an irreligious young woman who, because she knows nothing else, trusts her own 'judgement' to the exclusion of all else and to the detriment of herself.

For Miriam the reason behind the need to discover a 'purpose' to her existence partly derives from the lack of family identity and her consequent singularity, and that is also new to this novel. The story implicitly asks us to consider the 'modification' of Giacomo's 'spiritual chemistry' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 51) in Miriam, something we are asked to do again later in 'Michael Trevanion' (p. 157), the other extended story in the volume. The idea of the subtle but significant ideological differences effected by apparently small

alterations that occur from generation to generation, is familiar from the earlier novels. But in Miriam's Schooling it is critical because, without the religious background, the problem becomes much more a personal and internal one; there is no inheritance even to be modified.

The 'Gideon', 'Samuel' and 'Saul' papers at the opening of this volume all concern themselves with generational change and the way in which, given such a context, 'law' is apprehended, reinterpreted, understood, and even recast through time. In the volume as a whole then, the sense of perspective and its limitation, is extremely important. Gideon acts according to divine instruction even though afraid and doubtful of himself as the account in Judges 6,7 and 8 makes plain. But Rutherford offers his story as told by his grandson at a time when everything that Gideon had struggled for has apparently been lost. Jotham clearly regrets the failure of the law that inspired Gideon, even though from his perspective in time he can see that the people had merely followed his grandfather as a military leader, and not the spirit of the law behind him. In the second of the re-tellings, Samuel, characteristically, speaks in his own voice though at the end of his time: 'Samuel immediately before his death spoke thus at Ramah' ('Samuel', p.13). The sense of disconnection is registered in that 'at'. Like Michael Trevanion, never doubting that the law was the only 'safeguard' for action ('Samuel', p.24), Samuel embodies a code that Rutherford presents as highly restrictive, separating and alienating. By contrast, Saul's story is related by a woman, his wife Rizpah. Rizpah, like Miriam, has little sense of the law other than that apprehended naturally. Her loyalty and passionate love of Saul, the strong man, and her sympathy for the tragedy of his life radically reinterprets the

biblical account. Rather like the sentence describing Miriam's response to Cutts, it forces us to recognize why 'Gideon' and 'Saul' precede it and it redirects our reading of them.

By contrast 'Michael Trevanion' which follows 'Miriam's Schooling' is another tale of the present day where the problem of perspective is as acute for us as Samuel and Saul were for biblical antiquity. 'Michael Trevanion' is told to an uncompromisingly 'modern' readership. Miriam's Schooling therefore evolves into a remarkably coherent volume. Rutherford is deliberately thinking his way forward to what it might be like to have to live, and to progress through life, as Miriam, not only without any predetermined sense of law (and thus no coherent basis for thought or for ideas), but in the grip of strong desires. Even where a sense of the law survives, as in the case of Michael Trevanion, or Samuel, with his jealous defence of priestly code, the unwitting intervention of personal desire may lead to its abuse.

'Miriam's Schooling' is the hinge novel in Hale White's short series of novels. In the earlier volumes he has been fighting over again and again the battles of his youth. They are about figures who are held by the dead hand of a paralytic faith and who struggle to find a new spiritual identity. In later volumes, the central figures are women, of generous natures, who are alone as individuals within their impulses, seeking not so much release from old beliefs as guidance, directions for their lives. 'Michael Trevanion' is really the farewell to the earlier novels; we are never so interior to his life as we were with Rutherford or Zachariah. The preoccupation with 'spiritual chemistry' in both 'Miriam's Schooling' and 'Michael Trevanion' suggests something more involved and

inextricable than the old Puritan theology, a reconciliation of substance and spirit within one's self, with that self primarily as agent.

The 'original nature plus' ('Miriam's Schooling', p.51), as Rutherford puts it, results in Miriam becoming something more than her 'average' brother Andrew but, even whilst it makes her more of her father's daughter than her brother is his son, it deprives her of that equally important something that enables Giacomo to live with serenity. Early on in the story Rutherford comments upon the way in which, faced with the challenge of explaining his position on the question of Cutts, in truth something somewhere between the reactionary female Cattle and the 'radical' Miriam, Giacomo 'evaded' the difficulty. There is no suggestion of cowardice or dishonesty in this, Giacomo merely defers to a higher authority than his own, reminding the company that Cutts 'hasn't been convicted yet' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 57). Even though he is not presented as a devout man, Rutherford makes clear that Giacomo lacks neither faith nor system, but his serenity is personal, based on no principles that can be taught or passed on. Rutherford refuses in this novel the language of explanation which had been so important earlier on.

Where Giacomo is prepared to wait upon an authority beyond himself, Miriam, ironically, is far more like Michael Trevanion who, precisely because of the passionate intensity of his love and respect for the law, repeatedly goes wrong because he fails to realize that the 'real cause' of his troubles and thus the unconscious motivation for his actions, is located within that part of his self that he will not acknowledge and repeatedly turns aside from. Ever since the night when he nearly 'fell' ('Michael Trevanion', p.156) in his battle with Satan, one

senses, Michael has been battling to suppress the passionate side of his nature. What he thinks of as his success in this effort is, in truth, only a refusal to recognize the power that the same passion, now diverted to his son Robert, continues to exert over him. Yet, at the same time, and again, because he is not just a devout but a good man, he cannot 'see' further than that buried passionate self's own fear for the uncertainties of the future and desire for right as he has always known it.

In Deliverance Rutherford writes that:

The very centre of existence of the ordinary chapel-goer and church-goer needs to be shifted from self to what is outside self, and yet is truly self, and the sole truth of self.
(Deliverance, p. 91)

Michael Trevanion had been used to believing 'God's will' to be 'ascertainable with comparative ease'; he was as certain of 'Divine direction as if he had seen a finger-post or heard the word in his ear' ('Michael Trevanion', p.192). There is a kind of arrogance, even if born out of absolute faith, in what Michael fails to realize is his self-certainty. Only when he discovers how mistaken he has been about the love of Robert for Susan, the merely conventional Anglican, as he thinks her, can he submit to his own limitation and admit to his God 'Thou art wiser than I'. Following on from this comes the sentence:

It was mere presumption then to have risked the loss of his soul in the blind belief that it was for God's cause.
('Michael Trevanion', p.193)

Something that is 'outside self' as he and we have been used to think of it, tells Michael that the 'cause' he had 'risked the loss of his soul for' had been the product of his own desire and not 'God's will'.

Significantly, Rutherford makes the sentence, following on from the direct speech of the prayer, 'Thou art wiser than I', into reported thought, so that Michael's characteristic 'voice' is suspended. This emphasizes the sense of distance between his hitherto 'blind belief' and this latter apprehension of the limitation of self gained from acquaintance with the 'sole truth of self', something that can only be apprehended from some position beyond the will. No less than Miriam, Trevanion is schooled by wants, though the wants are for him in the old language of the revelation of God's will, which he has hitherto misunderstood.

One needs to see oneself from a distance, so to speak, to recognize what is 'truly self' as opposed to emotion. The concealed influence behind this collection of stories is Spinoza: 'an affect which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of it' (Ethic, 5, 3., p. 255). From this it follows, Spinoza argues, that 'In proportion as we know an affect better it is more within our control, and the less does the mind suffer from it' (Ethic, 5, 3 corollary). Michael Trevanion's 'centre of existence' has been emotional though he has not realized that; his faith has gained from his emotion but only to a degree. Michael's adamant faith and the emotional intensity of his love for Robert become confused so that Robert becomes a substitute for God without Michael realising it, 'he assumed a right to the perfect enjoyment of Robert' ('Michael Trevanion', p.168). Michael could bear anything so long as he 'enjoyed' Robert, even the loss of his God.

Miriam is a less constantly obsessional figure than Trevanion. She has no internal demands to meet and there is no idea of salvation to render her life perilous and heroic; her life in London is an accidental drift rather than over-

determination. Nevertheless, near the close of 'Miriam's Schooling' one begins to sense that Miriam finally realizes her 'true' self, paradoxically by getting out of or beyond her 'self-centred' self. Unable to sleep one night, she dresses and visits a 'favourite spot', significantly the place where she had first met the man who awakened her to her husband's worth and particular intelligence:

She watched and watched, and thought after her fashion, mostly with incoherence, but with rapidity and intensity. At last came the first flush of scarlet upon the bars, and the dead storm contributed its own share to the growing beauty. The rooks were now astir, and flew, one after the other, in an irregular line eastwards, black against the sky. Still the colour spread, until at last it began to rise into pure light, and in a moment more the first glowing point of the disc was above the horizon. Miriam fell on her knees against the little seat and sobbed, and the dog, wondering, came and sat by her and licked her face with tender pity.
(*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 153-4)

Miriam is like Michael Trevanion, who undergoes no fundamental transformation in the end. What has made him the man he was remains as solid as ever; though it 'presented itself to him in a different shape', his 'faith remained unchanged' (*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 188). Miriam is also finally presented as retaining those dubious qualities which, if they are the cause of much of her distress, contribute no less to the real power of her individuality and of her 'schooling'. Even after her husband's patient tutoring, Rutherford insists, Miriam remains capable of thinking only 'after her fashion', that is 'mostly with incoherence'. But also, in this fashion there is an inherent, if unrealized, rectitude, again typically revealed in what seems at first to be a secondary clause; her thought is distinguished by its 'rapidity and intensity'. The 'dead storm' is also that of her captive self-involvement, something that Rutherford's oxymoron makes to seem like a kind of death-in-life, and it 'contributes' to the quiet vitality of the 'growing beauty'

that Miriam's new found connectedness nurtures, and with it a modesty that makes her more 'truly self' (Deliverance, p. 91). This is Miriam's moment of communion with what is 'outside self':

Still the colour spread, until at last it began to rise into pure light,
and in a moment more the first glowing point of the disc was above
the horizon.

Miriam's presence has dominated the narrative, here it is drenched out by the light of the dawn. At the close of 'Michael Trevanion' Rutherford speaks of the light emitted by the lighthouse in these terms:

There is consolation and hope in those vivid rays. They speak of something superior to the darkness or storm - something which has been raised by human intelligence and human effort. (p. 193)

It is typical of the differences, also, that Miriam is tutored by nature but that Trevanion's revelation should come from something outside the natural. It is her relief at the recognition of the 'consolation and hope' in the spectacle of the encroaching dawn that brings Miriam to her knees sobbing. It is not the Eddystone light that Michael Trevanion sees at the end; 'consolation and hope' are invested for him in another 'light', the only one he has been used to recognize. What must serve Miriam and Robert for enlightenment has more to do with the recognition of one's place within the universe, rather than in relation to a God as Michael would have understood it. And yet, in spite of this, her communion with the dawn is Miriam's religious moment. In an article in The Athenaeum,² William Hale White refers to some lines designed for the poem 'Michael' by Wordsworth but thrown aside:

2. Athenaeum, 25 September 1897, p. 412. Hale White's review of The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. by William Knight.

That in his thoughts there were obscurities,
Wonder, and admiration, things that wrought
Not less than a religion in his heart.

The recognition that Miriam achieves is 'not less than a religion' and, like Michael Trevanion, she is better for having suffered and struggled to achieve it.

From the start of the story of Miriam it is clear that the 'schooling' of the title is to involve a process of learning by mistakes. The success of the process is never in doubt and we are always being pulled towards that conclusion. There is a scrupulousness and economy about Rutherford's writing which means that here, for example, we read fast, seeing the story's direction so clearly, but also slowly as we begin to see how the apparently casual incidents of the life contribute to a definite shape. We read forward to its conclusion but then pause to reconsider the relevance of what have seemed, while we read them, arbitrary details. Apparent endings turn out to be no more than prompts to retrace and re-think. So what is true of Miriam then, becomes equally true of her audience. The contingent nature of Rutherford's narrative means that the reader is never quite certain how to evaluate the information presented, as is the case, for example, when we read the long paragraph that introduces Miriam to us (pp. 51-2), or how and where to draw conclusions from what is disclosed.

The idea then, that, some hundred or so years after Miriam, her reader should repeat the same kinds of premature conclusions as she does herself, seems a strangely apt response to the most 'modern' narrative Rutherford had yet written. In the volumes that precede Miriam's Schooling, Rutherford's protagonists have been very much shaped by and tied to a past which has become inimical. Even the 'last' of the Rutherford novels, Deliverance, is in continuity

with the backward looking Autobiography. This volume uses as its central thought the idea that the past might be irrelevant in terms of its provision of present shaping structures. The volume opens with the 'Gideon', 'Samuel' and 'Saul' pieces, each of which carries a strong sense of both religious and human history, yet the stories are told so as to show, not continuity, but difference (as extreme as that between Samuel and Rizpah). Rutherford makes clear in these opening papers that the past will not bear direct translation and that the present demands a re-working of all that has gone before. 'Miriam's Schooling' is far less of a period piece than the earlier novels are. The reader in the twentieth century, sans religion and with an awareness of history that tends more towards a recognition of its differences of cultural assumption, has much more in common with Miriam than with the Mark Rutherford of the Autobiography and Deliverance or Zachariah Coleman. Like Miriam too, perhaps, the reader's anticipation and misinterpretation of conclusions, though superficially it seems inept, is an invaluable part of the process that the story exemplifies, the reader too is being 'schooled'.

So it happens that, having spoken of Miriam's eventual reconciliation, which takes the modest form of 'necessary readjustment', rather than the indulgence of what Mrs Dabb calls her 'untamed and irregular' genius ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 67), one is compelled to reappraise it. We are, in effect, forced to do what Rutherford has been at pains to leave us room to do; by the deliberate qualification of Miriam's 'good' qualities with those apparently less so, he precludes any final verdict even whilst tempting us to judge. We are left unsure whether to trust to instinct or defer to reason, though either way the outcome is

equally enigmatic. This going back over her biography ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 119) points up the inadvertence of Miriam's salvation and shows how perilously close (romantically and temperamentally), she comes to the only character that the story despairs of and eventually removes - George Montgomery. There is in Montgomery, as he is first presented, something of the same sense of potentiality that accrues in Miriam:

His father and mother - fathers and mothers, even the best of them, will do such things - had given him a fairish schooling, but had never troubled themselves to train him for any occupation. They stuck their heads in the sand, believed something would turn up, and trusted in Providence...Poor George Montgomery found himself at eighteen without any outlook, although he was a gentleman, and his father was a clergyman. The only appointment he could procure was that of a temporary clerk in the War Office during a 'scare' - 'a merely provisional arrangement,' as the Rev. Mr Montgomery explained, when enquiries were made after George. The scare passed away; the temporary clerks were discharged; the father died; and George, still more unfitted for any ordinary occupation, came down at last, by a path which it is not worth while to trace, to earn a living by delighting a Southwark audience nightly with his fine baritone voice, good enough for a ballad in those latitudes, and good enough for something much better if it had been properly exercised under a master...He read a good deal, mostly fiction, played the organ, and actually conducted the musical part of a service every Sunday, heathen as he was. His vagrant life of excitement begot in him a love of liquor, which he took merely to quiet him, but unfortunately the dose required strengthening every now and then. He was mostly in debt; prided himself on not dishonouring virtuous women - a boast, nevertheless, not entirely justifiable; and through his profession had acquired a slightly histrionic manner, especially when he was reciting, an art in which he was accomplished. ('Miriam's Schooling', pp. 80-2)

Though Montgomery is far more worldly and degenerate than is Miriam herself, Rutherford's initial presentation of him bears remarkable similarity, in technique primarily but in spirit also, to hers. It is difficult to ignore, in looking more closely at two of the sentences taken from Montgomery's introduction, elements of the same method of discontinuity that characterizes Miriam's:

He was not downright dissolute, but his experience with his father, who was weak and silly, had given him a distaste for what he called religion; and he was loose, as might be expected. Still, he was not so loose as to have lost his finer instincts altogether, for he had some.

We recognize in that first 'but' an echo of those in the first paragraph that describes Miriam; the effect is to exacerbate where we would expect moderation. There is hope in that 'not downright dissolute' and, it seems, some degree of mitigation in the fact that Montgomery's father had been 'weak and silly'. But this is undermined when Rutherford reveals that the reason why the one good thing offered by Montgomery's father, is rejected, is not because it goes against the son's conscience or convictions, but because it did not suit his 'taste'. This is an important distinction, it makes Montgomery culpable where Miriam is merely naive: she is consumed by her yearning, Montgomery is ruled by appetite. In any case, the phrase 'what he [Montgomery] called religion' is framed so as to hint that we need not necessarily accept that his son's appraisal reflects what the Rev. Mr Montgomery would have professed. Montgomery's 'looseness' is first posited as the necessary result of factors beyond his own control (weak parents, an unfitness for 'ordinary occupation'), until that 'Still' when we learn that, for all his apparent disadvantage, he was not left without 'finer instincts'. How much worse he seems for allowing what little remained that was 'fine' in him to be corrupted by gross appetite.

Yet if there is much in the narratorial method of Montgomery's introduction that reminds us of our first glimpse of Miriam, the figure that actually materializes from his portrayal is much darker. It is as if Rutherford intended Montgomery to shadow forth an alternative conclusion for Miriam, to

be a measure of the fortuitousness of her own ending, a portrait of the more depressingly likely outcome of the kind of laissez-faire background that they both share.

But for her encounter with Mr Armstrong, the astronomer clergyman, and the grace that the recognition of her husband's worth comprises, Miriam might well have turned out much as does Montgomery, a wastrel whose motivation increasingly centres itself in a destructive desire. This very nearly happens. Lacking any specific objective, Miriam's life in London has a boredom waiting for some excitement to command it, and she recreates Montgomery out of her desires. Everything must take second place to him:

Miriam actually hated her brother, and cursed him in her heart as a stone over which she stumbled in the pursuit of something madly coveted... (p. 109)

Every thought had taken one direction - everything had been bitter or sweet by reference to one object alone... (p. 110)

When she backs away from his easy promiscuity, she does not immediately recognize a desire for self-annihilation; 'the temptation presented itself to her with fearful force to throw herself in [the dock] and be at rest' (p. 113) but 'Afterwards the thought that she had been close to suicide was...a new terror' (p. 114). The impulse, fortunately for her, manifests itself eventually in the oblivion that she expects her marriage to Didymus Farrow to be, and not, as does Montgomery's, in drinking himself to death. The 'problem' for Miriam has been partly that she is not as careless as Montgomery. Where he, by his indolence (a kind of self-disgust), is prepared to undo the advantages he does possess, she is a compulsive 'doer'; she wants desperately to make things happen. That she is hampered in this by an environment that provides relatively little scope for

endeavour is only half of her difficulty, however. Far more disabling is her own misjudgment of what action is open to and right for her to attempt. For most of the story, Miriam lacks the power of deliberation (the result of 'continuous training'), that would allow her to assess whether the mere desire to do is sufficient justification for action. Her eventual appreciation of her husband's qualities becomes also an appreciation of the limitation of her own supposed superiority. The discovery prompts in Miriam the beginning of a realization of the blend of mystery and undisclosed rectitude that underpins human impotence. From this discovery comes a kind of serenity that is in marked contrast to the mere capitulation that her original acceptance of Didymus's proposal comprised and also to the despair and self-murder of Montgomery's drinking and promiscuity.

Miriam possesses in her 'spiritual chemistry', an important idea for Rutherford in the two stories of the volume, something that prevents her from giving in to distress as Montgomery allows himself to:

The desire to get rid of it [her suffering] by one sudden plunge was strong in her. Nevertheless, she held back and passed on.
(*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 114)

This nadir is actually the first of a series of points of emancipation. Despite the strength of her desire to be done with suffering, or to be done with the self that brings so much suffering on itself, something other than desire compels Miriam to resist suicide and go on.

Miriam is far more innocent, even in her blind desire for Montgomery, than he is. It is her inability to sustain the kind of furtive self-justification and deception that he so easily manages, that leaves her susceptible to change for the

better. If Miriam is presented in the tale as incomprehensible, at least Montgomery's slightly squalid rebellion against his family is easy to understand. Miriam is lucky in having less of a past to carry around and react against. Less means more in this story. Schooling becomes largely a process of disillusion. She realizes, once she is in Mr Mortimer's office that her reasons for going there are questionable ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 60). She will not allow herself to harbour any doubt that it is Montgomery that she sees with the prostitute: 'Suddenly she caught sight of one man whom she thought she recognized...It was Montgomery beyond a doubt...she was not sure it was he...She could not help being sure now' ('Miriam's Schooling', pp. 109-10). She does not in the end deny her unsuitability (nor her faulty motivation), for nursing. When Miss Dashwood finally dismisses her Miriam is 'not taken by surprise'; she had said the same thing [about her unsuitability] to herself a dozen times before' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 124). For Miriam, unlike Montgomery, disappointment becomes a spur to go on, not to give in, even though she could not explain why. After her illness, she is boarded by her father with a Wiltshire farmer:

One day she contrived to reach Stonehenge. She was driven there by the farmer with whom she was staying, and she asked to be left there while he went forward. He was to fetch her when he returned. It was a clear but grey day, and she sat outside the inner circle on the turf looking northwards over the almost illimitable expanse. She had been told as much as is known about that mysterious monument -that it had been built ages before any record, and that not only were the names of the builders forgotten, but their purpose in building it was forgotten too. She was oppressed by a sense of her own nothingness and the nothingness of man. If those who raised that temple had so utterly passed away, for how long would the memory of her existence last? Stonehenge itself too would pass. The wind and the rain had already worn perhaps half of it, and the place that now knows it will know no more save by vague tradition, which also will be extinguished. Suddenly, and without any apparent connection with what had gone before, and indeed in contrast with

it, it came into Miriam's mind that she must do something for her fellow-creatures. How came it there? Who can tell? Anyhow, there was this idea in the soul of Miriam Tacchi that morning.

('Miriam's Schooling', p. 117)

In this we recognize a thought fundamental to Rutherford, one that surfaces in all of his novels. The fact of the brevity of human existence, its failure to make any lasting impression on the world or in time, and to leave tangible evidence of the pain, joy, and striving it endures, becomes for Miriam, not an excuse for despair, but reason for endeavour. The only reason to live well and to do one's best, not just for one's self but for others too, is that there is no reason - indeed this is the purest motivation one might aspire to - it defeats the futility through spirit. The fact that human life is, for many and often, filled with distress and uncertainty, is the recurring inspiration for Rutherford and his characters. In Last Pages, Hale White writes:

If a man holds sincerely to any theory of life it is better than none. Any system which gives unity and subordinates motives is an advantage. (p. 266)

Motives are too suspect and narrow a criterion for action, as both Montgomery and Miriam have shown. Rather 'any theory', 'any system', than haphazard desire determine the way we live. The final veracity of whatever theory or system we alight upon matters less than the 'sincerity' with which it is held to. It is by the organization of the mind, Rutherford contends, something that is open to us, that we might rise above the apparent disorder of the world.

In another note in Last Pages, Hale White writes of Socialism that he fears it may turn out a 'great failure'. Nevertheless, he insists, at the very least, in so far as it 'aspires to govern the world by an idea', Socialism does represent 'progress' (p. 254). One recognizes again the influence of Spinoza here; 'no one

so far as I know has determined', he writes at the opening to the third part of the Ethic, 'On the Origin and Nature of the Affects': 'the nature and strength of the affects, and what the mind is able to do towards controlling them' (p. 104). Miriam's 'schooling' takes as its starting point the idea of the 'nature and strength of the affects' and culminates in the mind's 'control' of them, 'control' rather than 'conquest'. Even at the very close of her 'schooling', one feels that Miriam is going to have to fight again and again to reachieve that 'sweetness' with which her story concludes, and to control the impatience that her husband unwittingly provokes in her. The 'unity' referred to in the first quotation from Last Pages (p. 266), is the same as that Rutherford calls, at the close of the Stonehenge episode, the 'idea in the soul of Miriam Tacchi'. Her implicit apprehension is gained 'without any apparent connection with what had gone before' and issues from some unidentified source, 'How came it there?', 'Who can tell?' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 117). Yet the possibility of her self-government by thought, 'the very centre of existence', is shifted from the 'self to what is outside self [idea], and yet is truly self, and the sole truth of self' (Deliverance, p. 91). Miriam is closer now to understanding, and gaining consolation from understanding, the true proportion of human existence. "'Humilitas', says Spinoza, 'virtus non est, sive ex Ratione non oritur'. The demonstration is characteristic. The true knowledge of ourselves is knowledge of our power" (Last Pages, p. 272).

This is then another point of apparent conclusion. And yet what Rutherford goes on to do is to show how, even given the insight that

incorporation of the 'idea' within her soul involves, Miriam still overestimates her 'power':

The next question was, What could she do?
(*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 117, my emphases)

Nevertheless, her movement is towards the kind of humility that Spinoza and Hale White applaud: even if she does lack patience, it is more habit of mind than pure self-centredness that compels her. Miriam fails as a nurse:

Specially troublesome was her new employment to Miriam, because she was by nature so unmethodical and careless. Perhaps there are no habits so hard to overcome as those of general looseness and want of system. They are often associated with abundance of energy. The corners are not shirked through fatigue, but there is an unaccountable persistency in avoiding them, which resolution and preaching are alike unable to conquer. The root of the inconsistency is a desire speedily to achieve results. To keep this desire in subjection, to shut the eyes to results, but patiently to remove the dust to the last atom of it lying in the dark angle, is a good part of self-culture. (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, p. 122)

Yet even though she fails, Rutherford implies that she does begin to realize the effect of her 'indiscipline' and to go some way towards 'self-culture'. She does make some progress in the correction of her want of system. Miriam wants 'results', but has to learn to settle for intangible benefits. You don't always get what you want from a given sacrifice; sometimes you get something better than is wanted, something more useful:

She was obliged to confess to herself that the light of three months ago, which had then shone round her great design, had faded. To conceive such a design is one thing, to go down on the knees and scour floors week after week is something different.

She did not intend, however, to give up. When she looked out over the London tiles and through the smoke with a miserable sinking of heart, hoping, if she hoped for anything, for the end of the day, and still more for the end of life; but still she persevered, and determined to persevere. (*'Miriam's Schooling'*, pp. 122-3)

The discontinuity between the first paragraph above and the second is typical of the manner in which Rutherford makes form imitate content. The logic that the first paragraph works towards is superseded by the second, Miriam 'did not intend...to give up'. She would carry on, not because she saw some purpose or hope in continuing, but because she could see none. Her action is not dependent on 'results', it is motiveless.

In his essay 'Talking about our Troubles' in Pages from a Journal, Hale White writes:

Much of what we dread is really due to indistinctness of outline. If we have the courage to say to ourselves, What is this thing, then? let the worst come to the worst, and what then? we shall frequently find that after all it is not so terrible. (pp. 68-9)

Miriam, very much like Michael Trevanion, cannot speak of what troubles her fundamentally because her trouble is of that type that lacks distinction or outline, Rutherford calls it the 'oppression' of a 'sense of her own nothingness' (p. 117). Michael Trevanion, out of an apparently natural but 'singular shy[ness]' at talking about his troubles, develops the habit of assigning the cause of his 'indoor' worries to outdoor phenomena ('Michael Trevanion', p. 155). So the relief Michael seeks through prayer is sometimes begged from the wrong source; he might better have looked to himself or listened to David Trevenna, his workmate. But Michael will not be diverted from the precedent set in his younger days when 'he had been subject to great temptation', and a force that was 'no more' himself 'than if somebody had come and laid hold of [him] by the scruff of his neck', had intervened to preserve him. Michael rightly trusts to the efficacy of this 'Invisible Power' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 156), and his belief in a personal 'Devil', in a sense of evil so profound as to make it almost palpable, is sincere and

commendable too. And yet Rutherford insists, both implicitly and explicitly, and not for the first time,³ that the time and the context in which it might be wise to look again for 'such efficient help' as these experiences represent, is past.

'Miriam's Schooling' is the story of how a mind devoid of any sense of duty to dogma or tradition, a mind in the wilderness, so to speak, might learn to find a centre from which to live. In the end, it is a story of self-sacrifice achieved through the surrender of desire. 'Michael Trevanion' is a story of self-sacrifice also, but of an inimitable self-sacrifice because the standards by which it is to be judged are no longer historically available to us. From the very beginning Rutherford's work has contained, implicitly, testimony to the time when the tradition that is the basis of his writing was a vital and dynamic force. The last story in Miriam's Schooling makes that testimony explicit; it re-members and personifies, in Michael Trevanion, the sheer nobility and heroism of Nonconformity but ironically does it through a figure who is a non-conformist to his own beliefs. Even as Michael is presented as a tribute to his tradition, Rutherford is unflinchingly honest in his portrayal of him. The idea that Michael's actions are likely to seem incomprehensible, if not indefensible, to a 'modern' audience is never denied by Rutherford, indeed he makes our incomprehension a measure of Michael's stature. We are introduced to Michael through the eyes of David Trevenna, his journeyman in the stone-merchant and building business:

Michael was called by his enemies Antinominian. He was fervently religious, upright, temperate, but given somewhat to moodiness and passion. He was singularly shy of talking about his own troubles, of which he had more than his share at home, but often strange clouds cast shadows upon him, and the reasons he gave for the change

3. Revolution, p. 51.

observable in him were curiously incompetent to explain such results. David, who had watched him from the other end of the saw for twenty years, knew perfectly well what these attacks of melancholy or wrath meant, and that, though their assigned cause lay in the block before them or the weather, the real cause was indoors. His trouble was made worse, because he could not understand why he received no relief, although he had so often laid himself open before the Lord, and wrestled for help in prayer. ('Michael Trevanion', pp. 155-6)

That opening sentence sustains a bitter irony whose full force (as so often within this volume), is only realized later. The charge of Antinomianism is levelled at Michael by his 'enemies' and Rutherford neither confirms nor denies it at this point but later on the charge is implicitly discredited as Michael agonizes about whether he would be justified in defaming Susan Shipton, the 'worldling' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 171) with whom his only son Robert has become involved, in order that the son might be 'saved'. How much more simple might the decisions that he is compelled to make have been if, as his 'enemies' could claim, Michael believed that the moral law was not binding upon him. But perhaps the irony is more extensive than this? However prepared we are to be well disposed towards Michael at the opening of the story, Rutherford knows that we will be sorely tried by him as the narrative unfolds. So certain is he of our hostility, that Rutherford even allows it a voice: 'Monstrous' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 179) he has us cry of Michael's struggle to determine whether evil means can be justified by 'good' ends. We may well endorse the 'fervour' of Michael's religion in theory and at the beginning, but Rutherford calculates on our becoming his 'enemies'. It is the practice of Michael's faith that Rutherford knows will appal us, we who are more accustomed to and comfortable with mere profession.

Trevanion is the giant amongst Rutherford's characters, a man of powerful extremes, 'fervently religious', but given to both 'moodiness and passion', 'melancholy and wrath' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 155), a kind of mixture of Samuel and Saul from the biblical portraits that begin the book. His religion is 'wrought' into him, 'impressed' and not merely 'admitted' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 161) voluntarily, as is the case with his son. In Catharine Furze Rutherford speaks of Catharine's love in these terms:

She was in love with [Cardew] - but what is love? There is no such thing: there are loves, and they are all different. Catharine's was the very life of all that was Catharine, senses, heart, and intellect, a summing up and projection of her whole selfhood.
(Catharine Furze, p. 192)

Having come so far as Miriam's Schooling, passing on the way characters like Rutherford and Snale and Ellen Butts in the Autobiography and Deliverance, and Zachariah Coleman, John Broad and George Allen in the Revolution, we cannot escape the fact that what Rutherford writes about love in the later novels is a transformation of the styles of belief in the earlier books.

The love that compels Michael to save his son carries no temporal reward to compensate for the damnation it evokes on himself for its sake. At best it guarantees an escalation of the 'savage reserve' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 173) that Robert adopts towards his father following his first approaches regarding Susan. Even though Michael lives for and even through Robert, so that 'he would almost have impeached the Divine justice if Robert had been removed from him' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 168), his son's rejection, meaning, as it would, an end to the only real human contact and joy that Michael has, would be a small enough

price to pay if it meant that Robert could be prevented from repeating his father's mistake of marrying wrongly.

But there is a still greater price to be paid. Michael's whole life has been dedicated to God but, if Robert will not attend to his father's counsel, then Michael must risk what Paul had contemplated in the Epistle to the Romans:

Michael read in the ninth chapter, 'I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 175, author's emphases)

Michael's immediate response to the text is, like Bradshaw in the Revolution, to determine its meaning for him, individually, 'What did Paul mean? Accursed from Christ!'. He is not prepared merely to use the text to alleviate his conscience nor to justify conduct whose implications have not been rigorously thought through. F.F.Bruce, in his commentary on the Epistles of Paul, suggests that:

While the main outlines of the argument of Rom. were worked out in Paul's mind long before he sent the letter to the Roman Christians, there are features in the course of his letter which reflect his actual dictation. His rhetorical questions (especially those put in the mind of a supposed objector) and his sudden apostrophes are not simply to be described as commonplaces of his discursive style. This is especially so in Rom. 9-11, where Paul wrestles with the problem of Jewish unbelief. In these chapters we almost hear him thinking aloud, exploring one argument after another as he endeavours to reach the heart of the problem...In Rom. 1-8 Paul had traced the course of God's saving purpose from universal sin to saving glory, and there inevitably burst forth the question which lay continually near his heart: Why have my people not grasped this salvation with both hands - they in whose midst the preparation for it was all worked out.⁴

Though Michael takes him as an authority, Paul stands, in the ninth chapter, in much the same place as does Michael. Paul speaks of his people as his 'flesh',

4. Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. by Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (London: Thomas Nelson, 1967), p. 933.

as Robert is one flesh with Michael. Bruce even speaks above of Paul 'wrestling' with the problem he faces, just as Trevanion 'wrestles' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 178; p. 181) where he cannot understand. Paul says he 'could wish' that he were 'accursed' if to do so would be efficacious. Such a wish then, is not unthinkable, but Paul goes no further than to state his preparedness to do so. So great is his cause that it would justify such a blasphemous wish. This apostrophe must surely be numbered amongst those that Bruce refers to above as Paul's pronounced thoughts, his exploration of 'one argument after another as he endeavours to reach the heart of the problem'. It is part of a process and thus not to be taken as an imperative. Michael does himself an injustice when he seeks in these words of Paul a precedent for his own action:

What could [Paul] mean save that he was willing to be damned to save those whom he loved? Why not? Why should not a man be willing to be damned for others? The damnation of a single soul is shut up in itself, and may be the means of saving not only others, but their children and a whole race.
(*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 175, author's emphasis)

In his desperation to ensure Robert's salvation, Michael over-determines and over-interprets Paul. And yet even as he does so, he does not shrink from a recognition of the vile reality of what he contemplates:

Damnation! It is awful, horrible: millions of years, with no relief, with no light from the Most High, and in subjection to His Enemy.
(*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 175)

Paul's words, even misinterpreted, offer no easy authority. And the endless punishment of damnation presents itself in a terrifyingly graphic manner to Michael. The apostle John speaks of the 'greatest love' that a man might aspire to as the sacrifice of his life for his friends (John, 15. 13). The gospel can not have been far from Rutherford's mind as he pushes Michael towards his decision:

'And yet, if it is to save - if it is to save Robert,' thought Michael, 'God give me strength - I could endure it'... Michael determined that night that neither his life in this world nor in the next, if he could rescue his child, should be of any account.
(*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 175)

How do we measure a love that exceeds the 'greatest', or evaluate a sacrifice unprecedented even in biblical terms? There is a 'monstrousness' about Michael's apprehension of sin, the idea that 'a single lapse from the strait path is enough to damn a man forever; that there is no finiteness in a crime which can be counterbalanced by finite expiation' (*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 179). But we feel it more because the book assumes that we exist at the opposite extreme to Michael, that we live in a world more like Miriam's. Rutherford insists that 'Mere assent is nothing' (*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 161). Next to the nothingness that characterizes what passes as 'modern' belief, Michael's integrity, for all its mistakenness and 'spiritual pride' (*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 180) stands out as a beacon:

How sublime a thing is this dust or dirt we call man! We grovel in view of the vast distances of the fixed stars and their magnitudes, but these distances and these dimensions are a delusion. There is nothing grander in Sirius than in a pebble, nor anything more worthy of admiration and astonishment in his remoteness than in the length of Oxford Street. The true sublime is in the self-negation of the martyr, and it became doubly magnificent in the case of Michael who was willing not merely to give up a finite existence for something other than himself - to be shot and so end, or to be burnt with a hope of following glory - but to submit for ever to separation and torment, if only he might shield his child from God's displeasure. (*'Michael Trevanion'*, p. 175-6)

Even admitting the faulty reasoning on Michael's own grounds of the final clause, we are meant to see that there can be no humanist heroism to match this.

The fact that his reader must recognize Michael's imprudence matters nothing to Rutherford:

It is very doubtful if he ever fully realised what he was doing, just as it is doubtful whether in the time of liveliest conviction there has been a perfect realisation of the world to come. Had he really appreciated the words 'torment' and 'infinite'; had he really put into 'torment' the pangs of a cancer or a death through thirst; had he really put twenty years into 'infinity', he would perhaps have recoiled. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this man by some means or other had educated himself into complete self-obliteration for the sake of his child.

('Michael Trevanion', p. 180)

He sees the sacrifice as confirmation, not of the father's theological strictures nor the unreality of his vision of Hell, but of Michael's fundamental humanity. Rutherford appeals to our standards rather than Michael's own, and so to the magnitude of his heroism. This simply shows how Michael was able to do no more or no less than the best of us can do, the 'perfect realisation', of Heaven or of Hell, even in the time of the 'liveliest conviction' of their existence, being beyond the limits of human wit. Rutherford must at least acknowledge his readers' reservations, but Hale White had less patience with such accommodations; to him the making of nice distinctions is a mere avoidance of the real issue:

After all, the real question is how much truth has a man got. He may not accept the inevitable inference from what he admits, and he may therefore expose himself to the charge of intellectual or even moral dishonesty, but if he has acquired more beliefs than his neighbour who judges him, more beliefs which are facts, he is a better man than his neighbour. The really insincere person is the person who is indifferent to what ought to be of the most importance to him. (Letters, p. 198)

Michael's belief is a fact he is prepared to act upon. Hale White's letter states openly what is left implicit in the story. Can those of us who would be hard pressed to dredge up any belief that we would be prepared to defend in public, let alone die for and submit to damnation, dare to 'judge' one who would lay down his eternal life for what he believes, even though that belief might not

withstand our logic? The final sentence of the letter could stand as a rebuke to the 'enemies' that Rutherford mentions in his introduction of Michael, those who would dismiss him as some kind of a fanatic whilst they lack all conviction.

In the end, even Rutherford cannot restrain himself from censure:

The present time is disposed to over-rate the intellectual virtues. No matter how unselfish a woman may be, if she cannot discuss the new music or the new metaphysical poetry, she is nothing and nobody cares for her. ('Michael Trevanion', pp. 180-1)

The 'present time' identifies Rutherford's contemporaries generally, and the readers of 'Michael Trevanion' in perpetuity, as the focus of that censure. We have grown too clever for our own good. 'Unselfishness' is no longer something we know how to applaud; self-sacrifice is something quirky, to be treated with suspicion.

Miriam's Schooling spans the centuries, from the biblical times with which it opens to the 'present time' of 'Michael Trevanion'. The final story unashamedly assails its 'modern' audience:

Centuries ago our standard was different, and it will have to be different again. We shall, it is to be hoped, spend ourselves not in criticism of the record of the saints who sat by the sepulchre, but we shall love as they loved. ('Michael Trevanion', p. 181)

Michael dies at the end of the story. He was 'somewhat of a fossil' ('Michael Trevanion', p. 161) even whilst he lived, his time had passed. Rutherford means us to realize that we will never see the like of Michael Trevanion again, nor will the 'standards' to which he adhered be resurrected. If this volume bears witness to anything, it is to the irrevocable passage of time and the necessary realization of new ways of living. The Revolution found in a historical reading an apparent security in interpreting the loss of faith as really its transformation into something

else. Miriam's Schooling, typically of Rutherford, undoes the certainties of the previous book by a shifting series of perspectives which cast doubt upon our capacity to read historical process. Old Testament story becomes a series of viewpoints, dependent on moments in time and human prejudice. Miriam has to struggle for belief and is almost destroyed by her lack of direction just as Michael comes close to despair because of belief. If, like Giacomo Tacchi, Rutherford resists the temptation to detain himself with 'meditations on the flux of time' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 49), it is not because he is complacent. We cannot go back, the time will not sustain a faith like that of Michael Trevanion, but there 'will have to be' a change from 'present' ways. We 'spend' ourselves in 'criticism' of 'saints', 'indifferent' to what ought most to concern us. We may not be able to comprehend Michael Trevanion but Rutherford holds out the hope that we might be able to love as he did.

CHAPTER SIX

CATHARINE FURZE

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.¹

There are many portraits of women in the volumes that make up what might be called Rutherford's first series of novels. Some of these, like that of Mrs Snale who is described in chapter III of the Autobiography as being 'cruel, not with the ferocity of the tiger, but with the dull insensitivity of the cart wheel' (p. 34), have been little more than caricatures. Others, particularly that of the Arbour sisters, who appear in the same chapter as Mrs Snale, seem to signify for Rutherford, even at the most disillusioned moments of the Autobiography, a kind of hope that life's vicissitudes might be borne with patience and equanimity:

They were pious in the purest sense of the word, suffering much from ill-health, but perfectly resigned, and with a kind of tempered cheerfulness always apparent on their faces, like the cheerfulness of a white sky with a sun veiled by light and lofty clouds. (Autobiography, p. 37)

Whatever their weighting though, such portraits as these remain peripheral to the narrative in the first novels.

It is in his male characters that Rutherford epitomizes the particular struggle upon which the earlier work centres: the need to relinquish those elements of the 'old doctrine' that have succumbed to 'decay' ('Michael Trevanion', p.161), whilst keeping faith with and revivifying what had been vital

1. The Poems of Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith, ed. by Roger Lonsdale (London: Longman, 1980), Thomas Gray, 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard', ll. 53-6, p. 12.

in the tradition. Mark Rutherford and Zachariah Coleman embody this idea not merely in their zeal and earnestness but also in being male members of their community. Rutherford informs us that in the 'Calvinistic Dissenting society' to which both the protagonist of the Autobiography and Zachariah belong, 'the pious women who were members of the church took little or no interest in the mental lives of their husbands' (Revolution, p. 51), and therefore no real part in the personal and intellectual battle to reform their faith and to redefine their lives within it. Indeed, if we think of Jane Coleman giving the water-cress man twopence 'for himself' (Revolution, p. 55), because she does not approve of buying and selling on a Sunday, or of the kind of Dorcas gatherings (Autobiography, p. 34) at which Mrs Snale officiates, it is difficult to resist the suggestion of Hale White in his rôle as historian that, for many women, excluded as their men were not from the 'mental life' of their faith, religion inevitably became a mere matter of form, if not a kind of social club.

There is no doubt, taking into account the title of his fourth volume, and the positioning of her story within it, that in Miriam's Schooling Rutherford intends for the first time a woman to be the central focus. Even so, the cohesive nature of the volume as a whole and its fundamental concern to examine the way in which law is apprehended over time, means that whilst Rutherford's sensitive and perceptive account of Miriam ensures that she is never less than convincingly real, the woman's point of view is only one way of expressing his enquiry about the survival of the law, as with Rizpah's voice in 'Saul'. Idea and individuality are similarly balanced in Michael Trevanion, who, whilst he is undoubtedly

Rutherford's 'tribute' to the kind of fervour that had made Nonconformity vital, endures as a powerful and movingly believable character.

The change of protagonist in Miriam's Schooling signifies a re-voicing of the question that underpins all of Rutherford's work, though now within a different framework; the context is secular and the question applied specifically to a character who (for the first time in the novels), has no objective or intellectual base from which to comprehend its complexity, let alone attempt its answer. Miriam's Schooling is the hinge novel in Rutherford's work, within which 'Michael Trevanion' marks the point at which the question 'What am I to make of my life?', ceases to be explicitly 'religious' and becomes existential.

'Miriam's Schooling' breaks new ground for Rutherford. There are no specific religious or social issues raised in the story. For the first time in Miriam we are presented with a figure of strong natural desires. In addition, we begin to see the emergence of what might be called a women's support network. Earlier women had featured in isolation, as examples of hypocrisy or hope, but Miss Tippit and Miss Dashwood work together in an effort to help Miriam in her attempt to discover some worthwhile way to use her life. The fifth book, Catharine Furze, gives priority to the relations between women as Rutherford expands those ideas left more or less implicit in 'Miriam's Schooling' into the business of a whole novel. Amongst these, that of the emergence of the 'new woman' is pre-eminent. In the end Miriam 'settles' for marriage to Didymus, a decision made out of self-despair at her failure to secure any other occupation, but one that, in imposing an unexpected kind of discipline upon Miriam, saves her from self-pity and bitterness. Miriam's 'schooling' includes her learning to

find contentment as a wife, though that contentment is hard won. Alone of all the women that Rutherford has so far written about, Miriam emerges as a real malcontent, and it is in this that she is truly Catharine's precursor. Marriage will not be the answer or the refuge for Catharine; she cannot have the man she would be content with and cannot be content with the man she might have. In vowing 'never [to] be any man's wife' (Catharine, p. 287), Catharine virtually cuts herself off from any practical means of utilizing her life in her given circumstances and in so doing raises the issue of the sort of life that women can lead.

Catharine Furze then is able to give form to the new phrasing of Rutherford's perennial question precisely because, as a woman, dissatisfaction with the inherited answers has to be a matter of changing the life-rôle and not of intellectual accommodation only. Like Miriam and Mrs Cardew, Catharine is a relatively privileged woman, though for her, as for the others, that privilege emerges as something of a curse. If they are freed from the burdens that bearing children could bring or from the necessity of eking out their lives as servants or governesses, these women have yet to contend with the less welcome freedom to contemplate the emptiness of their existence, or, in the case of Mrs Cardew, the absence of any opportunity to exploit her 'unconventional' talents. If she had been born a few years later, Rutherford suggests, Mrs Cardew would have 'taken to science' and, what is more, 'would have done well at it' (Catharine, p. 121), but as things stand, she is condemned to seem a social failure. There is an important difference between Miriam and Catharine however. We are told that Catharine Furze was 'a young lady of natural ability, whose education had been neglected' (Catharine, p. 116). Catharine's natural intelligence, something that she

shares with Mrs Cardew (and with Madge and Clara Hopgood), makes her struggle far more like that of Rutherford and Zachariah than is Miriam's. Miriam has to strive mainly against her own will; reflection on life's purposes and spiritual anxieties is not in her nature. Unlike Mrs Cardew, Catharine inherits all of Miriam's wilfulness and a desire equally as passionate, but she has also the intelligence and moral sense to differentiate between legitimate and illicit longing.

This extra sensitivity in Catharine is never made more than implicit. A subtly worked but terrible irony permeates Catharine Furze, whose narrative unfolds amidst a voluptuous landscape of water and lush meadowland. At the very centre is not Eastthorpe or the Terrace but Chapel Farm, a place to which Catharine repeatedly returns, a kind of Eden remarkable for its unfettered fertility and the manner in which it conveys, through the teeming life it contains, a sense of unbounded potential:

One afternoon, late in August, Catharine had gone with the dog down to the riverside, her favourite haunt. Clouds, massive, white, sharply outlined, betokening thunder, lay on the horizon in a long line; the fish were active; great chub rose, and every now and then a scurrying dimple on the pool showed the jack and the perch were busy. It was a day full of heat, a day of exultation, for it proclaimed that the sun was alive; it was a day on which to forget winter and its doubts, its despairs, and its indistinguishable grey; it was a day on which to believe in immortality. Catharine was at that happy age when summer has power to warm the brain; it passed into her blood and created in her simple, uncontaminated bliss.

(Catharine, pp. 176-7)

Who can 'really hate the sun?', Rutherford asks in 'Michael Trevanion' (p.162). And it is this same 'heat' in which Robert Trevanion 'rejoices' that moves the jack and the perch to activity as it 'exults' Catharine. Miriam's infatuation with Montgomery is more the result of her will for excitement than of any deep-seated emotion. Catharine seems to manifest a potential for passion that blurs the

physical and spiritual boundaries; the summer's heat warms her 'brain' as it passes 'into her blood'. The 'heat' in her is 'uncontaminated'; her passion is not just sexual or generative but her most creative (and destructive) act. Part of the irony lies in the fact that, caught up in that sensual music of generation, it is easy to 'believe in immortality' at the farm, and yet such a belief has its foundations in the very mortality that it overlooks, just as the 'freedom' of the farm is extensively bounded:

Chapel Farm...lay about five miles from Eastthorpe. The road from Eastthorpe running westerly and parallel with the river, at a distance of about a mile from it sends out at the fourth milestone a by-road to the south, which crosses the river by a stone bridge, and there is no doubt that before the bridge existed there was a ford, and that there was also a chapel hard by...In the angle formed by the main road, the lane, and the river, lay Chapel Farm...It was not in the lane but on a kind of private road or cart track which issued from it; went through a gate and under a hedge...From the hand-post on the main road to the gate was half a mile, and from the gate to the farm nearly another half-mile. In driving from Chapel Farm you feel, when you reach the gate, you are in the busy world again, and when you reach the hand-post and turn to Eastthorpe you are in the full tide of life, although not a soul is to be seen. (Catharine, p. 53-4)

Chapel Farm is defined as much by its relation to other places, it is 'about half a mile from Lampson's Ford, and about five miles from Eastthorpe', and its boundaries, as its actual substance. It resists definition in a concrete sense, it is 'not in the lane' but is set secretly 'on a kind of private road' (my emphasis), approachable only by what seems a sort of spell: 'through a gate and under a hedge'. Even the secluded turning to Eastthorpe, at which not a soul is to be seen', seems to stand in 'the full tide of life' compared with the farm. Nor is its secluded containment merely a matter of human ingenuity, the farm's barriers are

both natural and prehistoric, 'before the bridge existed there was a ford'. This is a place of primeval seclusion, preserved from the ravages of time and change.

The farm is something like the garden that Hardy's Tess Durbeyfield skirts, being as much a symbol and a warning of the young woman's potency as a physical location. Chapel Farm is a kind of haven for Catharine, filled with the knowledge of sexual things, where procreation and death are spoken of openly and without false modesty or embarrassment. But, like Hope Farm in Mrs Gaskell's Cousin Phillis (1864), the idyll that Chapel Farm comprises has its dangers; it is a subversive place. Life is not ordered thus outside.

In the Go-Between, L.P.Hartley speaks of the past as 'a foreign country', adding, they 'do things differently there'.² Rutherford is at pains to show how Catharine (like Mrs Cardew) is historically stranded, 'the world as it is now is no place for people so framed!' (Catharine, p. 189) he tells us and, further on, 'Had Catharine been born two hundred years earlier, life would have been easier' (Catharine, p. 189). Catharine's spiritual home is amongst the 'foreign' practices only possible at the Bellamy farm. It is a place where nonconformity to agreed polite norms is not even recognized as such. 'Hind-quarters' (Catharine, p. 58) are discussed in some detail and without blushes here, whilst in the genteel parlours of Eastthorpe, the mention of the word 'bitch' (Catharine, p.17) causes a clatter. Singularity at the farm goes uncensored and is even applauded. Mrs Bellamy's excessive neatness, something that, in the character of Jane Coleman in the Revolution, is a sign of spiritual meagreness and an unreasonable and inflexible desire for 'order' at any cost, becomes a kind of 'poetry' (Catharine,

2. L.P.Hartley, The Go-Between (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p. 7.

p.57) here, a sign of an innate creativity but also of the pathetically narrow limits available to women for its exercise.³ The freedom of the farm is anachronistic, it is a survival, and Catharine is stranded between a lost past and an unimaginable future. She only 'haunts' the place. She needs much more than it can offer because she is neither an archaic shepherdess nor a Lawrencian woman. Catharine could never make the kind of 'poetry' out of household efficiency that Mrs Bellamy does, much as she loves and respects her. To be wholly alive Catharine must live outside the farm, and yet the only other place where she can go, Eastthorpe, is an intellectually barren place where nobody reads books and where there is no other young woman to whom she might 'unbosom herself' (Catharine, p. 191). With no female friend at Eastthorpe, Catharine 'st[ands] by herself, affiliated to nothing, an individual belonging to no species' (Catharine, p. 192). Always in Rutherford this feeling of separateness is a danger sign. All of his work moves towards the recognition of the fundamental necessity of relatedness.

In the earlier novels it is the men who are the agents of change and who move place restlessly (as does the protagonist of the Autobiography), or in disgust (like George Allen in the Revolution). The women have often been 'homebodies': proponents of convention and the settled habits of life. But Miriam, in order to accept the limitations of her marriage, needed the experiment of London life. In Catharine Furze, we see the heroine in constantly shifting

-
3. In a similar way to which, in this book, Rutherford is at pains to present Mrs Bellamy's pride in her house and devotion to neatness as an attribute to be seen, in the context of her having no other outlet for creativity, as a positive thing: so with Mrs Butcher, the wife of one of Cowfold's doctors, whose elegance in dress and appearance is presented as a kind of flair and not pride or self-display (p. 95).

locations, and often outside. In none of these places is she truly 'at home', least of all perhaps in her own house. In what is probably the least historically situated by specific detail of all of the novels, Rutherford is acknowledging in Catharine the problem of what she is to do with her life as it is felt by a young woman, intelligent, untaught, dreamy; who, albeit mutely, refuses to accept the limits permitted by her conventional provincial family.

Unlike Mrs Gaskell's Phillis Holman, who, it is possible to imagine, could have endured at Hope Farm in contentment, had not Holdsworth disrupted its serenity, Catharine does not belong at the Bellamys'. No more is she suited to life with her parents at Eastthorpe, especially after their move to the Terrace, another change initiated by a woman. Indeed her continuance at home is morally dangerous in destroying her sense of life as a negation and her yearning for unspecified freedom. The Furze household is despicable. Mrs Furze is a woman possessed of energy and intelligence and yet these are spent entirely in the pursuit of social ambition, under the influence of which she quite comfortably is able to 'believe' to be 'right' what she 'knows' to be 'wrong' (Catharine, p. 50). Mr Furze's 'unconscious reason', something that is 'partly direction by past and forgotten experiences, and partly instinct', makes him shrink from his wife's proposals to remove to the more select Terrace, a reaction that Rutherford endorses as 'perfectly wise', instinct being, in Furze's case, far 'more to be trusted than any mental operation' (Catharine, p. 26). Mr Furze has the right instincts but he is a weak and inarticulate man, easily beaten into submission by what his wife, with her greater verbal command, is able to represent as 'reason', and by her insistence that his 'forte' is not argument (Catharine, p. 93).

That which masquerades as 'reason' in the Furze household is in reality a terrible hypocrisy. During the delicate arrangements for removal to the Terrace, Mrs Furze announces her desire that her daughter go to stay at her aunt's in Ely, a woman that Catharine despises as much as she does her mother. The explanation given by Mrs Furze is that Catharine would not be much use in the new house, and would only 'knock herself up'. Rutherford exposes the collaborative subterfuge behind this species of reason:

That was not Mrs Furze's reason. She had said nothing to Catharine, but she instinctively dreaded her hostility to the scheme. Mr Furze knew that it was not Mrs Furze's reason, but he accepted it. Mrs Furze knew it was not her own reason, but she accepted it, and believed it to be the true reason. (Catharine, p. 48)

What Mrs Furze really wants is to get Catharine out of the way so that she might have only her dilatory husband to contend with in getting her own will. The 'dread' that she harbours comes from a knowledge that Catharine will be able to express her 'hostility' in terms articulate and forceful enough to overwhelm even a former resident of Cambridge like herself, to whom so much deference is given by Mr Furze. All that Mrs Furze's verbal facility brings her is the capacity to make herself believe the opposite of what, instinctively, she knows.

Both of her parents are in a kind of subjection to Catharine (her father gives in to her over reparation to Mike Catchpole, his blinded former employee), a subjection that Catharine herself implicitly perpetuates:

It was ridiculous that her mother should talk as she did to Catharine. Mrs Furze was perfectly aware that she was not deluding her daughter; but she assumed that the delusion was complete. (Catharine, p. 51)

Catharine was not deluded then, but neither was she going to waste her time or her breath in argument. If she has to go somewhere, and we notice how easily she

leaves the parental nest, Catharine would be the one to say where. She would have things as she determined:

'Well, mother, I say I cannot go to Ely.' Catharine again had her own way. She went to Mrs Bellamy's.
(Catharine, p. 52)

It was 'ridiculous' that Mrs Furze should speak to her daughter as though Catharine could not see through such talk. And yet for Catharine to have so much the measure of her mother's casuistry and to be able to deal with it in so cold-blooded a manner, says as much about the child's dangerous independence of feeling as it does about her parent's weakness.

So when the Ponsonby sisters, proprietors of the establishment chosen to 'finish' Catharine, 'label' her a 'young lady of natural ability, whose education had been neglected' (Catharine, p. 116), they are right, though not quite in the sense that they intend. As might be seen from the exchanges detailed above, Catharine is by no means 'unschooled' when she arrives at the Limes. Lamentably, though, her education and her intellect, like her mother's, has been utilized chiefly in the area most accessible to her, that is in order to ensure the satisfaction of her own will. Catharine differs from her mother though in that her instincts are usually good ones:

Miss Catharine generally, even at that early age, carried all before her, much to her own detriment. Her parents unfortunately were perpetually making a brief show of resistance and afterwards yielding. Frequently they had no pretext for resistance, for Catharine was right and they were wrong. Consequently the child grew up accustomed to see everything bend to her own will, and accustomed to believe that what she willed was in accordance with the will of the universe - not a healthy education, for the time is sure to come when a destiny which will not bend stands in the path before us, and we are convinced by the roughest processes that what we purpose is to a very small extent the purpose of Nature. The shock then is serious, especially if the collision be postponed

till mature years. The parental opposition, such as it was, was worse than none, because it enabled her to feel her strength.
(Catharine, p. 43-4)

This analysis is critical for the development of the whole novel. Its incremental repetitions and qualification, the insistence upon words like 'will' and 'bend' lead the reader to infer anxieties about the heroine before the action of the book has begun. Too astute to fail to recognize her parents' dishonesty and moral cowardice, Catharine, like Miriam, has grown up to believe that because they are 'wrong', she must inevitably be 'right'. This is unhealthy not merely in breeding an unquestioning pride and contempt but in instilling in Catharine a sense of her own 'strength' that is false. The feeling of superiority and the sense of singularity that she derives from the lack of any real relationship with her parents only makes the central riddle of their life - what to do with it and how to discover the limits of personal conduct - more difficult to untangle. The people who are supposed to provide an initial basis, from which she might begin to discover what 'right' might mean in a more inclusive sense than the personal, Catharine scorns absolutely (and justifiably), and yet she is never so irredeemably self-centred as to be able to escape the consciousness, once she is subject to the perplexities of more 'mature years', that a system of self-government based solely on satisfaction of desire and the exploitation of individuality, is untenable.

Her home thus comprises for Catharine a kind of trap. She needs to realize herself socially, intellectually and emotionally. The only model that she has for the former in the 'real' world (that is, outside Chapel Farm), is her mother, whose inflated sense of her own status and mental capacity devolves chiefly from having been born in Cambridge and therefore having picked up a 'university

flavour' (Catharine, p. 14). And in any case, whatever the weight of Mrs Furzes' intellect, it operates only in spite of an absence of feeling and dismissal of instinct, just those qualities that give intelligence its warmth and make it human rather than mechanistic. On the other hand, what feeling Mr Furze undoubtedly does possess, stumbles along without a language to support it so that it is easily trampled under his wife's pseudo-learning.

The trap is more involved than this however; Rutherford makes it multi-dimensional. Chapel Farm meets Catharine's need in the area of feeling, and, in Mrs Bellamy especially, supplies her with the kind of 'simple' wisdom that her parents are incapable of giving, as, for example, with Mrs Bellamy's 'sermon' on the futility of hate in chapter V. And yet, even though she has not encountered Shakespeare or Wordsworth (Catharine, p. 192), Rutherford makes clear that Catharine is not insusceptible to 'absorption' by a book (Catharine, p. 214), even, dangerously, to the exclusion of what is going on around her. But reading and thinking as Catharine apparently does, is considered (even by her best friend), at best, as a strange occupation for a young lady. Tom Catchpole, her father's employee in the shop, who is secretly in love with her, can make 'nothing' of what 'so much interest[s]' her (Catharine, p. 214). At worst, her thoughtfulness seems like downright perversity: Catharine 'was often greatly depressed' as a result of it when, as far as Tom could see, 'there was no cause for depression' (Catharine, p. 213). Her thirst for knowledge isolates Catharine, as it does Maggie Tulliver ⁴ and makes her unapproachable; Tom fears to 'dare to say anything'

4. Claire Tomalin calls Catharine Furze and Clara Hopgood, 'Maggie Tulliver's little sisters', The Listener, 16 October 1975, pp. 515-17.

to her because he knows that 'she thought about things which were strange to him, and that she was anxious upon subjects which never troubled him' (Catharine, p. 213). The irony is, of course, that Tom, though his deduction comes from something other than 'learning', is right. His thoughts re-emphasize a comment made earlier by Catharine, unaware of its pertinence to herself. Whilst still very new at the Limes she confesses to having read Rasselas and thought that part that dealt with the 'dreadful effects of uncontrolled imagination...wonderful' (Catharine, p. 122). Rutherford's narration of Catharine's response to the enquiry put by Cardew, the parson, as to whether she did not find 'those effects...exaggerated', is revealing:

She lost herself for a moment, as we have already seen she was in the habit of doing, or rather, she did not lose herself, but everything excepting herself, and she spoke as if nobody but herself were present.

'Not in the least exaggerated. What a horror to pass days in dreaming about one particular thing, and to have no power to wake!' (Catharine, p. 123)

That hypothetical 'horror' later becomes a reality to Catharine in her feelings for Cardew and in all that he represents to her. That it will be Catharine and not Cardew who finds the 'power to wake' from the 'dreadful effects', not merely of 'imagination', but of the love that in her was 'the very life of all that was Catharine, senses, heart, and intellect, a summing up and projection of her whole self-hood' (Catharine, p. 192), is made clear. Even whilst intimating how dangerously akin, in that 'habit' she is to Cardew, Rutherford shows how a minute adjustment, 'or rather she did not lose herself...she spoke as if nobody but herself were present', can (like that which set the orrery straight in 'Miriam's Schooling'), make a world of difference. Cardew, in losing sight of 'everything

excepting [him]self', precludes any sense of himself as what Dr Turnbull calls 'a piece of common humanity' (Catharine, p. 334): he thinks too much of being Theophilus Cardew and far too little of being husband to his wife and pastor to his flock, teacher to Catharine. His days are passed in dreaming with little outward stimulation or inner inclination to wake. On the other hand, Catharine never loses contact with what is the 'very life of all that was Catharine'. If she loses sight of the world at times, it is only to gain in unselfconsciousness, so that she can speak 'as if nobody but herself were present'. Her sense of self remains constant.

Catharine may well, indeed she certainly does, benefit from Mrs Bellamy's type of learning, but it is patently not enough for her. She needs access to the 'wonderful' world of ideas that Rasselas describes. If she is to live 'intellectually', she must do so apart from the Bellamies. And here lies the danger with Cardew. This is a novel which replaces the conflict of ideas by the impotence of human relationships. The old morality of social observance, convention and custom to which the prim lives of the Furzes are obedient, is transcended by love as a 'new' morality, generative of the devotion of Tom to Catharine, Phoebe's generous sacrifices for Tom, the awakening of Catharine and Cardew through each other. But at the same time as he makes sexual passion the motivating force of the novel, Rutherford surely and gravely observes its devastations. Love's exclusiveness, its concern with the single person, produces in even the most large-hearted characters, like Tom, also a callousness to others that amounts to little more than transferred egotism. The book urges us to ask how generous a motive is love when so much individual need and desire are compounded in it.

There is always a surplus of desire over satisfaction in the relationships that make up Catharine Furze. Yet the same thing happens here as does in 'Miriam's Schooling', where the narrator holds the positive and negative forces of his characters' personalities in balance, so that any sense of final judgement upon them is repeatedly frustrated. Effects that seem as though they must follow from reaction against previous causes, emerge here as symbiotic. Cardew transforms Catharine's life by giving her a language to think through, but the 'new' life unfits her to the 'old' without replacing it. She grows to love Cardew but their 'union' restores his marriage and leaves her with nothing to live for - the 'logic' is all awry. We must take great care how we read Catharine Furze. At the opening of chapter X, Rutherford warns against the 'severity' with which his reader will have (prematurely) 'judged' Cardew and Catharine. He admits that such severity, if not wholly justified, is partly predictable, these two being 'most unsatisfactory and most improbable'. What, in effect, this mock resignation urges is a more flexible response than that of the unbending Puritanism that our supposed initial response betrays. Catharine Furze asks us to extend our range of moral sympathies, to re-examine the status of the big moral event in the novel, to re-draw the moral map, so to speak.

Dr Turnbull speaks for the reader's common sense response when he warns Catharine that 'Disorders of the type with which [she is] affected are terribly selfish' (Catharine, p. 310). He is not without personal authority in his criticism of personal love. He comes into the novel late in order to express a simple alternative ethic, though one which the book will eventually reject. We are

made aware that he has been put to a test not unlike that to which Catharine is presently subject, and has 'triumphed':

he had fled from temptation in the shape of a woman he loved, but whom duty, as he interpreted it, forbade him to marry, because he considered it wicked to run the risk of bringing diseased children into the world.

(Catharine, p. 308)

When his hopes of romantic fulfilment are dashed however, there remains for Dr Turnbull another devotion to pursue, devotion to his duty as a physician, to the service of others. Denial of his love for the woman in Bloomsbury Square may well have been difficult and painful for the doctor, but it was never to be, as it must be for Catharine and Phoebe, a total denial of self, occupation and purpose.

Behind the selfishness of Catharine's suggestion that Mr Cardew (and, by implication, she too) might warrant special consideration because 'He may not be constituted as [others] are', is a wisdom that the doctor's practical self-command makes impossible for him to realize. His reply to Catharine is as confident as it is unequivocal:

'It is a pernicious consequence of the sole study of extraordinary people that the customary standards of human action are deposed, and other standards peculiar to peculiar creatures under peculiar circumstances are set up.'

(Catharine, p. 333)

In her afterword to the 1984 Hogarth edition of Catharine Furze, Claire Tomalin rather dismissively describes the introduction of the 'good Dr Turnbull' as 'a stock Hale White voice of virtue'. Tomalin's conviction that Turnbull is a one-dimensional character makes his inclusion in the story seem 'awkward' to her:

Turnbull is a free-thinker, born before the French Revolution, good to the poor and short with the rich, 'spiritual in his treatment of disease' and with an early interest in eugenics. Beyond this, he has

no function but to say sound things and to be notably unsuccessful in caring for his young female patients.⁵

The point is surely that, even though Turnbull does represent a 'voice of virtue', Rutherford means to show how what is good advice depends as much upon the particular recipient and their ability to realize the 'virtue' for themselves as it does upon the 'soundness' of the counsel proffered, no matter how tried and tested. The doctor is exemplary in doing all that can humanly be expected of him; he acts upon the best authority available to him, that is his own experience. But all sense of his being a 'stock' voice ends here. If his advice is sound (and it is), it is patently no panacea. With all the benefits of age and experience, Dr Turnbull is shown to be no less mistaken in believing he has the measure of Catharine and her peculiar dilemma, than is she, when, with all the arrogance of youth, she dismisses his advice as 'the moral prosing of a man of sixty who never knew what it was to have his pulse stirred' (Catharine, p. 338). The 'awkwardness' that Tomalin registers, far from resulting from the 'simplicity' of Turnbull's representation, may well have more to do with an implicit recognition that his words, for all their 'soundness', do not strike the immediate chord that they ought for Catharine, not because she isn't capable of coming to realize their virtue eventually, but rather because, as always in Rutherford, good counsel resists such smooth translation; it is not passed on so easily as the sensible characters think but must be real-ized again and again through individual experience.

Turnbull fails to acknowledge how 'customary standards' are arrived at only by means of a synthesis of diverse and 'extraordinary' actions, and thus how

5. Mark Rutherford, Catharine Furze (London: Hogarth, 1985), afterword by Claire Tomalin, no page number.

they owe as much, if not more, to 'other standards peculiar to peculiar creatures under peculiar circumstances' as they do to common-sense or self-command. Like the figure of Edward Mardon in the Autobiography, and Mike Catchpole in this novel, Dr Turnbull wins his way through to a kind of independence of being, but this self-confident, categorical voice is not what Rutherford primarily listens to. He is much more interested in fact in the person of dreams, of imagination and reflection. His work is more concerned with how we might arrive at some sense of community of feeling and thought than with inner triumphs of solitude or common-sense business.

The account of Dr Turnbull's act of sacrifice and his perception of duty that is offered by Rutherford makes the reader less than certain as to their absolute wisdom. Turnbull gives up the woman he loves because duty 'as he interpreted it' (my emphasis), forbade him to 'run the risk' (again, my emphases), of bringing 'diseased children into the world'. Turnbull is a good man (like Edward Mardon and George Allen), he is intent upon doing what he believes is right even to his own detriment; but doing so, Rutherford will not allow us to ignore, is more than likely to depend upon faulty 'interpretation' of what are, in any case, difficult concepts, and upon the degree of 'risk' that we feel justified in taking. As a postscript to Dr Turnbull's story, and in another of those twists so typical of Rutherford (not least in seeming at first to be superfluous to the main narrative), we are told how the woman that Turnbull loved died five years after he had given her up, ten days after the birth of her first child (Catharine, p. 339). His sacrifice does not preserve her for long then, and it deprives them both of perhaps five years of happiness. In being true to his principles and his science,

Turnbull may well have been guilty of infidelity to his love. His concern with genetics as an exact science, like Angel Clare's belief that 'aristocratic' genes, being morally 'decrepit' are condemned to extinction, overlooks the randomness of evolution that results in a woman like Tess, 'a peasant by position, not by nature',⁶ or evades the risk of congenital disease.

In 1866 William Hale White published a pamphlet arguing for universal suffrage: An Argument for an Extension of the Franchise (A letter addressed to George Jacob Holyoake, Esq.). In a personal letter that accompanies a copy of the pamphlet, marked 'With the author's kind regards' and presented to Holyoake, White expresses his indebtedness to his friend, especially for his advice on the organization of the pamphlet, but also for his 'expressions of esteem and assent to my beliefs on this great subject'. White goes on to add:

I am so constructed that if a man says to me 'what you believe is true' - he does me more service than if he says 'I love you'. Perhaps this is a trifle exaggerated, but I could not alter the expression without conveying less truth than I do now.⁷

Typical of White is that irritable quest to utter the exact truth, an endeavour that refuses to shrink from 'exaggeration' yet feels forced to confess a little embarrassment because of it. More important, White's words seem particularly apt to Catharine Furze, and especially to the examination of the relationship between Catharine and Cardew. What Catharine lacks at Eastthorpe and at Chapel Farm, she gains from the school and particularly from the contact it allows

Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 302.

The letter I quote from is part of the George Jacob Holyoake Special Collection kept at the Co-operative Union Library, Holyoake House, Manchester, 1647. See appendix.

with Mr Cardew. Through the school she gains limited access to the world of ideas, but, more than this, through Cardew, to someone whom she can admire intellectually and so to feelings more intense than the schoolgirl crush her fellow pupil, Miss Arden, owns to. Catharine has grown used, at home, to being in the right and being satisfied with her own approval. At the Limes she is not an authority; she is exposed to 'questions undreamt of at Eastthorpe' (Catharine, p. 120), and to a sense of knowledge as a communal endeavour, founded upon open discussion and agreement. For Cardew magisterially to say to her 'you are right', shows up her parents' fearful acquiescence for the stupidity that it is. When Catharine delivers her interpretation of the text from Paul, Cardew responds, 'Thank you; that is very nearly what I intended' (Catharine, p. 120). When Cardew says, in effect, to Catharine, 'we share the same beliefs', it seems to her that to do so is a kind of love. Cardew satisfies that need in Catharine for the feeling of mind that Hale White's letter to Holyoake alludes to and that Mark Rutherford describes in these terms:

No matter how pure the intellectual bond between man and woman may be, it is certain to carry with it a sentiment that cannot be explained by the attraction of mere mental similarity. A man says to a man, 'Do you really believe it?' and, if the answer is 'yes', the two become friends; but if it is a woman who responds to him, something follows that is sweeter than friendship, whether she be bound or free. It cannot be helped; there is no reason why we should try to help it, provided only we do no harm to others, and indeed these delicate threads are the very fairest in the tissue of life. (Catharine, pp. 186-7)

'Provided only we do no harm to others', Rutherford insists that this 'sentiment' is legitimate. But where Hale White, in his letter, is careful not to allow himself, or his correspondent, to accept the 'exaggeration' as actual 'truth' but merely a means of conveying a truth, Cardew is unwilling to have 'corrected the

exaggeration into which his impulse, talent, and power of pictorial representation were so apt to fall' (Catharine, p. 121). Cardew allows himself to believe in the 'exaggeration'. His sentiments towards Catharine are not legitimate because they are founded on a double (intellectual and emotional) lie: that they imply a real and deep regard for her thoughts when, in truth:

he was drawn to [her] because her thoughts were his thoughts. St Paul and Milton in him saluted St Paul and Milton in her.
(Catharine, p. 187)

What he thinks of as his 'love' for Catharine is not genuine, it is only that 'a new love awoke in him instantaneously' (Catharine, p. 187). This love is 'new' only insofar as it repeats the love for his wife. His love for her had been a pretence by which Cardew 'fell in love with himself, married himself, and soon discovered that he did not know who his wife was' (Catharine, p. 184). His feeling for Catharine is new in sincerity and intensity. It is 'instantaneous' in being the result of an 'excitement' that is not wholly intellectual. In chapter VIII, Rutherford describes how 'Catharine looked earnestly at the excited preacher' (p. 184, my emphases); the contrast here surely depends upon our apprehension of what, in Catharine, is not altogether spiritual and, in Cardew, not entirely physical.

In all this there is no exaggerated condemnation of Cardew. Rather this is the other face of Rutherford's belief that agreement in ideas brings us close. Disinterested intellectual passion too easily becomes the narcissistic pleasure of seeing our own ideas in the mind of another. The relation between Cardew and Catharine is another instance of what Basil Willey calls Rutherford's capacity 'for ever returning upon himself and finding deeper wisdom on the far side of his point of view' (Willey, p. 233). Cardew then is not simply a hypocrite. Like

Michael Trevanion, he suffers from having nothing or nobody to correct him; his 'self-communion' produces:

a habit of prolonged evolution from particular ideas uncorrected by reference to what was around him. If anything struck him it remained with him, deduction followed deduction in practice unfortunately as well as in thought, and he was ultimately landed in absurdity or something worse. (Catharine, pp. 185-6)

Like Montgomery too, Cardew is at heart a dreamer. He drifts into the ministry in much the same manner that Montgomery drifts into the music hall. Like Montgomery again, Cardew's 'unchosen' profession exploits just those 'talents' that ought better to have been suppressed:

He was always prone to self-absorption, and the tendency was much increased by his religion. He lived an entirely interior life. (Catharine, p. 185)

Yet the 'interior' nature of Cardew's life does leave him free from the mere social compliance that in John Broad takes precedence over spiritual ministry. Cardew believes in Tom Catchpole without reservation, when he is accused by Mrs Furze of theft; his trust in Tom is absolute because it is founded upon Cardew's instincts and his perception of his duty as a clergyman. When Mr Furze faces bankruptcy, it is Cardew who, anonymously, puts up the money to save him. Cardew has good promptings but he is engrossed, as Catharine is in danger of becoming, in another 'sphere' to that of his fellow mortals. If he therefore cannot share their 'joys and sorrows', no less can he share their common morality. He genuinely does not see that there is a line to be drawn on the 'intellectual bond' that connects him to Catharine.

If personal love is much nearer to providing a centre for Catharine Furze than for the earlier novels, then Rutherford is as concerned with its dangerous

incompatibilities and even more dangerous compatibilities as is Thomas Hardy. Only the Bellamies, in their archaic and isolated farm, are secure and happy. Passion creates a whole series of displacements; Phoebe loves Tom who loves Catharine who loves Cardew, who is loved by Mrs Cardew. Cardew himself is the most remarkable figure in this cycle of love, since what it means to him remains indeterminate:

he did not know where to stop, nor could he look round and realise whither he was being led. Any other person in six weeks would have noticed the milestones on the road and would have determined that it was time to turn, but he gaily walked forward with his head in the clouds. If anybody at that particular moment... could have made him comprehend that he was making love to a girl; that what he was doing was an ordinary, common-place criminal act, or one which would justifiably be interpreted as such, he not only would have been staggered and confounded, but would instantly have drawn back. As it was, he was neither staggered nor confounded, and went home to his wife with but one image on his brain, that of Catharine Furze. (Catharine, pp. 187-8)

This analysis is critically placed in the book. Chapter X coming at the mid-point, is brief, but it consists entirely of Rutherford's reflections on the two central characters, neither of whom quite recognize their situation. True 'knowledge' of a situation, and consequently of an appropriate response, depends upon its 'realisation'. We should notice how Rutherford speaks of Cardew as 'being led', passive, when in reality we must know that he is leading himself. Cardew truly doesn't realize where he is going, though the failure to do so, or to recognize limits to its progress, arises less because he is enraptured by Catharine (rapture would surely leave room for some consideration of her position), than because, at centre, his relationship with her is a form of self- reflection. 'Any other person' implicitly makes Cardew a special case, establishes him as being somehow exempt from the censure that, nonetheless, Rutherford is compelled in honesty to voice,

'what he was doing was an ordinary, common-place criminal act'. We are told that, as a decent and honourable man, if he 'could have been made to comprehend' the implications of his actions, and Rutherford makes this comprehension sound as though it would have to be imposed from without, and not arrived at from within the man himself, Cardew would 'instantly have drawn back'. It is difficult to escape that intimation of criticism in the juxtaposition of the extreme slowness of Cardew's 'comprehension' with the potentially 'instantaneous' repulsion on recognising what he is doing. And yet, like Hardy in his representation of Angel Clare, Rutherford is not only prepared to go to great lengths to explain and defend Cardew to and from the reader, but his rendering of him is undeniably sympathetic, even in its censure.

The text maintains a relation of argument with the reader and with its own moral assessments. Certain words, 'any other person' and 'gaily' for example, are clearly critical. But the whole direction of the paragraph is to explain how a man might feel so intellectually alone that he has become used to living in the current of his own mind and feelings without any critical rejoinder; literally he could not 'turn' around. Cardew loves Catharine because at last he has met someone who enters that mental isolation, on his terms of course, how could it be otherwise? and the experience is compelling because he sees it as intellectual rather than passionate; her image is in his brain, not, apparently, in his heart.

This tyranny of mind which conceals a more dangerous infidelity of feeling, like Zachariah's response to Pauline Caillaud, for example, is a recurrent situation in Mark Rutherford's novels. The author's pleading for such characters has a private significance for Hale White. In his article, 'The Confessional Fiction of

Mark Rutherford', Wilfred H. Stone comments that: 'The writings and personal life of Hale White cannot be considered separately, for nearly everything he wrote was part of an intimate and prolonged self-confession' (p. 36). Stone goes on to assert that White's first marriage, lasting from 1856 to 1891, 'is of paramount importance to understanding Hale White's mind and literary work' (p. 41). Shortly after she was married, Harriet Hale White developed disseminated sclerosis, an incurable disease of the nervous system. She slowly became paralysed in the legs, the paralysis spread in time to her arms so that she could not write and could hardly feed herself. The disease made her almost blind during her last years but did not finally kill her until 1891. According to Stone, White had come to see his wife's illness as a 'cross' that he had to bear and to feel that what he ought to have been able to do out of love, he had to contrive to achieve in the name of duty. Stone justifies the biblical language he uses in regard to White in these terms:

Hale White nearly broke under the strain of the Job-like forbearance demanded of him. His wife's illness became for him both a source of suffering and an excuse for suffering; it demanded of him all the Christian charity of which he was capable, but, as the years passed, his capacity for human love (always carefully husbanded) withered into self-pity and his sympathy into hostility. He grew to envy her serene martyrdom; he took it unto himself and called it hypochondria. And of the two, one suspects, his suffering was the more painful to watch. (p. 42)

Crushed by the insuppressible consciousness of his own 'suffering', Harriet's 'serene martyrdom' became a continuous rebuke to White, from the smart of which grew both bitterness and remorse. In the same way the apparently suffering husband in the novels, Zachariah, even Michael Trevanion, is also the guilty party, as with Cardew. Stone bases his claims upon the testimony of Hale White's son,

Sir William Hale White, in his 'Private Notes about W. Hale White'.⁸ Even so, pieces like 'Atonement' (Pages, pp. 174-9), 'A dream of Two Dimensions' or 'The Love of Woman' (Last Pages, pp. 138-52 and 95-107), clarify that undeniable undercurrent of guilt in the writing. Perhaps it was a consciousness of their 'self-confessional' nature that made Hale White say of his 'stories', long after he had ceased to produce them, that he 'wished' they had never been written because 'they are somewhat of a degradation'.⁹

Stone's speculation about the nature of Hale White's relationship with his wife is part of his endeavour to understand Rutherford as a writer. From his reading of White's response to his wife's illness, Stone presents him as a man capable of 'perverse truculence' of the kind that, even in the rigorous acceptance of 'duty', might sometimes transform 'sympathy' into 'hostility'. Nevertheless, Stone also characterizes White as a man of 'courageous honesty' in his submission to the kind of self-confession that is hardest of all to make: to those whose love, badly wanted, might be damaged or withdrawn as a response to the truth. That White was courageous and honest enough to take this risk, and that he could command enough respect and love in order to render it negligible, is born out by his eldest son:

Sometimes my father spoke to me as he wrote to my brother of what our mother's illness meant to him. Both he and she bore this thirty year long tragedy without wincing, devoted in their affection for one another. Although, after my mother became incapable of housekeeping, my father tried to do it for a while, he soon found this impossible, consequently lady housekeepers appeared. Thus, in

-
8. Stone gives the location of the 'Private Notes about W. Hale White' as 'in the hands of Dr Reginald Hale White, London, England', Stone p. 42.
 9. Groombridge Diary, p. 176.

addition to her suffering and his consequent unhappiness, the privacy of the home was destroyed. When he came home from his work, he and she together would have liked to be alone, but a stranger was always there. My father cannot be understood by those who are unaware of my mother's illness.¹⁰

Though they acknowledged their parents' shared devotion and affection, White's sons knew well what their mother's illness 'meant' to their father. The discretion with which the son admits knowing his father's distress, from his father, whilst refraining from any enlargement upon its 'meaning', even in his 'Private Notes', gives a sense of the delicacy and painfulness of the subject and the trust implied, in its acknowledgement as much as in the broaching of it. Rutherford's writing evokes, especially in the Autobiography and Deliverance, just this kind of sympathy between author and reader. Certainly there seems a guarded privateness about the preface to the former work, displaced onto his fictional character:

I sometimes doubt whether it is right to publish... what is mainly a record of weaknesses and failures... I have observed that the mere knowing that other people have been tried as we have is a consolation to us, and that we are relieved by the assurance that our sufferings are not special and peculiar [that we are not uniquely wicked?], but common to us with many others.
(Autobiography, p. 1)

If Hale White could find the courage for self-confession though, it seems that he found self-forgiveness more elusive. The former was to him a matter of instinct, the latter of reason. Too strictly conscious that his attendance upon his wife ought to be rendered out of love, when he could only reason it out as a disagreeable duty, Hale White displaces the failure to feel into fictional scapegoats like Cardew, in regard to his wife.

10. Quoted in Stone, pp. 41-2 from 'Private Notes about William Hale White: by his son Sir William Hale White'.

Something very similar to the tension Stone recognizes in the character of Hale White is identifiable in Rutherford's writing. Whilst he refuses to disguise the faultiness of characters like Montgomery and Cardew, the passage above from chapter X of Catharine leaves us in no doubt at all that he is concerned also to elicit our sympathy for them, and to explain and apologize, as far as he can, for their failings. Montgomery is the son of silly parents who never troubled themselves to 'train him up for any occupation' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 81), whilst the 'boundless love' that mixes with Cardew's mother's 'ambition' for him combines to ensure that her son:

passed through youth and early manhood without any intercourse with the world so called, and he lacked that wholesome influence which is exercised by healthy companionship with those who differ from us and are not afraid to oppose us. (Catharine, p. 184)

If they are culpable, Rutherford makes clear that Montgomery and Cardew are not wholly responsible for their failings.

Sir William Hale White writes of his mother's heroic acceptance of her illness that:

For thirty weary years she endured but never once complained. To all of us she was a saint for she awakened in us not only reverence but great love. (Stone, p. 41)

Harriet's refusal to complain is poignantly reflective of a silence that Rutherford attributes to Mrs Cardew. Incensed at what he considers his wife's untimely and inept intervention (ironically, intended to alleviate his 'embarrassment'), in a conversation he is having with Catharine and the Ponsonbies, Cardew makes his wife painfully aware of his irritation on the journey home when they are alone.

Rutherford describes Mrs Cardew's response thus:

She said nothing. She never answered him when he was angry with her. It was growing dark as they went home, and the tears came into her eyes and the ball rose in her throat, and her lips quivered. She went back - does a woman ever forget them? - to the hour of passionate protestation before marriage, to the walks together when he caught up her poor phrases and refined them, and helped her to see herself, and tried also to learn what few things she had to teach. It was all the worse because she still loved him so dearly, and felt that behind the veil was the same face, but she could not tear the veil away. Perhaps, as they grew older, matters might become worse, and they might have to travel together estranged down the long weary path to death. Death! She did not desire to leave him, but she would have lain down in peace to die at that moment if he could be made to see her afterwards as she knew she was - at least in her love for him. But then she thought what suffering the remembrance of herself would cost him, and she wished to live. He felt that she moved her hand to her pocket, and he knew why it went there. He pitied her, but he pitied himself more, and though her tears wrought on him sufficiently to prevent any further cruelty, he did not repent. (Catharine, pp. 129-30)

Speech is a source of power in this novel where the enabling agencies of communication, religious and political in the earlier books, are absent, and the characters are thrown back upon personal articulacy. It is the source of Mrs Furze's authority over her inarticulate husband, whereas the crippling disability of Phoebe with language is her shame, as it is for Tom for a different reason, when he is falsely accused. Catharine gets her way at home by the rule of her tongue. Mrs Cardew, whose response when moved by Paradise Lost is to say that 'It is very fine' (Catharine, p. 136), is married to the most powerful speaker in the book. Her deliberate silence, even when she might reply to Cardew with the feelings locked up within her, renders her particularly pathetic. And yet, what looks on the surface to be 'martyrdom' in the suppression of 'complaint', emerges, as this paragraph develops, into a joint tragedy. What we feel from the outset, and very strongly, is Rutherford's sympathy for Mrs Cardew, even to the extent that he enters her mind. The question 'does a woman ever forget?'

reminds us how those powerful Cardew words were once all for her. Though, typically, she does not or cannot speak them for herself, these are Mrs Cardew's feelings by the balance of nature and probability, not merely Rutherford's narration. By reporting her thoughts for her, Rutherford makes us more aware that if Mrs Cardew had uttered them directly they might have been misinterpreted as the result of a false modesty; she uttered only 'poor phrases' and had 'few things to teach'. Worse still, her speech might have left the reader with the belief that she could be eloquent in the cause of self-lamentation. Her silence comes really from a genuinely unspeakable sense of shame and regret at what she truly believes to be her failure of her husband. But typically, if cruelly, the paragraph includes also, it does not begin afresh, Cardew's own pain at what he regards as the hopeless impasse of his marriage.

In the paragraph that precedes the one quoted above, Rutherford says of Cardew that, in rebuking his wife for what he sees as her inability to 'turn everything into a platitude, the rector is right so far, that it is possible by just a touch to convert the noblest sentiment into a commonplace' (Catharine, p. 128). Rutherford goes on however, to add that even if Cardew is 'right' to regret his wife's inarticulateness, he is far 'more wrong than he was right' in failing to recognize in her 'whole regions of unexplored excellence, of faculties never encouraged, and an affection to which he offered no response'. In the 'love' that she retains for her husband, even when he is cruel and cold, Mrs Cardew is plainly 'right'. In her refusal to disbelieve that, beneath the 'veil', there endures the same man whose 'passionate protestation before marriage' made her love him, she is 'right' also. Her fears for their future together are well founded and

movingly real. But she is as 'wrong' (albeit fleetingly), in that impulse to lie 'down in peace to die' for Cardew, as she is 'right' in her love for him. The 'peace' that Mrs Cardew imagines in death might appear to be familiar from the protagonist of the Autobiography, a character whom we see enough of to realize that what might, in his despair, seem like peace, is really surrender. Mrs Cardew's death wish is of another order though; she wants to make her husband know what he has lost and so love her again. What is distinctive here is that Mrs Cardew doesn't want to die because her husband's guilt would be too great and she wants to spare him the pain: the issue is, how complex her feelings are, while, all the time, she seems simply inert, 'She said nothing'; the problem is a very real one - for Cardew as well as his wife. This kind of yearning, though it is common amongst Rutherford's characters, is anathema to him, and to the writing as a whole, because it runs contrary to the very idea upon which all of the novels are founded - a belief in the prevailing possibility of change. What makes Mrs Cardew more than a victim, and therefore a character worthy to be taken seriously, is not her patient suffering, nor yet her honesty about her own shortcomings, but that phrase which reveals in her, for all her silence, a spirit for going on: 'she wished to live'.

Mrs Cardew is 'wrong' though in not attempting to push forward to some language of feeling, however inept. That 'she never answered him when he was angry' suggests that she might possibly have done so at other times. But her refusal to 'confess' to her husband the pain and distress that his mistreatment causes her, reveals Mrs Cardew's silence as less a martyrdom than a species of self-defence, albeit self-defeating. Thereby Cardew becomes the cruel husband

and she the victim wife and both create and perpetuate the relationship, helplessly. It is made apparent that Cardew not only knows but feels that he is being cruel:

He felt that she moved her hand to her pocket, and he knew why it went there.

He realizes her distress and is moved by it:

He pitied her, but he pitied himself more, and though her tears wrought on him sufficiently to prevent further cruelty, he did not repent.

This brief episode must rank amongst the most pitiable examples of impotence of feeling in the grip of the failure of words in the nineteenth century novel. Habituated as he is to self-absorption, Cardew's wife's silence deprives him of the very thing he most needs in order to break out of his own 'sphere'. As so often in Rutherford, the problem is not one of evil people intentionally hurting each other, but rather of what Rutherford calls in the Revolution, 'false relationship' (p. 149). Marriages in Rutherford are either 'impulsive' (as is the Colemans' in the third novel and Michael Trevanion's in his story), or 'practical' (Rutherford and Ellen in the Deliverance, Miriam to Didymus in 'Miriam's Schooling', the Bellamies in this novel). The latter tend, despite their apparent lack of 'romance' or sexual attraction, to be the most successful. Too often the love that comes exclusively of sexual attraction reveals itself in time to lack any other basis, or else it fails to outlive the physical impulse (as is implied in the case of Michael Trevanion). The claims of passion are important in Rutherford: Robert Trevanion's attraction to Susan Shipton is undeniably sexual. But passion there is sanctioned by Robert's unerring faith in his lover as a person and by their equality of articulacy and silence. Yet, surprisingly, the Cardew marriage, if it fits

either of these patterns, tends more towards the 'practical'. Cardew's mother wished her son to marry Jane Berdoe, the daughter of her dearest friend. Cardew, used to making return for his mother's 'boundless' love in acquiescence, gives in to her 'contriving'; and Rutherford explains that he was, in any case, young, and 'had never known what it was to go astray with women, and he was unable to stand at a distance from her and ask himself if he really cared for her' (Catharine, p. 184).

If the 'practical' marriages survive and prosper, it is only through dint of sustained effort. Given the differences of social class, the Cardews' marriage is in the condition of Miriam and Didymus before she learnt to respect him. In this sense Mrs Cardew's sin is one of omission rather than commission. Though she may not consciously 'stimulate' what is 'disagreeable' in her husband, her silence does nothing to make him do what he most needs to, that is to recognize and confront it. Mrs Cardew's intended kindness, in not seeking to further inflame her husband by answering his criticisms of her when he is already angry, is really a cruelty, to herself and to him.

Catharine Furze has its basis in the idea of such accidental cruelties as the Cardews' relationship reveals, and in the kinds of frustration and suffering that they breed. It is a novel of displacement. Cardew cannot love his wife because he is convinced, and she does not realize what it will take to unconvince him, that because her attempts to speak to him of it are clumsy and eventually abandoned, she cannot care for that which interests him. That Mrs Cardew cares desperately, Rutherford leaves the reader in no doubt at all. Catharine, Cardew feels, possesses 'a sympathy which is unusual' and it is the source of his, unconscious,

love for her. He cannot see how that same sympathy, which is both for him and his wife, prevents Catharine from surrendering to her own love, even as it pulls her to him. Paradoxically, her involvement with Cardew has awakened in the hitherto headstrong Catharine, a delicacy that unfits her to the only life available to her, her mother's ambitious marriage plans or marriage to Tom Catchpole, the man to whom she (unknowingly) is 'miracle, soul, inspiration, religion, enthusiasm, patriotism, immortality', everything in fact 'which is not bread and yet is life' (Catharine, p. 213).

Catharine can't love Tom, though she holds him 'dear' (Catharine, p. 231) and knows him to be good, because, his mind being 'essentially plain', he has no means of access to the 'world of ideas' that she needs to inhabit. She becomes Cardew to Tom's Mrs Cardew in effect. Indeed, in one of those touches so typical of this book, until he declares himself to her, the thought of Tom as a lover is unthinkable for Catharine. And yet, with an irony that is totally in keeping with the spirit of the novel, Tom is the 'physical' agent of that unseen providence ('without the big P', Catharine, p. 228), which prevents the meeting between Catharine and Cardew that might well have been disastrous.

After Cardew had preached his sermon at Abchurch in aid of the County Infirmary, he and Catharine 'lingered behind at the Rectory gate'. Rutherford denies all knowledge of what 'passed between' them as they loitered; only God knew that, he insists, though he lets slip nevertheless that a subsequent meeting had been somehow 'prevented':

However, be all this as it may, it would be wrong to say that the meeting between Catharine and Mr Cardew was prevented by accident. She loitered: she went up Fosbrooke Street: if she had gone straight to Mr Cardew she might have been with him before

Tom met him. Tom would not have interrupted them, for he ventured to speak to Mr Cardew merely because he was alone, and Mrs Cardew would not have interrupted them, for they would have gone further afield. Tom's appearance even was not an accident, but a thread carefully woven, one might say, in the web that night. (*Catharine*, p. 229)

The 'web' of 'instinct', 'Demon, Fate, or presiding Genius', call it what we will, that would once have been called Providence but looks at first glance like blind chance, is made to seem more like a 'law as unevadable as gravity' (*Catharine*, p. 229). Tom, immediately, unwittingly reinforces Cardew's sense that he and Catharine share the same thoughts and feelings. When Tom's comment on Cardew's sermon renews the latter's sense of intellectual isolation, Tom replies 'Why there - there...There was Miss Furze - she took it in' (*Catharine*, p. 223). It is as though, for these inarticulate characters, their instincts outrun their consciousness, so that Tom chooses Cardew as his confidant, to explain his love for Catharine, in effect warning off his rival:

'I love Miss Furze; I cannot help it. I have never loved any girl before. It is very foolish, for I am only her father's journeyman; but that might be got over. She would not let that stand in her way, I am sure. But Mr Cardew, I am not up to her; she is strange to me. If I try to mention to her subjects, what I say is not right...perhaps it is because I never was taught. I had no schooling; cannot you help me sir? I shall never set eyes on any like her. I would die this instant to save her a moment's pain.' (*Catharine*, p. 223-4)

The apparent hierarchy here is inverted. It looks as if Tom is a mere petitioner and yet, in holding up to Cardew a mirror in whose reflection might be seen a duplicate of his relationship to his wife, the 'unschooled' and entirely unsophisticated Tom teaches the educated man what love might be like, even though Cardew is still too infatuated in his own way to learn from it at present.

It is still that sense of his or Catharine's 'superiority' and not of his culpability that Cardew takes from Tom's confession:

What a strange pathos there was in this recognition of superiority and in the inability to rise to it and appropriate it! Then his thoughts turned to himself again, and the flame shot up clear and strong, as if oil had been poured on the fire. She understood him; she alone.
(Catharine, p. 224)

Cardew reads Tom's appeal in terms of his own marriage, the 'inability to rise to it', and it immediately confirms his Miltonic sense of the union of compatible souls in his own relation to Catharine. Ironically, Cardew cannot 'rise to' or 'appropriate' Tom's admiration because such 'superiority' as he can claim, is limited and relative. Cardew possesses nothing to match Tom's humility or genuineness. But his thoughts turn inwards almost immediately, where they become the 'flame' and 'fire' of his desire: 'She understood him; she alone'.

Tom hangs 'mechanically' and silently on to Cardew who now seeks out Catharine, like his destiny, so that the rector is obliged eventually to retrace his steps up the lane to his home. In his endeavour to be free of his mute pursuer, Cardew is led, in spite of where he would go, back to his wife by Tom. The rival lover, without knowing it, has achieved the desired result. Tom takes his leave having finished with Cardew, leaving him alone with his wife. This is a dangerous moment. We can see how Cardew might be angry at having his way blocked, and be prepared to vent that anger upon his wife. But there is an implicit change in the tenor of their relation that must have at least something to do with Mrs Cardew's exhibiting that 'wish to live' in the 'little struggle' she engages in to be able to say to her husband:

'My dear, you have never preached - to me, at least - as you have preached tonight' (Catharine, p. 225)

It is in Cardew's reply to his wife's appreciation that the real impact of his encounter with Tom is shown. Cardew asks his wife if she 'means' what she has just said. He begins to 'take account that what his wife said and what she felt might not be the same; that persons, who have no great command over language, are obliged to make one word do duty for a dozen' (*Catharine*, p. 128). Cardew shows himself to be open to his wife's meaning where before he had been obsessed with her paucity of expression. For her part, Mrs Cardew is content to answer his enquiry 'You really mean it?', with silence, though a silence now that is light years away from the fearful muteness that she showed earlier. For the reader, the conscious man Cardew has made the unconscious recognitions that lie beyond his ordinary articulacy. A kind of interchange has taken place by which the husband has learnt to listen and the wife to speak.

It would be possible to present the reunion of husband and wife as a small triumph. But it is typical of the novel that success at one point is paid for by failure at another. In this Mr Cardew's inset tale about Charmides the Greek artist dying for love of the Christian slave Demariste, is exemplary, 'Did he believe?' is the title, but the reader's problem is whether the 'martyrdom' of Charmides is a futile mistake or whether he has at last found a feeling that is big enough to die for. In the novel *Catharine and Phoebe*, the subdued domestic servant of the Furzes, sacrifice themselves for people they love, Mrs Cardew and Catharine herself, but they lose those that they are in love with, Mr Cardew and Tom: the sacrifice is both active and passive. Without explicitly voicing the existential question, the novel attributes a nobility of power to the loves of

women, yet shows us what might only be the waste of the lives of Catharine and Phoebe.

Certainly, in Phoebe's pitiful denouement, it is difficult to escape the sense of sheer waste and pointlessness. She is dismissed when she speaks up for Tom to Mrs Furze. Her death is undoubtedly accelerated by exchanging the comfort of the Terrace for the squalor of her home, an action she undertakes without thought for herself, in thankless support of the man who never learns how she loves him. Her relation to Tom is made more pathetic by the fact that he, if he could not have loved her, is not a cruel man and is certainly capable of appreciating her action, could he only have realized its true nature and her frailty. He was 'grateful' to Phoebe for her loyalty, in the circumstances a word of almost culpable meagreness, but had what seemed at the time more practical concerns than that of expressing his thanks. Phoebe's pathetic letter, written to his London address, he thus puts aside until it is 'accidentally burnt' (Catharine, p. 290) and so never answered.

In a movement worthy of Hardy, the letter that looks to Tom to be a simple kindness, nothing more, becomes for Phoebe, by its miscarriage and given her circumstances, no less than self-betrayal, a shameful act. She allows herself to admit to betraying in the letter only 'a little tenderness', though we know that it is much more, not because she is knowing enough to have calculated upon and been prepared to protect herself from possible rejection, but because, with genuine humility, she thinks of Tom as so much above her. This is typical of the discrepancy of relationship that characterizes the way that couples perceive each other in this novel: Catharine looks up to Mr Cardew, Tom to Catharine, Mr

Furze to his wife and Mrs Cardew to her husband. The Cardew marriage is an echo of the relationship of Miriam to Didymus which almost foundered under the wife's sense of superiority over her husband. What happens finally for Miriam and Didymus, as it will in the solitary successful relationship that Catharine Furze sustains (ignoring the Bellamies of course, whose marriage is established as stable from the beginning), is that Miriam is forced to realize what Rutherford calls in this novel the 'exaggeration' into which her 'impulse' is so apt to lead (p. 121). Didymus's peculiar talent for precision of mathematical thought, his unfailing practical efforts with the orrery to persevere until things are 'true', shows Miriam how spurious her self-satisfaction is. The very thing that exasperates Miriam about Didymus (and Mr Cardew about his wife), what she takes to be an incapacity for imagination, turns out to be the thing most 'serviceable' to her (Catharine, p. 121).

Because she is so aware of what she takes to be their incompatibility, Phoebe dreads the shame that repulsion by Tom would mean to her, more than death. She never regrets the move away from the Furzes' that jeopardizes her already failing health, but having written the letter she feels 'ashamed', wishes 'she had not written, and would have given the world to have her letter back again' (Catharine, p. 290). She is afraid less of the humiliation that the letter might occasion than of the proof it would offer to her that her love for Tom had been an act of presumption and pride. With a perverse predictability, all of Phoebe's fears seem to her to be realized in what is really no more than Tom's busy thoughtlessness. She has sufficient dignity to be angry at him, 'He may be very much taken up', she thinks, 'but he might have sent me just a line'

(Catharine, p. 290). Her slight rebuke is due as much to her belief that, even if it was too much to have expected him to reply to her letter from a sense of her love from him, he was surely good enough to have done so out of what Hardy calls that 'high compassion' that operates for 'pure lovingkindness' sake.¹¹ Perhaps the hardest thought for Phoebe, and the one she doesn't (or won't) have, and that, ironically, contains the truth, is that Tom had simply forgotten the letter. Because she can't think that her love of him had simply not occurred to Tom, the shame that Phoebe has dreaded more than death, is doubly misappropriated; there has been no 'betrayal' and the only 'reason' for his silence is Tom's engrossment with more pressing matters.

If the situation here recalls Hardy, we are, nevertheless, aware of a difference in Rutherford's method. Rutherford's novels are more narrated than are Hardy's; they are less involved with the feelings of individual characters than with the opportunity they provide for exploring a specific set of circumstances, raising a certain awareness in the reader. Rutherford says starkly of Phoebe that:

She had been betrayed into a little tenderness which met with no response. She was only a housemaid, and yet when she said to herself that maybe she had been too forward, the blood came to her cheeks. (Catharine, p. 290)

Where Hardy would have dwelt upon Phoebe's 'indoor fears' (Tess, p. 179) and 'sad imaginings' (Tess, p. 180), Rutherford is concerned with presenting their outward aspect, inviting a response to her social position in order quietly to remind us of her self-respect, 'and yet', all in the one sentence.

11. The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy, ed. by James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1989), 'The Minute before Meeting', p. 191,

Ironically, if Rutherford 'overlooks' the interior life that Hardy would have exploited, he by-passes also the death-bed scene of which Dickens would have made so much. Phoebe's death occurs beyond the narration, in keeping with her existence as a whole. Even though Catharine sits in vigil beside her, the moment of Phoebe's death passes by, unmarked and neglected because, like her suffering as a whole, it is silent:

She then became silent, and so continued for two hours. Catharine thought she was asleep, but a little after dawn her mother came into the room. She knew better, and saw that the silence was not sleep, but the insensibility of death. In a few minutes she hurried Catharine downstairs, and when she was again admitted Phoebe lay dead, and her pale face, unutterably peaceful and serious, was bound up with a white neckerchief. (Catharine, p. 324-5)

Rutherford's positioning in the novel of the big emotional and personal events like Phoebe's death or Tom's false accusal, is peculiar. These occur on the periphery of the narrative. Effectively the meetings between Cardew and Catharine are over with the thunderstorm half-way through the novel. The second half of the book is really motivated by Mrs Furze's mistake that Catharine loves Tom, though with typical spasmodic insight she realizes that Tom loves Catharine. This displacement of the centres of expectation in the book is not arbitrary. It is a way of writing the accidental into the story. Characteristically, the author reminds us of Mark Rutherford's presence precisely to reinforce the importance of accident by a reference to its place in the marriage of Reuben Shapcott, the supposed editor of Rutherford's posthumous papers, of which the novel is one.

The events of the novel exist for Rutherford's constant act of rumination. Phoebe reveals a grandeur of spirit as she dies:

'Miss Catharine,' she whispered, drawing Catharine's hand between both her own thin hands, 'I have something to say to you. Do you

know I loved Tom a little; but I don't think he loved me. His mind was elsewhere; I saw where it was, and I don't wonder. It makes no difference, and never has, in my thoughts, either of him or you. It will be better for him in every way, and I am glad for his sake. But when I am gone - and I shan't feel ashamed at his knowing it - please give him my Bible; and you may, if you like put a piece of my hair in that last chapter you have been reading tonight.'

'Phoebe, my Phoebe, listen,' said Catharine: 'I shall never be Tom's wife.'

'Are you sure?'

'As sure as that I am here with my head on your pillow.'

'I am sorry.'

(Catharine, p. 324)

Her human achievement is indefeasible, but it goes unnoticed. This is the man for whom Phoebe has, almost literally, died, and Catharine is the woman who so captured his 'mind' that he didn't think even to send a perfunctory 'line' in acknowledgement of Phoebe's letter. And yet there is no bitterness in Phoebe, she loses sight even of her own 'shame' in her sorrow, the last words she utters, that Tom is not to have Catharine.

Even the method by which Rutherford recounts Phoebe's death encourages her pretermission at the level of narrative. At the close of her story Miriam manages to make that Spinozan connection, so vital in Rutherford, between herself and the universe around and beyond her. She falls to her knees, moved to tears at the sight of the dawn. This 'communion' at last makes real and 'very, very sweet' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 154), her relation to her husband, of whom she 'always thought' when she 'looked at the planets or stars, because he was so intimately connected with them in her mind' ('Miriam's Schooling', p. 149). That 'equality' that Miriam discovers in life and through Didymus, Phoebe has to die alone for, in order to bring it to realization:

The soul of the poor servant-girl had passed away - only a servant girl - and yet there was something in that soul equal to the sun

whose morning rays were pouring through the window.
(Catharine, p. 325)

The repetition of 'poor servant-girl' and 'only a servant-girl', is intended to provoke thought and not mawkish tenderness. In a novel that has taken as one of its central thoughts the idea of how social and intellectual hierarchies control consciousness, Rutherford's final words on Phoebe recall to us an alternative hierarchy, that of the sermon on the mount. If the meek are blessed though, they remain an obscure kindred:

She lies at the back of the meeting house, amongst her kindred, and a little mound was raised over her. Her father borrowed the key of the gate every now and then, and, after his work was over, cut the grass where his child lay, and prevented the weeds from encroaching; but when he died, not long after, his wife had to go into the workhouse, and in one season the sorrel and the dandelions took possession, and Phoebe's grave became like all the others - a scarcely distinguishable undulation in the tall rank herbage. (Catharine, p. 325)

Phoebe's 'soul' gleams forth for only an instant before it is subsumed amongst 'her kindred'. She is similarly interred by the narrative, laid to 'rest' like one of Gray's rustics, though Rutherford substitutes the 'back of the meeting house' for the country churchyard. Phoebe's last resting place is no idyll:

Half a mile beyond the cottage was a chapel...It had stood there for 150 years, gabled, red brick, and why it was put there nobody knew. Round it were tombstones, many totally disfigured, and most of them awry. The grass was always long and rank, full of dandelions, sorrel, and docks, excepting once a year in June when it was cut, and then it looked raw and yellow. Here and there was an unturfed, bare hillock, marking a new grave, and that was the only mark it would have, for people who could afford anything more did not attend the chapel now. (Catharine, p. 315)

Rutherford surely means us to feel the irony in such attempts at collective immortalization by an articulate elite.¹² The thought of 'some mute inglorious Milton' mouldering unknown might only be contemplated in serenity so long as we cannot put a name or a face to him or her. The assurance that death comes to us all, rich or poor, fails entirely to make up the deficit of neglect and waste of a life like Phoebe's: nobody would sit and muse in this graveyard.

The deaths of both Phoebe and Catharine are deliberately linked. Though their circumstances are so different, Catharine's life is, in its own way, as pitiful as Phoebe's. In the end, love and marriage providing the only viable future for her, Catharine finds, having rejected Tom, the only proposal she receives, and wanting nothing to do with her mother's preference, Charlie Colston, that the future, life itself, has become unimaginable to her. Whatever the medical diagnosis, Catharine dies of a kind of self-consumption:

her refusal of [Tom] brought it vividly before her that her life would be spent without love, or, at least, without a love which could be acknowledged. It was a crisis, for the pattern of her existence was henceforth settled, and she was to live not only without that which is sweetest for woman, but with no definite object before her. The force in woman is so great that something with which it can grapple, on which it can expend itself, is a necessity, and Catharine felt that her strength would have to occupy itself in twisting straws. It is really this which is the root of many a poor girl's suffering. As the world is arranged at present, there is too much power for the mills which have to be turned by it.

(Catharine, pp. 300-1)

Quietly, and without in this case using any of the expected terms, Rutherford raises issues that the late nineteenth-century readership would recognize as the 'Woman Question'. Mrs Furze, Mrs Bellamy, Phoebe, Mrs Cardew, and

12. The Poems of Gray, Collins and Goldsmith, Thomas Gray, 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', ll. 93-6.

Catharine have all, in their different ways, been possessed of energies that could find no useful expression. The older figures have learnt to accommodate themselves to their situation but, beyond their fragile health, the younger women feel the burden of futility. Catharine is nothing if not a 'strong' young woman, even, sometimes, in spite of herself, as is the case at those moments when she must repel Cardew:

She...cursed herself that she had dismissed him. Who had dismissed him? Not she. How had it been done? She could not tell. She crept out of the garden and went to the corner of the meadow where she could see the bridge. He was still there. She tried to make up an excuse for returning; she tried to go back without one, but it was impossible. Something, whatever it was, stopped her; she struggled and wrestled but it was of no avail, and she saw Mr. Cardew slowly retrace his steps to the town. Then she leaned on the wall and found some relief in a great fit of sobbing. Consolation she had none; not even the poor reward of conscience and duty. She had lost him, and she felt that, if she had been left to herself, she would have kept him. (Catharine, p. 180)

Catharine cannot make 'excuses' for wrong actions, even though she may desire to execute them, any more than she can justify eking out an existence that would be dependent upon 'twisting straws', and living 'without love'. There is a 'force' in her that is indeed great, but it lacks all 'object'. The power of mind that drew her to Cardew, and in turn made her attractive to him, spends itself now in 'vividly' presenting before her the bleak 'pattern' that, henceforth, would have to do service for a life.

The conclusion, the death of Catharine, is not an easy resolution of the cost and the pain of the problematic lives that the novel has laid bare. It moves beyond the critical, analytical weighing of one thing against another that has been the strength of the book, towards a kind of demonstration of the significance of event. The fact of Catharine's death is in the end bigger than any way of

understanding it. There is a vital difference for Rutherford therefore, between the deaths of Phoebe and Catharine. Rutherford is not interested in reinterpreting Christianity in purely ethical terms. The force of religion in this novel is seen in action and not in words. In writing to Mr Furze in defence of Tom Catchpole, Mr Cardew rightly insists that no apology is due for his intervention in the situation because, as a 'minister of 'God's word' he is bound 'to do all that He bids' (Catharine, p. 297, my emphasis). Catharine apart, Mr Cardew's actions as a clergyman are usually sound. Words and the false pride that they generate is his downfall. At the close of his emotional sermon at Abchurch, the one that so moved Catharine and his wife, Cardew feels bound to append an orthodox tag:

He inserted a saving clause on Christ's mediatorial work, but it had no particular connection with the former part of his discourse. It was spoken in a different tone, and it satisfied the congregation that they had really heard nothing heterodox. (Catharine, p. 218)

It is in departures such as this one, from what he knows to be the 'simple duty' of his ministry, that is the 'obligation...of bearing witness to the truth' (Catharine, p. 292, my emphases), where he allows himself to be caught up in what is, for him, merely the rhetoric of his religion, that Cardew is in greatest moral peril. It is the same skill with a 'saving clause' that justifies his pursuit of Catharine. For Cardew, Catharine's death assumes the status of an action, not merely something to be moralized over. Rutherford sets, against the wasted life of Phoebe, the death that 'saves'. Catharine asks to see Mr Cardew before she dies:

he looked steadily at her, and he knew too well what was on her face. Her hand dropped on the bed: he fell on his knees beside her with that hand in his, but he still was dumb, and not a single article of his creed which he had preached for so many years presented itself to him: forgiveness, the atonement, heaven - it had all vanished.

'Mr Cardew, I want to say something.'

'Wait a moment, let me tell you - you have saved me.'

She smiled, her lips moved, and she whispered -

'You have saved me.'

By their love for each other they were both saved.

(Catharine, pp. 364-5, author's emphases)

Cardew is 'dumb', not a single scrap of the creed he had hitherto managed so easily to summon up, out of mere policy sometimes (as we have seen) as much as from conviction, 'presents itself' now. Later in life, when he again takes up his ministry, Rutherford explains how Cardew's sermons 'were of the simplest kind', founded on the need for an 'active' piety, 'exhortations to pity, consideration, gentleness, and counsels as to the common duties of life'. Cardew's whole existence is altered by Catharine's death, but, more than this, her death transforms his attitude to life and holds his resolution steady:

Some men are determined by principles, and others are drawn and directed by a vision or a face. Before Mr Cardew was set for evermore the face which he saw white and saintly at Chapel Farm that May Sunday morning when death had entered, and it controlled and moulded him with an all pervading power more subtle and penetrating than that which could have been exercised by theology or ethics. (Catharine, p. 366)

'Theology or ethics' have nothing to do with what amounts to Cardew's 'conversion'. He is 'saved' by a vision whose power is more 'subtle' and 'all-pervading' than either of these. The experience of Catharine's death instils in Cardew a 'health' that he has not exhibited previously. Long after the event, the experience remains with him and it is the cause of his future integrity. His conversion comes from no 'new theory or [a] new principle', but from something that Rutherford urges as 'much deeper' (Catharine, p. 366). The distinction here between 'principles' and 'vision' is clear. And yet, like Wordsworth's 'Ode to

Duty', Rutherford, whilst he values 'principles', never loses sight of the vision to which they are the secondary support:

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not wisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.¹³

13. William Wordsworth: Poems, ed. by John O'Hayden, 2 vols (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 'Ode to Duty', ll. 17-24.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CLARA HOPGOOD

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.¹

The distance travelled between the Autobiography and Clara Hopgood is considerable. One way of measuring this distance is to consider the alteration in subject matter, tone, and the implied relationship of both author and reader to the writing. For the first time, in Clara Hopgood, we come to a novel in which there is no trace of Hale White's guilt. The private sources that drove him to the earlier writing seem no longer to obtain. Rutherford's concern to discover a means of surviving a period of individual and cultural upheaval, which in the Autobiography, Deliverance and Revolution derives directly from Hale White's own personal and religious distress, still informs the later works, but in these it is located in specifically female experience and in the apparent failure of female vocation. This 'second' movement begins tentatively in Miriam's Schooling and culminates assuredly in Clara Hopgood in which Hale White progresses not only beyond the details of his own autobiography (still implicit in the male-female relationships of Miriam's Schooling and Catharine Furze), but beyond predominantly personal motivation.

1. The Penguin Book of English Verse (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), Emily Bronte, 'No Coward Soul is Mine', p. 339, ll. 1-4.

The progress of the novels as a whole therefore is away from subjectivity and towards an objective analysis of problems that are as distant as it is possible to imagine from the experience of a respectable, ageing, 'Victorian' gentleman.

Clara Hopgood is the most explicitly intellectual of the novels, its characters the most eloquent and, significantly, we have the sense of their actually speaking for themselves, expressing individual dilemmas rather than embodying representative difficulties. The story is slight but strange. Of two well-educated sisters, Madge falls in love, becomes pregnant before marriage only to realize that she doesn't care for the man. He proposes, more than once, but she chooses to bring up her child alone. Clara is loved by a widower, loves him in return, but deliberately gives him up to her sister, and herself goes off to Italy to join Mazzini's struggle.

The 'slightness' of the narrative is entirely intentional; as always, what is most important for Rutherford are the ideas that his fiction supports. Of all his work, this final novel is the one most substantially grounded in ideas rather than story. 'The difference between a vice and a virtue may be a hair-line' Hale White contends in a note collected in More Pages from a Journal (p. 238). It is in just such subtle 'hair-line' divisions that Clara Hopgood deals. This greater complexity is as much a matter of form and narrative method as of content. Unlike Mrs Bellamy in Catharine Furze and Miss Arbour in the Autobiography, who can offer general moral advice and can plainly see the difficulty to be overcome and openly announce their 'solutions', the question of right and wrong in Clara Hopgood, is inwrought in all of the main characters' thought, speech and action. Intelligent conversation composes much of the novel but wisdom is not easily dispensable at

the level of words. Never inclined to spare his reader, Rutherford is particularly averse to doing so in this book where his audience is placed in much the same position as is Madge's lover, the well-intentioned but weak Frank Palmer. In chapter V of Clara Hopgood, wishing to avoid a difficult question, Frank professes his contentment to settle for what Mrs Hopgood would think right. Mrs Hopgood upbraids Frank:

'The worth of the right to you is that it is your right, and that you arrive at it in your own way.' (Clara, p.59)

Just as Mrs Hopgood will not be responsible for imposing her idea of right upon Frank, so Rutherford (from Miriam's Schooling onwards), implicitly declines to draw conclusions for his readers. Such conclusions as he might offer are revealed by the close of this novel, in any case, as neither definitive or universal. Here characters achieve their own resolutions in unrepeatable ways. The responsibility of moral judgement is placed firmly with the reader.

One person's 'morality' may well be another's 'immorality'. In the later work the division between right and wrong becomes less and less clear, and much more a matter to be interpreted individually rather than by any pre-established 'authority', whether that be the author or some moral or legal precedent. In an essay on 'The Corsair' in Pages from a Journal, Hale White defends Byron from the charge of immorality on these terms:

In reality he is moral, using the word in its proper sense, and he is so, not only in detached passages, but in the general drift of most of his poetry...

Conrad is not a debauched buccaneer. He was not -

'by Nature sent

To lead the guilty - guilt's worse instrument.'

He had been betrayed by a misplaced confidence.

(p. 125)

We see here how the word 'moral' must be heavily qualified 'in reality'; it depends upon usage in the 'proper sense', and an appreciation of 'general drift' more than specific cases. Nor, even then, can the idea of what is 'moral' exist in a vacuum, rather it compels towards itself a barrage of other weighted words like 'debauched', 'Nature', 'guilt', and 'betrayal'. It is just such an interest in discovering what truly constitutes morality and in the idea that self-betrayal might come from the 'misplacement' of a positive impulse and not from 'debauchery' or carelessness, that informs Clara Hopgood. A little later in the Byron essay White adds the warning that:

We must, of course, get rid of the notion that the relative magnitude of the virtues and vices according to the priest or society is authentic. (p. 129)

It is in Clara Hopgood, where the differentiation between the 'relative magnitude of the virtues and the vices' according to convention, becomes most problematic, and where the narrator's silence within the narrative is most implicit, that the quest for 'authenticity' is most profoundly undertaken.

And yet the difficulty in differentiating right from wrong in Clara Hopgood is compounded because, apart from the fact that the characters who now take over the debate are the most cosmopolitan (Clara and Madge have been educated abroad) and the most morally and politically articulate of all the novels, they are also the most 'real' in their inconsistency. All of the concerns that have emerged from the writing as a whole - the idea of love and the relationship between men and women, of sacrifice and the power of desire, the apprehension of 'law', the relative claims of instinct and reason - are brought together in Clara Hopgood, whose characters are the most 'qualified' of all of Rutherford's to show both

their own human complexity and inconsistency and that of the difficulties and decisions they have to face.

At the heart of the writing is a love story. There is no shortage of 'love' stories in Rutherford's novels, but often love itself in his work becomes subject to a kind of inertia, or it is a means to some other discovery and not an end in itself, at best a brief if welcome interlude to suffering or the harbinger of resignation. But in Clara Hopgood love is the dynamic of the characters, the impetus for both the narrative and the intellectual movement of the novel. At the end we know love as a universal, positive, and creative more than an exclusively personal, negative or despairingly sacrificial force as it is in Catharine Furze. Typically, though, it is less in the explicit love stories (one failed, one a success), of Madge Hopgood and Frank Palmer and of Madge and Baruch Cohen that Rutherford shows the action of love at its most sublime, than in the implicit love stories of Clara (again, one failed, one a success), for whom the book is named, though her love story seems so slight in comparison to those of her sister. The centre of interest and expectation is thus displaced so as to cause the reader to extend the idea of love to its most humanly inclusive: in Catharine Furze. Rutherford wrote that there is no one 'Love' but that there are 'loves' (Catharine, p. 192), each of them different. In this novel, 'tainted' by the 'sex question',² sexual love has to be measured against the devotion of the sisters to each other. In spite of Selby's regret that passion should be presented in 'a more or less pronounced form', Clara Hopgood is concerned only superficially with

2. Selby, Thomas, The Theology of Modern Fiction (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1896) 173-92 (p. 174)

sexual love, as a means by which the characters become more conscious of themselves and of the necessary limitation and complexity of reason, impulse and their interaction. It is the analysis of the feeling, more than love in the sexual sense, that is at the centre of the narrative.

Significantly too, love in this novel is seen consistently from the woman's point of view. Frank scarcely has a mind of his own and, though Baruch is individual, it is still Clara's response which matters in the book. Like 'Miriam's Schooling' and Catharine Furze, Clara Hopgood addresses (quietly) what would otherwise demand identification as the 'Woman Question'. This question, whilst it remains absolutely central to the book and is treated with genuine commitment and seriousness, is never made explicit. This is because Rutherford's 'feminism' has less to do with sexual politics than with recognizing and understanding human need. Rutherford replaces the word 'Question' with 'Idea', a substitution that allows him the freedom to represent the extraordinary lives and actions of Madge and Clara, whilst avoiding any self-imposed obligation to arrive at some (necessarily spurious) explicit conclusion. Thus Rutherford can present Madge and Clara Hopgood, as young women whose father believed education was more important for daughters than sons:

Boys, he thought, find health in an occupation; but an uncultivated, unmarried girl dwells with her own untutored thoughts, which often breed disease. (Clara, p. 7)

Their education fits them to conduct a discussion that touches upon ideas of 'true law', human nature, 'principle', instinct, reason, right and wrong (Clara, pp. 32-6), but they do so within a debate that takes as its starting point the importance and desirability of romantic love and the inevitability of marriage for women. The

refusal to put forward his ideas about the plight of women like Madge and, more particularly, Clara, in terms of a 'Question', comes not from any desire to avoid contention, but rather because, above all Rutherford is a 'practical' writer; he will not ignore the reality merely for the sake of a 'good' argument.

When we first encounter them, Madge and Clara are playing chess, a notoriously male game. Madge is losing and Clara attributes her sister's lack of success to a failure in 'planning and...forecasting'. Whilst Madge concedes that such calculation is a definite advantage when playing a game, she insists that in life and, more important, in the selection of a husband, her preference of instinct would tell:

'You never believe in impulses or in doing a thing just because here and now it appears to be the proper thing to do. Suppose anybody were to make love to you - oh! how I wish somebody would, you dear girl, for nobody deserves it more -' Madge put her head caressingly on Clara's shoulder and then raised it again. 'Suppose, I say, anybody were to make love to you, would you hold off for six months and consider, and consider, and ask yourself whether he had such and such virtues, and whether he could make you happy? Would not that stifle love altogether? Would you not rather obey your first impression and, if you felt you loved him, would you not say 'Yes'?'

'...I have never had the chance, and I am not likely to have it. I can only say that if it were to come to me, I should try to use the whole strength of my soul.'

(Clara, pp. 33-4)

Underpinning their discussion on the relative merits of impulse and calculation, is an almost Lawrencian assumption that every woman is entitled to be made love to. Madge is clearly demonstrative, as her gesture of love for her sister shows, but her enthusiasm for love is not undermined by her 'rational' sister's reply. Rather Clara shows that, if anything, her view of the importance of getting love right is yet stronger than Madge's for being thoughtful:

'I can only say that if it were to come to me, I should try to use the whole strength of my soul. Precisely because the question would be so important, would it be necessary to employ every faculty I have in order to decide it.' (Clara, pp. 33-4)

Madge's estimation of her sister's entitlement to love is not limited to her identification of any conventional or exclusively 'feminine' quality in Clara. Undoubtedly Madge thinks her sister gentle, kind, and good, but she and Clara are secure enough of making intelligent and loving companions not to be restricted to consider suitability merely on the grounds of conventional 'wifely' qualifications. Implicit in Madge's insistence upon her sister's fitness is Clara's particular blend of virtues, which include a warm nature and a fine intellect. The idea that Clara deserves to be loved comes from Madge's belief that love is:

'...the one emotion common to the whole world; we can all comprehend it. Once more, it reveals character. In Hamlet and Othello, for example, what is interesting is not solely the bare love. The natures of Hamlet and Othello are brought to light through it as they would not have been through any other stimulus. I am sure that no ordinary woman ever shows what she really is, except when she is in love. Can you tell what she is from what she calls her religion, or from her friends, or even from her husband?' (Clara, p. 81)

Love is the means to a Spinozan unity of the finite and infinite. It is 'common' to all humans, and the least of us can 'comprehend' it. In another note from More Pages from a Journal, Hale White writes of love precisely as Madge might have done if she had alluded to Spinoza:

When we really love we cannot believe that our love is mortal. We feel, not only that it is immortal, but that it is eternal, in the sense in which Spinoza uses the word. It is not the attraction of something entirely limited and personal to that which is also limited and personal. (p. 234)

Love is not merely a personal and private inclination; it 'reveals character' and brings 'natures...to light' so as to show (to ourselves as much as others), what we

truly are. It is not through 'bare love' ('entirely limited and personal') that we achieve so much but through love as an enabling force, as a key to the comprehension of the 'immortal' and 'eternal'. For Madge, love ought to be the crowning of virtue; a fulfilment of self, it marks a kind of completion which is not limited to the personal.

The game of chess ends unexpectedly when, Clara's 'thoughts perhaps elsewhere' for a moment, Madge executes the winning move. This conclusion is typical of the way that Rutherford is determined always to acknowledge the status of accident, not as the result of some malign destiny (as with Hardy), but as a kind of 'law', often supportive of humanity. The reader is obliged to realize, more so than do the sisters in the heat of their argument, how much more complicated the division between reason and instinct is. Reason is by no means always subject to the kind of conscious control that Clara claims for it, just as instinct, which apparently usurps thought - Madge simply 'saw the queen ought to take that bishop, and never bothered [herself] as to what would follow' - might make up for a deficit in calculation.

Rutherford's purpose in citing the examination of complex ideas within a narrative whose predominant thread is that of love, is not to turn character in the direction of allegory, or even to offer a theoretical analysis of the passions. Love in this novel, though it is grounded in the personal and sexual, goes far beyond them: it becomes a means of comprehending, not only oneself and other people, but the universe and one's own ineluctable relationship to it. Hale White insists that if a man can only believe in the Spinozan contention that his mind is "a part of the infinite intellect of God", then he will cease to feel as a 'mere transient,

outside interpreter of the universe, and he will feel a relationship with infinity which will emancipate him' (Pages, p. 38).

In Clara Hopgood we are made aware of how little as a repository of belief the established church, as against dissenting religion, has come to mean. Mr Hopgood 'went to church once on Sunday because the bank expected him to go'. Mrs Hopgood is a 'believer', but, 'neither High Church nor Low Church', she 'seldom' took part in formal collective worship, inclining instead 'towards a kind of quietism' (Clara, p. 9). Clara and Madge were never christened and the Palmers, Frank's parents, are Broad Church, friends of Maurice and Sterling. In this novel, love is revelation, or rather it is the agent of a belief that, in comprehending the infinite potential in human being, implicitly forges a connection to God or the universe.

It is just this connection that Madge makes when she realizes the degree to which the consequences of her own (implicitly rational) decision to make love with Frank, rebounds upon her mother and sister. Her intimacy with Frank, sanctioned by what seemed at the time their unquestionable commitment to each other, both formally and emotionally, and not merely by intense sexual attraction, had seemed 'right' to Madge. After the event however, Madge sees how her desire had been intensified by a double curiosity that was only distantly related to love. She confesses later that she had 'doubted [her] love' (Clara, p. 99) for Frank. Though she could not reason it as such beforehand, making love had been the only way of testing her 'love', against or relative to, her passion. Given the retrospective price exacted for mistaking passion for love, an idea that Rutherford had frequently explored in the books that precede Clara Hopgood, we must see

that the method of her discovery is of less importance than is the fact that by making it she saves herself and Frank from a lifetime's misery. In her reply to Frank's first letter from Germany, Madge writes:

'Forgiveness! Who is to be forgiven?' (Clara, p. 99)

It would be irrelevant to regret, or to see as sinful, her intimacy with Frank; in a remarkable way it is her salvation, not just here, but in the longer term. But, just as important, out of Madge's 'wrong' action will come Clara's 'divine' sacrifice.

What crushes Madge then is not shame or remorse, things in any case that are so 'limited and personal' as to be of no consequence or importance according to Spinoza, but the 'sense of cruel injustice to those who loved her'. Earlier on, Madge declared that she disliked the country because she 'never [had] a thought of [her] own down there' but was 'stupid' (Clara, p. 44), and yet it is to the country she now flees in order to escape London, the place where, hitherto, her chief pleasure had come from the apprehension that there 'nobody is anything particular to anybody' and 'eternal attachments' could be avoided (Clara, p. 44). Implicit in Madge's movement away from Frank and towards a kind of communion with what had seemed to her a wilderness, is the Spinozan contention that, even from mistaken love, or from a merely 'adequate' idea of love (Pages, p. 54) might come a sense of its true inclusiveness and extensiveness: '[Spinoza] continually insists that a thing is not unreal because we cannot imagine [or order] it' (Pages, p. 34). Madge feels the injustice 'to those who loved her' (my emphases):

One autumn morning, she found herself at Letherhead, the longest trip she had undertaken, for there were scarcely any railways then. She wandered about till she discovered a footpath which took her to a mill-pond, which spread itself out into a little lake. It was fed

by springs which burst up through the ground. She watched at one particular point, and saw the water boil up with such force that it cleared a space of a dozen yards in diameter from every weed, and formed a transparent pool just tinted with that pale azure which is peculiar to the living fountains which break out from the bottom of chalk. She was fascinated for a moment by the spectacle, and reflected upon it, but she passed on. In about three-quarters of an hour she found herself near a church, larger than an ordinary village church, and, as she was tired, and the gate of the porch was open, she entered and sat down. The sun streamed in upon her, and some sheep which had strayed into the churchyard from the adjoining open field came almost close to her, unalarmed, and looked in her face. The quiet was complete, and the air so still, that a yellow leaf dropping here and there from the churchyard elms - just beginning to turn - fell quiveringly in a straight path to the earth. Sick at heart and despairing, she could not help being touched, and she thought to herself how strange the world is - so transcendent both in glory and horror; a world capable of such scenes as those before her, and a world in which such suffering as hers could be; a world infinite both ways. The porch gate was open because the organist was about to practice, and in another instant she was listening to the Kyrie from Beethoven's Mass in C. She knew it; Frank had tried to give her some notion of it on the piano, and since she had been in London she had heard it at St Mary's, Moorfields. She broke down and wept, but there was something new in her sorrow, and it seemed as if a certain Pity overshadowed her.

(Clara, pp. 109-11)

The situation and setting makes us think, as so often in Rutherford, of Thomas Hardy. Indeed this scene is, superficially at least, not unlike the one in The Mayor of Casterbridge,³ where Henchard stares into the river that throws up his effigy after the skimmity ride. However, it is in the spirit behind the scene, or perhaps in, or of, the landscape and nature, that the two authors diverge. In Hardy the 'mill-pond' would have issued an invitation to self-slaughter. The emphasis would have rested upon the 'inner' deadness of Madge's feelings rather than upon the

3. Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge, 1886 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 372.

'peculiar' beauty of the 'living' scene, which, Rutherford is careful to point out, is no more if no less than typical of a particular geological feature.

Madge is 'fascinated for a moment by the spectacle'. That 'moment' is crucial; it allows time for Rutherford to make so much and yet so little happen within it. The power of the place, and nature is an active and not an indifferent force in Rutherford, deprives Madge for an instant of all ability to dwell on her own sorrows - just long enough to prevent her resisting its beauty. She is personally disempowered only to be made conscious of herself as part of a larger organization. Just so, Mrs Hopgood's response to the news that her daughter is pregnant is given in terms that any parent will recognize:

So much thought, so much care, such an education, such noble qualities, and they had not accomplished what ordinary ignorant Fenmarket mothers and daughters were able to achieve! This fine life, then, was a failure, and a perfect example of literary and artistic training had gone the way of common wenches whose affiliation cases figured in the county newspaper.

(Clara, p. 103)

As good as she is, pride and anger form a substantial portion of Mrs Hopgood's sorrow. She reacts against what seems the inappropriateness of Madge's trouble, its unreasonableness. The, supposedly secure, laws of cause and effect seem to her to have miscarried. Madge was not educated, not taught to use her mind, to fall victim to such a mistake. The glory of her daughters' 'training' was that it placed them outside the 'common' run, fitted them for a life elevated from that the 'common wenches' were obliged to endure. To free us from this kind of compounded sorrow is Spinoza's chief aim according to Hale White:

The sorrow of life is the rigidity of the material universe in which we are placed. We are bound by physical laws, and there is a constant pressure of matter-of-fact evidence to prove that we are

nothing but common and cheap products of the earth to which in a few moments or years we return. (Pages, pp. 33-4)

Hale White insists that Spinoza frees us from sorrow by 'thinking' (author's emphasis). As Mrs Hopgood's initial reaction subsides, this thought is represented in the 'prayer' that provokes a whispered message. She is able to return to Madge and to express silently her continuing love; the need for either forgiveness or judgement (a response to her disappointment and shock), seems irrelevant following on from thought. The same process is repeated later by Madge. Involved in the stillness and complete quiet of the churchyard, even though she remained 'sick at heart and despairing', Madge 'could not help being touched', and here Rutherford, like Spinoza, makes no distinction between 'substance' and 'attributes or effects', by or to, 'thought'. The thought that moves Madge is no more 'explanatory' or conclusive than was her mother's 'prayer', and yet it brings to Madge, as to her mother, a sense of the futility of complaint and of some undisclosed order, a balance, even taking into account personal sorrow. Madge thinks to herself:

how strange the world is - so transcendent both in glory and horror;
a world capable of such scenes as those before her, and a world in
which suffering such as hers could be; a world infinite both ways.

It is in the absolute certainty of that divergent infinity that human consolation and resolution can rest. The harmony of Madge's thought is compounded by that of the Kyrie. Rutherford writes later of the effect upon Madge of another piece of music, that 'it took possession of her; the golden ladder was let down and celestial visitors descended' (Clara, p. 162). Composed by a human mind, played by human hands, which include those of the man she thought she had loved, the music

participates in a divinity that includes, 'possesses', its listener, melds mortal and celestial in one undifferentiated whole. Madge 'breaks down'. Literally, the barriers between what she could hitherto think of as her self, and of the 'universe', are broken here. The sorrow remains, and (so convincingly), is in no manner assuaged, but 'there was something new in her sorrow'. That new thing is Madge's realization of an implicit balance, the certainty of a corresponding 'glory' to her distress. The paragraph ends conclusively; a 'certain Pity' cast its shadow upon Madge, the theologically apposite response to the unspoken prayer of the Kyrie, 'Lord, have mercy'. Again, it is typically exact that Rutherford should insist that the pity 'overshadowed' her as opposed to 'overlooked', since the grief persists within the need for pity.

In this novel, so full of intelligent exchanges, almost every scene is an analysis or a commentary or a reference back to another. Hence, in one of the extracts that will later move Madge's sister Clara, as she thumbs through After Office Hours, the book that Baruch Cohen has ordered, Rutherford readdresses the episode from chapter XI, though not merely to reiterate but to show how multifarious is the 'reason' or the 'impulse' that underpins it. The extract reads:

'What is precious in Quakerism is not so much the doctrine of the Divine voice as that of the preliminary stillness, the closure against other voices and the reduction of the mind to a condition in which it can listen, in which it can discern the merest whisper, inaudible when the world, or interest, or passion, are permitted to speak.'
(Clara, p. 177, author's emphasis)

Ironically, each of the sisters would read this as confirming her own particular philosophy. For Clara the 'preliminary stillness' would (indeed does), allow for the 'Divine voice' of reason to be heard above the claims of self-interest and desire. Madge would number amongst those 'other voices' to be closed off, that

which insists that every impulse be subject to calculation. Rutherford shows, in his narration of the churchyard scene, how debates such as that which Madge and Clara epitomize, however stimulating or problematic they might appear to be, must inevitably culminate in something beyond argument, in the imposition of an order not open to human negotiation.

In a note Hale White includes in Last Pages, he writes:

Side by side with the reason there has always been in almost all nations, revelation. It is assumed that the conclusions of the reason are not sufficient. This assumption leads to all kinds of impostures, but, as a principle, there is truth in it. The results of what is usually called the reason require correction and a supplement by something which is not reason in the ordinary sense of the term. But it would be wrong to say that this something is contrary to reason or is essentially a different faculty. It may be a method or process which is unusual or swifter than the customary processes or methods.
(pp. 264-5)

What happens to Madge in the churchyard shows how, though Rutherford's novels are a reflection of an agonizingly thoughtful analysis, and are based firmly in a body of ideas, it is at those moments during which the characters are forced into silence and their stories go beyond the narration, that the true profundity of the writing is 'revealed'. Madge's silence here is like that of Rutherford in the Autobiography at Edward Mardon's death-bed, Zachariah Coleman in Jean Caillaud's prison cell, Michael Trevanion speechlessly catching Robert in his arms or Cardew being saved by Catharine's death. This method of transcending the literal story may seem 'unusual' but there is a 'swiftness' and directness about Rutherford's suspension of the 'customary processes' of narration that is 'sometimes more expressive of deeper truth than anything that can be put into words' (Letters, p.287).

Clara Hopgood is immensely interested in the way that, coterminous with the story of a life (the mapping of a consciousness), there necessarily runs a kind of silent narration. The characters of this novel are highly self-conscious beings but Rutherford shows how, again and again, and for all their intelligence, they must learn to look, like William Blake, 'with, not through, the eye'.⁴ For all their articulacy, Rutherford's characters fail fully to 'see' themselves, to comprehend the complexity of their own reasoning, impulsiveness and motivation.

Madge Hopgood at first sees, in Frank Palmer, the perfect partner. Madge had 'read something of passion', Rutherford tells us. But it was not until she met Frank Palmer that Madge discovered 'what the white intensity of [passion's] flame in a man could be' (Clara, p.88). Reading is like argument in this book; taken as an end in itself there is an insufficiency about it. The characters have to accept 'solutions' that emerge from somewhere beyond the bounds of what they call their 'reason', as does Clara when she obeys the something that 'fell and flashed before her like lightning' in chapter XXVII (p. 265). Madge's intellectual apprehension of 'passion', gained, it is implied, chiefly from books, is unrealized until it is made flesh in Frank Palmer. A consequence of the 'exact discipline' that her reading and education have taught Madge is the need to know (passion) from the inside as well as from without. If the 'untutored thoughts' that Mr Hopgood so fears his daughters would be subject to without real education, 'breed disease', Rutherford is no less concerned to show how 'tutored' thought can carry its own peculiar restlessness (Clara, p. 7).

4. The Poems of William Blake ed. by W.H. Stevenson (London: Longman, 1985), 'The Everlasting Gospel', I. 104.

Used to testing her ideas and eager for experience without 'too much of profound and eternal attachments' (Clara, p.44), Madge 'experiments' with Frank. She admits that much of her enjoyment of acting derives from the potential to 'sway a thousand human beings into tears or laughter!'. Madge calls this power 'divine' (Clara, p. 82). In holding sway over Frank's passion she cannot fail to feel something of that 'divinity', not as the Spinozan unity that the novel endorses, but rather as making her a separate force to be reckoned with. Close to Frank, Madge's exhilaration comes as much from her power to control and manipulate desire as from the passion itself:

She released herself a trifle, held her head back as if she desired to survey him apart from her, so that the ecstasy of union might be renewed, and then fell on his neck. (Clara, p. 79)

Curiosity and physical responsiveness vie here in 'desire' and 'surveillance'. It is not so much Frank that Madge 'surveys' as another being caught up by the same thing, the same compulsion, that fascinates her. For all her intelligence, Madge is like a clever child, bright enough to want to discover, but too inexperienced to realize the dangers of playing with 'ecstasy'. The 'union' that she imagines is really no union at all, since beyond their excitement there is nothing shared between the two lovers; 'her emotion enveloped her' (my emphases), kept her somehow separate even in their intimacy. Frank for his part is 'beside himself': 'knowing nothing of the vice by which so many young men are overcome' (Clara, p. 89) there is a carelessness that makes consideration of the woman or of the moral and social consequences of sexual recklessness superfluous; he is 'intoxicated' by the thought that what he feels is 'lawful', that he is 'permitted' to touch such 'a beautiful creature' (not beautiful Madge or his

love). Frank will never 'love' like this again, but that does not mean that we should confuse this love for a thing of great depth. At the same time however, we ought not to underestimate his love as a measure of Frank's personal capacity; it was the ultimate to which he could aspire.

Clara recognizes in her sister's relationship to Frank what Madge's 'passion' disguises, and her assumed myopia prevents her from seeing:

Every now and then Clara thought she discerned in Madge that she was not entirely content...She never ventured to say anything about Frank to Madge, for there was something in her which forbade all approach from that side. Once when he had shown his ignorance of what was so familiar to the Hopgoods, and Clara had expected some sign of dissatisfaction from her sister, she appeared ostentatiously to champion him against anticipated criticism. Clara interpreted the warning and was silent, but, after she had left the room with her mother in order that the lovers might be alone, she went upstairs and wept many tears. Ah! it is a sad experience when the nearest and dearest suspects that we are aware of secret disapproval, knows that it is justifiable, throws up a rampart and becomes defensively belligerent. From that moment all confidence is at an end. Without a word, perhaps, the love and friendship of years disappears, and in the place of two human beings transparent to each other, there are two who are opaque and indifferent. Bitter, bitter! (Clara, pp.89-91)

It is in the failure of this sisterly love that the tragedy lies for Rutherford, and in Clara's seeing and feeling so much that she must not communicate. Whilst Madge, determined upon a kind of psychological subterfuge, merely becomes 'belligerent' where Frank is concerned, it is Clara who quietly suffers. Clara's sorrow for her sister, who seems to her to prefer excitement to sincerity, separates her from Madge like a 'rampart'; all 'approach' is barred. It is Clara who weeps, she who is left alone to calculate the risk that Madge runs and to count the cost of the 'confidence' that is already lost. Significantly, there is no criticism of Frank in this; his 'ignorance' is not cited in order to be condemned. What Clara instead

regrets is the absence of what to her would seem the only reasonable and natural response from Madge, no more than 'some sign', invisible to an outsider (Frank included), not of contempt or disapproval, but of 'dissatisfaction'. Such unreserved expression would reassure Clara that, though Madge may be conscious of a discrepancy between her own and Frank's intelligence, she harboured no real reservations about their compatibility. As so often in Rutherford, the silence that Madge maintains is a more eloquent indicator of what she truly feels, than is that desperate attempt 'ostentatiously to champion' Frank. Faced with the kind of perverse logic that Clara inevitably knows her sister must be exercising - forcibly recalling Frank's virtues, decrying 'mere intellectual sympathy', contemning 'culture' - there is nothing to be done but to 'submit and be dumb'. The irony is that it is here, when Madge most desires to seem 'opaque' to her sister, that Clara has the clearest insight into her feelings. Whilst, all the time, it is Frank who is truly 'opaque'; it is impossible to tell what he thinks, not least because he does not know himself.

The way the mutual influences of the characters work in this novel is unpredictable. It would be wrong, for example, to believe that Madge finds the justification of her infatuation effortless: as wrong as to believe that she feels nothing of Clara's distress or is completely unconscious of the reasoning behind it. The gaps between those episodes when she and Frank are alone and intimate, are filled with a kind of self-torture for Madge. At such times, Clara remains an implicit point of reference for her. At her moment of crisis, ironically, Madge transforms a gesture of Clara's, the result to a large extent of Madge's own special 'pleading' certainly, but also of Clara's eventual judgement, into a precedent for

her own mistaken action. Having unintentionally upset Frank after he had gone to pains to learn the 'Immortality Ode' for her, a work that, Madge tactlessly suggests, could only be admired by those for whom, amongst other failings, 'thinking is distasteful or impossible' (Clara, p. 93), Madge 'discerned in an instant' how she had hurt him and repents:

She recalled what she herself had said when somebody gave Clara a copy in 'Parian' of a Greek statue, a thing coarse in outline and vulgar. Clara was about to put it in a cupboard in the attic, but Madge had pleaded so pathetically that the donor had in a measure divined what her sister loved, and had done her best, although she had made a mistake, and finally the statue was placed on the bedroom mantelpiece. (Clara, p.94-5)

The statue had been a tribute to the superiority of Clara's mind, just as the Wordsworth poem is a tribute of Frank's genuine love. The argument is sound as far as Frank's gesture, but Madge knows that, if she is going to marry him instead of putting him on the mantelpiece, the analogy is misapplied. The timing of this piece of false reasoning is significant; it comes when not only Madge but Frank too cannot help but see how precarious their attachment is. Frank was 'unusually' silent after Madge's comments about the famous Ode:

There was something undiscovered in Madge, a region which he had not visited and perhaps could not enter. (Clara, p.94)

The sentence carries Frank's thought anxiously deeper as it develops. It begins with the unperturbed acknowledgement of 'something undiscovered in Madge', delivered with the dispassion of a familiar thought. Next comes that fearful specification of an area, a whole 'region', that was 'unvisited' and to which, by implication, invitation had been withheld. Finally comes the near despair of 'could not enter', shored up against utter hopelessness only by that 'perhaps'. The realization that his 'best' will not be sufficient to sustain their relationship

flashed across Frank's consciousness. His rare silence marks thought. Madge is sensitive enough to know 'in an instant', not only that she has hurt Frank, but also how and why. For the first time perhaps, it occurs to her that she could lose him. Her recourse to Clara's 'precedent' is a desperate attempt to convince herself that she is right in desiring, literally, to cling to Frank:

Madge's heart overflowed, and Frank had never attracted her so powerfully as at that moment. She took his hand softly in hers.
(Clara, p.95)

Frank had never been so attractive as he was now when Madge dangerously mistakes what is a kind of pity for him, for love, and when she can dispel her reservations about him under pretence of acting as Clara would. There was nobody to touch Frank in Fenmarket and the chances of his like happening through the town again were almost non-existent. Who was Madge to have if it were not Frank? Frank 'had never attracted her so powerfully' because she was on the brink of having to realize that she ought not to give in to an attraction that was almost entirely sexual. And yet Frank is set to leave for Germany; if they were going to make love, this might be the last opportunity for some time, perhaps forever. 'She took his hand softly in hers', knowing how, in the face of all the arguments for and against their alliance, physical contact would be decisive.

The narrative does not record their love-making. Rutherford is far more concerned with the circumstances under which it comes about (and what will result from it), than with the act itself, either as a literary event or as an act to be endorsed or condemned. Nonetheless, we are made powerfully aware of the implications of what is not being recorded through the storm that rages in the

background. Against all that is not disclosed here, Rutherford sets the final sentence:

Madge, who was timid and excited in a thunderstorm, closed her eyes to shield herself from the glare. (Clara, p.95)

What she would not see earlier now 'glares' at Madge. Frank is no different to what he has always been. She has belied herself - the details are superfluous.

Rutherford passes over event here the more to emphasize the struggle that surrounds it. Thus his focus briefly switches from Madge to Frank after chapter IX. Frank is not like Montgomery in 'Miriam's Schooling'; he is no wastrel. He comes from a good family in which he was 'surrounded by every influence which was pure and noble' (Clara, p. 38), and yet, in spite of his advantages and of ample opportunity to develop thought, he remained 'unreflective', lacking any real interest in the issues that animated his home. All that Frank is, is visible from the outside (though Madge had tried to imagine hidden depths); he was so 'hearty, so affectionate, and so cheerful, that it was impossible not to love him dearly', but there is no real substance in him, nothing 'behind' his expressiveness (Clara, p. 47). Precisely because he is weak in this way, Frank wants desperately to act honourably towards Madge, but, because his honour is compounded with weakness, for the wrong reasons. His offer to wed her comes not from any sense of marriage as the complement of love, but that under the circumstances it is the right thing, the only thing, to do. All of Frank's protestations are blunted by his preoccupation with his own problems:

He dwelt on an event which might happen, but which he dared not name; and if it should happen! Pictures of his father, his home, his father's friends, Fenmarket, the Hopgood household, passed before him with such wild rapidity and intermingled complexity that it

seemed as if the reins had dropped out of his hands and he was being hurried away to madness. (Clara, p. 100)

Frank sees 'pictures', his thinking is only sight: with, not through, the eye. There is nothing of instinct in his response to the 'trouble' he is in. When he writes to Madge from abroad, it becomes clear that the language of love is qualified by an overwhelming concern for convention:

Forgiveness! how is any forgiveness possible? But Madge, my dearest Madge, remember that my love is intenser than ever. What has happened has bound you closer to me...I will find a thousand excuses for returning and we will marry...You will not, you cannot, no you cannot, you must see you cannot refuse...Write by return for mercy's sake. (Clara, p. 98, author's emphases)

Though it is intense, Frank betrays the narrowness of his feeling here. When he writes the word 'bound' it is impossible not to hear its echoes of confinement and restraint, of the imposition of duty and the sanction of law. The final sentence shows a man at his wit's end. Frank is no brute but he just cannot get it right. He pleads for forgiveness and mercy where he ought to protest unqualified love. Madge's reply is completely composed; her 'eyes and ears were opened'. Forgiveness is inappropriate and, if it were not, it is she and not Frank who ought to beg it.

Clara Hopgood is a precisely structured, almost a schematic novel. The first half, as we have seen, concerns itself predominantly with Madge's story, the development and termination of her relationship with Frank Palmer. The second half is given over to Clara's narrative, her brief connection with Baruch Cohen, her 'sacrifice' and eventual exit from the novel. Compared with what is at times the near melodrama of Madge's opening, Clara's story emerges as relatively slight, even so far as to be difficult to identify or write about in terms of what we expect

from conventional narrative: that it ought to be more eventful and the protagonist explicitly active in some sense. The difference between the sisters' stories and the manner in which they are presented to the reader is fundamental to the novel as argument and exploration. Madge's struggle has been largely one explicable from the outside; so to speak; it has been one with the flesh, and an overwhelming curiosity about the nature of sexual desire, a compulsion to indulge feeling. Clara's 'action' will be almost entirely 'internal', her feelings displaced into the natural descriptions that occur more frequently in the second half of the novel.

Rutherford's novels always tend to have a structure rather than plot; the two parts of the Autobiography, completed by the Deliverance, for example, the disconnected halves of the Revolution, the deliberate contrast between 'Miriam's Schooling' and 'Michael Trevanion', even the near-disappearance of Mr Cardew in the later chapters of Catharine Furze. He breaks the expected continuities of the novel in order to put idea, discussion, reflection into the foreground. Madge and Clara are made to seem at the start of this novel like poles in a debate, one speaking for the impulsive, the other for reason. Yet as the debate develops we are made to recognize that they are closer, partake of each other's nature, to an extent that their expressed philosophies deny. In the second half however, the novel rediscovers their differences along a more complex route than the opposition of reason and feeling. For Madge life will always be grounded in the personal whilst Clara's life transcends the purely personal, as their different destinies disclose.

All of the chief characters depend to some extent for their definition upon their counterparts in the 'opposing' half of the book. Thus Baruch Cohen, a

profoundly educated, thought-ridden man, led by religious enquiries, emerges, once Frank has played his part as his antithesis. Mrs Caffyn's flexibility and understanding, very much the result of practical experience of life with all its inherent contradictions, contrasts generally with the Hopgood tradition of learning and profound thought on agreed issues. More specifically though, Mrs Caffyn, the woman Madge meets in the country churchyard, 'takes over' in the second half of the novel from Mrs Hopgood. Mrs Caffyn and Mrs Hopgood meet in chapter XIII:

Mrs Hopgood determined that she herself would go to Great Oakhurst. She had another reason for her journey. She wished her kind friend there to see that Madge had really a mother who cared for her. She was anxious to confirm Madge's story, and Mrs Caffyn's confidence. (Clara, p. 132)

This book is intensely concerned with the idea of how its characters come to 'knowledge', or rather how they 'know'. Division comes from the whole identity which has many sources of knowledge - reasoned argument, impulsive action, 'vision' and straightforward seeing, 'learning' and experience, even passion. These are put forward not in order that Rutherford might endorse any one model above another, but to point to the way in which our knowledge is, at its most profound, a compounded thing. Appalled at first that her educated daughter, of all women, should have fallen pregnant, Mrs Hopgood finds out how little reason has really to do with human action. To see how this could happen to Madge, her mother is forced back upon another kind of thought (her prayer), in order to grasp with her heart as much as her mind the true reason behind Madge's predicament, and the only 'intelligent' response to it. Just so Mrs Hopgood wants Mrs Caffyn not merely to know that she cared for her daughter, but to 'see', the

only 'confirmation' free from misinterpretation. Thomas Hardy likened Jude the Obscure, whose characters move in and out of the action and change places with each other, to a 'quadrille', and Clara Hopgood has a similar clarity of organization. The exchange of confidence between Madge's mother and Mrs Caffyn, marks a background transition, a pointer for the change that is to follow. Returning from Great Oakhurst, Mrs Hopgood catches cold and dies shortly afterwards, an event that is, characteristically, passed over by Rutherford:

On the morrow she was seriously ill, inflammation of the lungs appeared, and in a week she was dead. (Clara, p. 140-1)

Rutherford's primary interest is always in the practical aspect of event. The method of narration encourages us to realize that death cannot be allowed, either emotionally or artistically, to impede the progress of the history. After the 'first madness' of their grief at the loss of their mother had passed:

Clara and Madge were astonished to find how dependent they had been on their mother. They were grown-up women accustomed to act for themselves, but they felt unsteady, and as if deprived of customary support. The reference to her had been constant, although it was often silent, and they were not conscious of it. A defence from the outside waste desert had been broken down, their mother had always seemed to intervene between them and the world, and now they were exposed and shelterless.
(Clara, pp. 141-2)

Their education is of no useful 'support' without some kind of practical defence against a 'world' that seems an entirely different place now that their mother is no longer alive. The outside seems such a 'waste desert' partly because the sisters have been 'dependent' upon their mother's 'intervention', a word which implies it was not always welcome, when all the time they had thought that they were independent, but also because they have been privileged to be able to spend more

time in thinking about life (their perennial debate on right and wrong) than in the 'exposed and shelterless' living of it.

In contrast to the sisters, Mrs Caffyn is a remarkably free character whose estimate of 'the relative values of the virtues and of the relative sinfulness of sins was original' (*Clara*, p. 120) and not the result of an intellectual middle-class education. Rutherford tells us that she is a Christian but that she is 'a disciple of St James rather than of St Paul', of practice rather than theory. Mrs Caffyn's indignation 'never rose to the correct boiling point' against the crimes that the village rector condemned, though we feel very much that her wisdom is superior to his in being the product of a sad history and the practical apprehension of the kind of suffering that led some of the inhabitants of Great Oakhurst astray. She is not an educated woman in the sense that the Hopgoods are, her intellect is an accumulation of experience. A wanderer, Mrs Caffyn is seen in many different locations, always as a figure of consolation and strength. More than anything she represents a natural religion, a natural sense of piety that is no respecter of persons. She has as much the measure of the censorious rector as of the village sinner's, poor Polesden's, failings, and hence is the corrective mother figure for Clara's cooler section of the book, just as Mrs Hopgood qualified Madge's passion.

The 'love' that Madge and Frank felt for each other was founded in passion. Though the climax of this love comes suddenly, its narrative growth is relatively slow, allowing Rutherford time to tell how Madge and Frank meet, walk out together and become intimate, so that their love-making comes less as a shock than as the confirmation of our expectations. That their romance follows a

conventional pattern, is partly the reason why it cannot be sustained after its consummation. The manner in which Baruch and Clara fall in love is scarcely recognizable by comparison and is also unfulfilled. Typically, the difference will not turn upon the presentation of a 'moral' love, a happy ending, to balance the earlier 'immoral' unsatisfactory one; the balance that Rutherford seeks works less by contrast than by debate and exploration.

We have been as readers almost pre-programmed by the frankness and honesty of Madge to expect the love between a man and a woman to be grounded in the physical and emotional, as though Rutherford like Hardy and Gissing wanted to break the taboos. But the connection between Clara and Baruch, even whilst it is clearly much more profound than friendship, is impossible to comprehend in the purely 'romantic' terms that the novel's organization and the precedent of Frank and Madge invites.

Part of our difficulty has to do with the way Rutherford deliberately accelerates the pace of the intimacy that Clara and Baruch share, and part with the actual character of that intimacy. The suddenness of Clara and Baruch's relationship is even more pre-emptive than is that of Madge and Frank. Without the expected romantic preliminaries, this second love-affair is fully fledged before the reader has time to anticipate and so realize its occurrence. There is nothing arbitrary in the writing; Rutherford makes intellectual sympathy involve an emotional charge before the characters themselves realize what is happening. The reader is being surprised by the apparently casual becoming the serious. Where previously the reader was able to stay one step ahead of Madge and Frank, we need to struggle just to keep up with Clara and Baruch. They become intimate

too soon for us, they talk too easily for us to follow; if we are put off by the sophistication of their discussion, we are mystified by their ability to intuit its implicit meaning and course. Speaking of After Office Hours, the book that he had called to collect from the shop where Clara works, Baruch asks Clara:

'I suppose nobody but myself has ever asked for a copy of Robinson?'

'Not since I have been here.'

'I do not wonder at it; he printed only two hundred and fifty; he gave away five - and - twenty, and I am sure nearly two hundred were sold as wastepaper.'

'He is a friend of yours?'

'He was a friend; he is dead; he was an usher in a private school, although you might have supposed, from the title selected that he was a clerk. I told him it was useless to publish, and his publishers told him the same thing.'

'I should have thought that some notice would have been taken of him; he is so evidently worth it.'

'Yes, but although he was original and reflective, he had no particular talent. His excellence lay in criticism and observation, often profound, on what came to him everyday, and he was valueless in the literary market. A talent of some kind is necessary to genius if it is to be heard. So he died utterly unrecognised, save by one or two personal friends who loved him dearly. He was peculiar in the depth and intimacy of his friendships. Few men understand the meaning of the word friendship. They consort with certain companions, and perhaps very earnestly admire them, because they possess intellectual gifts, but of friendship, such as we two, Morris and I (for that was his real name) understood it, they know nothing.'

'Do you believe, that the good does not necessarily survive?'

(Clara, pp. 210-11)

It is with complete unselfconsciousness that these two agonizingly self-conscious interlocutors conduct what amounts, for them, to a remarkably confidential conversation, touching upon ideas such as the difference between good and great literature, true and false friendship, death and loss, genius and worth. But this sympathy goes far beyond subject matter. The question, put by Clara, that closes the quotation above: 'Do you believe that the good does not necessarily survive?', shows how, beneath the conversation that we as readers have been able to follow

as easily as the speakers until now, there has been another unspoken, more intimate dialogue. The break in the explicit continuity that pulls the reader up short here, not only goes unnoticed by Clara and Baruch, for them no break exists, but Baruch shows no surprise at what to the reader is a disjointed enquiry and he is able immediately to lift his response, from below the surface of the discussion so to speak, completely unaware of any switch in levels.

The manner in which Clara frames her question says as much as does Baruch's unruffled response. She believes that the 'good' does survive, believes too that Baruch must think so. Yet she knows too, having heard his life story, that Baruch's spirits are low, lower perhaps than her own. That 'necessarily' allows him room to affirm her implicit confidence, without her trivialising or ignoring or obliging him to disguise or deny, his loneliness and depression. Baruch's reply is an uncompromising 'yes and no':

'I believe that power every moment, so far as our eyes can follow it, is utterly lost' (Clara, p. 211)

That intermediary clause, 'so far as our eyes can follow it', is the corollary of Clara's 'necessarily'. Above all this is an intellectual conversation, it is not primarily about feelings, and yet it is governed by mutual sympathy, of joy and depression. The idea that 'good' might be wholly lost, in the manner that Baruch suggests, is more shocking to Clara than 'earthquake or the pestilence'. Looking closer though, we realize that it is the 'thought' and not the reality of earthquake and pestilence that most appals her. The thought that the 'good' inherent in a work like Robinson's (even if it goes largely unrecognized), might be entirely lost to humanity, is more disturbing than the 'thought' of the human suffering and death that accompany earthquake and pestilence. The former would be a loss

that, for Clara (and Baruch), is absolutely inclusive and infinite, the latter, in comparison, restricted and temporal. Actual earthquake or pestilence, being beyond human control, have merely to be submitted to, the suffering they cause to be alleviated practically. The 'survival' of good as a force, in the worldly as much as the universal sense, is to an extent dependent upon the degree to which humanity is prepared to acknowledge and bear witness to it. Without such acknowledgement 'good' endures, even in spite of earthquake and pestilence (or Madge's misery in the churchyard), but the lack of recognition is a symptom of human disunity with the intelligence that Clara and Baruch and Spinoza believe orders the universe. Thought is more real to Baruch and Clara (in extending beyond time and personality but also in comprising their mode of being), than is the threat, hypothetical or actual, of natural devastation. Implicit in Clara's choice of comparison is an absolute adherence to the notion of a 'good' that extends beyond nature and human suffering. Baruch recognizes this:

'I said "yes and no" and there is another side. The universe is so wonderful, so intricate, that it is impossible to trace the transformation of its forces, and when they seem to disappear the disappearance may be an illusion. Moreover "waste" is a word which is applicable only to finite resources. If the resources are infinite it has no meaning.' (Clara, p. 212)

The Spinozan sense of inclusiveness, implicit in Clara's 'necessarily', is made explicit now in this Baruch's explanation of a universe so 'intricate', so finely balanced, so 'strange' (Madge's word), as to hold in equipoise 'both glory and horror' (Clara, p. 110).

Their conversation is interrupted when two customers come into the shop. Later, when each in turn (characteristically) thinks over their meeting, it is with a kind of incredulity:

When he came to reflect, he was surprised to find not only how much he had said, but what he had said. He was usually reserved, and with strangers he adhered to the weather or to passing events. He had spoken, however, to this young woman as if they had been acquainted for years. (Clara, p. 213)

‘What he said’ was just about as far as it was possible to get from the ‘weather’. Baruch had poured out what amounted to his life-blood, his deepest thought, to Clara. His usual practice in speaking to ‘strangers’, to keep to uncontentious, impersonal matter, something he ‘adhered’ to, like a drowning man would to a piece of flotsam, he had unconsciously abandoned, not out of recklessness but because, implicitly, he had recognized in Clara a mutual sympathy. For her part Clara is astonished:

She always cut short attempts at conversation in the shop. Frequently she answered questions and receipted and returned bills without looking in the faces of the people who spoke to her or offered her the money. But to this foreigner, or Jew, she had disclosed something she felt. She was rather abashed, but presently her employer, Mr Barnes, returned and somewhat relieved her. (Clara, p. 213)

Even setting aside her natural reticence, Clara has learnt from experience, that what to her (and to any unprejudiced listener), were ‘very unobtrusive and very modest’ comments, aimed solely at understanding and not impressing, might easily be interpreted in ‘polite’ society, as an attempt to ‘put[s] herself forward’, to make ‘speeches’ (Clara, p. 28). Safer then to ‘cut short’ conversation, to avoid the face to face contact that might oblige a smile or some other gesture that would imply an openness that she feared to indulge. But to Baruch, ‘this foreigner or Jew’, she had not merely shown her face and exposed her thoughts, she had ‘disclosed something she felt’. It is difficult, always, to differentiate between thought and feeling in Clara, the two things being in her so closely allied.

But what is clear, from the quotation above, is that feeling comes through or by thought for her. That she should have 'disclosed something she felt', then, implies that Clara's surrender to Baruch was in some way deeper than thought, deep though that might be. Clara's mind is always open even though she recognizes the need to be on her guard about whom she reveals her thoughts to. If what she felt was only accessible through thought, nevertheless, it was more jealously contained: her feelings needed to be 'disclosed'.

Clara's reaction to what seems to her almost a kind of emotional self-betrayal is typically thoughtful, she was 'rather abashed', she was confounded. Abashed is more active than the slightly shame-faced and embarrassed 'bashful'; it suggests more of being caught out and confused than of simple timidity or coyness. Nonetheless, the nearness of the two states in Clara says much of her innocence, one that is so markedly different to Madge's blameless sexual curiosity. Part of Clara's abashment comes from a sense of sheer delight in what she feels ("I have never had the chance,[to love a man] and am not likely to have it ", Clara, p. 33), in the feeling that she knows she has revealed to Baruch, and part from real astonishment that she could be feeling this way. It is part of Rutherford's delicacy that he makes us recognize that 'abashment' would not even warrant a mark on the emotional register of her precocious sister.

The love that Frank and Madge briefly experience is not like that which Clara and Baruch are beginning to discover. This second love is an intellectual one - sexually dispassionate, intensely serious, founded upon ideas - a love consummated not primarily in physical attraction but in the disclosure of essential selfhood. Yet it is not anxious about being physically compromised, as is the

relation of Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead in Hardy's novel. The first paragraph of chapter XXIV opens with the unequivocal statement:

Baruch was now in love. He had fallen in love with Clara suddenly and totally. His tendency to reflectiveness did not diminish his passion: it rather augmented it. The men and women whose thoughts are here and there continually are not the people who feel the full force of love. Those who do feel it are those who are accustomed to think of one thing at a time, and to think upon it for a long time. (Clara, p. 223)

Being 'suddenly and totally' overwhelmed does not, however, transform Baruch, nor does it remove the impulse to comprehend, not only what he feels, but its wider implications. The move from this first to the second paragraph apparently confirms Baruch as the ideal match for Clara. Precisely because they are so endlessly self-reflective, their love the product of an intellectual sympathy rather than physical compulsion, there will inevitably be 'buts' to be overcome:

But Baruch looked in the glass: his hair, jet black when he was a youth, was marked with grey, and once more the thought came to him - this time with peculiar force - that he could not now expect a woman to love him as she had a right to demand that he should love, and that he must be silent. (Clara, p. 223-4)

Baruch is not moved as is Hardy when he looks into his glass. For Hardy the 'fragile frame' yet contains all the 'throbbings' of the youthful passion that in Baruch have been transformed over time into scrupulousness of conscience and compelling intellectual enquiry. Where Hardy rages:

'Would God it came to pass
My heart had grown as thin!'⁵

Baruch makes 'the unpleasant discovery that he is beginning to lose the right to expect what he still eagerly desires, and that he must beware of being ridiculous'

5. The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy, 'I look into my Glass', ll. 3-4, p. 81.

(Clara, p. 179, my emphases). That 'eager desire' is for the 'tender, intimate sympathy of a woman's love' (Clara, p. 180), and not primarily for the physical passion implicit in Hardy's poem. Baruch must not 'play the fool' to Clara! He must not expect what is not a part of the 'inevitable order of nature' (Clara, p. 180), to be allowed to 'pretend romance with a girl!' (Clara, p. 231). Now that it seems so near a possibility, the thought strikes him 'with peculiar force' that 'he could not expect a woman to love him as she had a right to demand that he should love' (Clara, p.224). He could not love Clara as Frank had loved Madge, with sexual fervency and abandon. Clara was a young woman, a 'girl' (Clara, p. 231), she had a right to 'demand' to be made love to in this way. There is the fear too that his 'love' for Clara is no more than a repetition of what has happened before, that it is imagined, a result of the desire for tenderness and intimate companionship. His hesitancy to declare himself must come from the suspicion that he might be in love with his own idea of a woman rather than with Clara herself.

Baruch is too scrupulous, too thought-ridden, easily to trust in his feelings. And yet he does feel. His sense of relationship with Clara is based on more than the apprehension that they share the same thoughts; when he speaks to her his voice trembles with 'an emotion quite inexplicable by mere intellectual relationship' (Clara, p. 230). In anyone else perhaps, this would be decisive. But for Baruch it comes as a kind of after-shock to the welcome upheaval that his intellectual connection with Clara had figured. During the nineteen years that he had been a widower, Baruch had met 'two or three' women with whom 'he had

imagined himself to be really in love', only to find that his 'ardour' (Clara, p. 179) was not genuine.

Though they seem so similar, it is in this kind of fearful questioning that Baruch differs from Clara. Clara is subject to no such testing rationalism as is he:

Clara was not as Baruch. No such storm as that which had darkened and disheartened him could pass over her, but she could love, perhaps better than he, and she began to love him. It was very natural to a woman such as Clara, for she had met a man who had said to her that what she believed was really of some worth. Her father and mother had been very dear to her; her sister was very dear to her, but she had never received any such recognition as that which had now been offered to her: her own self had never been returned to her with such honour. She thought, too - why should she not think of it? - of the future, of the release from her dreary occupation, of a happy home with independence, and she thought of the children that might be. She lay down without any misgiving. She was sure he was in love with her; she did not know much of him, certainly, in the usual meaning of the word, but she knew enough. (Clara, pp. 233-4)

'Clara was not as Baruch'. For her, thought and emotion are interchangeable in her relation with Baruch. If her love was 'better' than his, it was because, implicit in her unreasoned acceptance of its 'genuineness' was the suspension of the kind of enquiry that continues to distract Baruch. Baruch fell in love 'suddenly and totally'; Clara 'began to love him'. It is as if, the suddenness and totality of his love, once his reflective faculty revives, has the appearance of thoughtlessness. Clara's love has a slower development. It has a 'beginning', is subject to an implicit growth but, nonetheless, starts from a firm base, not of rational but of emotional security. Her love was the 'natural' consequence of her apprehension that, in 'saying' that 'what she believed was really of some worth'; Baruch had discovered (whether he could comprehend or believe it himself), her mind, her true-self.

In the paragraph that precedes this one Baruch seems so obsessed with 'seeing' that he looks merely with the eye and not through it. Clara, whose vision is a compounded thing, encompassing insight and foresight, instinct and intelligence, sees far beyond Baruch once he allows himself to be troubled by the supposed limits he attributes to sight. Though he can doubt, she is completely confident that he has seen into her:

Her father and mother had been very dear to her; her sister was very dear to her, but she had never received any such recognition as that which had now been offered to her...

Baruch does not realize the 'recognition' that he implicitly 'offers' Clara, perhaps because he wants to have love as a kind of knowledge that would be final and indisputable. To suggest this is almost to make Baruch seem cold, and yet Hale White would argue that, whilst it is undoubtedly mistaken, this search for definition is itself not only a species of 'passion' but is actually allied to the 'passion' that we call love:

The passion for definite statement, like the passion of men for women and of women for men, is no doubt implanted in us for a good reason, but what fearful mischief does not the one as well as the other breed! We carry our desire for logical completeness into a region where no logical completeness is possible, and shape out of the void all kinds of illusory phantoms. (Letters, p. 191)

The kind of 'logical completeness' that Baruch so 'desires' is not possible in the 'region' of love. The apprehension of love requires another kind of 'sight' than that Baruch attempts to engage, the kind that allows Clara to 'lay down without any misgiving' that 'he was in love with her', even though she 'did not know much of him...in the usual meaning of the word' (my emphases). The difference between Baruch and Clara and their respective 'loves', 'she could love, perhaps better than he', is not merely that Clara feels that 'she knew enough', but that,

in the end love for her takes on a larger aspect. Rutherford has presented all kinds of flawed relationships throughout his work; here love is genuine but it is as though at this level of fineness love might express itself in something more than the personal. In creating Clara, Rutherford is trying to create a secular 'Saint', the human type beyond which he cannot go. Baruch is worthy of Clara but in the end Rutherford is less concerned with him and makes for him the lighter destiny of personal love sufficient.

For her part, all the time that Baruch is struggling to try to make his position apparent to Clara, she views the situation with perfect clarity:

Clara made no reply. A husband was to be had for a look, for a touch, a husband whom she could love, a husband who could give her all her intellect demanded. A little house rose before her eyes as if by Arabian enchantment; there was a bright fire on the hearth, and there were children round it; without the look, the touch, there would be solitude, silence and a childless old age, so much more to be feared by a woman than by a man. (Clara, p. 265)

Clara knows precisely what is at stake here, not just in the moment but for her whole future. Her thoughts at the close of chapter XXIV about the home and children that Baruch's love might mean, are repeated here, as, implicitly, is Rutherford's earlier question: 'why should she not think of it?'. The thought of 'solitude, silence and...childless old age' holds much to be reasonably feared. It is as if Rutherford were answering the radical feminist criticism of the home and childbearing as instruments of female oppression by insisting upon their apprehension in practical rather than political terms. Clara's view of love is not simply or naively 'romantic'; it takes into account the 'demands' of her intellect, emotional fulfilment, physical comfort, personal security, biological compulsion. Yet, nevertheless, and above all, here was a man 'whom she could [though not

'did'] love'. The inclusiveness of Clara's apprehension of love gives to her, when she disclaims it, a stature beyond that attributable to the mere lovelorn.

Our sense of how 'emotionally' and 'intellectually' close she is to giving the 'look', bestowing the 'touch', to taking and having all of those comforts and securities and fulfilments, is made the more acute by the fact that the block, when it comes, is 'mechanical':

Baruch paused, waiting for her answer, and her tongue actually began to move with a reply, which would have sent his arm round her, and made them one forever, but it did not come. Something fell and flashed before her like lightning from a cloud overhead, divinely beautiful, but divinely terrible. (*Clara*, p. 265)

The reply is formulated, 'her tongue actually began to move'. But Clara, physically, can not follow through, or rather, independent of what she wills and desires, of how she would act, the answer 'did not come'. The answer is there, but 'something' whose implications Clara registers as more extensive than the merely personal or temporal, prevents its articulation. The opening half of the paragraph quoted above shows us first Clara's 'insight' and then her reasoned analysis of the benefits that love could be expected to produce. The conclusion of the paragraph introduces to these two another means of seeing that is neither 'insight' nor reason as a personal motive. It 'fell and flashed before her like lightning from a cloud overhead', generated in another 'region', from an extra-human energy. This kind of vision involves the human with the 'divine', in its 'beauty' but in its 'terror' too.

The thing that happens to Clara here is similar to something that Catharine Furze experienced earlier:

Something, whatever it was, stopped her; she struggled and wrestled, but it was of no avail, and she saw Mr Cardew slowly

retrace his steps to the town. Then she leaned upon the wall and found some relief in a great fit of sobbing. Consolation she had none; not even the poor reward of conscience and duty. She had lost him, and she felt that, if she had been left to herself, she would have kept him. (Catharine, p. 180-1)

There is a marked difference for Clara though, for whom 'consolation', if it receives no comment, seems implicit in the act of renunciation itself: 'divinely beautiful' if 'divinely terrible'. If fulfilment of 'conscience and duty' seems inadequate compensation for the sacrifice that Catharine feels has been 'imposed' upon her, it is yet too temporal and personal, too external, to figure as 'reward' for Clara, whose vision encompasses more than could Catharine's and for whom, in any case, the idea that right action ought to attract 'reward' would be anathema. In a way that Catharine is not, Clara is 'left to herself' in deciding to give up Baruch. The 'something' that has its seat somewhere outside Catharine (though she partakes of its power), is integral to Clara's self, so that for her there is no 'struggle' once the idea of what she must do is formulated. She cannot 'keep' Baruch, there is therefore no purpose in regretting what must not be.

The episode terminates when Clara remembers a purchase she must make in Lamb's Conduit Street and Baruch goes along with her, 'wanting' the 'power to proceed' with their earlier dialogue without Clara's leadership or co-operation. Baruch returns home where Rutherford tells us that he made no attempt to 'rekindle' the 'dead fire', believing that the 'last chance that he could begin a new life had disappeared':

There was nothing to be done but to pace the straight road in front of him, which led nowhere, so far as he could see. (Clara, p. 267)

Thus the chapter ends with a suggestion that Baruch's vision (and ours too, in that we probably can see no further than him at this point), is not unlimited. Implicit

here is the idea that there is frequently more to be seen than is revealed, that our sight is often deceptive. Where his 'vision' fails, Baruch's faith in the principle of 'the inevitable order of nature' saves him. That 'there was nothing to be done but pace the straight road in front of him', might seem at the moment a depressing thought, but that road being a narrative as well as a real one, it leads him (and us as readers too), to what we would not otherwise see. There is no further explanation to be offered at this juncture; all we and Baruch can do is go on.

Clara Hopgood is a novel of difficult explanations, explanations that Rutherford quite deliberately leaves only half-executed: why Madge must reject Frank; why Clara has to give up Baruch. Moreover, explanations, when they are offered, are given obliquely and come from unexpected quarters in this book, as is the case with Madge's 'enlightenment' in the country churchyard. After Clara 'sees' that she must leave Baruch there is no further explicit exposition of her actions. The scene leaves the reader more perplexed even than Baruch who could not be sure, as we are, of Clara's love for him. Only much later, as Clara at the start of the sisters' country holiday watches two figures (though there seems on the surface nothing to be seen in their being together), do we receive some inkling of the motivation for her refusal to 'answer' Baruch in chapter XXVII:

It was impossible to mistake them; they were Madge and Baruch. They sauntered leisuredly; presently Baruch knelt down over the water, apparently to gather something which he gave to Madge. They then crossed another stile and were lost behind the tall hedge which stopped further view of the footpath in that direction. 'The message then was authentic,' she [Clara] said to herself. 'I thought I could not have misunderstood it.' (Clara, p. 286)

This is where the 'straight road' has led Baruch, and there is the promise that he has after all a view to expect as he continues the leisurely saunter that takes him further, even as we watch him cross another 'stile' and disappear behind an obstacle that impedes only our own and Clara's 'view in that direction'. Clara could see the way things might tend, though the new lovers had not met at the time of her revelation, and her foresight now confirms the vision in the recent past: 'The message was...authentic'. At last we are able to realize her actions in chapter XXVII as decidedly more profound than the inevitable, if sincere, outcome of a predisposition always to see too many reasons to give in to compulsion. The connection with the 'divine' is confirmed in the transformation of the earlier 'vision' into 'message' here. The ideas of the perfect love that Madge could have with Baruch came like a revelation to Clara in chapter XXVII, and seeing them together here then is the fulfilment of that prophesy. Far from being something that could ever have been determined reasonably, the union of Madge and Baruch comes about mysteriously but unquestionably:

No syllable was uttered, but swiftest messages passed, question and answer. There was no hesitation on his part now, no doubt, the woman and the moment had come. The last question was put, the final answer was given...This was the goal to which both had been journeying all these years, although with much weary mistaking of roads; this was what from the beginning was designed for both!

(Clara, p. 290-91)

The 'last question was put, the final answer given', mutely. There is no agonizing rationalism here, Baruch at last 'sees' past the 'hair, lips, eyes' when he regards Madge. Rutherford remarks that 'There are some so closely akin that the meaning of each may be said to lie in the other'. Though his love for Clara was grounded in an intellectual sympathy, rational and dispassionate, Baruch needs

to be 'in love' as well. Perhaps this is why the appearance of 'emotion' in his relation to Clara so disorients him: it is as if one might genuinely love either 'intellectually' (as does Clara), or 'emotionally', but that if one's love was to take the form of a combination of these, then they ought to develop in tandem. The discontinuity of intellectual and emotional sympathy in Baruch's relation to Clara leaves too much open to question, and the answers are elusive. It is as if both Baruch and Madge set out to find the love that they thought they desired (she a passionate physical one, he a sympathy of mind), only to find that what was desired was not all that was wanted, their 'infatuations' could not last. Her great triumph is that Clara (unlike Frank whose sight is distorted by convention), has the generosity of soul to allow herself to see as much, and that her vision remains steady in spite of all that there was to show that they might get along adequately in any case. In a Spinozan sense, the 'design' is all.

But Clara's renunciation of Baruch has greater heroism about it than appears at first. The 'design' is not so simple as it looks at from the outside. In its apprehension there is an implicit appeal for obedience to a 'law' that goes beyond the personal. In giving Baruch up to Madge, Clara does more than forfeit her immediate comfort and what would have been a secure future in order to expose herself to the very real possibility of 'solitude, silence and a childless old age' (Clara, p. 265); she must realize also how she risks depriving herself of ever discovering any substantial purpose in life. Her relationship with Madge and her child has been, up to this point, effectively, that discharged by a husband and father; Clara went out to work to support the family. In emotional terms the prospect of the necessary break with Madge and her child, compounded by the

termination of a useful occupation, a reason for living, is like a second bereavement for Clara. Looking forward now, the prospect must seem to her bleak indeed. And yet it is through this very bleakness, in which it is difficult not to recall Madge's nadir, that light is admitted. In chapter XI Madge was compelled to accept that the awful 'strangeness' of the world lay less in its apparent toleration of human suffering than in the idea that it was 'transcendent both in glory and horror'. Rutherford's schematic narrative, so full of reflections and symmetries, obliges us, in thinking of Clara, to remember Madge, and so to consider that this is 'a world infinite both ways' (Clara, p. 110). What Clara was to Baruch, in the long run he is proven to be to her, a 'mistaking of roads' (Clara, p. 291). In losing what seems like the only vocation open to her, Clara gains sight of another 'road', another calling.

In a letter, written when he was fifty-five, Hale White explains how little even the most mature and introspective of us can truly know of what is in us:

I have been the victim of the strangest emotions, the description of which will not edify you, and so I forbear. One goes on living and thinking all one's life without knowing what lies in us; when suddenly an event, a shock comes, and we stand revealed to ourselves astonished at the presence of what we never suspected. The steel plate is wrought with care and to all appearances is solid throughout and free from flaw, but lo! the hammer is swung, the test is applied and it is mere sheet glass. I am struck dumb with my own ignorance of myself. (Letters, p. 26)

In a manner that is typical of Rutherford, White confesses his failure to prove his mettle when put to the test; what seemed to be 'steel' was revealed as 'glass'. The same cannot be said of Clara. What we take to be the 'steel' in her determination to do not just the right but the best thing in giving up Baruch, is 'revealed', after their split, as true adamant. We know that Clara had thought

fondly of herself as a wife and mother, but, put to the test, hers is revealed as an abstract passion, a yearning not for self-satisfaction, but for justice in the terms that Mazzini, whom they visit with their landlord, Marshall, describes:

'Whenever any real good is done it is by a crusade; that is to say, the cross must be raised and appeal be made to something above the people. No system based on rights will stand. Never will society be permanent till it is founded on duty. If we consider our rights exclusively, we extend them over the rights of our neighbours. If the oppressed classes had the power to obtain their rights to-morrow, and with the rights came no deeper sense of duty, the new order, for the simple reason that the oppressed are no better than their oppressors, would be just as unstable as that which preceded it.'
(Clara, pp. 270-1, author's emphasis)

It was Clara's 'duty' to bring together Madge and Baruch because they needed each other, regardless of her own claims or 'rights'. In submitting to this Clara reveals a Spinozan sense of the forces behind life, she needs something 'above' and beyond the personal for her love. Nor is her renunciation of Baruch finally what could be called a sacrifice, rather there is in her apprehension of the 'real good' a true delight in her own perception of a 'law' that, in superseding the personal, is 'stable'.

At the close of the novel Clara is transformed by a new faith, a new sense of her own purpose and that of the universe:

Clara, always a light sleeper, woke between three and four, rose and went to the little casement window which had been open all night. Below her, on the left, the church was just discernible, and on the right, the broad chalk uplands leaned to the south, and were waving with green barley and wheat. Underneath her lay the cottage garden, with its row of beehives in the north-east corner, sheltered from the cold winds by the thick hedge. It had evidently been raining a little, for the drops hung on the currant bushes, but the clouds had been driven by the south-westerly wind into the eastern sky, where they lay in a long, low, grey band. Not a sound was to be heard, save every now and then the crow of a cock or the short cry of a just-awakened thrush. High up on the zenith, the approach of the sun to the horizon was proclaimed by the most

delicate tints of rose-colour, but the cloud bank above him was dark and untouched, although the blue which was over it, was every moment becoming paler. Clara watched; she was moved even to tears by the beauty of the scene, but she was stirred by something more than beauty, just as he who was in the Spirit and beheld a throne and One sitting thereon, saw something more than loveliness, although He was radiant with the colour of jasper and there was a rainbow round about Him like an emerald to look upon. In a few moments the highest top of the cloud rampart was kindled, and the whole wavy outline became a fringe of flame. In a few moments more the fire just at one point became blinding, and in another second the sun emerged, the first arrowy shaft passed into her chamber, the first shadow was cast, and it was day. She put her hands to her face; the tears fell faster, but she wiped them away and her great purpose was fixed.

(Clara, pp. 283-4)

From her position, rooted in humanity, between 'church' and 'broad chalk uplands', and within a landscape whose face is marked, with fields of 'barley and wheat', 'cottage garden' and 'beehives', by the human endeavour to make the earth sustain the body, Clara watches as the working of the universe at large, and the implicit continuity that underpins both life and death, reveals itself before her, as if for her benefit alone, to teach her how to live without fear for the moment or the next scrap of bread. Rutherford describes the onset of the dawn in terms at once of burgeoning beauty and precise natural accuracy. The new day 'proclaims' an enlightenment for Clara that surpasses the 'beauty' even of the 'approach of the sun to the horizon', reflected in the most 'delicate tints'. What light there exists, and its delicacy, is felt more profoundly for the lingering darkness in the 'cloud-bank'. What moves Clara though is 'something more than the beauty' of the natural scene, it is what is for her implicit in this beauty: an order, a purpose. She has, though again we do not yet know it, already made her decision to work for Mazzini on a secret mission in Italy.

When, late in Middlemarch, Dorothea looks out from her window to the man with a bundle on his back and the woman carrying a baby, one has the sense that it is impossible for her to avoid being and feeling a part of the human world at large, even though she feels separate. What Dorothea sees is an image of how life might be carried on, even as a burden. Though she feels the 'largeness of the world', the lightening sky here is a backdrop for Dorothea, it is the human foreground that Eliot privileges, picturing the 'manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance' (Middlemarch, p. 846). The Middlemarch scene echoes Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and in this Eliot is not parted from the predominant language of the novel in presenting Dorothea's enlightenment. What is fixed for Clara by her vision at the end of Rutherford's novel, is not any sense of human community but rather of 'great purpose', a purpose that is alienating in imposing demands that might be considered beyond the bounds of human duty, the laying down of one's life for a principle. Rutherford wants to envisage in Clara a destiny for a woman's life even bigger than that which George Eliot finds for Dorothea, a sense of mission like St Theresa's but also like that of the Spanish saint, supra-personal, a total dedication of the self. Middlemarch, published twenty-five years before Rutherford's final novel, comes to the conclusion that the time and the 'medium' (Middlemarch, p. 896) that might give rise to a Saint Theresa is past. Clara Hopgood challenges Eliot's conclusion; in Clara we are shown, not only what a modern 'saint' might look like, but how she might come into being. In chapter IX of the Autobiography, the character of Theresa, a version of George Eliot herself, rejects Rutherford's wish that novelists 'would not write as if love were the very centre and sum of human existence'. Theresa insists that love 'is the

subject of all subjects', and again that 'it is the great fact of life' that 'keeps the world straight'. It is as if in Clara Hopgood, the character of Clara implicitly answers Theresa, by suggesting that if one was to love in such an exemplary manner, then only the whole of human kind would be sufficient as subject.

No other character in Rutherford is freed from criticism as Clara is. Like Clara and Baruch, Hale White greatly admired Carlyle's Heroes and Hero Worship. Carlyle's heroes though, are exclusively male. Perhaps Clara Hopgood attempts to redress Carlyle's gender prejudice?

The progress that Rutherford's novels work out culminates, in Clara Hopgood, in a vision from Revelation:

just as he who was in the Spirit and beheld a throne and One sitting thereon, saw something more than loveliness, although He was radiant with the colour of jasper and there was a rainbow about Him like an emerald to look upon. (Clara, p. 284)

Clara is 'moved' by the beauty of the encroaching dawn, but she is 'stirred' by something more than this, by a vision of spiritual brightness, by John's vision. Following this the dawn literally erupts:

the highest top of the cloud-rampart was enkindled, and the whole wavy line became a fringe of flame. In a few moments more the fire just at one point became blinding, and in another second the sun emerged, the first arrowy shaft passed into her chamber, the first shadow was cast, and it was day. (Clara, pp. 284-5)

As well as the magnificence there is a kind of violence implicit in the 'blinding' heat and 'arrowy' penetration of the sun: along with its light 'the first shadow was cast'. After mistaking her way with Baruch, Clara has reached her road to Damascus:

a strange and almost supernatural peace overshadowed her (p. 285)

Rutherford wrote that 'The shadows as much as the light make up the picture'. Clara is 'overshadowed' after this revelation in the same way that Madge had been after hers in the churchyard. The light casts shadows, gives definition to what would otherwise seem gloom; it is not merely (physically or spiritually) illuminating, it makes the darkness apparent. Even drenched with light, the mystery of life persists, the world is 'transcendent both in glory and horror'. Despite this though, Clara is at 'peace', a peace that allows her to answer Mazzini's concern that she takes up his cause because 'earthly love is impossible' (Clara, p. 297), unequivocally:

'My motive is perfectly pure.' (p. 297)

After this Clara is all but written out of the book; life goes on, Baruch and Madge live together, the child grows up, there is no holy shrine for Clara. Ten years later, 'a younger Clara', Madge's child, asks her father:

I had an aunt Clara once, hadn't I?

Yes, my child.'

'Didn't she go to Italy and die there?'

'Yes.'

'Why did she go?'

'Because she wanted to free the poor people of Italy who were slaves.'

(Clara, p. 298)

This is where Clara Hopgood, where Rutherford's last work, ends. Clara takes her place in life's continuum. Baruch acknowledges the 'Crucifixion' as a 'sublime' fact 'in the world's history', but, he adds, pointing to another continuity:

'...let us reverence also the Eternal Christ who is forever being crucified for our salvation.'

(Clara, p.198)

CONCLUSION

William Hale White was born six years before Victoria came to the throne, in the period when those values, qualities and modes of thought that the Queen was to give her name to were in gestation. He died in 1913, just before the war that brought to a close the 'Victorian' era, what we call the Edwardian period being predominantly one of Victorian afterglow. His reading habits were fixed by writing like that of the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress, works whose concern centred for him, without compromise to its variety or individual difficulty, upon the human struggle to do right and live well. It was not solely because of their content that the Bible and Bunyan were so precious and so influential to Hale White however; but because in works such as these the 'plain glass style' that his father both admired and strongly urged his son to adopt, as the only truthful way to write, was exemplified. Brought up to read for instruction more than a means of entertainment, it is no surprise that, amongst those writers of fiction who were his contemporaries, Hale White was pre-disposed, by background and temperament, to the serious-minded, searching, moral prose of George Eliot. He confessed, with a guarded reticence that is entirely characteristic, 'I could worship that woman' (Groombridge Diary, p. 72, my emphasis), and his response in looking over her letter some thirty five years after he first knew her, was not only a revival of his 'old passion' for Eliot but a compulsion to 'read her all over again' (Letters, pp. 180-1). Yet he was to find when he turned to the writing of fiction out of the same great need that determined his reading, that to write the truth as experience had revealed it to him, meant that he could not write with the same assertion or authority that was implicit in George Eliot's fiction. He wrote what for their

period must have seemed surprisingly economical novels, anecdotal, casually incomplete in not settling the destinies of all the characters, structured about ideas which give internal shape to the books, above all intimate and personal in tone and relation with the reader. It was maybe his sectarian tradition which helped to give the books their independence and rejection of the grand manner. Wilfred Stone writes that even though Hale White was 'an apostate from orthodoxy, he was also morbidly shy and introspective - and emotionally ill-equipped to live comfortably in the open spaces of emancipation' that George Eliot inhabited.¹ But, undoubtedly also, because of the 'delay' in his beginning to write fiction, Hale White was to find himself working within an entirely different historical context from Eliot.

Truth to experience was the great aim that Mark Rutherford was to authorize for William Hale White; truth however unpalatable, experience with all its apparent meaninglessness. With this end in mind Hale White did not set out to expand, exploit, or to experiment with the novel, and yet the nature of the truth he had to tell, and the manner in which he felt obliged to tell it, was conditional on just such innovation. The kind of life that he had to bear witness to, would not fit neatly into the traditional narrative with its forward movement and its clear sense of closure. He needed the distinct personality of his narrating voice, Mark Rutherford. Indeed, narrative in Rutherford is never more than a means of situating what assumes more of the character of a discussion or a 'case study' than straightforward or recognizable story. Of much greater importance in

1. W. H. Stone, 'Hale White and George Eliot', University of Toronto Quarterly, 25, (1956), 437-51 (p. 439)

'reading' the novels and discovering their meaning, is their deliberate structure. This is something that is at once so subtle that it left White open to the criticism, from those who believed that their lack of an instantly discernible beginning, middle, and end, meant that the novels were virtually thrown together, without regard for the conventional niceties of narrative; and, once one realizes their meticulous organization (as individual works and as a collection), so clearly illuminating, that the narrative is rendered secondary.

White's fiction, like that of George Eliot, comes out of an essay-writing history, one consequence of which is the extent to which in Eliot we are constantly aware of the narrator's intercession between character and reader. Eliot's voice, though, remains clearly distinguishable in the narratorial interventions and asides that punctuate her novels, a distinction that ensures her characters retain their autonomy. We are not so aware (especially after the Autobiography and Deliverance) of Rutherford's voice in his novels, paradoxically, because its presence is even more pervasive than Eliot's. Rutherford's characters have no being independent of their author; they exist solely to illuminate his feelings, his struggles, his gritty independence, always on the edge of defeat but courageously steadfast. Their remarkable concision, compared with nineteenth century standards, is partly a result of the fact that the novels are not predicated upon the presentation of fully developed characters with complex histories. More than this though, their brevity stands in direct relationship to the sense of deliberate structure by the author, almost to the extent of their belonging much more to the tradition of Pilgrim's Progress, than that of the novel as it had so far evolved.

All of Rutherford's novels take as their centre the history of a sensibility, the fundamental factor in which is a sense of change that is revealed as undermining generational and cultural transition as thoroughly as the individual life. In part, the kinds of change that all of the novels explore is intellectual, and yet it is never entirely self-generated, but rather the result of external circumstances that impose upon Rutherford's protagonists (however hard they might attempt to avoid or delay it) some response beyond bewilderment and despair. Within this setting the status of accident is crucial. And yet in Rutherford the force of accident and co-incidence assumes a different character from that in Thomas Hardy, where it is malign, dedicated to destruction and the representation of a 'vindictive' universe. Accident is a kind of unconscious corrective in Rutherford, a means by which the individual is brought into realignment with a Spinozan universe. The unity so achieved is always contingent however, something that is reinforced by the peculiar 'conclusions' with which Rutherford leaves the reader. It is almost as if the novels were short stories, fragments of a larger, undisclosed and undisclosable narrative, one that necessarily leaves characters behind and blithely refuses to disclose what the future might offer those surviving. This refusal to offer a satisfactory ending to his fragmentary narrative, is the means by which Rutherford captures the reality of the unformedness of life as it is actually experienced. The 'real' world for Rutherford stands in marked contrast to the verisimilitude of a 'realist' novelist like Mrs Gaskell. For him the 'real' lies much more in the need, the search, for an ideology, personal or collective. It emerges through his discussion of characters' sense of personal bewilderment and awareness of needs that seem

incapable of satisfaction by any means they can 'know'. Rutherford's reader must not expect resolution at the end of his novels, even like that in Joyce's Portrait, where the 'rhythm' of climax and anti-climax within the chapters means that we can predict the chapter that would have followed on from the last one written. Rutherford's novels count upon the reader having learnt enough to be able to intuit or to rest in ignorance of what further 'progress' would mean.

If there is in the novels, to a greater extent than in the work of contemporaries like Gissing and Hardy, an innovation and modernism of form, if his writing plays a significant part in looking forward from the Victorian to the 'modern' novel, how are we to explain the way in which Rutherford's novels have been so largely neglected, by readers almost as much as by scholars? The latest Oxford edition of the Autobiography admits how that novel 'has long been recognized as one of the minor classics of Victorian literature'. Why 'minor'? Contemporaneous reviews hailed the Autobiography as 'remarkable' and of 'real interest'.² Catharine Furze was the fifth of a 'remarkable series'; Clara Hopgood, the work of an 'original thinker'.³ Miriam's Schooling was commended as 'refreshingly natural', a 'simple story, told with a freshness of style that gives it an unmistakable charm'.⁴ In a review of Catharine Furze in the Academy, commenting that the novel is 'worth reading, because it is an unconventional

2. Athenaeum, 23rd April 1881, p. 555.

3. Athenaeum, 17th February 1894, p. 209.

4. Academy, 2nd August 1890, p. 88.

story which does not cheapen its unconventionality by italicising and advertising it', the reviewer asserts that 'Mark Rutherford has found his public'.⁵

Rutherford's reviewers give his work the credit that it deserves for the genuine qualities that they correctly identify in it, but it must be admitted that in being able to see so much and go on to 'enjoy' the novels as works of art, they were only ever in a minority, even if a select and discriminating one. Though he has been continuously read, and rarely out of print for long periods of time, Rutherford's endurance has been dependent upon a small number of faithful readers; he has remained something of a cult author. His writing was addressed and made its primary appeal to a virtuous and strict few. As a narrator he reveals a desire to inculcate in the reader his own precise sense of taste. This taste is conveyed through a voice that is not exactly convivial or hearty: anxious, questioning, and profoundly concerned with authenticity. His subject matter too, is unashamedly provincial (London is no more than a symbol of the paucity of life), it deliberately excludes the spectacular in order to locate the great significance of minute events and small lives. And yet, despite its relatively limited appeal, Rutherford's voice did strike a chord in other writers. D.H. Lawrence found him 'so thorough, so sound and so beautiful'.⁶ Andre Gide saw in his 'honesty and integrity...poetic virtues, beside which everything seems camouflaged, inauthentic, overloaded'.⁷ Joseph Conrad called Rutherford's work

5. Academy, March 10th 1894, p. 206.

6. The Letters of D. H. Lawrence, ed. by Aldous Huxley (New York: Viking Press, 1932), p.83.

7. The Journals of Andre Gide, trans. Justin O'Brien, 4 vols, II, p.101.

'good and more than good', it was, he said 'precious wood of straight fibre and with a faint delicate scent'.⁸

It is in what seems, compared with a novel like Hardy's Mayor of Casterbridge so crammed with events, its dearth of action, that Rutherford's work most clearly points towards the coming of the 20th century novel. Like Lawrence, Rutherford's concern was to refound the novel in sensibility; like Rutherford, Lawrence deliberately concentrates on 'small' figures and communities. Rutherford purposely turns to what was a neglected and 'eccentric' area of life for his fiction: small town Dissenting English society. There is no intrinsic interest in an aristocracy, or the upper or working classes in Rutherford's novels; he excludes the communities that have formed the major areas of attention in the works of his immediate predecessors in order to dissect the small commercial middle classes. The smallness has of course to do with authenticity. What is so individual is the combination of scrupulous cultural and historical accuracy with such an innovative use of the novel as a form. He deliberately eschews plot and character in order to found everything upon the analysis of states of sensibility, movements of mind. Thus we recognize in this seemingly quintessentially Victorian novelist shades of the conscious experiment with modes of narration that are a mark of the early modernism of Conrad, Ford, Lawrence and Joyce.

It would be quite wrong to underestimate the boldness of Rutherford's reconstruction of the novel form. What we can call his 'experimentation' (though for him personally there was more of accident and personal discovery than

8. Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters, ed. by G. Jean-Aubry (London: Heinemann, 1927), I, p. 335.

deliberate experiment in the way that his writing evolved), put him at risk of alienating the very audiences that he might claim. From the point of view of the mass audience of the Victorian novel, his books lacked the excitement of plot and character that they had been used to. Whilst from that of the intellectual reader, the student of the novel, the difficulty was that the novels, though they revealed glimpses of a substantial intellect and an exquisite sensibility, remained aesthetically circumscribed, the trials and small difficulties of serious people. It is precisely because of the scale of his innovation that Rutherford lacked advocates for its strengths. Both the daring of his experiment with the novel and the extent to which he is to be seen as reforming traditional preoccupation with character and plot, signals Rutherford's novels as a valediction to his nineteenth century peers. It is no accident that all of the novels take as their focus events of the past; that retrospective stare, allowing the author to discriminate what was fundamental from what was simply incidental, lends itself to the kind of artistic reformulation that produces a leaner form (a new concern for structure and design), a form whose primary perspective was unashamedly that of the narrator's own recognizable voice; Mark Rutherford offers a distinct perspective upon his stories as does Marlow (in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness, 1902), or Dowel (the narrator of The Good Soldier, 1915), or Lawrence's voice in his novels.

William Hale White took immense risks in turning his back upon the familiar form, in his refusal to offer the reader fully developed characters, the security of a defined plot or the comfort of anticipated modes of closure. That he was courageous enough as a writer to do so, was due to a genuine conviction that in recording his experience in the manner he was compelled in truth to do, his

novels would console and comfort other inhabitants of the 'doubtful' nineteenth century.

Appendix

The College, Groombridge, Kent.

18th Oct. 1907.

My dear Miss Edwards,

~~My dear Miss Edwards,~~ My Harrison's advice about writing your own life ^{maybe} is good but the difficulty is to be faithful without saying what may give pain. If you soften things down the value of the autobiography is destroyed. If you try to write this down by long postponement of publication, much of the interest of the story will disappear. Then again it is impossible for me at least, not being gifted with Rousseau's straightforwardness - to speak the truth about my self. It is steady what I cannot bring myself to do does which would ^{not} be ~~worthwhile~~ ^{worthwhile}. What is the use of recording the common place experience?

Which would be mine? Besides, a record of what my world now be surely in experience: it should include. So, although I have been asked to write my own life, I have decided it isn't to be done. I am not sorry. I am brave enough to acknowledge that the reason for my inactivity is that I should get nothing out of it, ^{for} ~~and~~ if I were it must be just humbug, and as to the world I am not vain ~~enough~~ ^{enough} to suppose its course ~~and~~ would be crossed by my self. Relations as a warning or example. It has more and the Prophets -

I was glad to see you - You were looking well in chain I have often and often seen you look at MacFarlane's ~~address~~ It was refreshing once more to come with my old friend, the Knight of the sword enemy of all obstruction.

Truly yours
W. Hale White.

Worple Wood Sprou

10th Feb. 1866

My dear Holyoake,

You are all wrong as to the humor' done you. The humor is rather mine than yours and it is appropriate in itself.

I have made some alterations you will find in the review all through.

One especially, we correspond with your suggestion about the doctrine

of original rights. I have added also a paragraph at the end about bribery and fraud to make the work

more presentable. When I get a complete copy I will send you one

I can assure you I saw very much affected by your expressions of esteem and about to my belief on this great subject.

I am so constituted that if a man says to me "what you believe is true," he does me more service than if he says "I love you."

Perhaps this is a trifle exaggerated, but I could not alter the expression without conveying less truth than I do now. You will understand the effect produced on me by the

sympathy of one who ^{of the same} like Paul ~~has been~~ ^{for the same} ~~is~~ "in prison of" has at least been in them too often, ~~for the same~~ and who

as though with wild beasts in many an
'...'. Such a one is likely to know what
true and what is not.

With kind regards believe me to be

very dearthly

Yours faithfully

W. Hale White

1. Holyoke

Bibliography

Works by Mark Rutherford - William Hale White

Rutherford, Mark, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford: Dissenting Minister, 1881 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936)

Rutherford, Mark, Mark Rutherford's Deliverance: Being the Second Part of his Autobiography, 1885 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936)

Rutherford, Mark, The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, 1887 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936)

Rutherford, Mark, Miriam's Schooling, 1890 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936)

Rutherford, Mark, Catharine Furze 1893 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906)

Rutherford, Mark, Catharine Furze 1893 (London: Hogarth, 1985)

Rutherford, Mark, Clara Hopgood, 1896 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1906)

Rutherford, Mark, John Bunyan, 1895 (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1905)

Rutherford, Mark, Pages from a Journal; with other papers, 1900 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901)

Rutherford, Mark, More Pages from a Journal, 1910 (London: Oxford University Press, 1910)

Rutherford, Mark, The Early Life of Mark Rutherford (W. Hale White). by Himself, 1913 (London: Oxford University Press, 1913)

White, William Hale, A Letter Written on the Death of Mrs Elizabeth Street (London: W.P. Griffiths, 1877), privately printed and circulated

White, William Hale, An Examination of the Charge of Apostasy against Wordsworth (London: Longmans, 1898)

White, William Hale, An Argument for an Extension of the Franchise: A letter addressed to George Jacob Holyoake Esq. (London: F.Farrah, 1866)

White, D. V., ed. Last Pages from a Journal, (London: Oxford University Press, 1915)

White, D. V., ed. Letters to Three Friends, (London: Oxford University Press, 1924)

Works Translated, Edited and Prefaced by William Hale White

Ethic: Translated from the Latin of Benedict Spinoza, 1883 (London: Oxford University Press, 1910)

Tractatus: Translated from the Latin of Benedict Spinoza, revised by Amelia Hutchinson Stirling (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895)

White, William, The Inner Life of the House of Commons, ed. by Justin Mc Carthy, Introduction by William Hale White, 2 vols (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897)

A Description of the Wordsworth and Coleridge Manuscripts in the Possession of Mr T. Norton Longman, ed. by William Hale White (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1897)

Coleridge's Poems: A Facsimile Reproduction of the Proofs and MSS of Some of the Poems, ed. by James Dykes Campbell with Preface and Notes by William Hale White (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1899)

Selections from Dr Johnson's "Rambler", ed. with Preface and Notes by William Hale White (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907)

Unpublished Letters

Letter from William Hale White to Miss Edwards, 18th October 1907. University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection, Shorter Correspondence, 11190-07

Letter from William Hale White to G.J.Holyoake, 10th February 1866. Manchester Co-operative Union Library, 1647

Reviews of Mark Rutherford's Work

- Academy, 15th September 1883, p. 177
Academy, 2nd August 1890, p. 88
Academy, 10th March 1894, p. 206
Academy, 15th August 1896, p. 112
Academy, 5th June 1897, p. 591
Academy, 17th July 1897, p. 43
Academy, 4th February 1899, pp. 161-2
Athenaeum, 23rd April 1881, p. 555

- Athenaeum, 20th October 1883, p. 493
Athenaeum, 11th April 1885, pp. 468-9
Athenaeum, 25th April 1885, p. 537
Athenaeum, 16th April 1887, p. 510
Athenaeum, 26th July 1890, p. 124
Athenaeum, 17th February 1894, p. 209
Athenaeum, 15th August 1896, p. 220
Athenaeum, 23rd April 1898, p.528
Atheuaeum, 25th March 1905, p.368
Athenaeum, 22nd March 1913, p. 335
Athenaeum, 12th July 1913, p. 40
Athenaeum, 30th August 1913, p.200
Athenaeum, 7th August 1915, p.87
- Critic, 15th August 1896, p. 103
- Fortnightly Review, 1st September 1908, pp. 453-73
- Listener, 16th October 1975, pp. 458-73
- Nation, 3rd September 1896, p. 180
- Nation and Athenaeum, 27th October 1923, pp. 151-2
Nation and Athenaeum, 1st March 1924, p. 767
Nation and Athenaeum, 14th June 1924, pp. 355-6
Nation and Athenaeum, 21st June 1924, p. 376
- Spectator, 16th June 1894, p. 830
Spectator, 9th August 1913, p. 218
Spectator, 11th September 1915, p. 341
- Times Literary Supplement, 7th August 1913, p.330
Times Literary Supplement, 15th July 1915, p.236
Times Literary Supplement, 4th October 1923, p.649
Times Literary Supplement, 15th May 1924, p.229

Primary Sources

- Allott, Miriam, ed. The Poems of Matthew Arnold (London: Longman, 1987).
- Arnold, Matthew, Literature and Dogma: An Essay Towards a Better Apprehension of The Bible, 1873 (London: Smith Elder, 1873)
- Bennett, Arnold, The Journals of Arnold Bennett 1896-1928, ed. by Newman Flower, 3 vols (London Cassell, 1933) III, 15-16

- Bunyan, John, Pilgrim's Progress, 1684 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987)
- Bunyan, John, Grace Abounding To The Chief Of Sinners, 1666 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987)
- Carlyle, Thomas, On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History, 1841 (London: Ward & Lock, 1841)
- Carlyle, Thomas, The Life of John Sterling, 1907 (London: Oxford University Press, 1933)
- Carlyle, Thomas, Reminiscences, 1881, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1881)
- Carlyle, Thomas, Sartor Resartus, 1883-4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Dickens, Charles, Great Expectations, 1860-1 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)
- Eliot, George, The Mill on the Floss, 1860 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)
- Eliot, George, Middlemarch, 1871-2 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)
- Ford, Ford Madox, The Good Soldier, 1915 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988)
- Gaskell, Elizabeth, Cousin Phillis, 1864 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988)
- Gibson, James, ed. The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1989)
- Gissing, George, The Unclassed, 1884 (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978)
- Gosse, Edmund, Father & Son, 1907 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988)
- Fowler, Alistair, ed. Milton: Paradise Lost, 1667 (London: Longman, 1987)
- Haight, Gordon, S., The George Eliot Letters, 7 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), I, p. 128; V, p.330; VII, p. 44.
- Hardy, Thomas, The Mayor of Casterbridge, 1866 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)
- Hardy, Thomas, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, 1891 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982)
- Hardy, Thomas, Jude the Obscure, 1896 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987)
- Hardy, Thomas, Two on a Tower, 1882 (London: Macmillan, 1975).
- Hartley, L.P., The Go-Between, 1953 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)

- Huxley, Aldous, ed. The Letters of D.H.Lawrence (New York: Viking Press, 1932)
- Jean-Aubry, G., ed. Joseph Conrad: Life and Letters (London: Heinemann, 1927).
- Joyce, James, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, 1914-15 (London: Heinemann, 1984).
- Lonsdale, Roger, ed. The Poems of Gray, Collins and Goldsmith (London: Longman, 1980).
- Mc Donald, Edward, D., Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H.Lawrence (London: Heinemann, 1936) pp. 151-6
- Morley, John, On Compromise, 1874 (London: Macmillan, 1888).
- Nichol, W. Robinson, Memories of Mark Rutherford 1924 (London: Fisher Unwin, [n.d.])
- O'Brien, Justin, trans. The Journals of Andre Gide (London: Heinemann, 1927).
- Raine, Kathleen, ed. Coleridge: Poems and Prose (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985)
- Ricks, Christopher, ed. Tennyson: A Selected Edition (London: Longman, 1989)
- Ruskin, John, Praeterita, 1885-9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- Stevenson, W.H., ed. The Poems of William Blake (London: Longman, 1980)
- Tolstoy, Leo, Anna Karenina, 1877 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)
- Shakespeare, King Lear, ed. by Bernard Lott (London: Longman, 1982)
- Shakespeare, Macbeth, ed. by Nicholas Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990)
- White, D.V., ed. The Groombridge Diary (London: Oxford University Press, 1924)
- Wordsworth Jonathan, M.H. Abrams, Stephen Gill, eds. William Wordsworth: The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850 (London: Longman, 1979)

Secondary Sources

- Allen, Peter, 'Mark Rutherford: The Anatomy of a Failure' in The View from the Pulpit: Victorian Ministers and Society (Canada: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 143-59

- Allen, Walter, The English Novel: From Pilgrim's Progress to Sons and Lovers (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), p.287
- Baker, E.A., 'Mark Rutherford and Others' in The History of the English Novel, 10 vols (London: Riverside Press, 1938) IX, pp.97-121
- Black, Matthew and H.H. Rowley, eds. Peake's Commentary on the Bible (London: Thomas Nelson, 1967), pp. 480-2
- Briggs, Asa, The Age of Improvement: 1783-1867 (London: Longman, 1959)
- Brookes, Gerry, H., 'Fictional Forms in William Hale White's Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverance', Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly, 9 (1986), pp. 247-268
- Cunningham, Valentine, Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp.
- Daiches, David, Some Late Victorian Attitudes (London: Andre Deutsch, 1969), pp. 90-123
- Drabble, Margaret, ed. The Oxford Companion to English Literature, 5th edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Ellis, S.M., 'Three Centenaries', Nineteenth Century, 109 (1931), pp. 753-57
- Goode, John, 'Mark Rutherford and Spinoza', English Literature in Transition, 34 (1991), pp. 424-53
- Grossman, Anita, Susan, 'William Hale White and the example of George Eliot', Papers on Language and Literature, 24 (1988), pp. 159-76
- Harland, Catherine, R., Mark Rutherford: The Mind and Art of William Hale White (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988)
- Hobsbawm, E.J., Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974), p. 146
- Holquist, Michael, ed. The Dialogic Imagination, M.M. Bakhtin (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 263
- Peterson, Linda, H., Victorian Autobiography (Yale: Yale University Press, 1986)
- Rayson, R.J., 'Is The Revolution in Tanner's Lane broken-backed?', Essays in Criticism, 20 (1990), pp. 71-80

Salgado, Gamini, 'The Rhetoric of Sincerity: The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford as Fiction' in Renaissance and Modern Essays presented to Vivian de Sola Pinto in celebration of his seventieth birthday, ed. by G.R. Hibbard (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 159-68

Selbie, W.B., Nonconformity: its Origins and Progress, 1904 (London: Thornton Butterworth, [n.d.]

Selby, Thomas, Gunn, The Theology of Modern Fiction, 1896 (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1896), pp. 173-92

Sperry, Learoyd, 'Mark Rutherford', Harvard Theological Review, 7 (1914), pp. 166-92

Stock, Irvin, William Hale White (Mark Rutherford): A Critical Study (London: Unwin, 1956)

Stone, W.H., 'The Confessional Fiction of Mark Rutherford', University of Toronto Quarterly, 25 (1956), pp. 35- 57

Stone, W.H., 'Hale White and George Eliot', University of Toronto Quarterly, 25 (1956), pp. 437-51

Stone, W.H., 'Browning and Mark Rutherford', Review of English Studies, 4 (1953), pp. 249-59

Swann, Charles, 'The Author of Mark Rutherford', Yearbook of English Studies, 9 (1979), pp. 270-8

Swann, Charles, 'Re-Forming the Novel: Politics, History and Narrative Structure in The Revolution in Tanner's Lane', English Literature in Transition, 34 (1991), pp. 45-69

Thompson, E.P., The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 23

Wiley, Basil, 'Mark Rutherford' in More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters (New York: Columbus Press, 1956), pp. 186-247

