Concepts and Historical Contexts in Liberalism's Intellectual Debates: A Study of John Stuart Mill's Moral and Political Thought

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Doctoral Dissertation

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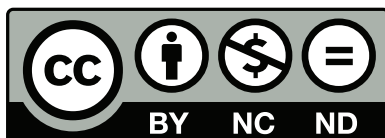
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Introduction:

Approaching John Stuart Mill's Political Thought

1. Purpose of the Study

This doctoral dissertation argues an interpretation of John Stuart Mill's social and political writings. It does so by drawing on the research programmes and theoretical assumptions of the 'New History of Political Thought', as developed by the works of John Pocock or Quentin Skinner, among others, and conceptual history, whose best-known advocate is Reinhart Koselleck. The combination and the contrast between both approaches to the history of political thought, as studied by Melvin Richter or Kari Palonen, offers a novel reading of some aspects of Mill's political thought that both casts light on frequently disregarded topics and revises prevailing interpretations in contemporary academic literature. Accordingly, the study examines the ways in which Mill's political ideas belong and contribute to the debates that equally concern his contemporaries. The study of the uses of concepts and argumentative strategies in Mill's writings contributes to a richer understanding of the history of political thought, more precisely of political liberalism as a context-dependent, historical narrative.

An unabated interest on Mill's ideas has led scholars to depict him in different ways. The image of Mill as an 'ancestral liberal voice',[1] certainly dominant, clashes with those who describe him as 'at once a radical libertarian and a cautious, conservative, Whig trimmer',[2] a socialist[3] or a liberal nationalist,[4] to name a few. His

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[1] John Skorupski, 'Introduction: The Fortunes of Liberal Naturalism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 2.

[2] John Gray, 'John Stuart Mill: Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations', *Literature of Liberty: A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought*, 2, II, 1979, 7.

[3] Bruce Baum, 'J. S. Mill and Liberal Socialism', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. Nadia Urbinati and Alex Zakaras, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007; William Stafford, 'How can a Paradigmatic Liberal call himself a Socialist? The Case of John Stuart Mill', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 3, 3, 1998, 325-45.

[4] For references on this description see chapter seven.

prolific career, both as philosopher and political activist, the vast amount of writings he published throughout his life, the complexity and variety of themes that they address and his eclectic intellectual influences may partially explain the emergence of these disparate labels. This study does not settle the issue, yet it aims to contribute to the understanding of his social and political thought as anchored in a historical milieu and engaging in the controversies that arouse among both Victorian intellectuals and the wider public sphere.

Mill's political project stands up to the challenge of devising sound methods for dealing effectively with Victorian concerns: improving the quality of people's life while satisfying popular political demands and soothing social unrest. He does so by studying social events according to models of the natural sciences, in line with earlier philosophic attempts, although he does not advocate a science of society aimed at predicting the future. Naturalistic explanations of social, political and economic events are only guidance for political reform, yet still valuable as such. In order to back his project, Mill turns to the historical development of societies, as he learns from Samuel T. Coleridge, Auguste Comte and some other French intellectuals. Partly thanks to them Mill realises that while some social elements have changed throughout time, others have not. Moreover, he regards that situation, which he depicts as the struggle between the antagonistic forces of order and progress, as particularly beneficial to social welfare. Mill was not the only Victorian that cherished the idea of opposite counterbalanced social and political powers, as the thesis shows, although he highly values the idea of argumentative discussion or 'many-sidedness'.

By studying Mill's rhetorical strategies and the intellectual context of his political ideas the dissertation pays attention to several underestimated issues and fills some gaps in the scholarly literature on Mill. In the first place, it contributes to clarify the argumentative link that Mill establishes between his methodological, historical social and political views, which leads to address Mill's intellectual allegiance to authors like Coleridge, Comte and François Guizot. Drawing attention to the changing meaning of concepts, the interdisciplinary approach that characterises conceptual history suits this aim. Present-day boundaries among academic fields were either different or non-existent in Mill's epoch, which justifies a contextual interpretive endeavour that captures how historical, political and methodological issues were jointly discussed.

Second, the dissertation helps restoring the significance of Mill's *A System of Logic* (1843) for a historically-minded interpretation of his political philosophy. Although widely regarded as an apolitical work, the *Logic*'s last book explains the methods and goals of the historical science of society. Along with the *Logic*, the interest in Mill's use of concepts and argumentative positions blurs the distinction between first- and second-order philosophical texts. Mill's so-called minor essays, private correspondence, parliamentary speeches and his autobiography, for instance, prove useful in offering an in-depth picture of his historical background. A selection of newspaper articles and pamphlets by his contemporaries are equally examined insofar as they help place his ideas in wider public debates. Without underestimating Mill's most popular writings nowadays, it calls attention to the fact that he made his name as a philosopher with the *Logic* and the *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) and remained a popular Victorian figure and political activist by constantly publishing and participating in public life.

In the third place, I examine Mill's arguments over social and political reality and his use of concepts in terms of linguistic actions. An interpretation of Mill's political thought should account for both what he says and what he is doing in saying what he says, assuming that Mill's argumentative defence of his viewpoints involves taking a stance for or against a determinate issue. Going beyond an understanding of Mill's texts as self-sufficient for scholarly interpretations, Mill's use of figurative language as a legitimising rhetorical strategy receives detailed attention. Similarly, the study takes into account a group of textual variants or alternative readings of the *Logic* that result from Mill's careful rewriting of this book. Changes disclose the *Logic*'s composing history and they provide an opportunity to gain access to multiple layers of intentionality.

Eventually, some of the chapters that make up the dissertation revise prevailing interpretations of Mill's thought. They do so in general by throwing light on some areas that political philosophers and historians of political thought have studied to a less extent, examining his intellectual debts and emphasising the ways in which social and political life itself sets the problems that Mill discusses. Yet a revisionist attempt particularly informs my reading of Mill's concept of nationality. Challenging the pervasive view of Mill as an advocate of civic or liberal nationalism, I argue that Mill

does not endow national peculiarities with paramount importance, hence their value depends on their effectiveness in promoting cooperation and durable social ties.

2. The Argument of the Thesis

'Concepts and Historical Contexts in Liberalism's Intellectual Debates' does not intend to be an exhaustive study on John Stuart Mill's moral and political thought. Rather, the study comprises seven interconnected essays that aim to enrich our understanding of certain areas of his social and political views. Sharing a common methodological ground, the different chapters elaborate on questions concerning the nature and relevance of past political texts for the present understanding of Mill's thought and how to study them as embedded in their social and political context. The chapters gravitate around the study of a selection of concepts, such as antagonism, history, order, progress and nationality, while building up a picture of both Mill's intellectual milieu and historical background.

The dissertation's first chapter, ' "The Collision of Adverse Opinions": Views on Social and Political Antagonism', examines the meaning of the idea of antagonism throughout Mill's life and several of his writings. Mill understands the existence of multiple viewpoints in contention as a ubiquitous and desirable feature of present and future societies. The study of history serves him to back his claim, for only those societies that embrace pluralism show a high degree of social improvement. When regarded in a broad sense, the idea of antagonism unlocks Mill's approach to social and political phenomena. His method to understand economics, society and politics builds on his study of history and its conclusions: society can be studied through the two antagonistic forces that shape it, namely order and progress. The first chapter suggests, moreover, that Mill's advocacy of many-sidedness as an inherent aspect of political life partly results from both his intellectual struggle between the utilitarian and other rival schools of thought and his personal experience within debating societies.

Genuine antagonism, which only emerges when arguing passionately against opponents in a debate, pervades Mill's understanding of social and political activity both in and outside Parliament. Mill's parliamentary proposals accordingly promote a reform of the established procedures and political parties so as to strengthen

argumentative deliberation. Many of Mill's writings endorse extensive discussion between dissenting opinions on public issues as a means to achieve better political decisions. The chapter analyses *On Liberty* in this regard, but also a number of Mill's parliamentary speeches, his reading of both François Guizot's and Samuel T. Coleridge's ideas, the autobiographical account of his intellectual development and several essays on political philosophy. By analysing Mill's parliamentary speeches along with his theoretical writings I deliberately attempt to blur the distinction between the so-called canonical texts and parliamentary debates and take both as equally valuable sources for present-day interpretations of Mill's thought. The chapter begins to explore the link between Mill's historical, methodological, social and political views, an underlying theme in the dissertation.

The second chapter, titled 'The Idea of History: A Rhetoric of Progress', goes deep into one of the previous chapter's claims, namely, that Mill's study of history serves to legitimise some of his political proposals. All too often Mill scholars have regarded his views on history a topic of minor importance, perhaps because he never published a monographic treatise on the matter. Yet when studied against the background of his personal and intellectual context, it may be seen that Mill's renewed interest on the idea of history remains itself a pivotal aspect of his emerging science of society and politics. By dealing with the relevance of history in Mill's social and political thought, the chapter offers an interpretation of his temporary depression, what he calls his 'mental crisis', as a process that leads him to expose the flaws of the received Benthamite opinions. In this regard, I examine Mill's debt to Coleridge, Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, who cherished a historical study of society, along with the influence of French historiographers like François Mignet, Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, Jean de Sismondi, Jules Michelet and François Guizot.[5] I suggest that by exploring Mill's view of history we gain an insight into his relationship with French thought. And vice versa, it is possible to explain how French thinkers' ideas appeal to him in terms of their interest in historical research.

By studying past events the conditions for social progress become apparent. To Mill's eyes the discipline of history should account for the progress of past societies while guiding future political decisions according to its findings. Without downplaying

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[5] Bentham's influence on Mill has been extensively studied, hence the emphasis on these thinkers, underrepresented in Mill scholarship.

the relevance of progress neither in Mill's thought nor in nineteenth-century Victorian imagination, the third chapter builds on the previous chapter, yet broadening the focus so as to include the idea of order. Much as Mill's belief in progress was a sign of his overall optimism about the present and future of society, his concern for social instability and peace need to be equally considered. The third chapter studies the argumentative relationship between the concepts of order and progress in a selection of Mill's writings from 1840 to 1867. 'The Principles of Order and Progress in Mill's Social and Political Thought' examines how the dichotomy between order and progress, appearing in Mill's texts under a few terminological variants, permeate some of his so-called canonical writings along with other less frequently studied concerning his political philosophy. In this essay I continue clarifying how Coleridge, Comte and Guizot shape his views on history, society and politics and to what extent their influence goes beyond Mill's early writings.

Mill's broad and versatile understanding of the ideas of order and progress allows him to reformulate them in several of his writings. As chapter one points out, Mill believes that contending forces shape present and past societies. In this chapter I further unfold how the concepts of order and progress help him represent such forces while drawing inspiration from natural phenomena. A science that attempts to make sense of social phenomena should focus, in Mill's opinion, on what changes and what remains unaltered through time, just as experimental sciences do. Order and progress provide, accordingly, the basic methodological outline for his science of society, political science and economics. Yet according to Mill order and progress also stand for the conservative and progressive political party lines respectively. Roughly speaking, Conservatives defend order or stability and Liberals advocate progress or change. Mill argues the need for a wise equilibrium between the principles of order and progress, which in practice amounts to a harmonious and peaceful social development. Such combination echoes his commitment to many-sidedness: a sustained effort to weave together opposite points of view, notwithstanding whether they refer to rival philosophical schools of thought, political beliefs or sets of values.

The ambiguous and highly polysemous concepts of order and progress not only figured prominently in Mill's thought, but also played a part in the writings of Victorian intellectuals as well as in the arguments of ordinary political actors especially from

1840 to 1899. Chapter four, 'The Argumentative Usages of Order and Progress: Social and Political Debates in Newspapers, Pamphlets and the Writings of Victorian Intellectuals', places Mill's social and political thought within a wider intellectual context by examining on the one hand some writings by Samuel Coleridge, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, Frederic Harrison, Samuel Alexander and Walter Bagehot. On the other hand, the essay studies a selection of pamphlets and widely-read newspapers, such as *The Times*, the *Morning Post*, the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Economist* and the *Daily News*. The underlying question is to what extent the ideas of order and progress played any role when the political issues of the day were publicly discussed. The chapter offers an affirmative answer to this problem in the light of textual evidence. It concludes that to a great extent Mill's uses of order and progress, thoroughly discussed in chapter three, and those of other 'public moralists' run parallel to the examples appearing in newspaper articles and pamphlets. The study sheds light on the bidirectional link between the writings of intellectuals and the way people represented social and political reality.

By extending the distinctive systematic research approach from the natural sciences to the understanding of society, order and progress become the pillars of some philosophical projects concerned with morality, economics, politics or society as a whole. Such descriptions, even if adopting a neutral, scientific-like tone, encompass an ideal of society as a balanced whole, thus tacitly aspiring to settle the political agenda. The perfect social equilibrium results from promoting progress and change, seeking generalised economic prosperity and satisfying people's basic needs, while at the same time guaranteeing order, the absence of violence and political turmoil. In times of social and political unrest, conversely, a generalised improvement of the quality of life is not possible. Newspapers and pamphlets put forward similar arguments when making sense of unresolved domestic and international conflicts, particularly as regards revolutionary upheavals in France and other European countries and ongoing popular struggles in British colonies. Newspapers portray England as a peaceful and prosperous society, thus in contrast to the former examples. As political principles, order and progress or stability and change figure in newspapers as indeterminate but powerfully appealing goals that political parties of any sign embrace.

The personal and intellectual relationship between John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte becomes the focus of chapter five, '*A System of Logic* as a Palimpsest: The Relationship between J. S. Mill and A. Comte in the Light of Textual Revisions'. Elaborating on some views already advanced in previous chapters, it examines the imprint of Comte's positivism on Mill's science of society. Mill's debt to Comte is sometimes underestimated by merely concluding that the former thought the positivist design of society imply 'liberticide'. While this point is not mistaken, Comte's influence runs deep in Mill's thought and deserves a more detailed attention. My interpretation of their relationship takes into account alternative readings of Mill's *A System of Logic*. More precisely, the essay discusses the reasons for Mill's deletion of a considerable amount of direct references to the French philosopher. As new editions of the *Logic* were released, from 1843 to 1872, Mill manages to extensively revise them, adding, rewriting or cancelling fragments, which resulted in new wordings currently available in the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*.

The fact that Mill's *Logic* keeps evolving throughout time calls into question some assumptions concerning scholarly interpretations of past texts, which leads to address the issue from the disciplines of textual criticism and editing. The chapter maintains that textual variants provide invaluable information on how authorial views change over time, thus considering Mill's *Logic* as a palimpsest. As for Mill's recasting of Comte's role, it is argued that variants mirror Mill's changing opinions and attitudes towards positivism through time. More generally, the chapter illustrates how contextual approaches to the history of political thought may be enriched when viewing texts under discussion as historically contingent objects.

Naturalistic metaphors and the vocabularies of experimental sciences strikingly pervade the concluding book of Mill's *Logic*, where he lays down the methods and goals of the historical science of society. The principles of order and progress discussed in chapter three and four are examples. Along with them, chapter six, titled 'Natural Imagery and Metaphors in Mill's Science of Society', discusses other instances, which unveil Mill's project to study society as guided by metaphoric thinking. In line with other philosophical theories of his epoch, Mill borrows vocabulary and images from biology, mechanics, astronomy and mathematics. A rhetorical, linguistic-based analysis of these semantic transfers provides an interpretation of how metaphoric utterances

shape Mill's arguments and political claims. Metaphors help him characterise the object under investigation, opening up a new imaginative horizon that determines the limits of conceivable knowledge and future actions. Such reading requires, nevertheless, taking a stance on the role metaphors and analogies play in contemporary scholarly interpretations. To that end the chapter sketches an ongoing interdisciplinary debate with a view on a contextual approach to Mill's political thought.

The last chapter, 'Mill's Concept of Nationality: Enriching Contemporary Interpretations through Contextual History', calls into question some prevailing accounts of the nationality debate whereby Mill ranks as a forerunner of liberal or civic nationalism. An isolated reading of Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* serves in many scholarly studies as the starting point for arguing a normative view of political liberalism capable of combining both individual liberties with communal identity and cultural rights. Chapter seven argues an interpretation of Mill's concept of nationality that challenges this view by going beyond Mill's most studied text as regards the issue of nationality.

My reading pivots around three points made in three previous chapters. In the first place, the interpretation builds on chapter six's analysis of Mill's metaphoric use of scientific vocabularies. In *A System of Logic* Mill defines nationality as a principle of *cohesion*, which is a term rooted in the language of physics by the time Mill uses it. In the second place, this definition stands as an addition for the *Logic*'s third edition, thus pulling a thread from the fifth chapter's analysis of textual revision. Third, Mill understands nationality as one of the conditions for social stability, contributing to order, social stability and peace. The chapter then goes deep into Mill's understanding of order as one of the basic political principles that governments have to promote. While relying on these claims, the argument benefits from Quentin Skinner's approach to the history of political ideas and focuses on both what the term cohesion means by the time Mill employs it and the historical and intellectual background of his thought. It becomes apparent that national feelings matter to Mill not intrinsically, but in virtue of their effectiveness in promoting social cooperation.

3. The Thesis's Findings

John Stuart Mill's writings continue to attract great attention nowadays particularly among scholars from disciplines such as philosophy, history, political science and economics, but also, though to a lesser extent, within legal studies, psychology and educational sciences. There is, however, a wide agreement that he makes his most important contributions in the fields of moral and political philosophy, where he is frequently recognised as an extremely influential intellectual of the mid-Victorian period. Some of his texts, like *On Liberty* (1859) and *Utilitarianism* (1861), have become an obliged reference when it comes to explaining political liberalism and the utilitarian moral theory respectively. These texts have gathered much scholarly attention, along with other maturity works such as *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) and *The Subjection of Women* (1869). The focus on Mill's most popular later writings has resulted in a somewhat distorted picture of Mill's political philosophy where his earlier writings are comparatively less studied and deemed as less representative of the major themes of his work. His 'late political and moral writings', as Ross Harrison points out, are 'most significant for us', though 'not the largest or most serious works that he wrote'.[6]

The dissertation attempts to depict Mill as an eclectic thinker whose writings take root in a variety of philosophical traditions that appear consequently weaved together. Mill himself takes pride in his 'many-sidedness' referring to his ability to 'building bridges and clearing the paths' that connected two rival schools of thought. Commentators like James Fitzjames Stephen, Gertrude Himmelfarb and Isaiah Berlin have regarded this heterogeneity as justifying the charge of incoherency, ultimately postulating the existence of 'two Mills', each with a different and mutually incompatible message.[7] Against Mill's 'intellectual schizophrenia' John Rees, Alan Ryan and John Gray, among others, have argued a so-called revisionist position that

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[6] Ross Harrison, 'John Stuart Mill, Mid-Victorian', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 296.
[7] James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* [1874], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967; Gertrude Himmelfarb, 'Introduction', in John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974, 7-49; Isaiah Berlin, 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life', in *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, 132-51.

presents Mill as a more systematic thinker.[8] Without engaging directly in this debate, the dissertation highlights how Mill's earlier writings, and particularly *A System of Logic* (1843), can be significant for an understanding of his later publications. Mill's science of society, which he describes in the *Logic*'s last volume, intends to guide political behaviour or the 'art' of politics. I explore in what ways the issues he deals with in this treatise underlie later works, mainly by mapping out Mill's ideas of order and progress, the role of history, and his concept of nationality throughout his writings.

Whether scholars take a stance on the 'two Mills' issue or not, his methodological and political views remain often unrelated. Mill's *Logic* is widely regarded as a work on the philosophy of science or scientific methodology, and only secondarily relevant to understand his political philosophy. Notwithstanding the fact that it is in the *Logic* where Mill establishes the scientific credentials of the science of society, by which he refers to both political and social science, the attention turns generally to his maturity and most popular works nowadays, which adopt a clear political tone.[9] Present-day interpretations of Mill largely depend, accordingly, on the way he deals with the topics that concerned him in these essays. Downplaying the long-standing relevance of the *Logic* amounts to disregarding that, to Mill's eyes, politics should be based on a robust, though not scientifically exact, knowledge of society. True, Mill thinks that his task in writing the *Logic* is to 'work out principles' which are abstract and 'of use for all times'. Yet he equally defends that such abstractions should have a practical application in 'morals, government, law, education, [and] above all self-education'.[10] The dissertation shows in this regard that it is only through a scientific study of society and history that Mill is able to establish 'order' and 'progress', or 'permanence' and 'progression', as the two main interests of society, as chapters two and three argue.

When studying Mill's earlier writings, unfolding the sources from which he draws inspiration becomes a crucial task. After his famous 'mental crisis', Mill concludes that

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[8] John C. Rees, 'The Thesis of the "Two Mills" ', *Political Studies*, 25, 1977, 369-82; Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, second edn, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1987; John Gray, *Mill On Liberty: A Defence*, second edn, London and New York, Routledge, 1996; John Gray, 'John Stuart Mill: Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations', in *Literature of Liberty: A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought*, 2, II, 1979, 7-37.

[9] See the same point in Frederick Rosen's recent monograph on Mill, Frederick Rosen, *Mill*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, 1-30.

[10] John Stuart Mill to John Sterling, 20 October 1831, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, XII, 78.

Benthamism is fundamentally flawed, although not completely. I devote attention to this turning point in his establishing as an independent thinker, which leads him to read and study Coleridge and the Coleridgean school of thought, and a number of French thinkers and historians, such as Auguste Comte, François Guizot and Henri de Saint-Simon, among others. Much as he criticises some aspects of his utilitarian education, he does not wholly embrace these new approaches, thus remaining faithful to his preferred practice: bringing into dialectical conflict rival points of view.[11] Mill's reading of Coleridge, Comte and Guizot, for instance, seems to be fuelled by his maxim of many-sidedness, whereby he makes his own what he finds worth keeping from these theories, entwining them with his existing beliefs. In line with recent scholarly studies the dissertation examines a selection of Mill's earlier intellectual influences that, belonging to conservatives or not clearly liberal traditions of thought, deserve a close analysis.[12]

My interpretation of Mill's social and political thought relies on a wide-ranging selection of his texts, though by no means exhaustive. Along with his best-known works, special attention has been devoted to the so-called minor essays, newspaper articles, private correspondence, book reviews, parliamentary speeches, public talks, pamphlets and his autobiography. Mill's texts emerge as fundamentally embedded in their historical and intellectual contexts, taking part in public ongoing controversies and trying to make sense of social and political reality. Different editions of dictionaries published in Mill's time, as well as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* helped me study the changing meanings of the concepts that mid-Victorians employ. Finally, the dissertation reviews some selected studies belonging to the vast amount of secondary literature on Mill and nineteenth-century moral and political philosophy.

In order to place Mill's thought within a wider historical and intellectual setting, the dissertation examines a debate in Victorian Britain on how to increase social welfare while guaranteeing political stability. In this regard, I consider a number of widely-read newspapers and political pamphlets and the writings of some outstanding intellectuals. Among the examined newspapers are *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* or *The*

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[11] I develop this claim in the first chapter.

[12] See for instance Vincent Guillin, *Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill on Sexual Equality: Historical, Methodological and Philosophical Issues*, Leiden, Brill, 2009; Rosen, *Mill*, 97-130; Georgios Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', *History of Political Thought*, XX, 2, 1999.

Economist, which provide new channels to explore the social context and how people discussed pressing political issues. Along with Mill, I study the writings of several 'public moralists', such as Samuel Coleridge, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, Frederic Harrison, Samuel Alexander and Walter Bagehot. The heterogeneity of textual sources offers a snapshot of Victorian political concerns where England, represented as a peaceful and prosperous society, stands as an exemplary model in contrast to the growing number of unresolved international conflicts and revolutionary turmoil. Several pages of this dissertation deal with the ordinary ways of thinking about politics and the popular recasting of political theories.

The fluid and contingent character of Mill's texts deserves a particular mention as one of the sources of my study. I take advantage of John M. Robson's admirable variorum edition of the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, thanks to which scholars gain access to Mill's fascinating process of rewriting and revising his texts in their subsequent editions. To my knowledge, the relevance of such process has not been assessed beyond isolated examples. I approach this issue in chapters five and seven. Mill's personal and intellectual relationship with Auguste Comte may be seen under a different light in chapter five in virtue of a group of emendations, whereas in chapter seven textual variants lead to a nuanced interpretation of Mill's concept of nationality. I provide some background methodological reflections on the interpretive challenges of dealing with different versions of a philosophical work. These rather preliminary insights open up a debate in which a contextual approach to the history of ideas proves useful to grasp the peculiar character of Mill's writings. Still, several epistemological questions on the nature of texts as changing historical sources need to be addressed, which calls for further exchange between the disciplines of textual criticism, philosophy and the history of political thought.

Together with a heterogeneous selection of textual sources, the thesis's methodological approach suggests a new way of reading them. The emphasis is placed not only on what Mill's texts mean but also on what he is doing when writing what he wrote, in line with the heuristics that the so-called 'New History of Political Thought' advocates. Fleshing out this claim requires transcending the textual boundaries themselves, thus regarding both Mill's and his contemporaries' thought as inextricably linked with their historical and intellectual contexts. Accordingly, the dissertation does

not devote a separate chapter to explaining the historical, biographical and intellectual ambience, as it is common practice in some monographs on major political thinkers. Mill's background, both historical and intellectual, plays an important role in our reading of his social and political thought and gains prominence in each of the essays that makes up this dissertation.

By attending to both the rhetorical and contingent character of Mill's texts it becomes possible to both grasp some frequently neglected aspects of his theories and challenge some prevailing readings of his thought. A study of his use of scientific vocabulary and naturalistic images, for instance, throws light on the crossroads between scientific and political languages in both Mill's thought and the Victorian context. Mill's metaphors help him legitimise a new science while describing human understanding as capable of rationally describing social and political phenomena. Moreover, focusing on Mill's argumentative strategies helps clarify pre-Darwinian attempts to explain social change using models and images from the natural sciences. A concern about the historical configuration of Mill's political thought likewise yields some clues as to how Mill regards national feelings and their significance. Over the last decades academic literature has depicted Mill as a liberal or civic nationalist who adopts cultural identity feelings as the main criterion for political organisation. In these accounts, Mill's decontextualised idea of nationality serves as an exemplary model thanks to which a normative view of liberal nationalism makes sense. I suggest that these interpretations are misleading by attending to both Mill's rhetorical use of concepts and historical background.

Questions of method are central to this study of Mill's moral and political thought, as I further explain in the next section. It entails, accordingly, an interdisciplinary approach to his political philosophy that addresses the fields of philosophy, history, linguistics and political science. Questioning commonly unproblematic interpretive assumptions may enrich our research practices, thus reinvigorating a philosophical debate on the best-suited methods to understand the history of political thought. In this regard, the dissertation benefits from an ongoing debate on the different ways to assess the link between political thought, language and history that may be traced back to the 1960s writings of Reinhart Koselleck, Quentin Skinner and John Pocock, among others, and continues nowadays engaging scholars from a variety of disciplines. Leaning on

their theories this dissertation studies how Mill and his contemporaries conceptualised the social and political world that surrounded them, which in turns contributes to reassess some widespread conclusions that dominate the secondary literature on Mill.

4. Debates on Method: The Study of the History of Political Thought

The questions concerning what requires careful attention, what counts as a problem and how to tackle it guide scholars' present-day interpretations of past texts. Our attempts to understand the history of philosophy, and more particularly the history of political thought, result from the responses to such questions. Notably, scholars do not necessarily need to devote time to justifying their methodological approach or elaborating on these questions. Very frequently textual interpretation takes for granted a set of more or less clear ideas about the goals and means of reading historical sources. When authors spell out these issues, it sometimes appears as a prelude to the proper study of the subject, or to put it in Michael Freeden's words, as '[being] the overindulgent preliminary to talking about what really matters'.[13] In this dissertation, contrarily, my reading of Mill's writings and those of his contemporaries implies and originates in a set of methodological concerns. I understand methodological assumptions both as determining what requires our scholarly attention and as 'the key to deciphering the secrets contained in written texts and oral utterances'.[14] Not confined to a unique introductory essay, methodological remarks spread throughout the different chapters that make up the dissertation, guiding the selection of problems as regards Mill's social and political thought and the suggested answers to them.

John Pocock's and Quentin Skinner's theoretical writings, and to a lesser extent the work of Reinhart Koselleck, have provided the methodological starting point for the development of this study.[15] Some decades ago they brought into focus questions about method and still today remain as pivotal figures for those scholars that seek to unfold the relationship between language, history and political thought. Instead of regarding

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[13] Michael Freeden, *Liberal Languages: Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, 9.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] See for instance John Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time* [1960], Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989; Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002.

texts as contributions to timeless debates, they suggest that written historical sources are better understood when interpreting them against their historical settings and focusing on the rhetorical uses of language. This way Pocock and Skinner, for instance, provide innovative readings of major political thinkers, such as Machiavelli and Hobbes, while challenging widespread interpretations of them.[16] Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte* rather focuses on the changing meanings of 'basic' political and social concepts and uses them as 'navigational instruments of historical movement'.[17] Adopting a comparative approach, and highlighting the points of convergence between these authors, scholars such as Melvin Richter and Kari Palonen mediate my reading of the so-called German and Anglophone modes of analysing political thought.[18]

The suggested interpretations of Mill's writings gravitate towards Skinner's and Pocock's distinctive programmes of textual interpretation and historical research, partly because the focus on the Victorian context does not favour a long-term history of concepts. Still, Koselleck's emphasis on the plasticity of political language and the role of metaphor in conceptual change have proved valuable, particularly to understand Mill's use of scientific jargon and the widespread use of the ideas of order and progress.[19] When commenting on these research programmes, Richter remarks that 'Pocock and Skinner have seldom ventured beyond the late eighteen century',[20] which leads to believe that more academic work needs to be done in assessing nineteenth-century political thought from the Pocock-Skinner perspective.

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[16] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975; Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996; Peter Laslett's edition of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* inaugurates a new perspective that paves the way for subsequent interpretations of Locke, while serving as a source of inspiration to Skinner. See Peter Laslett, 'Editor's Introduction', in John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960, vii-xxii.

[17] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Time and Revolutionary Language', *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 9, 2, 1983, 124, quoted in Kari Palonen, 'Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives on Conceptual Change: Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 3, 48, 1999, 41-59. See also Koselleck, 'Introduction (Einleitung) to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 6, 1, 2011, 7-8.

[18] Melvin Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995; Kari Palonen, 'An Application of Conceptual History to Itself', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 1, 1997, 39–69; Palonen, 'Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives on Conceptual Change: Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck'.

[19] See chapters four, six and seven.

[20] Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts*, 125; Freeden brings to our attention the fact that the contextual approach has not been sufficiently 'cashed out in existing research on the nineteenth and twentieth century', Freeden, *Liberal Languages*, 8.

Authors like John Burrow, Donald Winch and Stefan Collini, however, whose names frequently appear under the umbrella of the 'Sussex School of Intellectual History', have since the 1980s devoted some illuminating monographs to Victorian political thought.[21] Their approach to intellectual history dovetails with those of Skinner and Pocock although '[eschewing] adherence to any of the methodological programmes or tight conceptual schemes'.[22] In a nutshell, they share an 'attempt to recover past ideas and re-situate them in their intellectual contexts in ways which resist the anachronistic or otherwise tendentious and selective pressures exerted by contemporary academic and political polemic'.[23] The dissertation takes up and elaborates on their stimulating readings of nineteenth-century British society and politics.

The attention to methodological issues improves our understanding of the history of political thought, and precisely of Mill's social and political writings, in a number of ways. A contextual history of Mill's arguments depicts him as deeply concerned about the social and political problems that surrounded him. Mill's thought is regarded from the perspective of linguistic action, as a historical event 'happening in a context which defines the kind of [event it is]'.[24] In an attempt to better understand political institutions, Mill joins some of his contemporaries when proposing a science of society, even if his endorsement of individual free will distinguishes his project from more deterministic endeavours. Although Mill admits that his results serve only as guidance for political decisions, social stability and progress represent the two major antagonistic goals that every government should pursue. He shares this perspective with some of his contemporaries, both high-minded intellectuals and ordinary political actors, who equally feared and hoped for deep unprecedented socio-political transformations of their time. Actively engaging in contemporary debates, Mill's writings draw on those political and philosophical perspectives available to him.

The idea of an antagonistic balance brings to light the internal tension that he ends up cherishing between competing intellectual influences. The study of the way Guizot,

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[21] A paradigmatic example is Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, and more recently Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young, eds., *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[22] Stefan Collini, 'General Introduction', in *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, 14.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time*, 11. See a similar point in Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, 115-20.

Comte and Coleridge leave their imprint on Mill's theories contributes to a deeper understanding of the richness of his thought. Far from stylised versions of Mill's political liberalism, a contextual understanding presents his writings as a nodal point where several heterogeneous philosophical traditions play their part. A richly textured account of Mill's context and writings contributes to recast liberalism as a historically determined, pluralistic narrative that encompasses an overlapping and 'multidisciplinary genealogy' concerning, as Freeden has pointed out, the disciplines of 'politics, psychology, sociology, management, biology'.[25]

An analysis of Mill's argumentative use of a selection of concepts forms the backbone of most chapters. Revolving around the concepts of antagonism, history, order, progress, nationality and a group of terms widely used in the vocabularies of the natural sciences, the emphasis lies on the way Mill either accepts or challenges a set of social and linguistic conventions. In other words, in what ways he contributes to a pre-existing conversation by arguing for or against certain issues, or describing facts under a different light.[26] Their particular relevance to understand Mill's arguments sets the criterion for the selection of concepts. Progress, for instance, ranks as a 'basic concept' according to Koselleck's terminology, although the metaphoric expressions to which chapter six is devoted would not fall into this category. Still, a close look into Mill's use of natural and scientific imagery provides a yet unexplored viewpoint for assessing his thought. Emphasising the cognitive function of metaphoric expressions, I deal with some examples of Mill's rhetorical strategies to legitimise his political views, which casts light into the argumentative convergence between natural and social and political sciences.

Chapters three and four examine the joint argumentative usage of two vague and highly polysemous concepts, such as order and progress, and how that use determines their historical meanings. Whereas 'progress' has been one of the main focus of scholarly attention, its argumentative relationship with other political concepts has aroused less interest. Drawing on this neglected area both chapters examine how the concept of progress is jointly used with that of order choosing a twofold target. To this

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[25] Freeden, *Liberal Languages*, 8. A synchronic analysis throws light only on certain aspects of liberalism, which contributes to depict the ideological family of liberalisms. For a comprehensive picture see Freeden, 'The "Grand Projects" of Liberalism', in *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, 141-77.
[26] Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, 115.

end, chapter three goes deep into Mill's writings, while chapter four studies the academic writings of some prominent Victorian intellectuals, along with a selection of newspaper articles and political pamphlets published from the 1840s until the end of the nineteenth century. As a result, it may be seen how the public usage of order and progress fairly corresponds with the writings of intellectuals, which points to a common context of debate. In offering a window into ordinary political thinking in nineteenth-century Britain from 1840 to 1899, the chapter elaborates on Michael Freeden's criticisms of the existing bias towards 'great thinkers' in the study of the history of political thought. It challenges and contributes to blur the distinction between 'primary and secondary texts', or first- and second-rate evidence when investigating political thought, which Freeden regards as customary among political philosophers and some historians.[27]

The example illustrates how a contextual methodological approach may determine the results of academic research by changing both the way of interrogating sources and even the criteria for selecting what counts as relevant historical evidence in the study of political thought. Victorian periodicals provide new channels to explore widespread beliefs and political arguments in use and in continuous transformation, that is, how people discussed pressing political issues and how political theories were popularised. Chapter five stands as a further example by considering Mill's writing process and the history of the publication of his *Logic*. Textual variants, occurring throughout eight different editions over a period of twenty-nine years, open the way for assessing the motives for Mill's emendations, which in turn echo his historical and intellectual contexts. While scholars have emphasised the limitless readings that philosophical texts afford, my aim is to call into question the tacitly assumed idea of what a text is by addressing their fluidity and instability. Although overlooked in this regard, Mill's texts are historically contingent objects that change with the passage of time. While a contextual approach to the history of political thought has consciously used 'non-canonized sources' as a means to revising our interpretation of 'canonized thinkers',[28] textual plurality has largely escaped the notice of contemporary scholars.

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[27] Freeden, *Liberal Languages*, 11.
[28] Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2003, 3. On this point see Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 101-105.

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'The Collision of Adverse Opinions':
Views on Social and Political Antagonism[1]

Yet truth, in everything but mathematics, is not a single but a double question […].
There is no knowledge, and no assurance of right belief, but with him
who can both confute the opposite opinion,
and successfully defend his own against confutation.[2]

This chapter examines the outstanding role of the idea of antagonism throughout John Stuart Mill's life and writings. Following his arguments, I understand antagonism in a broad sense, concerning opposite points of view in debates, but also conflicting methodological and philosophical approaches. The clash between divergent standpoints and different sets of values has in Mill's writings an all-pervading importance as regards society and politics. I agree with Nadia Urbinati that Mill scholars 'overemphasize his moral philosophy and give his thought an antipolitical twist'.[3] It shall be seen that Mill's multifaceted concept of antagonism reveals his understanding of politics as a persuasive, ubiquitous activity. The analysis illuminates, moreover, some overlooked aspects that link his historical, methodological, social and political views.

By placing disagreements at their core, parliaments typically drive social antagonisms into political institutions. The deliberative processes and argumentative confrontation, that is, speaking for and against, underline the rhetorical character of

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[2] John Stuart Mill, *Grote's Plato* (1866), in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, XI, 411.
[3] Nadia Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy: From the Athenian Polis to Representative Government*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002, 203.

parliamentary politics.[4] In a similar sense, Mill depicts parliamentary activity as a dialectical battle between advocates of different points of view. During his period as a parliamentarian, he promotes a far-reaching reform to guarantee authentic political confrontation and keeping Westminster as an effective Parliament.

Yet Mill's idea of controversial antagonism does not limit to Parliament nor is it always strictly rhetorical. The distinctive character of Mill's parliamentary politics becomes apparent when drawing our attention to a wide concept of antagonism. As Kari Palonen remarks, 'in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the parliamentary style of deliberative rhetoric also surpasses national parliaments and shapes much of the deliberations in governmental, local, intra-party and intra-associational politics as well as inter- and supranational organisations'.[5] Going further in this direction, 'parliamentarism as a particular style of politics' not only moulds assemblies that mirror decision-making processes.[6] The conflict between dissenting opinions, according to Mill, also accounts for the history of European civilisation and provides him with an approach to the study of society. Urbinati's call for a political shift shows that the struggle between competing points of views builds up a comprehensive picture of Mill's ideas in political context.

In the first section I consider Mill's debt to François Guizot and Samuel Coleridge as regards the relevance of antagonism and social pluralism in the history of European society. The chapter then continues by focusing on one of his best-known essays, *On Liberty*, where he stresses the role that genuine argumentative discussion plays in decision-making processes. They ideally require, according to Mill, social heterogeneity and the existence of multiple viewpoints in contention. The third section deals with the manner in which Mill's portray of society determines his methodological approach to the study social events. It argues that the method's general layout reflects opposite social features. A biographical reading of Mill's involvement in some debating societies, as the fourth section examines, offers yet another point of view from which to

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[4] Suvi Soininen and Tapani Turkka, 'Introduction', in *The Parliamentary Style of Politics*, ed. Suvi Soininen and Tapani Turkka, Helsinki, Finnish Political Science Association, 2008, 9-10; Kari Palonen, 'Speaking Pro et Contra: The Rhetorical Intelligibility of Parliamentary Politics and the Political Intelligibility of Parliamentary Rhetoric', in *The Parliamentary Style of Politics*, 82-83; Palonen, *The Politics of Limited Times: The Rhetoric of Temporal Judgement in Parliamentary Democracies*, Baden-Baden, Nomos, 2008, 139-41.
[5] Palonen, *The Politics of Limited Times*, 139.
[6] Soininen and Turkka, 'Introduction', in *The Parliamentary Style of Politics*, 9.

assess the relevance of a dialectical conflict in his writings. The chapter ends by studying how Mill understands parliamentary politics. Some of his political speeches and reform proposals shall be interpreted as an attempt to both increase people's involvement in public decision processes and improve deliberative practices within parties and parliamentary assemblies.

1.1 Antagonistic Forces in the History of Modern Civilisation: Guizot and Coleridge

This section discusses the idea of antagonism in Mill's views on the distinctive features of European history. Mill argues that the possibility of publicly confronting different opinions, values and interests is crucial for a successful social development. Following François Guizot and Samuel Coleridge, Mill insists that diversity and social antagonism account for England's and in general Europe's favourable conditions at that time. As Georgios Varouxakis has shown, scholars have downplayed Guizot's philosophical influence on Mill by focusing almost exclusively on the personal and intellectual relationship between the latter and Alexis de Tocqueville.[7] Academic literature has only superficially pointed out that Mill borrows Guizot's idea of antagonism, but does not deal in depth with the topic.[8] In what follows, I explore Mill's debt to Guizot in this respect.

Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History contains Mill's opinions about the distinguishing features of modern European civilisation. Whereas in ancient societies one single power, military, religious or economic, exercised an overriding influence over public affairs, modern civilisation permits a 'systematic antagonism' or inherent confrontation of interests. Diversity and conflict between different social and political groups and ideas explain Europe's more developed condition. Only in such

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[7] See e.g. Iris Wessel Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1956, 59, 64; Georgios Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', *History of Political Thought*, 20, 2, 1999.

[8] Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 157; Michael Levin, *Mill on Civilization and Barbarism*, London, Routledge, 2004, 117; Aurelian Craiutu, *Liberalism Under Siege: The Political Thought of the French Doctrinaires*, Oxford, Lexington Books, 2003, 7, 15, 37; notable exceptions are Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', *History of Political Thought*, and Varouxakis, *Victorian Political Thought on France and the French*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 35-43.

circumstances, argues Mill, 'stability and progressiveness can be permanently reconciled to one another'.[9] Mill's wording deserves a more detailed consideration. He refers to Guizot's second lecture of the *Cours d'histoire moderne*, which contrasts the 'remarkable simplicity' and 'unity' of ancient civilisation with the 'confused, diversified, [and] stormy' modern societies, where 'all principles of social organization co-exist' in continuous struggle (*lutte*).[10] In Europe 'la liberté est résultée de la variété des éléments de la civilisation, et de l'état de lutte dans lequel ils ont constamment vécu'.[11] Noticeably, Guizot's lecture does not use at all the term 'antagonism,' and perhaps more revealing, neither does he particularly stresses the need of reconciling 'stability and progressiveness' as opposites, which features prominently in Mill's review. I argue in this regard that Coleridge mediates Mill's reading of Guizot. Coleridge provides Mill with the idea of social equilibrium, which fits Guizot's theory.

Mill had already published an overall appraisal of Coleridge's philosophy in 1840, five years before his review on Guizot appeared. In his article Mill fully grasps the importance Coleridge attaches to the balance between differing interests, labeled under the headings of 'permanence' and 'progression'.[12] The state consists in the interplay of 'two antagonist powers or opposite interests,' corresponding to two social groups, whose goals are mutually exclusive: the 'interest of permanence,' represented by those who own land or work in agriculture, and the 'interest of progression,' embodied in the

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[9] *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History* (1845), CW, XX, 267-70. See the same point in *On Liberty*: 'Europe is, in my judgment, wholly indebted to this plurality of paths for its progressive and many-sided development', *On Liberty*, (1859), CW, XVIII, 274. Mill refers to Alexis de Tocqueville, who in turn has adopted the idea from Guizot.

[10] François P. G. Guizot, *Cours d'histoire moderne: histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe*, Paris, Pichon et Didier, 1828, 3-12.

[11] Guizot, 'Deuxiemme leçon', 25 avril 1828, *Cours d'histoire moderne: histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe*, Paris, Pichon et Didier, 1828, 10; on the same conclusion as regards England see Guizot, 'Quatorzième leçon', 18 juillet 1828, *Cours d'histoire moderne*, 7.

[12] *Coleridge* (1840) CW, X, 151-52, 155; see also Mill's letter to John Sterling, 28 September 1839, *The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848, Part II*, CW, XIII, 408. Although Guizot's influence on Mill has been, as mentioned before, underestimated, commentators dealing with Mill's reception of Coleridge have clearly pointed out that Mill borrows the Coleridgean principles of permanence and progression. Frederick Rosen, 'Mill on Coleridge', *Telos: Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios Utilitaristas*, XII, 2, 17-31, 2003, 29-30; Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. Nadia Urbinati and Alex Zakaras, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 124-46; Christopher Turk, *Coleridge and Mill: A Study of Influence*, Aldershot, Avebury, 1988, 171; John M. Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, 73-74; Robert Devigne, *Reforming Liberalism: J. S. Mill's Use of Ancient, Christian, Liberal, and Romantic Moralities*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006, 87-92.

commercial classes.[13] Coleridge maintains that conflicting forces remain together 'by equipoise and interdependency' and evokes the image of a magnet whose opposite poles 'tend to union'.[14] Coleridge's *On the Constitution of the Church and State* justifies England's ascendancy by referring to 'the antagonist powers' that have remained historically counterbalanced.[15] The conclusion is similar to Guizot's *Cours*, but a comparative reading reveals subtle differences between their theories. Yet Mill's account of the historical achievements of European civilisation fuses Guizot's and Coleridge's ideas together.

Guizot's version of antagonism regards mere struggle between different social forces as the main reason for the progress of civilisation, whereas Coleridge provides an insight into how this conflict takes place, giving prominence to the need for balance between opposite interests.[16] Guizot thus celebrates diversity and antagonism *per se*, since they would in turn promote the general improvement of society; Coleridge's argument assumes that antagonism gives rise to equilibrium, and therefore progress. It goes without saying that both viewpoints are closely related, fully compatible and even complementary, as Mill seems to have noticed. But only for Coleridge social improvement is a dialectic process, a reconciliation between antagonistic powers that still does not withdraw the differences between them.[17] Constant rivalry among social groups does not disappear, according to both Coleridge and Mill, since this would mean that progress would be no longer possible.

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[13] Samuel T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each*, London, Hurst, Chance & Co, 1830, 18; see also Pamela Edwards, *The Statesman's Science: History, Nature and Law in the Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, 185. Note that Coleridge does use the term 'antagonism', as well as the pair 'permanence/progression'. The role of opposites in Coleridge's philosophy has been well documented. Mary A. Perkins, 'Religious Thinker', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. Lucy Newlyn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 187, 192-93; Edwards, *The Statesman's Science*, 184-87; John Morrow, *Coleridge's Political Thought: Property, Morality and the Limits of Traditional Discourse*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990, 115-20; Basil Willey, *Nineteenth-Century Studies: Coleridge to Mathew Arnold*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1949, 19-21, 44-46. His theory of opposite social forces makes better sense when connected with his 'general biological theory of life'. See for instance Coleridge, *Hints Toward the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life*, Philadelphia, Lea and Blanchard, 1848, 63; Edwards, *The Statesman's Science*, 152.
[14] Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, 18.
[15] Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, 17; Perkins, 'Religious Thinker', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, 193.
[16] See also chapter three.
[17] Devigne, *Reforming Liberalism*, 88.

1.2. The Place of Dissenters in *On Liberty*

Closely related to the previous topic, this section explores Mill's main arguments in *On Liberty* justifying and encouraging the clash of opinions over social and political issues as part of both individual self-development and society's general welfare. Antagonism is not only a descriptive tool, which helps explain Europe's success, as shown above, but also has a normative value: antagonism aims for good decisions that promote common interests.

Mill certainly encourages social heterogeneity already in the motto of one his most popular works, when restating Alexander von Humboldt's opinion on the 'absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity'.[18] Mill has in mind Victorian all-pervasive moral values, which threaten individuality, originality and eccentricity, bringing about social uniformity and paralysing improvement. Mill fears that progress is not possible where the 'despotism of custom' rules.[19] His response to the problem, encouraging freedom of speech, particularly echoes Guizot's beliefs. Since men are fallible, Mill argues, truth should be a common enterprise. There are three typical cases in which public deliberative processes help achieving the truth. First, when a person is right, the only way of knowing it for sure is by facing supporters of the opposite opinion: if the received opinion is true, 'a conflict with the opposite error is essential to a clear apprehension and deep feeling of its truth'.[20]

Second, only through discussion a person may realise that he or she is wrong. In the third case, more common that the previous two examples, 'the conflicting doctrines […] share the truth between them'.[21] A good decision results from a combination or a 'balance' between divergent perspectives. Far from the Guizotian bare struggle, Mill opts for Coleridge's theory of counterbalanced forces. In everything but mathematics, according to Mill, widely held opinions 'are often true, but seldom or never the whole truth',[22] hence the necessity of 'correcting and completing' personal opinions through

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[18] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 215; see also pp. 261-62.
[19] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 272-75.
[20] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 252; also pp. 242-43.
[21] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 252.
[22] *Ibid*.

argumentative discussion.[23] Elsewhere, Mill praises this practice that he calls 'many-sidedness of mind'.[24]

Classical rhetoric and Socratic dialectics help Mill illustrate the importance of actually facing opponents.[25] It is not an artificial or contrived debate what makes truth emerge, but the effective 'collision of adverse opinions'.[26] Those who support particular opinions should actually encounter genuine opponents, though Mill still thinks adversaries can be imagined if real ones would be missing.[27] The fragment, from which the article takes its title, reads:

> [T]hough the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.[28]

Even though Mill is a 'seeker for truth', this goal does not rule out discrepancies in opinion and antagonism at the public sphere of debate.[29] Dissensus and, perhaps more emphatically, dissenters remain at the centre of his social and political thinking. Mill is fully aware, thanks to Guizot and Coleridge, that when social disagreement does not take place, progress will not be possible.

Urbinati's reading of Mill's political philosophy underlines the centrality of rhetoric, discussion and political disagreement, as well as the powerful presence of ancient Greek philosophy in his writings. I agree with Urbinati that even if he 'did not produce a comprehensive theory of deliberation, that notion provides a key to his political theory'.[30] Her novel approach illuminates a neglected aspect of Mill's thought by focusing on his idea of deliberation not as a tool devised 'to reach a consensus, and

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[23] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 232, 245.
[24] *Autobiography* (1873) CW, I, 171; *Obituary of Bentham* (1832), CW, X, 498; see Wendy Donner, 'Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy', in *Mill*, ed. Wendy Donner and Richard Fumerton, Chichester, Willey-Blackwell, 2009, 61; Kevin C. O'Rourke, *John Stuart Mill and Freedom of Expression: The Genesis of a Theory*, London, Routledge, 2001, 75-93.
[25] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 242, 251.
[26] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 258.
[27] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 245.
[28] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 258.
[29] Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, London, Longmans, 1882, 157-58.
[30] Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy*, 1.

bury dissent,' but rather 'to reach decisions' that do not imply consensus.[31] The decision-making process contributes to the general interest and, being always open to revision, do not annihilate differences or disagreements. Mill's 'general interest do not exist prior to debate,' hence there are no extra-political criteria guiding deliberation.[32]

Urbinati's formulation draws nonetheless too closely on contemporary debates on deliberative democracy when she labels Mill's general approach as an 'agonistic model of deliberative democracy' in contrast to a 'consensus model of democracy'.[33] I agree with Brandon Turner's criticism in pointing out that Mill's 'politics are antagonistic, but they are not agonistic'.[34] Beside Turner's suggestions, I would not describe Mill's perspective as agonistic for two reasons. First, Mill does not use the terms 'agonism' or 'agonistic' to refer to the positive social effects of disagreement and seems to prefer 'antagonism.' In that respect, I think Urbinati may be bringing into play a notion rooted in twentieth-century debates over political and democratic deliberation. Even if the term 'agonism' exists at Mill's time, it was not used to refer to political reality.[35] The 1856 *Johnson's Dictionary* does not include the term, although 'agonistes' means 'prize fighter'.[36] Indeed, 'agon' refers to 'a public celebration of games, a contest for the prize at those games'.[37] In the second place, 'antagonism' better grasps Mill's multidimensional idea of constructive social conflict. Even if Turner makes a point concerning Mill's approach, he develops his argument alongside 'agonistic critiques of liberalism'.[38] Perhaps for that reason he fails to take into account Mill's comprehensive idea of antagonism, which provides a framework for an understanding of the historical

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[31] Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy*, 4.

[32] Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy,* 82-83; Palonen, *The Politics of Limited Times*, 143-44.

[33] Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy*, 82.

[34] Brandon P. Turner, 'John Stuart Mill and the Antagonistic Foundation of Liberal Politics', *The Review of Politics*, 72, 2010, 38.

[35] Tim Fisken, 'Agonism', in *Encyclopedia of Political Theory*, ed. Mark Bevir, Los Angeles, Sage, 3 vols., I, 2010, 13. Moreover, Chantal Mouffe's very influential works on agonistic pluralism opposes agonism to antagonism, which would be incompatible with Urbinati's understanding, while failing to capture Mill's nuances. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, London and New York, Verso, 2000, 102-103; Mouffe, *On the Political*, London, Routledge, 2005, 20; Mouffe, 'Democratic Politics and the Dynamics of Passions', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Politics of Democratization in Europe: Concepts and Histories*, ed. Kari Palonen, Tuija Pulkkinen and José María Rosales, Farnham, Ashgate, 2008, 93.

[36] Samuel Johnson and Austin Nuttall, *Johnson's Dictionary of English Language*, London, Routledge, 1856, 6.

[37] 'Agon', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edn, CD-ROM, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992.

[38] Turner, 'John Stuart Mill and the Antagonistic Foundation of Liberal Politics', *The Review of Politics*, 27.

accomplishments of European society, as already explained, but also for the analysis of his methodological approach and his own intellectual maturing process. Antagonism is not confined to rhetorical or dialectical expressions of disagreement, but goes well beyond those limits, as I try to show in the following sections.

1.3 Developing a Method: The Science of Society, Political Economy and Political Science

The appropriate method for the study of society is one of Mill's leading questions throughout his work. Consistently with his former views, in 1865 Mill insists: 'Social phenomena, like all others, present two aspects, the statical, and the dynamical; the phenomena of equilibrium, and those of motion. […] The dynamical aspect is that of social progress. The statics of society is the study of the conditions of existence and permanence of the social state'.[39] Despite his later disagreements with Auguste Comte, in the late 1830s, when Mill was devising a method to examine society in his *System of Logic* (1843), Comte's ideas strike him as particularly sound and perfectly compatible with Coleridge's division between permanence and progression.[40] Mirroring social phenomena, the science of society appears split into two branches. Social statics studies the 'conditions of stability in the social union,' whereas social dynamics focuses on 'the laws of progress'.[41] This division crystallises into the Comtean catchphrase 'order and progress,' which springs up in Mill's writings and eventually would become a positivist motto.

The conceptual plasticity of these formulas stimulates Mill's extensive usage in his methodological proposals to study the social world in its many forms, yet in every case conveying the idea of antagonistic forces that shape society. In 1848 Mill structures his work on political economy around the division between statics and dynamics.[42] As regards political science, in 1840 Mill considers the division of permanence and

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[39] *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), CW, X, 309.
[40] *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843), CW, VIII, 917-18; *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), CW, XIX, 384; on Mill's borrowings from Comte see Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 97-98. On the disagreements between Mill and Comte see chapter five.
[41] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 918. See also chapter three.
[42] *The Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848), CW, III, 705.

progression as a 'first step,' granting 'its manifest insufficiency'.[43] More extensively, in 1861, he admits that everything that promotes progress will contribute to the order of society and viceversa.[44] As for Mill's unwritten book on ethology, Alexander Bain ventures that Mill would have used the division between statics and dynamics as 'the basis of his arrangement'.[45]

Mill's attempts to systematically study social phenomena closely resemble each other as regards their basic outline. Both changeable and permanent elements receive equal attention, since it is society itself that possesses these antagonistic qualities. In other words, Mill's methodological approach places antagonism at their core, since it follows the defining characteristics of society. Yet the terms Mill uses to refer to them slightly vary, even if always preserving the form of a twofold division. Methodological reflections lie in this manner underneath his ideas of history, society and especially politics.[46] And Mill's defence of social antagonism, as explored in other sections of the present chapter, is consistent with these descriptions of social reality. As a way of examining how antagonism moves into the political decision-making process, and eventually his institutional reform proposal, the next part of the chapter discusses Mill's early experiences within debating societies and his reading of Jeremy Bentham and Coleridge.

1.4 Hearing Both Sides of the Subject: Mill's Personal Experience of Antagonism and his Intellectual Development

In what follows I attempt to read Mill's intellectual development as an independent thinker against the background of his education and young activism in debating societies. Mill's philosophical standpoint comes about as a result of his long-lived personal and intellectual struggle between competing schools of thought. For that reason a contextual analysis can particularly enrich our interpretation.

Under his father's influence, Mill reads some Platonic dialogues and Cicero as part of his early education. This can explain that he 'grew a good nose for a fallacious

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[43] *Coleridge*, CW, X 155.
[44] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 385-87.
[45] Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, 73.
[46] Rosen, 'Mill on Coleridge', *Telos: Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios Utilitaristas*, 144; Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, 91; Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 174.

argument', but surely his participation in some discussion groups also contributed to improve his argumentative skills.[47] Between 1822 and 1829 Mill regularly attended the meetings of the Society of Students of Mental Philosophy and the London Debating Society. The former was a reading group that met at George Grote's house. Mill's 'real inauguration as an original and independent thinker' dates back to these debates, as he himself acknowledges.[48] By facing opposite interlocutors Mill develops a new personal point of view and acquires the 'habit of never receiving half-solutions of difficulties as complete'.[49] It is worth mentioning that he also describes the outcome of his discussions at other debating societies in terms of achieving intellectual independence.[50]

When in 1828 the Coleridgeans join the London Debating Society, the 'philosophic radicals' and the 'Tory lawyers' outnumbered them. The discussion group mirrored the political arena in both ideological positions and debating practices. Hence, not surprisingly, some of its members later on became Members of Parliament.[51] Just as in *On Liberty* Mill argues for a genuine debate, here he praises that the Coleridgeans put forward 'the strongest arguments, […] thrown often into close and *serré* confutations of one another'.[52] The dialectical clashes help him shape his own philosophical and political opinions and would contribute to reach decisions at a more general level. Lively debate is equally useful both in and out of Parliament, as it will become clear in the next section.

Even though Mill admits that his experience at the London Debating Society was 'very useful,' perhaps the chief advantage he derives from these meetings is his acquaintance with the Coleridgeans, which changes his mind about Coleridge's theories. Mill goes, as Urbinati has put it, 'from being absorbed with the opinions of others for the sake of promoting or refuting them to longing for a critical understanding

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[47] Michael St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1954, 37.
[48] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 126.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] On his participation in the Cambridge Union, see *Autobiography*, CW, I, 79; in the Utilitarian Society, see *Autobiography*, CW, I, 83; for a general picture on British debating societies see Tary Haapala, 'Debating Societies, the Art of Rhetoric and the British House of Commons: Parliamentary Culture of Debate before and after the 1832 Reform Act', *Res Publica: Revista de Filosofía Política*, 27, 2012, 25-35 and Haapala, 'Parliament as a Model for Debating: Procedure Debates in the Cambridge and Oxford Union Societies', in *The Politics of Dissensus: Parliament in Debate*, ed. Kari Palonen, José María Rosales and Tapani Turkka, Santander, Cantabria University Press & McGraw-Hill, 2013 forthcoming.
[51] Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, 70.
[52] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 133.

of his own beliefs'.[53] Bain's biography portrays Mill as never 'afraid to encounter an able opponent' and willing to change his opinions on any subject.[54] Giving much thought to some of Coleridge's ideas, they eventually convince Mill. 'One-sidedness' was, as he admits to Thomas Carlyle, 'almost the one great evil in human affairs'.[55]

It is not an arbitrary guess that Mill has in mind his own personal history when in 1859 he writes that truth is often a balance between opposing ideological grounds only achievable when discussing the opposite sides of an issue.[56] Two instances stand out: his methodological proposal emerging from the controversy between his father, James Mill, and Thomas Macaulay, and his understanding of Coleridge and Bentham as 'completing counterparts'.[57] In 1829 Macaulay publishes a demolishing attack on James Mill's way of proceeding *a priori* in politics.[58] The interesting point is that even if Mill thinks Macaulay is wrong, 'there was truth in several of his strictures on [his] father's treatment of the subject'.[59] Again Mill takes a midway stance between both sides and advocates his own method to study society, the Inverse Deductive or Historical Method.

The second, and perhaps more revealing example, follows the Coleridgean exchange in the debating society and it is outspoken in Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge.[60] Bentham and Coleridge are 'the contrary of one another' when it comes to their philosophical and political opinions. They represent 'two sorts of men' to the extent that 'it would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another.[61] Yet, since opposite poles require each other, as Coleridge would have said, 'the points of view of all the fractional truths' should be

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[53] Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy*, 135.

[54] Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, 157-58. In 1911 Hobhouse states that Mill is 'always ready to put his own convictions to the proof, not because he doubts them, but because he believes in them', Leonard T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism* [1911], New York, Oxford University Press, 1964, 63, quoted in W. J. Stankiewicz, *In Search of a Political Philosophy: Ideologies at the Close of the Twentieth Century*, London, Routledge, 1993, 80.

[55] Mill to Thomas Carlyle, 12 January 1834, *The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1812-1848 Part I*, CW, XII, 205.

[56] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 252.

[57] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 121.

[58] Thomas B. Macaulay, 'William Pitt (January 1859)', in *The Miscellaneous Writings of Lord Macaulay*, London, Longmans, 2 vols., II, 1860, 159-89.

[59] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 165; Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 172.

[60] *Bentham* (1838), CW, X and *Coleridge*, CW, X.

[61] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 120.

combined'.[62] He saw himself 'building the bridges and clearing the paths' that connected two rival schools of thought and certainly 'superior to most of [his] contemporaries in willingness and ability to learn from everybody'.[63] Frederick Rosen enriches this claim by pointing out that Mill feels 'alone and depressed' within Bentham's circle.[64] In any case, the publication of *Coleridge* is best understood as a political move. Mill's essay shows first what he thinks is valuable in Coleridge's philosophy and concludes that 'a Tory philosopher cannot be wholly a Tory, but must often be a better Liberal than Liberals themselves.' Conveying his message in political terms, he then argues that Bentham's reformist agenda would benefit by 'rescuing from oblivion truths which Tories have forgotten, and which the prevailing schools of Liberalism never knew'.[65] A critical discussion about the political programme and ideals that Coleridge represents provides a corrective to the political weaknesses of liberal and radical views.

Reconciling a world of contradictory philosophical and political beliefs is one of Mill's most valuable contributions. As chief editor of the *London and Westminster Review*, the official organ of the Philosophic Radicals, Mill changes the publication policy by accepting texts coming from a variety of ideological traditions He allows confrontation and 'many-sidedness'.[66] His own essay, *Coleridge*, prepares the ground for the significant shift that Mill attempts. He appreciates the positive outcomes of both philosophical and political disputes between extreme viewpoints within debating societies and throughout his personal development and eventual establishment as an independent thinker. It is therefore not surprising that he backs social and political antagonism in a considerable number of his writings. So far, a fundamental question still requires further assessment: how do political institutions echo social antagonism.

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[62] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 94, 119-25; Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, 124-46; Devigne, *Reforming Liberalism*, 87-91.
[63] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 251-53.
[64] Rosen, 'Parallel Lives in Logic: The Benthams and the Mills', in *John Stuart Mill, Thought and Influence: The Saint of Rationalism*, ed. Georgios Varouxakis and Paul Kelly, London, Routledge, 2010, 73.
[65] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 162-63.
[66] On this topic see Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, 56-58.

1.5 Parliament and the Value of Debate

This section examines in the first place Mill's support of political deliberation and parliamentary government as 'politics by speech'.[67] Secondly, I argue that social antagonism lays the foundations for parliamentary politics. I study a selection of Mill's theoretical writings, along with some of his parliamentary speeches. They show that Mill attempts to reform parliamentary procedures and political parties, being himself a Member of Parliament, for the sake of what he believes is a fruitful antagonism. Finally, this interpretation challenges the view that Mill's political thought lacks a theory of party or does not regard parties as feasible agents of change.

Mill depicts the House of Commons as a battlefield that reflects society and therefore social antagonism. It is 'the place where the opinions which divide the public on great subjects of national interest, meet in a common arena, do battle, and are victorious and vanquished'.[68] Representative assemblies are then more useful when 'talking' instead of 'doing,' especially 'when the subject of talk is the great public interests of the country'.[69] Accordingly, the general good is a common enterprise that needs discussion. Provided that a debate brings about neglected approaches to the same subject, deliberation 'can be done better by a body than by any individual.' A 'deliberative body,' in addition, proves useful in order to 'secure hearing and consideration to many conflicting opinions'.[70] These opinions draw attention to Mill's rhetorical understanding of political deliberation as pervasive. Argumentative discussion lies at the core of parliamentary politics in Mill's view. Walter Bagehot and Thomas Macaulay put forward a similar argument when defining parliamentary government as a 'government by discussion' and 'government by speaking'

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[67] Palonen, *The Politics of Limited Times*, 139 and Palonen, 'Fair Play and Scarce Time: Aspects of the 1882 Procedure Reform Debates in the British Parliament', *The Politics of Dissensus: Parliament in Debate*, forthcoming.

[68] *Recent Writers on Reform* (1859), CW, XIX, 348. Antagonism passes from society to representative assemblies but should not extend to the antagonism between the two chambers. When commenting on the 1848 French Revolution, Mill states that: 'the antagonism may be more beneficially placed in society itself, than in the legislative organ which gives effect to the will of society', *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History*, CW, XX, 358-59.

[69] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 433; see Palonen, *The Struggle with Time: A Conceptual History of 'Politics' as an Activity*, Hamburg, Lit Verlag, 148-49.

[70] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 424.

respectively.[71] Yet there is a two-way relationship between social antagonism and parliamentary discussion, since not only parliamentary debates echo social antagonism, but also set an example as regards deliberative practices outside Parliament.[72]

Political parties, typically representing rival interests within Parliament, stand for the opposite interests of the state, that is, the Coleridgean permanence and progression or the Comtean order and progress.[73] Although a 'party of order or stability' and a 'party of progress or reform' are both necessary, Mill prefers a wise combination comprising the best of each, namely, 'a party equally of order and of progress'.[74] However, since a perfect combination is hardly possible, 'it has to be made by the rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners'.[75] The controversies between the Conservative and the Liberal parties are beneficial, even if he has in mind a party that ideally embodies the two chief conditions for general wellbeing.

Mill's political speeches deliver a similar idea in terms already familiar to us. A few days before being elected Member of Parliament (1865), in his first series of meetings with the electors of Westminster, Mill sets out the main points of his political creed. While praising the Liberals and attacking the Conservatives, he suggests a necessary regeneration of the Liberal party itself, a proposal that he calls 'advanced Liberalism.' Liberals do not wish to 'keep things as they were,' but to 'improve' society.[76] Mill introduces a temporal element in his definition of Liberals as contrasted with the Tories. A Liberal, according to Mill, 'looks forward for his principles of government,' while a Tory 'looks backward'.[77] The line of reasoning behind this brief sketch follows Mill's argument in *Coleridge*. Already in 1840 he concludes that the Conservatives, tied to the past, want society to remain unchanged. Liberals, contrarily, stand for the exact

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[71] Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, in *The Works and Life of Walter Bagehot* [1872], ed. Russell Barrington, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 9 vols., 1915, vol. VIII, 102; Macaulay, 'William Pitt (January 1859)', in *The Miscellaneous Writings of Lord Macaulay*, vol. II, 330.

[72] In this regard see Palonen, *The Struggle with Time*, 147-53, and Pasi Ihalainen and Kari Palonen, 'Parliamentary Sources in the Comparative Study of Conceptual History', *Parliaments, Estates & Representation*, 29, 2009, 20-21.

[73] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 151-52; *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 309.

[74] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 253.

[75] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 253-54; another instances: *Reorganization of the Reform Party* (1839), CW, VI, 467; *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* (1859), CW, XIX, 314; on that topic see also Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 198; Nancy L. Rosenblum, *On the Side of the Angels: An Appreciation of Parties and Partisanship*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2008, 144.

[76] 'The Westminster Election of 1865 [4]', CW, XXVIII, 34.

[77] 'The Westminster Election of 1865 [2]', CW, XXVIII, 22.

opposite group of principles: change, progress and improvement.[78] In Mill's opinion, the Tory's model for good government implies 'the restoration in some shape or other of the feudal principle,' as he makes clear in his 1865 speech.[79] The divergent attitudes towards past and future help Mill untangle the Liberal and Conservative party lines. The Liberals, among whom he counts himself, are devoted to the 'cause of progress' and pursue a model of government that does not correspond with those of past regimes.[80] Yet the fact that the Liberals do not describe themselves as committed to past political ideals, the argument follows, does not imply that they disregard the lessons of history. Mill introduces himself as 'the candidate of advanced Liberalism,' which differs from Liberalism in an important detail concerning the appraisal of the past: '[B]y diligent study, *by attention to the past*, by constant application, it is possible to see a certain distance before us, and to be able to distinguish beforehand some of these truths of the future'.[81]

Only by a study of the past, Mill argues, it is possible to 'see the direction in which things are tending'.[82] Advanced Liberals should hold on to reformist guidelines without neglecting the lessons from the past. The gist of Mill's argument is that future-oriented political ideals can also embrace the teachings which history provides. Although Liberals and Conservatives have opposing viewpoints, an advanced Liberal party should seek to include what is best from the adversary party, hence aiming at a reconciliation of apparently contradictory elements.[83] The similarities between these claims and Mill's reading of Coleridge's philosophy stand out. Just as Mill finds some of Coleridge's ideas truly interesting, Conservatives' awareness of history, which Liberals wave aside, seems a valuable point for advanced Liberals. The statements analysed show both Mill's adherence to the Liberals and a pioneering spirit as regards party ideological guidelines. On the one hand, a feeling of allegiance is consistent with Mill's description of his own political creed and explains that he later agrees to sit as a Liberal MP at the House of Commons. On the other hand, his reformist zeal accounts for his proposal of an

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[78] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 145-46. On this point see also chapters three and four.

[79] 'The Westminster Election of 1865 [2]', CW, XXVIII, 23.

[80] Mill to Edward P. Bouverie, 19 October 1868, *The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1849-1873, Part III*, CW, XVI, 1463.

[81] 'The Westminster Election of 1865 [2]', CW, XXVIII, 23, my emphasis.

[82] *Ibid*., see also *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews* (1867), CW, XXI, 237.

[83] Chapter four concludes that a similar argument pervades the writings of some Victorian intellectuals, newspaper articles and pamphlets.

advanced Liberal party, his relative independence from party discipline and his support of Thomas Hare's parliamentary reform proposal. I consider these topics in the next few paragraphs.

Bruce Kinzer has persuasively pointed out that Mill's lack of attention and few hostile comments regarding the question of party in *Considerations on Representative Government* does not originate in his aversion to the principle of party but in the existing party system.[84] Mill claims that Conservatives and Liberals 'have lost confidence in the political creeds which they nominally profess' and do not act according to the political principles they are supposed to uphold. Expressing his concern over the lack of ideological commitment of political parties, Mill states: 'Well would it be for England if Conservatives voted consistently for everything conservative, and Liberals for everything liberal'.[85] But even though Mill first blames both Liberals and Conservatives, he then focuses on the shortcomings of the Conservative Party. Instead of acting according to party principles, regrets Mill, the Conservative Party would 'rush blindly in' and stop whatever measure that Liberals propose, even if it were 'truly, largely, and far-sightedly' conservative in tone. What Mill denounces then is pointless opposition between the two main political parties.[86]

The negative opinions on the Liberal and Conservative parties have misled commentators to believe that Mill does not have a theory of party.[87] On the contrary, he supports a renewed party antagonism, based on an in-depth discussion of political principles. Such debate should moreover take place within the Liberal Party, as one of his political speeches suggests. Mill maintains a year later that among advanced Liberals there are no 'narrow articles of orthodoxy.' Discrepancy is therefore allowed on the premises of ideological renewal. What ties Liberals together is merely an underlying assumption, 'a common allegiance to the spirit of improvement'.[88] Apart from that, Mill regards internal disagreement as welcome and having a salutary effect. Party advocates, then, should not blindly follow a political party doctrine that would leave personal judgements aside thus making the deliberative processes impossible.

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[84] Bruce L. Kinzer, 'J. S. Mill and the Problem of Party', *Journal of British Studies*, 21, 1, 1981, 107.
[85] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 452; Kinzer, 'J. S. Mill and the Problem of Party', *Journal of British Studies*, 108.
[86] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 452.
[87] Kinzer, 'J. S. Mill and the Problem of Party', *Journal of British Studies*, 106.
[88] 'W. E. Gladstone [1]' (1866), CW, XXVIII, 97.

Mill's statements unmask him as a 'moralist in and out of Parliament,' who holds a normative idea of what a political party should be like.[89] But above all, the understanding of genuine political discussion as the driving force behind party ideological grounds remains central to his views on parliamentary politics.

These insights also help understand his career as a professional politician. Mill's claims of relative independence and his reformist views explain why he was unpopular at the beginning of his parliamentary career. In the *Autobiography* he admits his election was difficult because he 'did not choose to stand as the mere organ of a party'.[90] He recalls that his public interventions dealt with the 'work which no others were likely to do'.[91] Even William Gladstone familiarly calls him the Saint of Rationalism due to 'his high independent thought of a recluse'.[92] Yet he stands for advanced Liberalism, or to put it in a rather mocking tone, he was 'more liberal than the Liberals'.[93] He aims at preserving his autonomy, acting according to the principles outlined above.

Mill suggests in this context a major reform that would strengthen political deliberation and change the system whereby people choose party candidates: Hare's scheme of personal representation. In the belief that progress follows from antagonism, 'the best men of their respective parties' shall improve discussion and reach better decisions.[94] As Mill argues in one of his speeches, titled 'Personal Representation,' this system will also ensure that politicians are no mere instruments of party propaganda.[95] Mill's point is that Hare's proposal does not benefit any particular party. It establishes 'a principle of fair play to all parties and opinions without distinction'.[96] Moreover, general improvement would be secured by giving voice to minorities and preserving social diversity.[97] The ideological shift that political parties require not only falls on politicians' ethos, but also requires some basic procedural reforms.

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[89] Bruce L. Kinzer, John M. Robson and Ann P. Robson, *A Moralist In and Out of Parliament: John Stuart Mill at Westminster, 1865-1868*, Toronto, Toronto University Press, 1992.
[90] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 274.
[91] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 275.
[92] Cited in William L. Courtney, *Life of John Stuart Mill*, London, Scott, 1889, 142.
[93] Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, 452.
[94] *Personal Representation* (1867), CW, XXVIII, 178.
[95] *Personal Representation*, CW, XXVIII, 178-79.
[96] *Personal Representation*, CW, XXVIII, 177.
[97] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 458-59.

Even if Mill dislikes the situation of political parties, his arguments are far from being against the principle of party government. His parliamentary career would not make sense otherwise. Nancy Rosenblum concludes in this regard that Mill does 'not see parties as promising forces for political correction or improvement,' mainly because 'every look at actual parties appalled him'.[98] It is true that Mill does not agree with party politics as it stands, but he offers a 'moral ideal of party'.[99] His writings and political speeches offer a model of a good politician, whereas his political reform proposal, endorsing Hare's personal representation, seeks to promote wide-ranging debate on social and political issues. A closer look into his political writings and speeches provides arguments to challenge Rosenblum's interpretation and presents Mill's theory of party devoted to antagonism and independence, both within and between the main political parties.

1.6 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has suggested an interpretation of Mill's multi-layered and complex concept of antagonism. Mill regards the study of history as an opportunity to support his views on the importance of social antagonism. He concludes then that the clash between competing worldviews promotes general social progress. I have argued that Mill's reading of Europe's historical development owes much to Guizot and Coleridge. The main thread running through *On Liberty* provides him with a further instance that seems to confirm his opinions. Mill argues that good decisions concerning public issues result from a variety of points of view that coexist and conflict with each other. He imagines a citizen capable of forming his or her own opinion, not very different from parliamentarians struggling within a deliberative decision-making process. Reversely, a well-established parliamentary activity needs an active public engagement where diversity and disagreement are customary rather than exceptional.

Victorian society and politics, in Mill's view, needed a substantial improvement on that regard. His political writings and parliamentary speeches consequently encourage social pluralism and dissent, so far as suspending personal critical judgement, not only within political parties, spoils deliberative processes. The chapter has understood Mill's

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[98] Rosenblum, *On the Side of the Angels*, 149, 155.
[99] Kinzer, 'J. S. Mill and the Problem of Party', *Journal of British Studies*, 121.

support for personal representation in the light of this concern for fair representative mechanisms and lively political debate. It has become clear that the dialectical tension between opposing beliefs, which represents a defining feature of parliamentary procedures, goes beyond the institutional boundaries of Parliament. 'Speaking for and against' does not take place exclusively in either Parliament or the organisations that mirror parliamentary assemblies. The concept of antagonism receives, moreover, a normative value: it is not only a defining feature of social and political life, but it ought to be encouraged. Parliament figures therefore as a regulatory example that illustrates how to deal with multiple viewpoints in contention.[100]

Eventually, by focusing on his writings and his intellectual background, I have briefly paid attention to Mill's early involvement in several debating societies and their role in his reception of Coleridge's ideas. I have argued that the acquired habit of refuting adversaries has a decisive impact on his philosophical thought. Mill's meetings with some discussion groups in the 1820s lead him to question the sources of his education, but also account for the fact that he cherishes the practice of 'many-sidedness' throughout his life. Genuine antagonism, which only emerges when arguing passionately against opponents in a debate, pervades Mill's understanding of social and political activity both in and outside Parliament.

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[100] Ihalainen and Palonen, 'Parliamentary Sources in the Comparative Study of Conceptual History', 20-21.

2

The Idea of History: A Rhetoric of Progress[1]

This chapter examines the crucial role the idea of history plays in John Stuart Mill's social and political thought. Insofar as Mill argues that historical change and progress are synonyms, the latter deserves a careful attention. However, academic literature has mostly regarded Mill's philosophy of history a topic of minor importance. Some of his philosophical views on history, it will be argued, clearly affect his political views, but they also inform his scientific study of society. Accordingly, historical research aims both at understanding the past to guide society's future.

By analysing the different sources from which Mill draws inspiration, the chapter considers his views against the background of his personal and intellectual context. Mill's temporary depression, along with Macaulay's criticism of the utilitarian ahistorical conception of politics, triggers an enquiry into the appropriate method to study society, which eventually places history at its core. His reading of Coleridge and a number of French thinkers reflects a renewed interest in the discipline. The chapter discusses, first, Mill's interpretation of Coleridge as Bentham's opposite pole. Later in the essay, I highlight Mill's debts to Comte and Saint-Simon, especially as regards what he calls the 'Inverse Deductive Method'. Some remarks on French historiographers, like Mignet, Dulaure, Sismondi, Michelet and Guizot, also support my argument.

2.1 History as the 'Great Things' Achieved by Mankind

Towards the end of his life, John Stuart Mill was elected Rector at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. In his inaugural public address, Mill argued that:

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter has been published in *Res Publica: Revista de Filosofía Política*, José María Rosales and Manuel Toscano, eds., 'Rhetoric, Ethics and Democracy', 27, 2012, 63-74.

All true political science is, in one sense of the phrase, *à priori*, being deduced from the tendencies of things, tendencies known either through our general experience of human nature, or as the result of an analysis of the course of history, considered as a progressive evolution.[2]

The quotation introduces the initial discussion for this chapter, which can be further formulated by two questions: What is the role of history in John Stuart Mill's social and political thought? And, what does it mean to regard history 'as a progressive evolution'? Mill's answer to both questions, originally presented in the late 1820s, went unchallenged for the remainder of his career. The speech, written when he was around sixty years old, stands as an example of Mill's firm views on history.[3]

It is interesting to note that scholarly research has mostly considered Mill's philosophy of history a topic of minor importance, despite the fact that he believes 'that it was responsible for the most radical change that occurred in his thought'.[4] With exceptions, mainly methodological studies in the social sciences examine the matter. This chapter aims, rather, to study the significance of Mill's views on history against the background of his personal and intellectual context, for it offers, on the one hand, an interpretation of his temporary depression or 'mental crisis' and the subsequent intellectual development in his early twenties. On the other hand, it provides an opportunity to explore some key aspects of his interest in French thought and his relationship with French intellectuals.

History, as 'the record of all great things which have been achieved by mankind', has to explain the progress of society.[5] In other words, it aims to describe the patterns that historical events show. The idea of progress plays a prominent role in Mill's philosophy of history. However, if we consider all the senses in which Mill uses the concept of progress throughout his work, it becomes clear that touches upon a variety of topics, such as economic growth and wealth or moral improvement. Whereas Kurer or

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[2] John Stuart Mill, *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews* (1867), in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, XXI, 237.

[3] *Autobiography* (1873), CW, I, 287. Three years before Mill had published *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, where he dealt with historical issues in similar terms *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), CW, X, 306-308.

[4] Clark W. Bouton, 'John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and History', *Political Research Quarterly,* 18, 3, 1965, 569.

[5] *Civilization* (1836), CW, XVIII, 145.

Harris present a somewhat loose though general overview of Mill's concept of progress, this essay will exclusively focus on the idea of progress as regards history.[6]

2.2 Mill and the Coleridgeans on History

In England, by the time Mill turns to writing, history as a discipline is still in its infancy. As Cairns remarks, his 'life coincided with the rise of the modern historical profession'.[7] More precisely, 'the shift towards professional status, and a changing social role for historians, effectively began during the middle decades of the nineteenth century'.[8] It was not the same case in Germany or France. Unlike her continental neighbours, Britain does not 'need a history of the present dedicated to protesting its potential as a modern state'.[9] Mill, who praises French historiography in an 1826 review, is aware of the imbalance and admits the flaws of his own country in this respect.[10] Still by 1853, he notes 'how new an art of writing history is, how very recently it is that we possess histories'.[11] Taking into account the development of historiography, Mill's views on a new science of the past are to be seen as a great novelty. Moreover, it explains why Mill's philosophy of history merges sometimes with analyses of French historians: 'historical thought becomes philosophy of history'.[12]

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[6] Oscar Kurer, *John Stuart Mill: The Politics of Progress*, New York and London, Garland, 1991; Abram L. Harris, 'John Stuart Mill's Theory of Progress', *Ethics*, 66, 3, 157-75.

[7] John C. Cairns, 'Introduction', in *Essays on French History and Historians*, CW, XX, xxv.

[8] R. Harrison, A. Jones and P. Lambert, 'The Institutionalisation and Organisation of History', in *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline*, ed. P. Lambert and P. Schofield, London, Routledge, 2004, 16. For a wider perspective see Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[9] Michael Bentley, 'Shape and Pattern in British Historical Writing, 1815-1945', in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: 1800-1945*, ed. S. Macintyre, J. Maiguashca and A. Pók, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 4 vols., 2011, vol. 4, 205.

[10] *Modern French Historical Works* (1826), CW, XX, 17-18, 260. As Philips observes, Mill 'pays full compliments to the earlier generation, while at the same time denying that their work should be considered history at all', Mark Salber Philips, 'Historical Distance and the Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Britain', in *History, Religion and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, ed. Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore and Brian Young, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, 42. Elsewhere, Burns has argued that Mill thinks of his father's *History of British India* as part of this tradition see J. H. Burns, 'The Light of Reason: Philosophical History in the Two Mills', in *James and John Stuart Mill: Papers of the Centenary Conference*, ed. J. M. Robson, and M. Laine, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976, 10.

[11] 'Grote's History of Greece' (1853), CW, XI, 328.

[12] Bouton, 'John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and History', *Political Research Quarterly,* 570.

The poor state of British historiography may be one of the reasons why Mill's education, though involving the study of Scottish historians, lacks a sense of the philosophical and scientific value of history.[13] However, Mill slides into a depression about 1826 in which he questions his own philosophical ideas and revises personal beliefs. As he recalls in his *Autobiography*, the teachings received from his father, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham, were put into question.[14] Yet what is more interesting is not how he feels during the crisis, for it lasts only a few months, but what may be understood as a longer and more complex process of gaining intellectual independence. According to Hayek 'it is from the recovery from that depression toward the end of 1828 that we must probably date the beginning of his career as an independent thinker'.[15] The famous mental crisis is the preface to his public career, in which he looks upon history as worthy of philosophical study.

A year after his recovery, in 1829, James Mill's *Essay on Government* receives a demolishing attack from Thomas Macaulay.[16] The historian criticises James Mill's way of proceeding a priori in politics, suggesting instead his own empirical method. Macaulay's criticism undermines John Stuart Mill's convictions as a Benthamite, although he does not agree with either of them. Rather, he takes a stance between the two sides and advocates his own method to study society: the Inverse Deductive or Historical Method. In his own words, 'a foundation was thus laid in my thoughts for the principal chapters of what I afterwards published on the Logic of the Moral Sciences'.[17] Mill is referring to the sixth book of his *System of Logic*, where we find his most extensive account on the method of sociological enquiry and, hence, history. From this moment on, Mill observes, it becomes apparent that a 'philosophy of politics supposes a previous theory of human progress, and that this is the same thing with a philosophy of history'.[18] Although the controversy between Macaulay and James Mill turns out to be

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[13] The fact that Mill began reading some historians when he was just four years old suggests that history was for him an entertainment *Autobiography*, CW, I, 554.

[14] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 139.

[15] Friedrich A. Hayek, 'Introduction', in John Stuart Mill, *The Spirit of the Age*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1942, x; see also John M. Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, 76.

[16] Thomas B. Macaulay, 'Mill's Essay on Government: Utilitarian Logic and Politics', *Edinburgh Review*, XLIX, 1829, 159-89.

[17] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 169.

[18] *Ibid*.

crucial, the British historian will not be the only important figure in Mill's process of intellectual autonomy.

Then, how does the new set of beliefs come about? To answer the question we have to analyse the influence of Coleridge and some French thinkers with whom Mill becomes acquainted. He begins to read Coleridge and the Coleridgeans in 1828, after approaching the London Debating Society, where they were anti-Benthamite contenders.[19] Although Mill does not mention any interest on Coleridge's works until this moment, he regards Bentham and Coleridge as philosophical counterparts.[20] Subsequently he argues that 'it would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another'.[21]

When it comes to their understanding of history there arises a manifest opposition. On the one hand, Bentham 'assumes that mankind are alike in all times and all places'.[22] On the other hand, unlike his mentor's, Coleridge's philosophy is 'concrete and historical'.[23] More accurately, he ranks first among those 'who inquired […] into the inductive laws of the existence and growth of human society'.[24] History represents for the Benthamites 'a dusty record of the crimes and follies of mankind', while for the Coleridgeans embodies 'an inspiring chronicle of the gradual unfolding of society'.[25] The outcome of Mill's reading of Coleridge is twofold. Most significantly, he becomes more sensitive to the great value of history for social and political philosophy. About the Coleridgeans, Mill acknowledges that 'the brilliant light which has been thrown upon history during the last half century' comes from this school.[26] Furthermore, Coleridge partly influences Mill's interest in studying the combined effect of order and progress in society, an issue that becomes central in his *System of Logic*, where he deals with the necessary conditions for social stability and progressiveness.[27]

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[19] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 159. See chapter one on Mill's experience at the Debating Societies.
[20] On this point see also chapter one.
[21] *Coleridge* (1840), CW, X, 120.
[22] *Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy* (1833), CW, X, 16.
[23] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 125.
[24] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 139.
[25] Michael St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1954, 245; see also Robert O. Preyer, *Bentham, Coleridge and the Science of History*, Bochum-Langendreer, H. Pöppinghaus, 1958, 16 and Burns, 'The Light of Reason: Philosophical History in the Two Mills', in *James and John Stuart Mill: Papers of the Centenary Conference*, 3.
[26] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 139.
[27] Actually, Mill reproduces a long extract from *Coleridge* in his *Logic*. *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843), CW, VIII, 917-25; I develop this point in chapter three. Frederick Rosen, 'Mill on

2.3 France and French Historians

Mill keeps a long-lasting and fruitful relationship with a number of French philosophers and intellectuals. Besides, his lively interest in the country itself leads him to write a series of articles on French affairs, published in the *Examiner* since 1830 to 1834.[28] However, I agree with John Cairns when he states that 'the casual reader of the few and sober pages' of Mill's *Autobiography* in which he alludes to France 'might not readily grasp what [the country] had been to him'.[29]

Mill's interpretation of French thought reflects the new role that philosophy of history is going to have in his outline of the new social and political sciences. I will illustrate this claim by analysing mainly the impact of Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte on Mill's point of views. Some French historiographers, like François Mignet, Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, Jean de Sismondi, Jules Michelet and François Guizot, deserve some attention, though brief, since they also influence his renewed interest in history.

In 1820 Mill first visits France, where he 'breathed [...] the free and genial atmosphere of Continental life'.[30] From that moment on, as observer and admirer, French literature captures the interest of the young Mill. In the 1826 reviews of the works by Mignet, Dulaure and Sismondi, he indirectly conveys an ideal image of a professional historian. Mill, who criticises Dulaure because he 'does not look out for causes and effects',[31] praises Mignet as an example of a historian who combines 'philosophical history' with 'mere narrative'.[32] In a preliminary form, Mill gives an account of the task of history that will characterise his later writings.

Coleridge', *Telos: Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios Utilitaristas*, XII, 2, 2003, 29-30; Bouton, 'John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and History', *Political Research Quarterly*, 573; Christopher Turk, *Coleridge and Mill: A Study of Influence*, Aldershot, Avebury, 1988, 171; on Coleridge see Pamela Edwards, *The Statesman's Science: History, Nature and Law in the Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, 284-300, and John Ph. D. Morrow, *Coleridge's Political Thought: Property, Morality and the Limits of Traditional Discourse*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990, 115-20.

[28] See *Newspaper Writings December 1822-July 1831, Part I*, CW, XXII and *Newspaper Writings August 1831-October 1834, Part II*, CW, XXIII; Iris Wessel Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1956, 22-24.

[29] Cairns, 'Introduction', in *Essays on French History and Historians*, 1985, vii.

[30] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 59.

[31] *Modern French Historical Works*, CW, XX, 51.

[32] *Mignet's French Revolution* (1826), CW XX, 3.

However, to judge by his description, for Mill the Saint-Simonian school was the most influential of the epoch.[33] In 1829, Gustave d'Eichtal presents him some of their publications, among which is one of Comte's seminal essays. Despite the fact that Comte had distanced himself from Saint-Simon as early as 1825, it is difficult to distinguish between the ideas of the two.[34] To begin with, Saint-Simon's doctrine influences Comte's philosophy, as the latter was his disciple. In addition, the mentor appropriates Comte's historical philosophy.[35] One of the main ideas they share is that organic and critical periods alternate in history. Mill elaborates on their works while discussing the topic in a series of articles.[36] In an organic or natural state, 'power and moral influence are […] exercised by the fittest persons whom the existing state of society affords'. On the contrary, a society that 'contains other persons fitter for worldly power and moral influence than those who have hitherto enjoyed them', undergoes a transitional or critical period.[37] According to Mill, society is passing through a 'transitional state', and thus overcoming a 'natural state', that is, 'mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones'.[38]

Progress appears as a two-stage process: primarily, it takes place in a natural state when a society 'moves onward' insofar as it does no collide with 'the established order of things'. At a further step, whenever a transitional stage is left behind, society 'resumes its onward progress, at the point where it was stopped before by the social system which it has shivered'.[39] According to this theory, the progress of society never stops. More significantly, an exhaustive enquiry into the past allows him to establish a pattern to predict the future, since natural periods are always followed by transitional periods. Even if Mill leaves a series of unfinished articles which he finds 'lumbering in style', the idea will play a prominent role in his *System of Logic*.[40]

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[33] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 171; Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, 61.

[34] Walter M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963, 140; on Mill's first impression about Comte see Mill to Gustave D'Eichtal, 8 October 1829, *The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill 1812-1848, Part I,* CW, XII, 34-38.

[35] Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, 92.

[36] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 173; Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, 61, 66; Hayek, 'Introduction', in John Stuart Mill, *The Spirit of the Age*, xxix.

[37] *The Spirit of the Age III* (1831), CW, XXII, 252.

[38] *The Spirit of the Age I*, (1831), CW, XXII, 230.

[39] *The Spirit of the Age III*, CW, XXII, 252.

[40] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 181.

Although finally published in 1843, as early as in 1831 Mill is elaborating that part of the argument.[41] During the meantime, between 1830 and 1842, the six volumes of the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* appear. Mill admits that he 'gained much from Comte', yet it is the Inverse Deductive Method what strikes him 'as the one chiefly applicable to the complicated subjects of History and Statistics'.[42] After his reading of the *Cours'* last volume, Mill writes to the French philosopher that the *Logic* had to be revised.[43] Moreover, John Robson suggests that the chapters where Mill explains the Inverse Deductive Method are additions resulting from their agreement.[44] Indeed, Mill's main borrowing from Comte provides him with a double strategy.[45] By arguing for a methodology that enables a scientific study of society, he establishes a direct link between the unfolding of history and political science, that is, between the past and the future.

The Inverse Deductive Method, also called Historical Method, is 'crucial to an understanding of his social philosophy', since it is the key to the science of society or sociology.[46] It aims at giving a rational account of historical change, that is, 'the progressiveness of the human race'.[47] Historical facts, once analysed, unveil the 'law of progress' which 'enable[s] us to predict future events'.[48] In other words, the Historical Method should describe 'the laws according to which any state of society produces the state which succeeds it and takes it place'.[49] Fortunately, this task 'has become the aim of really scientific thinkers', such as Comte.[50] Remarkably, the idea of 'state of society' underlies Mill's scheme of sociology. Following Comte, he describes a state of society as the 'the state of civilization at any given time'.[51] Accordingly, an advance in people's

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[41] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 167; Mill to Sterling, 20-22 October 1831, CW, XII, 79.

[42] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 219.

[43] Mill to Comte, 15 December 1842, CW, XIII, 561.

[44] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', in *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive*, CW, VII, lxxvi; Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, London, Longmans, 1882, 72, 68. On the relationship between Comte and Mill see chapter three and five.

[45] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 219.

[46] Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 150.

[47] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 914.

[48] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 914.

[49] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 912, 930.

[50] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 930.

[51] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 911-12.

knowledge, with its consequent shift in public opinion, brings about a transitional period, which, as Mill had previously argued, leads to progress.[52]

For Mill, progress and historical change are equivalent. More accurately, 'Philosophy of History is generally admitted to be at once the verification, and the initial form, of the Philosophy of the Progress of Society'.[53] Thus, the crucial question remains whether progress means general social improvement. Mill confidently asserts that 'progress and progressiveness' are not synonymous with 'improvement and tendency to improvement', or, to be precise, society is not bound to improve.[54] While rejecting historical determinism, he endorses the value of individual freedom. The progress of society, when it takes place, results from mankind's actions, which suggests that Mill's later defence of liberty fits in with his theory of history.[55] Thus, every human action can be explained appealing to the state of society or the 'general circumstances of the country', yet it also depends on 'influences special to the individual' or free will.[56]

Nevertheless, his rejection of historical determinism does not mask his optimistic beliefs: 'the general tendency is, and will continue to be, saving occasional and temporary exceptions, one of improvement'.[57] This allows him to support Comte's law of the three states, according to which society goes from a theological to a metaphysical period, before reaching a positive stage.[58] Again, for both Comte and Mill, people's beliefs or 'the progress of human knowledge' influence the pace of progress.

Mill publishes two reviews of Jules Michelet's and François Guizot's historical essays in 1844 and 1845 respectively, which provide some insights into his own ideas concerning history. Mill reads with interest those historians who are at the 'highest stage of historical investigation, in which the aim is not simply to compose histories, but to construct a science of history'.[59] Among them, he believes, three French figures stand out: Michelet and Guizot, but also Thierry.[60] Mill describes the course of history using

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[52] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 926; Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. N. Urbinati, and A. Zakaras, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 138.
[53] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 930.
[54] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 913.
[55] John Gibbins, 'J. S. Mill, Liberalism, and Progress', in *Victorian Liberalism: Nineteenth-Century Political Thought and Practice*, ed. Richard Bellamy, London, Routledge, 1990, 101.
[56] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 933.
[57] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 914.
[58] *A System of Logic,* CW, VIII, 928.
[59] *Michelet's History of France* (1844), CW, XX, 225.
[60] *Michelet's History of France*, CW, XX, 225, 221-22.

two metaphors that reinforce both the Comtean notion of different stages of historical progress and history as a scientific discipline. History displays 'a progressive chain of causes and effects', which may be described as 'a gradually unfolding web, in which every fresh part that comes to view is a prolongation of the part previously unrolled'.[61]

However, Mill appreciates both Guizot's style in writing history and his persuasive lectures on the origin of progress in European civilisation. According to Guizot, whereas ancient societies remain stationary, ruled under the influence of one single power, modern European civilisation permits a 'systematic antagonism', both social and political, which has made progress possible over the centuries.[62] Mill first grasps the significance of countervailing forces from Coleridge's ideas of permanence and progression and later from Comte's complementary dichotomy between order and progress.[63] A few years later Guizot provides him with yet another insight into the benefits of elaborating the ideas of antagonism and social balance.[64]

2.4 Concluding Remarks

The aim of this chapter has been to highlight the crucial role the idea of history plays in Mill's social and political thought. In doing so, it is worth paying attention to Mill's usage of the concept of progress as a rhetorical device, which strengthens the link between a scientific understanding of history and a foreseeable future. Besides, a review of Mill's both earlier and later writings casts new light on two interconnected topics: a temporary personal crisis in 1826 and the considerable influence that French thinkers have exerted upon him since the 1820s.

Mill's growing interest in history and his intellectual maturing process may be clarified by stressing the significance of three events that take place around 1829. First, Thomas Macaulay publishes a devastating criticism on James Mill's *Essay on Government*, aimed particularly at his philosophical method and its political scope. Macaulay's review leaves a deep impression on John Stuart Mill, who takes up the

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[61] *Michelet's History of France*, CW, XX, 225.
[62] *Guizot's Essays and Lectures On History* (1845) CW, XX, 169.
[63] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 917-25.
[64] Georgios Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', *History of Political Thought*, 20, 2, 301-303.

challenge and suggests his own method to study society.[65] Second, at The London Debating Society he makes the acquaintance of John Sterling, Frederick Maurice and Samuel Coleridge. Mill agrees with them on emphasising the importance of history for a satisfactory account of human experience. Strikingly, Mill begins reading Coleridge as Bentham's intellectual adversary, but ends up considering him a model. Third, also at the Debating Society, he meets Gustave d'Eichtal, who would become his guide to read Saint-Simon's and Comte's writings.

Additionally, an outline of the three episodes help us understand why Mill rejects the Benthamite ahistorical way of treating politics and places history in the core of his social and political thinking. As Rosen writes, 'Mill himself thought that progress in social science required the rejection of the geometrical method of Bentham and his father and its replacement by the historical method of Comte, which he also associated with Coleridge'.[66] Moreover, the three episodes culminate in the publication of various writings that illustrate his idea of history: A series of propagandistic articles titled *The Spirit of the Age* (1830-1), *Bentham* (1838) and *Coleridge* (1840), both monographs on 'two great seminal minds', and Mill's most systematic treatise on the philosophy of social science, *A System of Logic* (1843).[67] Though, as Burns remarks, we do not have a substantial historical work, Mill's philosophy of history is widespread throughout his writings. [68] Ultimately, Mill's changing attitude towards history provides an interpretation of his development as an independent thinker.

Likewise, most of the French scholarly literature Mill reads throughout his life deals with either history or the philosophy of history. According to Varouxakis, Mill has a 'compulsive interest in France and an astonishing conversance with France and things French'.[69] However, for Mill, it was Saint-Simon and Comte who best explained historical progress by conferring a scientific rank to the study of history and society. I have suggested, moreover, that by exploring Mill's view of history we gain an insight into his relationship with French thought. To put it differently, one possible way to

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[65] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 165.
[66] Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, 139.
[67] *Bentham* (1838), CW, X, 77.
[68] Burns, 'The Light of Reason: Philosophical History in the Two Mills', in *James and John Stuart Mill: Papers of the Centenary Conference*, 4.
[69] Varouxakis, 'French Radicalism through The Eyes of John Stuart Mill', *History of European Ideas*, 30, 4, 2004, 45; on this topic see Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*.

analyse Mill's study of French contemporary thinking is by focusing on his historical writings.

For Mill, political philosophy is only possible as a philosophy of history. Furthermore, insofar as the progress of society becomes apparent by studying the history of mankind, political science faces a double task: it has to explain past events, that is, what he calls progressive change, while it also has to argue the conditions for future progress. Thanks to the historical method, Mill points out, 'we may hereafter succeed not only in looking far forward into the future history of the human race, but in determining what artificial means may be used, and to what extent, to accelerate the natural progress in so far as it is beneficial'. History emerges eventually as essential to Mill's social and political philosophy. Besides, given the privileged place that historical research occupies in Mill's methodology of the social sciences, history aims both at understanding the past and guiding for 'the noblest and most beneficial portion of the Political Art'.[70]

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[70] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 930.

3

The Principles of Order and Progress
in Mill's Social and Political Thought

This chapter examines the ways in which John Stuart Mill relates the concepts of order and progress in his social and political works. For that purpose, I consider a selection of his writings from 1840 to 1867 where he uses both concepts in an antagonistic though interdependent sense. Drawing inspiration from Coleridge, Comte and Guizot, Mill argues that societies present two main attributes, order and progress, that should be the guidelines for the study of social events and particularly politics, economics and history. An overview of Mill's recurrent use of the dichotomy illuminates the features that social and natural phenomena have in common, an increasingly influential topic at that time. Moreover, this analysis contributes to our understanding of the rhetorical strategies by which highly abstract concepts shape their meanings when used in arguments.

The concept of progress is one of the interpretive keys to grasp John Stuart Mill's general understanding of politics, economics, society and particularly history. [1] However, 'progress' does not refer to a single phenomenon in Mill's time. As can be seen throughout his writings, the notion of progress has to do with economic growth and wealth, moral improvement, be it social or individual, education and historical change. In this chapter it is not my aim to distinguish and analyse the many senses of progress. [2] I shall rather examine Mill's gradual unfolding of the idea of progress as related to the concept of order, which mirrors some of the epoch's public debates.

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[1] I examine this point in chapter two.

[2] Some general studies have adopted a wider perspective: Abram L. Harris, 'John Stuart Mill's Theory of Progress', *Ethics*, 66, 3, 1956, 157-75; Oscar Kurer, *John Stuart Mill: The Politics of Progress*, New York and London, Garland, 1991; John Gibbins, 'J. S. Mill, Liberalism, and Progress', in *Victorian Liberalism: Nineteenth-Century Political Thought and Practice*, ed. Richard Bellamy, London, Routledge, 1990; Don A. Habibi, *John Stuart Mill and the Ethic of Human Growth*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001.

While currently we do not regard the ideas of order and progress as possibly or necessarily linked to each other, Mill consistently used them in an interdependent sense, especially in his social and political writings from 1840 to 1867. Mill brings into play several terms to refer to the concepts of order and progress. He uses the terms 'order' and 'progress' along with 'permanence' and 'progression', 'social statics' and 'social dynamics', 'coexistence' and 'succession', as well as 'stability' and 'movement'. These dichotomies highlight the pervasiveness of two antagonistic but complementary concepts belonging to the basic vocabularies of the humanities and the social sciences.

In the pages that follow I examine a selection of Mill's writings to underline his main sources of inspiration when using the concepts of order and progress, namely, the theories of Samuel Coleridge, Auguste Comte and François Guizot. For the sake of clarity, the study considers Mill's texts in their chronological order of publication, with a single justified exception. Since their topics are closely related, the third section jointly examines *A System of Logic* and *The Principles of Political Economy*, even if the latter was published after Mill's review of Guizot, which is the object of the chapter's fourth section. Thus, each section's heading identifies the main texts under discussion: *Coleridge* (first section); *A System of Logic* and *The Principles of Political Economy* (second section); *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History* (third section); *On Liberty* and *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* (fourth section); *Considerations on Representative Government* (fifth section); *Auguste Comte and Positivism* and the *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews* (sixth section).

The chapter explores Mill's understanding of order and progress as multifaceted concepts. Rooted in some of the epoch's intellectual and political controversies, Mill's arguments frequently overcome the apparent antinomy between the ideas of order and progress. To my knowledge, the topic has received little academic attention. In his 1968 monograph on Mill, John M. Robson points out that it is possible to 'find variations of [the distinction between order and progress] in Mill's discussion of the social sciences in his *Principles of Political Economy*, *Representative Government* and *On Liberty*'.[3] An in-depth analysis seems timely, since the reader is left without any further details. Even if Robson is right, the chapter shows that the division permeates Mill's writings beyond those three singled out. Eventually, the study offers some general insights into

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[3] John M. Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, 98.

the rhetorical strategies whereby conceptual change takes place. I suggest in this regard that the joint argumentative usage of two vague and highly polysemous concepts, such as order and progress, determines their historical meanings.

3.1 *Coleridge* (1840)

A few years after Samuel Coleridge's death, in 1834, Mill publishes an essay giving an overall account of his work. *Coleridge* is better understood when paired with Mill's *Bentham*, published in 1838.[4] Samuel Coleridge and Jeremy Bentham represent, according to Mill, opposite views, so much so that 'it would be difficult to find two persons of philosophic eminence more exactly the contrary of one another'.[5] Mill regards Coleridge, roughly speaking, as a conservative thinker, while Bentham is considered a philosophical radical.[6] When it comes to their approaches to history, opposite pictures emerge. Unlike his mentor's, Coleridge's philosophy is 'concrete and historical,'[7] which is one of its distinguishing features. According to Mill, 'the brilliant light which has been thrown upon history during the last half century' comes from the Coleridgean school.[8] As a reaction against utilitarian philosophy, which 'assumes that mankind are alike in all times and all places,'[9] Mill develops a renewed enthusiasm for history, then becoming a leading theme in his later writings on social and political

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[4] *Autobiography* (1873) in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, I, 225, 227; Mill to John Sterling, 28 September 1839, CW, XIII, 405-406.

[5] *Coleridge* (1840) CW, X, 120.

[6] Mill writes *Coleridge* as an essay on a conservative thinker for a liberal and radical audience. He first publishes it at the *London and Westminster Review*. 'The impetus with which I had detached myself from what was untenable in the doctrines of Bentham and of the eighteenth century, may have carried me […] too far on the contrary side. […] [M]y defence is, that I was writing for Radicals and Liberals, and it was my business to dwell most on that in writers of a different school, from the knowledge of which they might derive most improvement'. *Autobiography*, CW, I, 227. See also Frederick Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. Nadia Urbinati and Alex Zakaras, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 129.

[7] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 125.

[8] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 139. On this topic see Michael St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1954, 245; Robert Preyer, *Bentham, Coleridge and the Science of History*, Bochum-Langendreer, H. Pöppinghaus, 1958, 16.

[9] *Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy* (1833) CW, X, 16.

philosophy. The ideas of Comte and Guizot also stimulate Mill's interest in the study of the past, which I analyse below.[10]

Along with history, Mill values that Coleridge's theory enquires into the 'laws of the existence and growth' of society. He agrees with the author of *On the Constitution of the Church and State* that the principles of permanence and progression are 'the two antagonistic powers or opposite interests of the State, under which all other State interests are comprised'.[11] In Coleridge's view, the interests of permanence emanate from agriculture and landed property, whereas those of progression stem from commerce.[12] Political philosophy should then begin by exploring what promotes both interests, expressed and contained in the division between the ideas of permanence and progression.[13] Mill conceives them as 'guidance,' though acknowledging their practical limitations. Permanence and progression encompass all other interests and, when balanced, they amount to 'perfection in a political constitution'.[14] Coleridge evokes the image of a magnet, whose opposite poles 'tend to union' and require each other. In the same sense, the long-lasting balance between landed property and commerce explains England's general favourable circumstances, as compared to other countries.[15]

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[10] This interest also results from his reading of Saint-Simon and a number of French historiographers, as I suggest in chapter two. See also J. H. Burns, 'The Light of Reason: Philosophical History in the Two Mills', in, *James and John Stuart Mill: Papers of the Centenary Conference*, ed. J. M. Robson and M. Laine, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1976.

[11] *Coleridge,* CW, X, 138-39.

[12] Samuel Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each*, London, Hurst, Chance & Co, 1830, 16-29. Pamela Edwards is remarkably clear when explaining these principles: 'where land, which was uncreated, perpetually stayed in the same place, goods were created and moved across counties or even oceans in search of buyers'. Pamela Edwards, *The Statesman's Science: History, Nature and Law in the Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2004, 185.

[13] Mill's borrowing of the principles of permanence and progression has mostly been superficially noted, with the exception of Frederick Rosen. See Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', 124-47; Rosen, 'Mill on Coleridge', *Telos: Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios Utilitaristas*, XII, 2, 2003, 17-31, 29-30. Examples are Clark W. Bouton, 'John Stuart Mill: On Liberty and History', *Political Research Quarterly*, 18, 3, 1965, 573; Christopher Turk, *Coleridge and Mill: A Study of Influence*, Aldershot, Avebury, 1988, 171; Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 73-74; Robert Devigne, *Reforming Liberalism: J. S. Mill's Use of Ancient, Christian, Liberal, and Romantic Moralities*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2006, 87-91.

[14] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 151-52, 154. Mill's correspondence with John Sterling makes this point clear: '[Coleridge] stands almost alone in having seen that the foundation of the philosophy of the subject is a perception what are those great interests (comprehending all others) each of which must have somebody bound & induced to stand up for it in particular, & between which a balance must be maintained – & I think with him that those great interests are two, permanence & progression'. Mill to John Sterling, 2 October 1839, CW, XIII, 408.

[15] Coleridge, *On the constitution of the Church and State,* 17-23. *Coleridge*, CW, X, 151-52; On the importance of opposites in Coleridge's thought see his usage in Coleridge, *Hints Toward the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life*, Philadelphia, Lea and Blanchard, 1848, 63. And also Mary

As it is seen from the passage above, Mill endorses Coleridge's opinion. Where the principles of permanence and progression have remained balanced, society has reached an advanced state of civilisation. Historical analysis strengthens Mill's argument according to which both principles should form the basis of political philosophy. Still, in Mill's *Coleridge* the dichotomy between permanence and progression is used in a further sense. Mill recasts the division in political terms by identifying each opposite pole with Coleridge's and Bentham's political opinions. Coleridge, who embodies the principle of permanence or 'the Conservative interest,' aims at 'reasserting the best meaning and purposes of the old [doctrines]'. Bentham's radicalism, which demands 'the extinction of the institutions and creeds which had hitherto existed,' stands for the principle of progression.[16] Bentham and Coleridge are contrasting counterparts in every respect, including politics. Mill's rhetorical strategy is to present both their theories as partially valuable. He also invokes the importance of achieving a balance between the principles Bentham and Coleridge represent, just as the latter intends in his writings. Although apparently contraries, the two philosophers are allies, for '*the powers they wield are opposite poles of one great force of progression*'.[17]

Permanence and progression are the two main interests of society, also represented by opposite philosophical and political points of view. In order to make general progress possible, Mill suggests that both perspectives should be equally important, hence calling for their combination. Overall, by attaching political significance to Coleridge's and Bentham's philosophical approaches, Mill intends to rescue 'from oblivion truths which Tories have forgotten, and which the prevailing schools of Liberalism never knew'.[18] Later, in his *Autobiography*, he readily admits to have 'applied […] to Coleridge himself, many of Coleridge's sayings about half truths'.[19]

Mill's broad and somewhat ambiguous understanding of the concepts of order and progress allows him to reformulate them in several of his later writings. Towards the

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Perkins, 'Religious Thinker', in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. Lucy Newlyn, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 187, 192-23; Edwards, *The Statesman's Science*, 152, 184-87; John Morrow, *Coleridge's Political Thought: Property, Morality and the Limits of Traditional Discourse*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1990, 115-20; Basil Willey, *Nineteenth-Century Studies: Coleridge to Mathew Arnold*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1949, 19-21, 44-46.

[16] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 145-46.

[17] Notice Mill's usage of the idea of opposite poles in *Coleridge*. My emphasis. *Coleridge*, CW, X, 145-46. See also Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', 136.

[18] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 162-63.

[19] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 169, 171.

end of the essay Mill states that 'the Continental philosophers have, by a different path, arrived at the same division'.[20] According to a previous remark, by 'Continental philosophers' Mill means the French philosophers.[21] I argue that in this context we can take it as an oblique reference to Auguste Comte and François Guizot.[22] The chapter's next section discusses Comte's influence in this respect; the fourth section is devoted to Guizot.

3.2 *A System of Logic* (1843) and *The Principles of Political Economy* (1848)

Mill's first major work, *A System of Logic*, fleshes out the Coleridgean principles of permanence and progression, which Mill regards as the 'first step' of political philosophy.[23] The *Logic*'s last book, written under the spell of Auguste Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*, aims at developing a new method to study society from a scientific point of view. On this issue, it is crucial to bear in mind that Mill's 'science of government' is part of his proposed 'general science of society,' which suggests that his distinction between 'social' and 'political' is not a sharp one.[24] Trying to discern both the permanent and the changing features of society, Mill argues a new science he calls sociology, which Comte had earlier named social physics. Sociology, divided into social statics and social dynamics, investigates the structure and transformations of society:

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[20] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 155.

[21] 'To insist upon the deficiencies of the Continental philosophy of the last century, or, as it is commonly termed, the French philosophy, is almost superfluous'. *Coleridge*, CW, X, 131.

[22] By the time Mill writes *Coleridge*, he has already read Comte and Guizot. Although Comte elaborates extensively on the idea of order and progress in the fifth and sixth books of the *Cours de philosophie positive*, it is already sketched in the first book: Auguste Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive*, Paris, Rouen Frères, 6 vols., 1830, I, 32ff. As for Guizot, Mill quotes the *Cours d'histoire moderne* in *Coleridge*, CW, X, 140. Georgios Varouxakis has pointed out that Mill had read Guizot as early as in 1832. Georgios Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', *History of Political Thought*, XX, 2, 1999, 295 n.14.

[23] Rosen argues that Mill's reflections in *Bentham* and *Coleridge* set the scene for the method of social science as it stands in the *Logic*. See Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', 125.

[24] *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843) CW, VIII, 906. See also Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 133-34.

> The Empirical Laws of Society are of two kinds; some are uniformities of coexistence, some of succession. According as the science is occupied in ascertaining and verifying the former sort of uniformities or the latter M. Comte gives it the title of Social Statics, or of Social Dynamics; conformably to the distinction in mechanics between the conditions of equilibrium and those of movement; or in biology, between the laws of organization and those of life. The first branch of the science ascertains the conditions of stability in the social union: the second, the laws of progress. Social Dynamics is the theory of Society considered in a state of progressive movement; while Social Statics is the theory of the consensus already spoken of as existing among the different parts of the social organism.[25]

The quotation provides three valuable insights into our subject. First, following Comte, Mill elaborates on the idea of antagonistic, necessary and complementary principles that exist in both past and present states of society. By 'state of society' Mill means the general circumstances that define a community at one point of its history.[26]

Consequently, there should be two different scientific disciplines researching stability and progress, which together constitute society's conditions of existence. These disciplines, called social statics and social dynamics, match the analogous distinction in mechanical science between the branches of statics and dynamics. In mechanics, that is, the part of physics studying the behaviour of bodies, statics researches why bodies remain balanced while dynamics analyses why they change.[27] Comte also draws this distinction from biology, and particularly from Henri de Blainville's writings, a French biologist who regarded every organism as both static and dynamic.[28] Therefore, the terms 'statics' and 'dynamics,' until then confined to the experimental sciences, are transferred to the social sciences and thus become 'social statics' and 'social dynamics'. Mill's figurative usage of these terms, accordingly, highlights the features that society

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[25] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 917.

[26] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 911-12.

[27] 'Statics' and 'Dynamics', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edn, 1989, OED Online, Oxford University Press: http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/statics and http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/dynamics, accessed 15 November 2012.

[28] On Comte's usage, see, for instance Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. Harriet Martineau, London, J. Chapman, 1853, vol. I, 10 and vol. II, 74, 83. Blainville states: 'tous les corps existants dans la nature doivent être comparés entre eux sous ces différens rapports, parce que tous sont dans un état statique ou dynamique'. Henri Marie Ducrotay de Blainville, *De l'organisation des animaux ou principes d'anatomie comparée*, Paris, F. G. Levrault, 1822, ix. I extensively use Harriet Martineau's English translation of the *Cours*, since Comte himself admits that he preferred it to his own book. See Mary Pickering, 'Auguste Comte', in *The Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists*, ed. George Ritzer, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003, 36.

as an institutional arrangement shares with natural phenomena.[29] On the one hand, the study of both society and experimental sciences requires taking into account permanent and variable aspects. On the other hand, like in physics or in biology, social phenomena afford certain kinds of predictions, which makes a science of society possible.[30]

In the second place, Mill uses different formulas in his argument and the dichotomies of equilibrium/movement, coexistence/succession, stability/progress and social statics/social dynamics. The Coleridgean principles of permanence and progression equally belong to that list. In fact, when clarifying the purpose of social statics, Mill quotes at length his *Coleridge*, where he had already attempted to establish the conditions for 'stability in political society'.[31] The examples discussed in the chapter illustrate that by changing their wording the concepts of order and progress may be used in a variety of contexts and for several argumentative purposes. The usages remain disputable, for they depend on Mill's aims at each instance. *A System of Logic*, for example, mainly explores their potential for methodological arguments, while in *Coleridge* they support Mill's interpretations of history and politics. Insofar as order and progress are highly contested, open-ended concepts, it becomes possible to revise their meanings and use them in methodological, historical or political arguments, as Mill does.[32] Every time Mill elaborates on the concepts of order and progress, he re-describes and re-evaluates the social and political reality of his time. Thus, while portraying society as shaped by two opposite forces, he endorses a particular view to study social phenomena and consequently politics. His reappraisal of the meaning of order stands as a further example. Mill defines 'order' in a positive light and challenges its standard meaning, which, as he admits, represents the core of political conservatism. In *Coleridge*, for instance, he does not reject the principle of permanence, arguing that conservatism contains a part of truth that liberalism ignores. In sum, Mill's usages

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[29] On Mill's use of figurative language see chapter six.

[30] See Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1987, 149-58, 168-80.

[31] The conditions for stability are a common education, social cohesion and a sense of loyalty. *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 921-24. *Coleridge*, CW, X, 133-36. See also Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 98.

[32] Chapter four studies such ambiguity as it appears in the writings of some Victorian intellectuals, newspaper articles and pamphlets.

illustrate that the meanings of concepts are contingent and historically variable and crucially change according to their uses in arguments.[33]

In the third place, the fragment quoted above reveals the extent of Comte's influence on Mill's methodological proposal to study society.[34] By the time Mill writes the *Logic*, between 1830 and 1842, Comte publishes his six-volume *Cours de philosophie positive*.[35] Mill's search for a rational understanding of the causes and effects of social events is eloquently expressed by Comte's doctrine. The concepts of order and progress are placed at the ideological core of positivism. The division between statics and dynamics, argues Comte,

> corresponds with the double conception of order and progress: for order consists (in a positive sense) in a permanent harmony among the conditions of social existence; and progress consists in social development; and the conditions in the one case, and the laws of movement in the other, constitute the statics and dynamics of social physics.[36]

At this point the similarities between Comte's and Mill's formulations are apparent. Being order and progress desirable ends, social statics and social dynamics will be devoted to find out the conditions that guarantee them. Arguably, despite later disagreements between both philosophers, Mill regards the dichotomy between order and progress as an underlying idea of his science of society, reformulating it over the years. Mill's later critical appraisal of positivism, *Auguste Comte and Positivism*,

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[33] On this point I draw inspiration from Skinner on the significance of rhetorical redescriptions in political arguments. See for instance Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 138-53; Skinner, 'Rhetoric and Conceptual Change', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 3, 1999, 60-74; Skinner, 'Moral Principles and Social Change', in *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 145-57; Kari Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2003, 161-69. Reinhart Koselleck makes an analogous point in his description of ideologisation as an essential phenomenon in a long-term history of political concepts. Collective singulars nouns, such as progress, are 'general and ambiguous'. According to Koselleck, 'these qualities facilitate open-ended, unspecified expressions that can be understood in different, contradictory senses depending on the class or interest of the person using them'. Reinhart Koselleck, 'Introduction (*Einleitung*) to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 6, 1, 2011, 13.

[34] Chapter five is devoted to the personal and intelectual relationship between Mill and Comte.

[35] On the role that Comte's theory plays in the drafting of the *Logic* see Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, lxviii-lxix, lxxvi. In 1842, Mill writes to Comte: 'Si j'avais pû le connaître antérieurement, sourtout [*sic*] en entier, j'aurais peut être traduit cet ouvrage au lieu d'en faire un nouveau, ou si je l'avais fait, j'aurais vraisemblablement donné à l'exposition de mes idées, même sans intention nette à cet égard, une tournure un peu différente'. Mill to Comte, 11 July 1842, CW, XIII, 530.

[36] Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, vol. II, 74.

reinforces this point, as I discuss below. In Alexander Bain's opinion, Mill's first biographer and one of his closest friends, 'if [Mill] had written a complete work on Sociology, he would have made [the distinction of Statics and Dynamics] the basis of his arrangement as Comte did'.[37]

Although Mill never wrote a 'complete work on sociology,' his studies of economics lead him to revisit these ideas in a closely related field. In 1848, only a few years after the publication of the *Logic*, Mill structures *The Principles of Political Economy* around the division between statics and dynamics. He devotes the first three books to the statics of political economy, while the fourth and last book to the dynamics of the discipline. Its opening lines explain that he aims at 'adding a theory of motion to our theory of equilibrium – the Dynamics of political economy to the Statics'.[38] Remarkably, this division has become crucial to modern economics ever since Mill used it.[39] The study of economics, for Mill a science of its own, requires a combined analysis of 'the economical laws of a stationary and unchanging society' and those elements that explain its progressive change.

The examples in *A System of Logic* and *The Principles of Political Economy* suggest that Comte's imprint only reaches Mill's methodological approach. However, for both Comte and Mill the principles of order and progress, which correspond respectively to the static and dynamic aspects of a sociological study, also stand as political ideals. Comte argues that they should have an equal social impact, since they 'both are indispensable conditions in a state of modern civilization'. Their combination,

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[37] Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, London, Longmans, 1882, 73. In general, scholars have briefly commented on this affinity: W. M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963, 174; T. R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, 41; Angèle Kremer-Marietti, 'Introduction', in Oscar Haac ed., *The Correspondence of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte*, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1995, 23; Iris Wessel Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1956, 104-105; Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 97; Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, 170, 178; Yuichiro Kawana, 'John Stuart Mill's Projected Science of Society: 1827-1848' (PhD diss., University College London, 2009), 140-41, http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/18561/1/18561.pdf. From the fact that Mill does not agree with Comte's subsequently proposed mainstays of society does not follow that he rejects the division itself. On their differing opinions about the social role of the family see Vincent Guillin, *Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill on Sexual Equality: Historical, Methodological and Philosophical Issues*, Leiden, Brill, 2009, 198-211.

[38] *The Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848) CW, III, 705.

[39] Fritz Machlup, 'Statics and Dynamics: Kaleidoscopic Words', *Southern Economic Journal*, 26, 2, 1959, 91-110; Lionel Robbins, *History of Economic Thought: The LSE Lectures*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1998, 223-26; Robert B. Ekelund and Emilie S. Olsen, 'Comte, Mill, and Cairnes: The Positivist-Empiricist Interlude in Late Classical Economics', *Journal of Economic Issues*, 7, 3, 1973, 391.

continues Comte, 'is at once the grand difficulty and the main resource of every genuine political system. No real order can be established, and still less can it last, if it is not fully compatible with progress: and no great progress can be accomplished if it does not tend to the consolidation of order'.[40] Comte has in mind the extreme political positions that led France to a revolutionary period, and intends to appeal directly to both conservative and revolutionary audiences.[41] The ideas of order and progress, and the parties that represent them, 'are set up in radical opposition to each other, – the retrograde spirit having directed all efforts in favour of Order, and anarchical doctrine having arrogated to itself the charge of Social Progress'.[42] Furthermore, only in a positive stage a balance between the two ideals would be possible. Comte thinks that this definitive stage of human history would only take place after society overcomes two previous phases, the theological and the metaphysical periods. By now it is clear that Comte's attempt to reconcile conservative and progressive principles closely resembles Mill's lifelong effort to draw lessons from both Coleridge and Bentham, who represent two apparently opposite philosophical and political standpoints.

After a brief outline of Comte's and Coleridge's ideas, it comes as no surprise that Mill regards them in the same light. Their theories partially overlap, combining historical considerations with claims for both social and political stability. Following Coleridge and Comte, Mill suggests a pair of open-ended concepts that play a role in his methodological, historical and political arguments. In the *Logic*, he outlines an all-embracing method to study society and politics that is rooted in his previous thoughts about Coleridge's theory. Society has historically exhibited certain qualities of equilibrium and change, which offer a criterion for its present study. In addition, political questions may immensely benefit from this study. Sociology's ultimate goal, writes Mill, is to determine 'what artificial means may be used […] to accelerate the natural progress in so far as it is beneficial'.[43] Mill's debt to François Guizot as regards

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[40] Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, vol. II, 3-5.

[41] See Pickering, 'Auguste Comte', 37-38.

[42] Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, vol. II, 3. Comte goes as far as to turn the dichotomy into one of the positivist mottos that appear as a catching phrase in every positivist publication: 'Ordre et Progrès. Vivre pour autrui' or 'L'Amour pour principe. L'Ordre pour baise. Et le Progrès pour but'. See also Wright, *The Religion of Humanity*, 79. On the significance of the dichotomy in Comte's writings see Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, vol. I, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 606; Franco Ferrarotti, 'The Social Character of Science: The Lessons of Positivism', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 12, 4, 1999, 538-40.

[43] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 929.

the ideas of balance and the antagonistic social forces still deserves detailed attention, which is the object of the following section.

3.3 *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History* (1845)

Mill publishes his first review of Guizot's historiographical writings in 1836, co-authored with Joseph Blanco White, and a second one, by himself alone, in 1845.[44] In this section I focus on the second review since Blanco White is the main author of the first one, to which Mill only adds and cuts out some passages. Although it was eventually signed by both thinkers, Mill admits that he added 'a few remarks […] near the beginning' and deleted a few pages 'in order to make room' for his suggestions.[45] *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History* contains Mill's opinions about the distinguishing features of modern European civilisation.

Guizot provides Mill with several crucial points that support his approach to the interdependent principles of order and progress. Whereas in traditional societies one single power, military, religious or economic, exercised an overriding influence on public affairs, modern civilisation permits a 'systematic antagonism' which is 'the only condition under which stability and progressiveness can be permanently reconciled to one another'.[46] The general improvement of society arises from 'complication,' 'multiplicity,' 'variety' and 'struggle,' that is, from the social 'conflict of forces'.[47] Europe, and particularly England, has historically prevented stagnation by embracing social and political diversity, which accounts for their unrivalled position.[48]

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[44] See *Guizot's Lectures on European Civilization* (1836) CW, XX, 367-94, and *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History* (1845) CW, XX, 257-95.

[45] See Mill to Joseph B. White, 21 October 1835 and 24 November 1835, CW, XII, 280-81, 285; Mill to Henry S. Chapman, November 1835, CW, XII, 284.

[46] *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History*, CW, vol. XX, 267-69. Guizot's passages: François Guizot, 'Deuxiemme leçon', 25 avril 1828, *Cours d'histoire moderne: histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe*, Paris, Pichon et Didier, 1828, 3-10.

[47] The significance of social diversity is evident in *On Liberty*. See, for instance, Mill's epigraph to this book, which is a quotation by Wilhelm von Humboldt. *On Liberty* (1859), CW, XVIII, 215. See also *Civilization* (1836) CW, XVIII, 141.

[48] Mill's essay discusses England's ascendancy, which Guizot explains in these terms: 'Nul doute, par exemple, que ce développement simultané des divers éléments sociaux n'ait beaucoup contribué à faire arriver l'Angleterre, plus vite qu'aucun des États du continent, au but de toute société, c'est à dire à l'établissement d'un gouvernement à la fois régulier et libre'. Guizot, 'Quatorzième leçon', 18 juillet 1828, *Cours d'histoire moderne*, 7. In Mill's writings and, more generally, among Victorian intellectuals, the idea of England's superiority to other European countries coexists with a deep admiration for France. See Varouxakis, *Victorian Political Thought on France and the French*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002, 14,

The Coleridgean idea of interdependent and historically opposite social and political forces pervades Mill's appraisal of Guizot's *Cours d'histoire moderne*. To judge by Mill's words, Coleridge's theory matches Guizot's perfectly.[49] In order to make this point clearer, it is worth noting that Guizot's second lesson of his *Cours d'histoire moderne*, to which Mill refers, does not mention the term 'antagonism,' in contrast to Coleridge's writings.[50] But perhaps more revealing, Mill's review clearly points to the Coleridgean principles of permanence and progression when discussing the harmony between 'stability and progressiveness,' which is also missing in Guizot's *Cours*. Thus, Coleridge's ideas mediate Mill's reading of Guizot.

Insofar as Guizot's and Coleridge's understandings of social forces are fully compatible with each other, Mill comments on them using similar formulas. In an 1842 letter to Comte, Mill celebrates in a similar sense a 'complete sympathy' towards Comte's beliefs concerning the historical conditions for progress. In every progressive society, says Mill, an 'organised antagonism (*antagonisme organisé*)' persists over time. However, Mill points out that he was already familiar with this doctrine, probably referring to Guizot.[51]

By examining Mill's borrowings from Coleridge, Comte and Guizot, it is not my aim to draw well-defined boundaries distinguishing their theories. I highlight on the contrary that, to Mill's eyes, their ideas fused together sharing a common ground: the call for a precarious but necessary balance between countervailing social and political forces as the only condition for the progress of society. Arguably, the three thinkers have exercised a significant influence on Mill's ideas about social and political improvement. The next section moves away from Mill's methodological and historical

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43-47, 125-28; Collini et al., *That Noble Science of Politics*, 131, 157-59. For a general perspective, including literature, see Britta Martens, 'The Victorians' View of France', *Literature Compass*, 3, 3, 2006, 562-71.

[49] Varouxakis has noted the similarities between Coleridge and Guizot on this respect. Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', 301-302.

[50] Coleridge uses the image of antagonistic forces several times. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, 17-19, 23, 135. In addition, Mill particularly emphasises the reconciliation of opposite elements as the key to progress in European civilisation, which only appears towards the end of Guizot's *Cours*. See *Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History*, CW, XX, 269, 274, and Guizot, 'Quatorzième leçon', 18 juillet 1828, *Cours d'histoire moderne*, 7.

[51] Mill to Comte, 25 February 1842, CW, XIII, 502. See also Mill to Comte, 22 March 1842, CW, XIII, 508. Mill uses the examples of Egypt and Asia, a commonplace in Guizot's writings. See Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', 298-99.

considerations and examines how the principles of order and progress help him depict the contending political parties of his day.

3.4 *On Liberty* (1859) and *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* (1859)

In this section I examine two more instances in which Mill uses the dichotomy between order and progress in a political sense. Both *On Liberty* and *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* heavily mirror their social and political contexts and, perhaps for this reason, Mill's insights on method are virtually non-existent. Yet, by elaborating on the principles of order and progress, Mill draws an analogy between political and natural phenomena: they are both shaped by opposite interdependent forces. The division between order and progress serves, therefore, as a guiding thread, linking his early methodological writings with both later works.

When discussing the idea of freedom of thought in *On Liberty*, Mill argues that political opinions, and also political parties, are divided into two classes: those who defend order or stability and those who advocate progress or change. A party 'equally of order and of progress' would emerge in an ideal scenario. However, in the meantime, 'a healthy state of political life' should provide room for political debate or 'struggle' between the two main parties. In Mill's opinion, only a process of 'reconciling and combining of opposites' can promote the common good.[52]

Along with *On Liberty*, in 1859 also appears a pamphlet titled *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform*, containing Mill's reflections on the first Reform Act (1832), which considerably extended male franchise, and his proposal for a new far-reaching parliamentary reform that would further increase the size of the electorate, including women as well. Mill begins the pamphlet by arguing that British society is ripe for a major redistribution of parliamentary representation, precisely because it has not been demanded with 'impetuous and formidable demonstrations of public sentiment'.[53] The lack of public disorder is, according to Mill, 'one of the most satisfactory signs of the times'. As he argues in the passage quoted above from *On Liberty*, this extraordinary situation results from the clash of opposite political parties, that is, 'the mustering and

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[52] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 253. For a wider perspective see chapter four.
[53] *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* (1859) CW, XIX, 313.

trial of strength between the Progressive and the Stationary forces'.[54] Mill celebrates a peaceful succession of Whig and Conservative governments, which have 'inaugurated Improvement as the general law of public affairs'.[55]

Mill argues once again that the countervailing of political forces gives rise to a favourable state of society. In other words, not only political pluralism brings about order and progress, but also, consequently, they both are conditions for general prosperity. The balance between order and progress is both means to, and outcome of, a desirable political situation. Interestingly, Mill praises the British society by portraying it as a unique stimulating model, where such conditions take place. In fact, an idealised image of Britain, capable of improving while remaining peaceful, is a commonplace at the time. Its peculiarities stand out against the background of the French revolutionary fate, which provides a warning lesson. The stereotype spreads not only across Guizot's or Mill's writings, as we have seen. It also figures prominently in the historical narratives of T. B. Macaulay, W. Stubbs, W. Bagehot or M. Arnold, to name a few.[56]

3.5 *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861)

In his only treatise entirely devoted to political philosophy, Mill takes up again the question of what a good government should be like. The controversy addresses a discussion on 'what are the distinctive characteristics of the form of government best fitted to promote the interests of any given society,'[57] which lead him to revisit a topic he had examined in *Coleridge* a few years earlier. Still in 1861, the debate is far from being conclusive and his main sources are Coleridge and the French thinkers. Mill's tentative answer identifies the principles of order and progress as the criteria for a good government: 'The classification [of the constituents of social well-being] begins and

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[54] *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform*, CW, XIX, 314.
[55] *Ibid*. 1830-1834: Whig Government, Head of Government: The Earl Grey (1830-1834), The Viscount Melbourne (1834); 1834-1835: Conservative Government, Head of Government: The Duke of Wellington (1834) Sir Robert Peel (1834-1835); 1835-1841: Whig Government, Head of Government: The Viscount Melbourne (1835-1841); 1841-1846: Conservative Government, Head of Government: Sir Robert Peel (1841-1846).
[56] I examine the image of France in this regard in chapter four. Burrow has particularly emphasised the similarities between a Whig idea of balance and Mill's notion of diversity. John Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, 101-124; Collini et al., *That Noble Science of Politics*, 185-205; See also Varouxakis, *Victorian Political Thought on France and the French*, 14-15, 44-45, 128-29.
[57] *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) CW, XIX, 383.

ends with a partition of the exigencies of society between the two heads of Order and Progress (in the phraseology of French thinkers); Permanence and Progression, in the words of Coleridge'.[58] However, by now, he has a more nuanced opinion on this clear-cut division.

The argument continues by suggesting a number of terminological precisions with a practical purpose. First, Mill redefines order as 'the preservation of all kinds and amounts of good' and progress 'as consisting in the increase of them'.[59] In the second place, he actually subordinates order to progress, because the former 'is not an additional end to be reconciled with Progress, but a part and means of Progress itself'.[60] For that reason, it suffices to say that a good government should promote progress. Notwithstanding Mill's remarks, the division still holds.[61] Mill 'now swallows up in the pursuit of progress the anxieties of the Conservatives about the maintenance of order,' as Alan Ryan puts it.[62] Yet Mill admits that, as it stands, the formula lacks practical significance. Seeking to minimise this weakness, he devotes the rest of the chapter to the subject and concludes that a representative system constitutes the 'ideally best form of government'.[63]

As noted above, some of his later political writings, like *Representative Government*, develop and refine the basic outline of Mill's envisaged science of society. Some scholars have argued in this respect that 'it can hardly be said that *Representative Government* shows much evidence of being part of that 'general science of society' heralded in [the *Logic*'s] Book VI'.[64] Yet, when it comes to the fragments where Mill decisively commits to a representative form of government, the dichotomy between order and progress remains the keystone of his argument.

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[58] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 384.
[59] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 385.
[60] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 386.
[61] See for instance: 'We have now, therefore, obtained a foundation for a twofold division of the merit which any set of political institutions can possess. It consists partly of the degree in which they promote the general mental advancement of the community […]; and partly of the degree of perfection with which they organize the moral, intellectual, and active worth already existing'. *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 392.
[62] Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, 198-99.
[63] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 398. It is an ideal form of government and, as such, it suits only those communities who have reached the higher stage of civilisation. On this point see also 393 and *Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy* (1833), CW, X, 16ff.
[64] Collini et al., *That Noble Science of Politics*, 155.

3.6 *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865) and *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews* (1867)

By delving into the so-called Mill's minor writings, two more instances require some attention. *Auguste Comte and Positivism* contains Mill's mature reappraisal of positivism, whereas the *Inaugural Address* represents a good overview of his thought, only comparable with the *Autobiography*. They further illustrate the claim that, until the end of his life, Mill's interpretation of social phenomena entails a two-fold point of view: it focuses on both permanent and variable elements.

More than thirty years after he read Comte, Mill publishes an essay where he summarises both the strengths and weaknesses of positivism. One of the passages reads:

> Social phenomena, like all others, present two aspects, the statical, and the dynamical; the phenomena of equilibrium, and those of motion. The statical aspect is that of the laws of social existence, considered abstractedly from progress […]. The dynamical aspect is that of social progress. The statics of society is the study of the conditions of existence and permanence of the social state. The dynamics studies the laws of its evolution.[65]

Mill's opinion of Comte's epistemological grounds for a scientific study of society has remained intact despite the passage of time. Going even further, he states that *every kind* of phenomena, including social phenomena, exhibits the properties of permanence and progress. Remarkably, Mill elaborates on the concept of evolution, now closely intertwined with the idea of progress.[66] His argument continues, however, by criticising Comte's social statics. Comte argues that the family is one of the basic institutions that promotes social stability, while Mill particularly rejects a traditional view of marriage as a permanent bond, or the subordinate role of women, which Comte endorses.[67] Therefore, the criticism on the positivist design of society does not reach Mill's outline of his methodological approach, which still finds the division worthwhile.

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[65] *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), CW, X, 309.

[66] The fact that by 1865 Charles Darwin had already published his *Origin of Species* (1859) may be related, although the topic is beyond the scope of this chapter.

[67] *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 309-15. For a detailed discussion on this point see Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 95-105 and Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century*, 172-201.

Delivered in 1867, almost at the end of his life, Mill's *Inaugural Address* discusses his views on higher education, going through many of his 'thoughts and opinions which had been accumulating [in him] through life'.[68] When explaining the role of history in education, he argues that a student of past societies should '[picture] to himself human life and the human conception of life, as they were at the different stages of human development: in distinguishing between *what is the same in all ages and what is progressive*, and forming some incipient conception of the causes and laws of progress'.[69] Mill crucially remarks that the study of history qualifies people for 'the exercise of thought on the great interests of mankind as moral and social beings – ethics and politics, in the largest sense'.[70] The lessons of history, which constitute a special kind of political wisdom, are to be drawn by distinguishing between the elements that remain unchallenged and those that help improve society.

3.7 Concluding Remarks

Throughout many of his social and political writings, Mill unfolds his views on the interdependent concepts of order and progress. Such dichotomy discloses the basis of his methodological approach to the study of history and society, which turns crucial to Mill's portray of the leading political forces of his time. Societies present two main attributes, according to which social phenomena can be studied regarding politics, economics and history. The two dimensions of order and progress, when balanced, lead to the general improvement of society in Mill's view. However, this is more an analytical division, lacking empirical support, than a purely descriptive one, since in practice everything that promotes progress tends to contribute to social stability. They are, in short, basic principles of the science of society corresponding with the means to achieve a good government. But as such, they are also an important part of the outcome: leaving room for antagonistic forces in public life results in a positive balance whereby democratic rules are instilled into people's minds.[71]

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[68] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 287.
[69] *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews* (1867) CW, XXI, 244. My emphasis.
[70] *Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St. Andrews*, CW, XXI, 243-44.
[71] On the value of public debate see chapter one.

More generally, the chapter illustrates a specific understanding of political thought by which concepts shape their meanings according to both the way they are used in arguments and their particular location within a constellation of concepts. As regards Mill's historical setting, scholars have argued that the idea of progress plays a significant role in the Victorian intellectual context. Yet in Mill's writings the concept frequently appears tied up with the idea of order, a topic hardly ever explored. The meaning of progress, moreover, is determined by this proximity and joint usage. The examples discussed in this chapter show that Mill understands progress as one of the necessary constituents of society, be it an aim of good government, a dimension of society or a political force. Progress shared the terrain with order, and in this sense they were both 'filled out in a distinctive way due to their mutual proximity'.[72]

The study of the argumentative relationship between concepts has proved valuable for the history of political thought. Michael Freeden's morphological approach to political ideologies stands as an example. When examining Mill's political thinking, Freeden points out that 'it is only when bonded and subservient to progress that order became a constituting, though marginal, concept of Mill's liberal thought'.[73] Freeden supports his claim by quoting mostly from *Representative Government*, where Mill indeed subordinates order to progress. However, the concept of order keeps throughout Mill's writings a more prominent role than it can be assumed by a selective analysis of this work.

Finally, the chapter aims to contribute to a renewed understanding of Mill's social and political thought in two more ways. In the first place, it offers an interpretation of Mill's intellectual debts to Coleridge, Comte and Guizot, which goes well beyond his early writings. Mill's borrowings stand out against the background of his Benthamite education, although the influence of Coleridge, Comte and Guizot is not only limited to the areas I have discussed. Secondly, the study suggests an interpretation that links usually unconnected aspects in scholars' approaches to Mill's thought, namely, his methodological and political views. The fact that the concepts under discussion are particularly ambiguous is crucial, for they perform different roles depending on the context in which Mill uses them. On the one hand, by drawing inspiration from natural

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[72] Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, 78.

[73] Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 167.

phenomena, the concepts of order and progress become the backbone of Mill's image of present and past societies, which makes a case for his science of society. They represent, on the other hand, two antagonistic political principles. A close look into history shows that societies improve when a balance between both principles is achieved. Therefore, his proposal goes along the same lines and advocates a wise combination of these apparently opposite principles. The two preceding general remarks suggest that Mill's political views are closely linked to his methodological approach to society. After all, it is not by chance that Mill pictures himself as 'building the bridges and clearing the paths' that linked his received opinions with those of whom he regarded as political opponents.[74]

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[74] *Autobiography*, CW, I, 251-53.

The Argumentative Usages of Order and Progress:
Social and Political Debates in Newspapers, Pamphlets
and the Writings of Victorian Intellectuals (c. 1840-1899)

Academic literature has frequently regarded the concept of progress as one of the leading ideas in Victorian society and politics.[1] However, whereas this concept has been one of the main focus of scholarly attention, its argumentative relationship with other political concepts has aroused less interest. This chapter draws on this neglected area by examining how the concept of progress is jointly used with that of order. I study the academic writings of some prominent Victorian intellectuals, along with a selection of newspaper articles and political pamphlets published from the 1840s until the end of the nineteenth century.[2]

The chapter has three main sections. The first section analyses the writings of a number of 'public moralists' such as John Stuart Mill, Samuel Coleridge, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, Frederic Harrison, Samuel Alexander and Walter Bagehot.[3] Some of their works illustrate the two main usages of the dichotomy between order and progress. In the first place, the dichotomy highlights two antagonistic but complementary social attributes. They provide a methodological starting point for the study of society in the writings of the mentioned authors. Yet their scientific enquiries have practical purposes, for they aim at finding out what contributes to secure the continuity of political institutions and peace within a country while improving the

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[1] One of the best-known examples is Asa Briggs, *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*, sixth edn, London, Longmans, 1987. See also Peter J. Bowler, *The Invention of Progress: The Victorians and the Past*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1989.

[2] In the first section I consider one of Samuel Coleridge's works published in 1830 because its analysis is crucial to understand Mill's later usage of 'order' and 'progress'. However, apart from this exception, the chapter focuses on writings published between 1840 and 1899.

[3] I use Stefan Collini's phrase, 'public moralists', to refer to some influential British intellectuals who developed their activities at universities, in Parliament or in the press. Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006.

welfare of its citizens. By describing society, these Victorian comprehensive accounts of social reality set the key issues on the political agenda. In the second place, the concepts of order and progress stand for party ideals. They condense ideological positions into convenient labels that spring up in the argumentative battles among political parties. Although for the sake of clarity the chapter distinguishes between the two uses, it is worth noting that sometimes they appear closely intertwined.

The second and third sections study what roles both concepts play in everyday language. By everyday language I refer to the way in which ordinary political actors expressed their concerns on both domestic and international affairs. It is therefore an attempt to broaden the history of political thought so as to include ordinary political thinking beyond the well-known canonical texts, which Michael Freeden has called 'the actual political thinking'.[4] For that purpose, I consider a number of widely-read newspapers and political pamphlets. Among the analysed newspapers are *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* or *The Economist*. It shall become apparent that the public usage of order and progress fairly corresponds with the writings of intellectuals previously examined. Even if the survey of newspapers and pamphlets is not exhaustive, they provide new channels to explore the social context and how people discussed pressing political issues. Whereas some scholarly studies tend to push Victorian periodicals into the background, or treat them as second-rate evidence, the second and third sections of the chapter are entirely devoted to their analysis as a manner of interpreting Victorian political arguments in their historical setting.[5]

Periodicals and pamphlets offer a snapshot of the Victorian political concerns. Their study gives an insight into the ordinary ways of thinking about politics and the popular recasting of political theories. The French revolution of 1848 and the volatile political scenario that follows or the British imperialist policies in the last decades of the nineteenth century, for instance, receive detailed attention in this regard. It shall be seen that the ideas of order and progress help make sense of international and domestic political affairs. Furthermore, the dichotomy of order and progress was one of the

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[4] Michael Freeden, 'Thinking Politically and Thinking about Politics: Language, Interpretation and Ideology', in *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*, ed. Marc Stears and David Leopold, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008, 197. Alan Finlayson has referred in the same sense to political ideas 'as they are found in the wild' or ' "everyday" and "routine" political ideas', Alan Finlayson, 'Rhetoric and the Political Theory of Ideologies', *Political Studies*, 60, 2012, 751-67.

[5] In a similar sense, Freeden has suggested that the distinction between primary and secondary texts need to be blurred, see Michael Freeden, *Liberal Languages*, Princeton, Priceton University Press, 2005, 12.

leading methodological and political principles of Comte's doctrine. Positivism played a part in Victorian culture at different levels. It was a philosophical theory that encompassed religious, moral and political beliefs. Eventually, the chapter aims to an understanding of positivism that was reshaped when popularised by exploring the public argumentative usage of one of its ideological backbones. The popularity of order and progress, I argue, stems from the fact that it encapsulates a fundamental concern in the epoch on how to prevent social unrest while improving the quality of people's life.

4.1 Intellectuals' Arguments

In this section I consider, first, how the concepts of order and progress provide the basis for some systematic enquiries into the causes and consequences of social events, establishing some similarities between the natural and the social sciences. From this correspondence it follows that social welfare requires a combination of stability and improvement, namely, of order and progress. I use these terms following the writings analysed to identify the twofold aim that governments pursue. Promoting progress is synonym with searching generalised economic prosperity and satisfying people's basic needs. By order the writings discussed refer to the absence of violence and political turmoil, thus disapproving revolutionary upheavals. The section examines in the second place a further usage of the dichotomy: order and progress stand for political ideals and help summarise political parties' ideological positions.

4.1.1 Samuel Taylor Coleridge and John Stuart Mill

John Stuart Mill reassesses Samuel Taylor Coleridge's thought in an essay originally published in the *London and Westminster Review*. Mill endorses Coleridge's idea of the state as a balanced whole encompassing the two opposite interests of permanence and progression. According to Coleridge, 'the two antagonist powers or opposite interests of the state, under which all other state interests are comprised, are those of permanence and progression'.[6] The permanence of a state is connected to land ownership, whereas

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[6] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each*, London, Hurst, Chance & Co, 1830, 18. On this point see also Pamela Edwards, *The Statesman's Science: History, Nature and Law in the Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, New York,

the forces of progression are represented by the 'the four classes of the mercantile, the manufacturing, the distributive, and the professional'.[7] Coleridge talks of state in a broad sense, as a 'unity' or 'body politic' shaped by the interplay between two great forces that ultimately correspond to two social groups, landed and commercial society. Where these interests have remained balanced in 'equipoise and interdependency', as in Britain, the country enjoys certain prosperity. Being an island, says Coleridge, the antagonist powers 'have been allowed to work out their final balance with less disturbance from external forces, than was possible in the Continental states'.[8]

Coleridge's views leave an imprint on Mill's beliefs.[9] The 'great interests' of permanence and progression are in his opinion the foundations for political philosophy, as Mill comments to John Sterling, one of Coleridge's disciples.[10] When analysing society, Mill looks into the conditions that guarantee 'the permanent existence of the body politic' as compatible with his 'perpetual and progressive improvement'.[11] This dual approach is useful to Mill's subsequent understanding of society and politics, as Mill's sixth book of *A System of Logic* (1843) shows. It aims at developing a method to study society in a broad sense, including politics. Sociology, or the science of society, analyses social events according to two criteria: 'the conditions of stability' or 'equilibrium' and 'the laws of progress' or 'movement'.[12] There should be two different branches of sociology, social statics and social dynamics, devoted to find out what is needed to ensure both social order and progress respectively.

Mill reproduces this double-sided approach in two other works published in 1848 and 1865. When arguing his method to study economics in *The Principles of Political*

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[7] Columbia University Press, 2004, 175-200; Basil Willey, *Nineteenth-Century Studies: Coleridge to Mathew Arnold*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1949, 44-50.

[7] Coleridge, *Church and State*, 20.

[8] Coleridge, *Church and State*, 17. Although John Morrow interprets *Church and State* as an attempt to defend landed interests against commercial activity, I agree with Edwards when she points out that Coleridge argues instead for a balance between both interests. See John Morrow, *Coleridge's Political Thought: Property, Morality and the Limits of the Traditional Discourse*, London, Macmillan, 1990, 115-20 and Edwards, 'Coleridge on Politics and Religion: *The Statesman's Manual*, *Aids to Reflection*, *On the Constitution of Church and State*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Frederick Burwick, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, 235-53.

[9] I deal with this topic more extensively in chapter two and three.

[10] Mill to John Sterling, 2 October 1839, in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, XIII, 408.

[11] *Coleridge* (1840), CW, X, 139.

[12] *A System of Logic, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843), CW, VIII, 917.

Economy (1848), he considers in the first place the 'statics of political economy', while only the last book is devoted to the 'dynamics of political economy'.[13] His 1865 reappraisal of positivism constitutes another example. Mill sticks to his earlier views on social phenomena and argues that they present 'two aspects', the statical and the dynamical. The 'conditions of existence and permanence of the social state' are examined independently of 'the laws of its evolution'.[14] Remarkably, in Mill's epoch statics and dynamics are branches of mechanics, the part of physics that studies stability and movement in inorganic bodies.[15] When picturing society according to this clear-cut distinction Mill implicitly assumes that both society and nature share some features whereby it makes sense to talk about the 'statics of society' or 'social statics' and the 'dynamics of society' or 'social dynamics'.

4.1.2 Herbert Spencer

Following Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, Spencer's first book, *Social Statics* (1851), divides social philosophy into statics and dynamics.[16] Statics deals with 'the equilibrium of a perfect society', and dynamics with 'the forces by which society is advanced towards perfection'. A detailed study of the former will establish the laws 'we must obey for the obtainment of complete happiness', whereas the latter considers 'the influences which are making us competent to obey these laws'.[17] Spencer describes society, as Mill does, by focusing on the elements leading equally to social equilibrium and development. His main problem, both in *Social Statics* and his later writings, is precisely how to reconcile order with change.[18] However, the few and obscure comments that Spencer devotes to this question have led some commentators to neglect

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[13] *The Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848), CW, III, 705.

[14] *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), CW, X, 309.

[15] See chapter six.

[16] Spencer clarifies that he draws inspiration from Mill's *Political Economy* in a later essay. Herbert Spencer, 'Reasons for Dissenting from the Philosophy of M. Comte', in *Essays: Scientific, Political and Speculative*, II, London, Williams and Norgate, 1891, 134. See also Sydney Eisen, 'Herbert Spencer and the Spectre of Comte', *The Journal of British Studies*, 7, 1, 1967, 52.

[17] 'To determine what laws we must obey for the obtainment of complete happiness is the object of the one, whilst that of the other is to analyze the influences which are making us competent to obey these laws'. Spencer, *Social Statics: Or the Conditions Essential to Human Happiness Specified*, London, John Chapman, 1851, 409.

[18] Robert M. Young, 'Herbert Spencer and "Inevitable" Progress', *History Today*, 37, 1987, 18-22.

the significance of the dichotomy.[19] The distinction between permanent and changing social elements becomes the basis for his evolutionary theory, fully developed only in his later works. Civilisation is not 'artificial', but 'part of nature'.[20] Being then a natural phenomenon, society should be studied attending to what gradually changes and what constitutes its structural, immutable basis. In his *Principles of Ethics* (1879-93) Spencer defends, in accordance with his earlier views, that for men to be virtuous they should live in a society that can ensure peace, both with other countries and within its national boundaries.[21] Long-term stability is a necessary condition for progress, he argues, thus recasting the dichotomy between statics and dynamics by turning it into a normative goal that society has to achieve.

Similarities between the natural and the social sciences become apparent when considering in this light Spencer's and Mill's writings, but they are also recurrent in Coleridge's work. The image of a magnet helps Coleridge portray social arrangements as a unitary whole that exists thanks to a constant tension between twin opposite forces: permanence and progression. Still, as Edwards remarks, the idea of rival forces pervades his writings. Coleridge's metaphysical and biological theories of opposite powers, developed for example in *Hints Toward the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life*, establish the framework for his approach to politics.[22] A prosperous society, in Coleridge's opinion, has found the right balance between permanence and progression, the two interests of the state.

4.1.3 Auguste Comte's Positivism, Frederic Harrison and Samuel Alexander

By mid-nineteenth century, however, positivism ranks as the philosophical doctrine that more markedly combines a scientific approach to society with a concern for the balance

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[19] For instance, neither David Weinstein's study nor Michael Taylor's book deal with the distinction. David Weinstein, *Equal Freedom and Utility: Herbert Spencer's Liberal Utilitarianism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998; Michael W. Taylor, *Men versus the State: Herbert Spencer and Late Victorian Individualism*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992.

[20] Spencer, *Social Statics*, 65.

[21] Spencer, *The Principles of Ethics*, orig. edn 1897, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2 vols., 1978, I, 298. On Spencer's defence of this idea and the similarities in this regard with Henry Sidgwick and Thomas H. Green see Duncan Bell and Casper Sylvest, 'International Society in Victorian Political Thought: T. H. Green, Herbert Spencer, and Henry Sidgwick', *Modern Intellectual History*, 3, 2, 2006, 207-38.

[22] Written by 1816 and published posthumously. Coleridge, *Hints Toward the Formation of a More Comprehensive Theory of Life*, Philadelphia, Lea and Blanchard, 1848, 50-67. Edwards, *The Statesman's Science*, 151, 97-98.

between social order and progress. Auguste Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* was not available in translation for English readers until 1853, but already in 1843 Mill's *Logic* introduces some of its central theses, including the above-mentioned notions of social statics and social dynamics.[23] According to Comte, the distinction between statics and dynamics 'corresponds with the double conception of order and progress'. Order refers to the 'permanent harmony among the conditions of social existence', whereas by progress Comte means 'social development'.[24] The formula 'order and progress' eventually becomes a positivist motto, since it summarises one of its leading ideas: politics has to prevent social unrest and promote social prosperity. In other words, 'no real order can be established, and still less can it last, if it is not fully compatible with progress: and no great progress can be accomplished if it does not tend to the consolidation of order'.[25] Comte reaches this conclusion after having devised a method to study society according to scientific standards.

Comte's influence is by no means limited to Mill's writings. In 1867 Richard Congreve founded the London Positivist Society that aimed at spreading Comte's doctrine in England. The positivist formulas, including the catchphrase 'order and progress', presided the weekly meetings that gathered those interested in positivism.[26] Frederic Harrison, who was one of its leading members, publishes in 1881 a two-volume book titled *Order and Progress*. The first volume explains the ideal conditions for a good government according to positivism, while the second is a collection of previously published articles devoted to the analysis of contemporary political issues. Recognising his debt to Comte, Harrison clarifies that by order he refers to 'the normal conditions' of society and by progress to the 'evolution' of society as a 'systematic

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[23] On this topic see W. M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963, 172-237.

[24] Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. Harriet Martineau, London, J. Chapman, 1853, vol. II, 74.

[25] Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, vol. II, 3-5. 'Order and progress' appear as a catchphrase in every positivist publication. See Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, 79. On the significance of the dichotomy in Comte's writings see Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, vol. I, 606; Franco Ferrarotti, 'The Social Character of Science: The Lessons of Positivism', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 12, 4, 1999, 538-40.

[26] See Wright, *The Religion of Humanity*, 79.

whole',[27] adding that 'there is no opposition – hardly any contrast between them'.[28] Harrison consequently defends 'a regeneration and not a revolution' for England, a peaceful reformist agenda that promotes profound moral, social and political changes in perfect harmony.[29] Without going into much detail, Harrison endorses Comte's positivism and encourages the development of education as essential to moral regeneration, as well as a government 'of practical men' whose common sense guide their political decisions.

Samuel Alexander, whose relation with positivism is not documented, applies the distinction between order and progress to ethics.[30] He claims 'to have worked independently, and to have put things in [his] own way', but his description of the 'nature of morality' is strikingly similar to Comte's and Mill's approaches to social reality.[31] The second and third parts of Alexander's book are respectively titled 'Statical – Moral Order' and 'Dynamical – Moral Growth and Progress'. The latter studies 'morality in motion rather than in repose' and examines how the 'distinction of good and bad grows and varies'.[32] The statics of morality regards the matter 'as it is given'.[33] The writings of Mill, Coleridge, Spencer, Comte, Harrison and Alexander illustrate a tendency to represent society by drawing an analogy with the natural world. In doing so, most of them develop a methodology for the study of society that bears an obvious resemblance to procedures and discourses of the natural sciences. For instance, the main branches of the science of mechanics, namely statics and dynamics, and their corresponding concepts of order and progress, provide the backbone for some of the projects that are concerned with morality, economics, politics or society as a whole in the Victorian context.

Contemporary scholarly studies dealing with the similarities between experimental and social sciences usually downplay the impact of positivism in social and political

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[27] By 'evolution' Harrison means 'development', echoing the Darwinian theory of evolution. See Frederic Harrison, *Order and Progress*, London, Longmans, Greens & Co, 1881, 36.

[28] Harrison, *Order and Progress*, 31, n. 1.

[29] Harrison, *Order and Progress*, 36-37.

[30] See for instance John Laird, 'Alexander, Samuel', rev. Michael A. Weinstein, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, hereafter ODNB, Oxford University Press, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30372, accessed 27 December 2012.

[31] Samuel Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress: An Analysis of Ethical Conceptions*, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1889, viii.

[32] Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress*, 19.

[33] Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress*, 16-17.

arguments by focusing on the significance of Darwin's theories.[34] However, the joint use of the ideas of order and progress can be traced back to before Darwin's ideas strike Victorian society in 1859. The Coleridgean and positivist roots traceable in the usage of order and progress are scarcely noted, mainly because of a further complexity: in the 1860s many authors also resort to the concept of evolution when elaborating on social progress, which was to be viewed as synonym with social Darwinism.[35] Academic literature has, as a result, focused more frequently on the idea of progress, either in isolation or as equivalent to evolution. The fact that it was sometimes used in connection with the concept of order has been generally neglected or downplayed.[36]

A further consequence follows from these scientific approaches to social phenomena. When highlighting the features that the social and the natural world have in common, speakers not only describe society, but also make normative claims about it. The large-scale projects that aim at studying society and adopt a neutral tone frequently encompass an idea of how society should be like.[37] As Quentin Skinner puts it, concepts may perform evaluative as well as descriptive functions.[38] Order and progress carry out this twofold task when describing social reality as shaped by two countervailing and interdependent forces that likewise offer the basic guidelines for a political agenda. The well-being of society demands a combination between general improvement and social stability. To put it differently, a generalised improvement of the quality of life is not possible in times of social and political unrest. Revolutionary periods or popular

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[34] A few examples are Robert M. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985; Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989; Peter Dickens, *Social Darwinism: Linking Evolutionary Thought to Social Theory*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 2000; R. Creath and J. Maienschein, eds., *Biology and Epistemology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, see part one; Roger Smith, 'British Thought on the Relations Between the Natural Sciences and the Humanities, c. 1870–1910', in U. Feest, ed., 'Historical Perspectives on *Erklären* and *Verstehen*', *Archimedes*, 21, 2010, 161-85. John Burrow's *Evolution and Society* is a notable exception. J. W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966.

[35] As John Burrow points out, this is usually the case as regards Walter Bagehot's thought. Mill, Spencer, Harrison, or Alexander are further examples. Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, 108.

[36] See for instance Margaret Meek Lange, 'Progress', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Spring 2011 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/progress/, accessed 30 December 2012; Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, New York, Basic Books, 1980; John B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, London, Macmillan, 1920, 190-205; Leslie Sklair, *The Sociology of Progress*, London, Routledge, 1998.

[37] I develop this point in chapter six.

[38] Quentin Skinner, 'Rhetoric and Conceptual Change', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 3, 1999, 61, 71.

upheavals are thus contrary to this end. As it may be seen below, newspapers and pamphlets widely use the concepts of order and progress in this sense.

4.1.4 Walter Bagehot

The conditions for continued progress and the dangers of social disorders also figure as central themes in Walter Bagehot's writings. Particularly in his *Physics and Politics* (1872), progress results from a delicate tension between continuity and change. While a certain degree of uniformity is indispensable to establish a bond among members of any society, too much uniformity prevents progress and leads to stagnation. In Bagehot's opinion, 'progress is only possible in those happy cases where the force of legality has gone far enough to bind the nation together, but not far enough to kill out all varieties and destroy nature's perpetual tendency to change'.[39] An imbalance would jeopardise social progress and lead to either gradual decline or disorder and anarchy. On the one hand, the 'old Eastern civilisations' represent a paradigmatic example of a 'customary', non-progressive society, in contrast to the European civilisation, where a 'government by discussion' makes possible the differences of opinion, and hence progress.[40] On the other hand, France illustrates an instance where progress is not possible due to social instability. When analysing the 'many failures' of France, says Bagehot, 'all sensible Englishmen' will conclude that 'the first want of the French is somebody or something able and willing to keep down street-rows, to repress the frightful elements of revolution and disorder which, every now and then, astonish Europe'. In contrast to England, where 'order and tranquillity' have promoted progress, France struggles to keep peace and stability.[41] Bagehot stresses that a peaceful and well-ordered society is

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[39] Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, in *The Works and Life of Walter Bagehot*, hereafter *Works*, ed. Russell Barrington, London, Longmans, 9 vols., 1915, vol. VIII, 42. See also 35-37.

[40] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, in *Works*, VIII, 101, 143, 43, 97.

[41] Bagehot refers to 'England' and 'English' instead of 'Britain' and 'British'. This is also the case in most of the newspaper articles and political pamphlets on which I comment below. The question of whether this usage refers to England in contrast to Great Britain remains unanswered and cannot be addressed properly within the scope of this chapter.

the 'essential and primary prerequisite of industry and civilisation'.[42] The fragile balance has been altered in France.[43]

Mill's attempt in the 1840s to establish a science that predicts what promotes social stability and progress was not conclusive, to judge by his later reflections on the matter. In *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) his argument goes along the same lines as Bagehot's. Mill's answer to the question of what is a good government reads: 'The classification [of the constituents of social well-being] begins and ends with a partition of the exigencies of society between the two heads of Order and Progress (in the phraseology of French thinkers); Permanence and Progression, in the words of Coleridge'.[44] This quotation singles out his two main sources of inspiration while identifying the principles of order and progress as the criteria for a good government. Yet the chapter continues by drawing a slightly different conclusion. Mill subordinates order to progress, since progress already includes the idea of order and 'expresses rather one of the conditions of government, than either its purpose or the criterion of its excellence'.[45] Like Bagehot, Mill thinks that a certain amount of social stability is indispensable to both promote social welfare and establish a government.

4.1.5 Political Ideologies Encapsulated

The concepts of order and progress are jointly used in a further sense that has not been discussed yet. They represent political ideals and summarise party political lines, functioning as watchwords for ideological stances. Roughly speaking, 'order' stands for the Conservative Party, whereas 'progress' outlines the Liberal Party programme. In 1859 Mill talks of a 'party of order or stability' opposed to a 'party of progress or

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[42] Bagehot, 'Letters on the French *Coup d'État* of 1851', *Works*, I, 113. Bagehot thus justifies Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* as a temporary solution that will end uncertainty and social disorder.

[43] John Burrow has repeatedly pointed out some similarities between the Whig idea of balance and that of authors like Mill, Bagehot and Henry Maine, along with a shared concern for the 'distinctiveness of progressive European civilization'. See Burrow, 'Balance and Diversity', in *Whigs and Liberals*, 101-24; Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 175-81, 194-205. Burrow, 'Henry Maine and Mid-Victorian Ideas of Progress', in *The Victorian Achievement of Sir Henry Maine: A Centennial Reappraisal*, ed. Alan Diamond, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, 59-68.

[44] *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), CW, XIX, 384.

[45] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 385.

reform' and describes the situation as a commonplace.[46] His earlier essay *Coleridge* identifies the principle of permanence or the 'conservative interest' with Coleridge, who aims at 'reasserting the best meaning and purposes of the old [doctrines]'. Bentham's radicalism, on the contrary, is represented by the principle of progression, his theories demanding 'the extinction of the institutions and creeds which had hitherto existed'.[47]

Both *Coleridge* and *On Liberty* follow a similar argumentative strategy: Mill advocates a party capable of counterbalancing both extremes, that is, 'a party equally of order and of progress'.[48] As for Coleridge and Bentham, Mill believes that the rival political principles they represent are equally valuable, since both 'are opposite poles of one great force of progression'.[49] The practical concerns of life, says Mill, require 'reconciling and combining opposites', which is one of his main goals when arguing for a renewed political party.[50] For Mill, as Courtney remarks, 'the truth lay somewhere between the views of two counterbalancing and antagonistic parties'.[51] Martineau's translation of Comte's *Cours* similarly calls for a political stance capable of solving the problems that the French Revolution brought about.[52] The ideas of order and progress, and the parties that represent them, radically oppose each other, 'the retrograde spirit having directed all efforts in favour of Order, and anarchical doctrine having arrogated to itself the charge of Social Progress'.[53] Their combination in a single political party is essential, but not easy. For that reason, Mill accepts political discussion and party rotation as a means to assure favourable social circumstances.

A 'healthy state of political life' makes therefore room for party contest and lively debate.[54] Moreover, the successions in power of the two main parties, what he calls 'the

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[46] *On Liberty* (1859), CW, XVIII, 253. See also one of his parliamentary speeches in which he describes the differences between 'a party of Progress' and 'any Conservative party'. 'W. E. Gladstone [1]', 21 July 1866, CW, XXVIII, 97. To my knowledge, these labels have not been discussed in depth, but they appear in contemporary literature to refer to British political parties. See Maurice Cowling, *1867: Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution: The Passing of the Second Reform Bill*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, 27, 191; Nancy L. Rosenblum, *On the Side of the Angels: An Appreciation of Parties and Partisanship*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2008, 74-75, 149, 365; John Scott and Christopher T. Husbands, 'Victor Branford and the Building of British Sociology', *The Sociological Review*, 55, 3, 2007, 460-84.

[47] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 145-46.

[48] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 253-54. See chapter three.

[49] *Coleridge*, CW, X, 146.

[50] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 254.

[51] W. L. Courtney, *Life of John Stuart Mill*, London, Walter Scott, 1889, 65.

[52] On this point see Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, I, 7-8.

[53] Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, vol. II, 3.

[54] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 253.

Progressive' and 'the Stationary forces', have led to general improvement, according to Mill.[55] Democratic debate, both in and out of Parliament, benefits from 'many-sidedness', a virtue that Mill values throughout his life.[56] Walter Bagehot and Sidney Webb also use the distinction between a party of order and a party of progress to refer to the political forces of their time. While Bagehot employs repeatedly the formula 'party of order' to refer to the 'English Tory Party', Webb laments that 'the nature of an Englishman seems to be suited only to a political fight between two parties – the party of order and the party of progress'.[57] As it has become clear, the dichotomy that first serves as the basic guideline for the study of social matters also represents the ideological positions of both political parties.

Recast in political terms, the dichotomy of order and progress encapsulates the Conservatives' and Liberals' creeds respectively, offering convenient labels to identify them. Yet Comte and Mill seek to weave together a political doctrine out of what is valuable in the views of the two main parliamentary rivals.[58] The newspapers analysed in the next section show that this formula is a recurrent rhetorical strategy in political speeches, regardless of the speakers' party affiliations. Instead of mutually incompatible, order and progress may become allied political principles, bound together within a single political party. Since social welfare entails stability, a renewed, appealing political party shall advocate both order and progress in equal degree. The alliance between them makes sense when interpreted against the background of the experimental sciences' insights.

Mill and his contemporaries thought of England as a peaceful and prosperous society as compared with the rest of the continent, and particularly in contrast to France. Mill acknowledges that this situation, 'apparently anomalous', is a notable exception rather than the rule.[59] France offers, according to Burrow, the 'antithetical example, for purposes of warning or self-congratulation', as it may be seen in the writings of Thomas

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[55] *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform* (1859), CW, XIX, 314.
[56] See *Autobiography* (1873), CW, I, 171; *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 252-53; 'Death of Jeremy Bentham', *Examiner*, 10 June 1832, in CW, XXII, 471-72.
[57] Bagehot, 'Intellectual Conservatism', *The Saturday Review*, 26 April 1856, in *Works*, IX, 256. Reports of Fabian meetings in *Workman's Times*, 30 January 1891, quoted in A. M. McBriar, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 246.
[58] In this regard, Mill's proposal of an advanced Liberal party may fulfil this aim, as I point out in chapter one.
[59] *Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform*, CW, XIX, 314.

B. Macaulay and William Stubbs, among others.[60] When making sense of the '"special" British path of non-violent, gradual constitutional reform', political arguments draw decisively on the concepts of order and progress.[61] Furthermore, John Roberts has argued that the international community also admired at that time 'the spectacle of peaceful change' in a country that 'had not faltered in its opposition to the revolutionary danger from France'.[62] The question remains whether the issues discussed above are relevant to a wider social context, beyond the writings of 'public moralists', and to what extent the ideas of order and progress played any role when the political issues of the day were publicly discussed. The next section deals with the issue.

4.2 Exploring Everyday Language: Newspaper Articles

In what follows I examine if the joint usage of the concepts of order and progress was part of ordinary political thinking in nineteenth-century Britain from 1846 to 1899 and whether popular usages and meanings were consistent with the writings of leading intellectuals. I suggest a shift in the chapter's focus from well-known authors' ideas to widely-read newspapers and pamphlets, which offer a window into the Victorian cultural and intellectual context. This analysis draws on Michael Freeden's criticism of Quentin Skinner's understanding of political thinking as both intentional and 'agent-based'. Great political thinkers, as Freeden has argued, are 'eloquent points of ideological discourse', but their thought should be understood as part of a larger context. Without denying that the ideas of intellectuals leave an imprint on the way people represent social and political reality, it seems crucial to highlight that the influence also works conversely: the writings of intellectuals root in people's concerns and elaborate on ideas already present in public opinion.

I pay attention to newspapers and pamphlets that enjoyed a wide circulation by mid-nineteenth century. The so-called 'tax on knowledge', which increased the price of

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[60] Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals*, 124. See also Collini et al., *That Noble Science of Politics*, 193-97, 200-202 and Burrow, 'Henry Maine and Mid-Victorian Ideas of Progress', 59-60. On Victorian perceptions of France's faults see Georgios Varouxakis, *Victorian Political Thought on France and the French*, Houndmills, Palgrave, 2002, 125-28.

[61] Gregory Claeys, 'Political Thought', in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Chris Williams, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004, 200.

[62] John Roberts, 'Politics and Society from 1789 to 1851', in *The Nineteenth Century: The Contradictions of Progress*, ed. Asa Briggs, New York, Bonanza Books, 1985, 63.

newspapers up to four pence, was progressively reduced from the 1830s onwards until its total disappearance in 1855.[63] In the case of newspapers, I have found one hundred and twenty-two articles that use the expression 'order and progress' as such from 1846 to 1899.[64] The articles belong to *The Times* (29), the *Morning Post* (2), the *Manchester Guardian* (20), *The Economist* (9) and the *Daily News* (62), five of the most popular newspapers of the epoch.[65]

The Times, established in 1785, is the most influential newspaper of the first half of the nineteenth century. Although the *Morning Post*, first published in 1772, has a smaller circulation than *The Times*, its analysis has proved useful for the aims of this study. As regards their ideological stances, both *The Times* and the *Morning Post* have a conservative tone, challenged by the other three newspapers mentioned above. The *Manchester Guardian* published its first issue in 1821, while *The Economist* and the *Daily News* in 1843 and 1846 respectively. As prices fell, circulation increased, and from around the 1850s the three newspapers were strong competitors to *The Times*, advocating alternative ideological viewpoints closer to liberal and radical political positions.[66]

In the articles considered, the ideas of order and progress help authors describe social events and argue for future political scenarios in England or elsewhere. We find them mainly in two different contexts. First, most of the times order are progress are what governments should promote, that is, they are desirable ends and positive long-term outcomes resulting from wise political decisions. Second, in some cases they function as labels that identify political parties or stand for their fundamental principles. In this regard, some articles talk about 'a party of order' or 'a party of progress', but in

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[63] 'Newspaper taxes, taxes on knowledge, stamp taxes', in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, gen. eds., Gent, Belgium, Academia Press, 2009, 454. Hereafter DNCJ.

[64] The search narrows to the expression 'order and progress', although the results link them with other concepts such as stability, liberty and improvement.

[65] The research has benefited from the *British Library 19th-Century Newspapers Database*, http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/news/newspdigproj/database/index.html accessed 1 November 2012, *The Economist Historical Archive, 1853-2007*, http://www.tlemea.com/economist/home.asp, accessed 1 November 2012 and *Guardian and Observer Digital Archive*, http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/guardian/, accessed 1 November 2012.

[66] On the ideological background and the significance of these newspapers, see 'Press, Popular', in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Sally Mitchell, New York, Routledge, 2011, 628-29; 'The Times (1785-)', DNJC, 627-28; 'Morning Post (1772-1937)', DNCJ, 427; 'Manchester Guardian (1821-)', DNJC, 394-95; 'Economist: Or the Political, Commercial, Agricultural and Free Trade Journal (1843-)', DNJC, 189; 'Daily News (1846-1912)', DNJC, 158.

some other examples, a single political party, it is argued, should promote both order and progress.

4.2.1 Explaining Social and Political Unrest

Regarding the first and second usages, they appear in articles about international conflicts to describe popular upheavals, among others, in France, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Mexico. They are also present when discussing the administration of British colonies, such as India, Australia, Egypt and Basutoland (Lesotho). According to these accounts, order and progress are missing in foreign contexts due to political struggles and social unrest. Governments, then, have to both restore peace and promote welfare. In England, on the contrary, political stability and prosperity are apparent. Some eloquent examples shall show that both concepts are consistently used as complementary, rather than incompatible with each other. The use of the terms is therefore consistent with that of eminent Victorian thinkers. But whereas the writings of intellectuals are typically regarded as purposeful, in everyday language people's points of view are not *necessarily* intentional.[67] When using the dichotomy between order and progress, ordinary people may have not been aware that they were matching Mill's and Comte's two main attributes of society, according to the distinction between statics and dynamics in the natural sciences.

George Villiers, fourth Earl of Clarendon and Whig politician, gives a speech on the condition of Ireland in 1847 where he claims that without 'a spirit of exertion and manly self-reliance' or 'universal patriotic co-operation among Irishmen […] the blessings of order and progress […] may […] be indefinitely postponed'.[68] Although he points out some means to achieve 'order and progress', they represent the aims towards which all the efforts should be directed. A further instance appears in an article from *The Economist* that echoes a speech from Leopold I, the first King of Belgium. He stresses that during 1848, a year of generalised social unrest in Europe, Belgium has remained remarkably stable. This country, he says, 'has been able, by a happy conformity, to conciliate stability with progress, and order with the practice of every liberty', in

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[67] Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 104-105.
[68] 'Ireland', *The Times*, 20 September 1847.

contrast to France, where 'disorder' and 'anarchy' followed the 1848 revolution.[69] As a result, in order to achieve general improvement, a country should retain certain stability. Violent revolutions frustrate these goals, since they involve sudden changes that bring progress to a halt.

Another article from *The Economist* wonders in a similar tone what accounts for the present peace in 1849 England 'as contrasted with the disturbances on the continent'.[70] According to the newspaper, the general 'progress of civilization' has several causes, being two of the most significant the growth of both wealth and population.[71] In England, the 'increase in wealth and population has been accompanied by order and tranquillity. We have effected many peaceful reforms; our neighbours, whose progress has been so much slower, […] have been a prey to violent revolutions'.[72] France ranks as 'the chief source of all the social disorders of Europe' while England has effectively avoided 'the Jacobin paroxysms of democracy' and enjoyed 'exemption from trouble'.[73] The newspaper goes on to link national with individual character and states that 'our experience of nations is consistent with our experience of individuals'.[74] By cooperating with each other in economic activities, individuals enrich themselves, thus reducing social conflict and bringing about stability and prosperity. The article's closing sentence sums up its leading idea and puts in a nutshell the spirit of laissez-faire: 'The stateman's best helpmate is the money-making citizen'.[75] One of Benjamin Disraeli's speeches as member of the opposition draws on the question that *The Economist* uses as starting point. England has, according to Disraeli, 'solved the most difficult problem of politics, and [has] combined, not only freedom with order, but progress with tradition'. This combination is a 'source of strength' and a reason to be proud of being an Englishman.[76] The goals of order and progress illustrate England's unrivalled position

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[69] 'From our Belgium Correspondent', *The Economist,* 1 July 1848.

[70] 'The Progress Of Wealth And The Preservation Of Order', *The Economist*, 14 July 1849.

[71] The idea that free trade would bring civilisation and peace was a prevailing belief in Victorian Britain: Anthony Howe, 'Free Trade and Global Order: The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Vision', in *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 26-46.

[72] *Ibid*.

[73] 'The Progress Of Wealth'.

[74] 'The Progress Of Wealth'.

[75] *Ibid*. For a discussion on Victorian ideas about the role that commerce and free trade play in the development of civilisation see Bell and Sylvest, 'International Society in Victorian Political Thought' and Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England: 1846-1946*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997.

[76] 'Disraeli at Buckingham', *Daily News*, 18 September 1862.

when compared to other countries.

The picture of the French social and political environment as opposed to the English will last longer. France sets an antithetical example that serves as a warning against the evils of the revolution. But France's difficult circumstances are also a reminder of England's success in preventing major popular uprisings. The dichotomy of order and progress helps to emphatically depict England's achievements and France's misfortunes. A reviewer criticises De Lamartine's role in the 1848 French revolution because 'he never comprehended the phenomena, and was not fit generally to deal with them. He fought with the crisis, but he knows nothing of the laws that govern the order and progress of society'.[77] A few years later, *The Times* devotes an editorial to the 1876 French legislative elections and the subsequent Republican victory in the framework of the newly established Third Republic. The editor, John T. Delane, praises Leon Gambetta, then a Republican leader, for his 'political prudence' while criticising left-wing republicanism by describing it as 'fanaticism'. The Republicans, stresses the newspaper, are blind to the fact that a good government, regardless of whether it is a monarchy or a republic, should meet a number of conditions: 'when will Republicans acknowledge that the end of all good Government is the same though the means may indefinitely vary? The end is happiness, liberty, order and progress; the means depend on history and character of the countries to be governed'.[78] Almost twenty-five years after the previous fragment from *The Times*, an article from *The Economist* describes the French Third Republic as 'the best *régime* that France has had during this troublous century, [because] it does really for the first time combine reasonable freedom, order and progress'.[79]

The contemporary journalistic analyses of British colonial affairs offer several instances where the ideas of order and progress apply to ongoing popular struggles in occupied territories. The newspapers typically argue that due to the existing conflicts in the British colonies, these communities lack order and progress. British administrations should try to remedy the situation, acting on the interest of less-developed peoples when governing them. Imperialism is thus justified as a civilising mission that could improve

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[77] 'De Lamartine's History of the Revolution of 1848', *The Economist*, 1 September 1849.
[78] 'Editorial', *The Times*, 6 October 1876. Delane edited *The Times* between 1841 and 1877. See 'Delane, John Thaddeus', DNCJ, 163-64.
[79] 'France and her New Ministry', *The Economist,* 1 July 1899.

foreign societies. A letter to the editor of *The Times* in 1853 analyses the interests involved in the government of India, then under British rule. According to this reader, 'India is unable to govern itself'.[80] For that reason, 'the natives of India demand from England a vigorous Government, that shall maintain peace, order and progress'. The reader endorses Britain's foreign administration, that is, a 'paternal' government that 'effuse enlightenment and develop the native intellect'.[81] A rather positive tone dominates in contrast *The Times*'s chronicle on the general situation of New South Wales, Australia, also a British colony by 1870. Although the author complains that political decisions are 'left too much in the hands of those who are utterly incompetent to administer them', he trusts in the role of education: 'We must have patience. Things will mend. Education will widen and inform and train the mind of the colony, and out of what was chaos will come order and progress'.[82]

The Gun War was a conflict between the natives of Basutoland (present-day Lesotho, Southern Africa) and the British administration around 1880. A letter to the editor of *The Times* describes native wars in South Africa as 'contests between civilization and barbarism – civilization, with its law, and order and progress, and security of life and property for all nationalities and colours; and barbarism, with its lawlessness, caprice, and general insecurity and stagnation'. Order and progress are features of civilisation, as compared with the insecurity and stagnation that defines barbarism. In establishing a clear contrast between the natives and the colonising power the author justifies the presence of a foreign government. He wonders who should govern the territory: 'Which, for the sake of the natives themselves, especially of those who are beginning to advance steadily and surely towards a better mode of life, shall hold the reins?'[83] The example illustrates the allegedly *civilising* tone of the British imperialist agenda. In order to bring peace, stability and improve life conditions, the British government has the moral obligation to take political control over a foreign country. Furthermore, it shows that the concepts of order and progress fuel the debate on the contrast between British social and political values and those of indigenous populations.

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[80] 'Letter to the Editor', *The Times*, 4 March 1853.
[81] *Ibid*.
[82] 'Australia', *The Times*, 25 January 1870.
[83] 'The Disarmament of the Basutos', *The Times*, 19 October 1880.

For a few years before Egypt finally became a British colony, in 1882, both France and England seized financial control of the country. The outcome of this period is not particularly positive, according to *The Economist*, for 'although it has unquestionably been productive of very considerable good', the joint Anglo-French financial control 'has not proved the efficient instrument in guiding Egypt into the paths of order and progress it was intended to be, while it has introduced into Administration new difficulties and complication'.[84] The goal of the colonial government is expressed through the dichotomy between order and progress, which is a rather vague but effective catchphrase that conveys the leading idea behind imperialist policies. The British government is responsible for achieving these goals, thus legitimising a paternalistic political tutelage.[85] Under certain degree of controversy, Gladstone will still support the occupation of Egypt three years later, the occupation ending eventually in 1956. According to the *Manchester Guardian*, Gladstone is 'determined to remain there until we can leave with full security for the maintenance of peace, order, and progress'.[86]

Some newspaper articles deal with foreign political conflicts not related to colonial issues by using the ideas of order and progress. The Italian process of national unification figures prominently in the articles examined. In 1857, nine years after a constitutional government was established under the leadership of Victor Emmanuel II, the region of Sardinia-Piedmont is presented as 'the champion of order and progress in Italy', because 'she preferred the wise, safe road of reform, to the perilous and deceptive course of revolution'. More passionately, the journalist insists, 'the flood of revolution and that of reaction have been broken against that rock which shelters the liberties and the hopes of Italy'.[87] This situation contrasts with the rest of Italy, which goes through a period of generalised social and political instability due to the unification process. When Victor Emmanuel II is proclaimed King of Italy in 1861, the unification is partially accomplished. He came to be seen as a symbol of union for Italians, as *The Times* claims. The newspaper describes the events that take place after the defeat of the Kingdom of Naples and immediately before his coronation: the 'inhabitants of Naples, [have left the city] on its way to meet King Victor Emmanuel, with the object of

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[84] 'Egypt And The Financial Control', *The Economist,* 30 September 1882.
[85] On this topic see Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1999, chapter 3.
[86] 'From our London Correspondent', *Manchester Guardian*, 10 December 1885.
[87] 'Foreign Intelligence', *The Times*, 12 February 1857.

presenting an address to His Majesty, inviting him to come to Naples in order to restore tranquillity and to diffuse the benefits of liberty, order and progress'.[88]

The importance of maintaining social stability as a condition for social welfare in Spain or Turkey, where popular struggles take place throughout the nineteenth century, springs up in several newspaper articles. After the 1854 Spanish revolution, known as Vicálvaro revolution, *The Times* maintains that 'the political situation continues to improve, and we are beginning to hope that it will be consolidated on the basis of order and progress'.[89] When analysing the state of the Christian community in Turkey, a letter to *The Times* from the Reverend Josias L. Porter, Irish missionary, urges England to intervene in the country to stop the oppression of Christian Turks. What Turkey requires, according to Porter, 'to put and end to those periodical outbursts of fanaticism […] and to secure permanent order and progress, is complete reform in the laws and administration of the whole Empire'.[90] In Porter's view, England can interfere legitimately in domestic politics and it has the moral obligation to do that.

Greek constitutional principles are also a matter of interest. The 1864 Greek Constitution led to the so-called 'crowned democracy', whereby popular sovereignty was secured by limiting the king's powers. According to one of *The Times* correspondents, the 1864 Constitution contains 'sound principles', secures 'protection against arbitrary and sudden changes', and provides 'an escape from the military and sectional disturbances from which countries in a similar state of society often suffer'.[91] Yet the question of how to 'prevent a vast deal of bad government' remains unanswered. The ultimate goal, nevertheless, is clear: 'to construct a solid and permanent foundation for order and progress'.[92]

4.2.2 Summarising Ideological Positions

In what follows I comment on a few examples that illustrate the second usage of order and progress, namely, when they are identified with political ideals. Some quotations

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[88] 'The Fall of Ancona', *The Times*, 1 October 1860.
[89] 'Foreign Intelligence: France', *The Times*, 12 September 1854.
[90] 'The Christians of Asiatic Turkey', *The Times*, 23 November 1876.
On J. L. Porter see: Thomas Hamilton, 'Porter, Josias Leslie (1823–1889)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, ODNB, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22574, accessed 15 Dec 2012.
[91] 'Constitutional Government in Greece', *The Times*, 16 May 1872.
[92] *Ibid*.

employ what may be seen as a two-level rhetorical strategy. On the one hand, 'order' and 'progress' act as watchwords for the conservative and liberal ideological stances respectively. On the other hand, a number of authors advocate the necessity of combining or balancing these two principles in a single party. As it shall become evident, both Liberal and Conservative statesmen argue for this persuasive political alternative.

The case of *The People's Review of Literature and Politics* deserves particular attention. This monthly periodical was first published in 1850 by an association called the 'Friends of Order and Progress'. In response to one of the letters to the editors, they explain the chosen pseudonym: 'We adopt it for these reasons. Two mighty parties divide Europe: one takes for its watch-word the talismanic name of "Order;" the other, that we term big with hope of the future – "Progress."' When considered separately, order, 'appropriated by the Reactionaires', signifies 'subordination' or 'death', and progress, 'the cry of the "People,"' means 'commotion' or 'anarchy'. When allied, these 'symbol-words […] become the simple and expressive programme of the nations'.[93]

Although anonymous, some scholars have pointed out that the journal was founded by George J. Holyoake and William H. Ashurst, both supporters of the British co-operative movement.[94] Holyoake was an acquaintance of Harriet Martineau, the British translator of the *Cours the philosophie positive*. As may be seen in their correspondence, they both share an interest in 'introducing Comte to the English' by translating the *Cours* 'in a popular form' and making the work 'as cheap as possible'.[95]

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[93] The journal only saw three monthly numbers, from February to April 1850. 'The Correspondent', *The People's Review of Literature and Politics*, II, March 1850, London, C. Mitchell, 95.

[94] 'In that year [1850] W. H. Ashurst started a new monthly, the *People's Review of Literature and Politics*, which enabled Holyoake to reverse the disastrous policy of the previous year when he had tried to ape the political press. Now, instead of emphasizing social and political matters in the *Reasoner*, he banished them to the People's Review, making the *Reasoner* purely theological. Ashurst had already offered the paper 100 pounds and W. J. Birch promised ten shillings a week'. Edward Royle, *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791-1866*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1974, 216; '[…] G. J. Holyoake, who joined with a number of moral-force Chartists in bringing out a journal called The People's Review of Literature and Politics'. Royden Harrison, *Before Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, 319; 'In 1850, Holyoake also published the first monthly number of *The People's Review*, edited by himself and others': C. W. F. Goss, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Writings of George Jacob Holyoake*, London, Crowther & Goodman, 1908, xxxix.

[95] H. Martineau to G. Holyoake, 6 October 1851, in *The Collected Letters of Harriet Martineau*, ed. Deborah Anna Logan and Valerie Sanders, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2007, 212. On the role of translation in disseminating Comte's philosophy in Britain see Lesa Scholl, 'George Elliot, Harriet Martineau and the Popularisation of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*', *Literature Compass*, 9, 11, 2012, 764-73.

However, Martineau's translation was not published until 1853, and hence in 1850, when calling themselves 'Friends of Order and Progress', the association translates the principles of order and progress in two senses: first, it is a translation in a linguistic sense, because French was rarely spoken among the lower and middle-classes, and second, they introduce these terms into everyday discourse, both serving as political party catchwords.

Since the 1830s onwards, the British political spectrum was increasingly fragmented due to internal divisions within the Tory and the Whig parties. By the 1850s, after a process of party realignment, 'liberal' and 'conservative' were widely used labels to refer to each party, although the Liberal Party was not officially founded until 1859.[96] Despite inner-party tensions, the dichotomy of order and progress helps agglutinate and simplify political alliances. The idea of order encapsulates the political conservative programme, whereas progress represents liberal ideals. The division stand for two opposite political views by bringing into play a temporal perspective. When advocating order, Conservatives intend to preserve past institutions. Liberals, on the contrary, pursue political reform and future-oriented changes.

Yet the fragment from *The People's Review* not only describes the doctrines of the two main political parties but also suggests a convenient alternative to them. The writer offers an approach that manages to combine apparently opposite political perspectives, hence exposing and correcting each party's flaws. In doing so, it emerges a new understanding of political change that does not automatically rule out past experiences and practices: '"Past," which "Order" represents, from being the enemy, is converted into the guarantee, of the Future'.[97] An editorial in the *Morning Post* serves as an example of this position. A few years after Lord Palmerston's death, the editorial praises Palmerston because he did 'more than any other statesman to unite order with progress, to liberalise Conservatism, and to render even Radicalism comparatively Conservative'.[98]

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[96] The foundation of the Liberal party is usually traced to a meeting of Whigs, Peelites, moderate reformers and radicals in June 1859. On this topic see Michael J. Turner, 'Political Leadership and Political Parties, 1846–1900', in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 140.

[97] 'The Correspondent', *The People's Review*, 95. Notice how this formula resembles Mill's description of Coleridge and Bentham discussed above. See *Coleridge*, CW, X, 145-46.

[98] 'Editorial', *Morning Post*, 19 November 1868.

Politicians of any affiliation reproduce a similar rhetorical strategy as that employed by the *People's Review of Literature and Politics*. As some newspaper articles show, both sides of the political spectrum define their own ideological programmes as capable of combining the principles of order and progress. According to Robert Vernon Smith, Whig MP for Northampton, a good politician should 'reconcile order and progress', which means that he should 'stand by the old institutions of the country' while being able to 'achieve entire justice for the people'.[99] In 1851, Robert Milligan, who would eventually become a Whig MP for Bradford, describes his political principles in these terms: 'I may say that I am now and always have been a firm friend to freedom, to order, to progress, and to good government'.[100] During the 1854 parliamentary elections for the borough of Maldon, George M. W. Peacocke states that he is 'candidate on the conservative interests'. Peacocke explains before his audience what he means by emphasising the ideological distance between Liberals and Conservatives. 'The liberals', he remarks, 'talked about progress. If you asked them what their principles were, they would require a speech to tell you, whereas a conservative could answer for his in two words – "order and progress."'[101] Also a Liberal politician, such as John Bright, was defined as 'a high-minded statesman and patriot, whose voice had ever been raised in favour of peace, law, order, truth, progress and liberty'.[102]

After the Second Reform Act of 1867, passed under Disraeli's government, the Conservative Party faced strong criticism. Some partisans thought that by widening the franchise, the party would lose votes and support. Charles Du Cane, Conservative MP for North-Essex, replies to this criticism by arguing that, on the contrary, the Conservative Party had grown in popularity thanks to the parliamentary reform. At the Hinckford Conservative and Agricultural Club he celebrates that some 'conservative associations of the working men', now enfranchised, have been organised 'in the heart of those places where have hitherto been regarded as radical strongholds'. Du Cane refers to the Birmingham Conservative Association, whose programme, he says, is

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[99] 'Dinner to the Mayor Of Northampton', *The Times*, 8 January 1846. W. R. Williams, 'Vernon, Robert, (1800–1873)', rev. H. C. G. Matthew, ODNB, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25898, accessed 15 December 2012.

[100] 'Bradford Election', *Daily News*, 22 October 1851.

[101] 'Maldon Election', *Daily News*, 17 August 1854.

[102] 'Mr. Bright at Birmingham', *Daily News*, 24 October 1868. Bright was 'an independent Radical by principle, with a persistent strain of innate conservatism. He was *in* the Liberal Party as it evolved but not always *of*, or even *with*, the Liberal Party', Bill Cash, *John Bright: Statesman, Orator, Agitator*, London, Tauris, 2012, xiii.

'based upon those very principles of order and progress, and that attachment to the union of church and state, which for the last forty years have been the guiding star of this club'.[103] Samuel Rathbone Edge was the Liberal candidate for the 1878 by-elections in New-Castle-Under-Lyme. Edge says he is a 'staunch Liberal', prepared to support free trade. His promise is to '[carry out] to the fullest extent those great political principles which had so much conduced to the welfare of the country', and his 'watchword would be order, progress, retrenchment and reform'.[104]

Given that order and progress are synonymous with social welfare, political parties define their electoral programmes as promoting both of them, regardless of their political sign. Politicians manage to overcome the simple identification of order and progress with the Conservative and Liberal parties respectively. They argue, as it may be seen above, that they advocate the double goal of order and progress, thus dispelling the fears associated with each of them separately. By tracing the conceptual history of progress, Reinhart Koselleck has noted that it became a catchword that political parties of any sign used to gain public legitimacy.[105] The analysis of newspaper articles has confirmed and enriched this claim by revealing an argumentative link between progress and order. Still, order and progress perform an interesting role in the rhetoric of political parties.

They recast the ideological distance between political opponents by accusing each other of lacking a political commitment to both ideals. These examples run parallel to Mill's and Comte's claims for 'a party equally of order and progress'. The conceptual vagueness and ambiguity of the terms 'order' and 'progress' explain why they appear in both Liberal and Conservative political discourses. Political party manifestos are intended to appeal to a wide audience and usually employ open-ended, polysemous terms that may accommodate the speakers' argumentative purposes.[106]

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[103] 'Conservative Gathering in Essex', *Daily News*, 24 October 1867.

[104] 'Election Intelligence', *Daily News*, 20 August 1878.
F. Bealey, J. Blandel and W. P. McCann, *Constituency Politics: A Study of Newcastle-under-Lyme*, New York, Free Press, 1966, 415.

[105] Reinhart Koselleck, ' "Progress" and "Decline:" An Appendix on the History of Two Concepts', in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, 230.

[106] See Reinhart Koselleck's description of ideologisation as an essential phenomenon in a long-term history of political concepts. Collective singular nouns, such as progress, are 'general and ambiguous'. According to Koselleck, 'these qualities facilitate open-ended, unspecified expressions that can be understood in different, contradictory senses depending on the class or interest of the person using them'.

4.3 Exploring Everyday Language: Pamphlets

A survey including several collections of pamphlets shows that the pair 'order and progress' was consistently used in arguments concerning political issues both in texts penned by English sympathisers of positivism and in other writings whose authors are not linked by any means to organised positivism.[107] By the mid-1840s, John Stuart Mill's and George Henry Lewes's writings introduce in England Comte's philosophical ideas. A few decades later, positivism is present in Victorian society as an organised 'secular religion', mainly thanks to the English Church of Humanity and the London Positivist Society, established in 1859 and 1867 respectively. Frederic Harrison and Edward Beesley particularly help spread Comte's theories founding the *Positivist Review* in 1893.[108] Pamphlets authored by positivists were always headed with one of its mottos, 'Order and Progress', and frequently drew on this idea, as Comte's writings did.[109] Yet in this section, my focus is not on Comte's devoted followers, but on those authors less familiarised, if at all, with positivism. In what follows I briefly discuss four pamphlets that elaborate on the concepts of order and progress. In doing so, we may gain some insights into how positivism was popularised in Victorian Britain.

Two of these pamphlets were written under the sway of the British temperance movement. From the 1830s onwards this social movement argued for the prohibition of alcohol and for anti-alcohol legislation. Teetotalism flourished first among Radicals and Chartists and only later rooted in religious communities. Teetotal Chartists, more precisely, saw the campaign against alcohol as a way of justifying the extension of franchise.[110] Temperance was a distinctive sign of social and moral respectability, a way of achieving certain status. The abstinence from alcoholic drinks was then a convincing

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Reinhart Koselleck, 'Introduction (*Einleitung*) to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 6, 1, 2011, 13. See also Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 76-77.

[107] For this section I have browsed the *19th-Century British Pamphlets Online* database, which gathers several collections of pamphlets. *19th-Century British Pamphlets Online*, http://www.britishpamphlets.org.uk, accessed 15 December 2012. I have found eleven pamphlets that use the formula 'order and progress' whose authors are not formally linked with positivism.

[108] See Wright, *The Religion of Humanity*, 40-124.

[109] Positivist mottos appeared at the front page of positivist publications: 'Ordre et Progrès. Vivre pour autrui' or 'L'Amour pour principe. L'Ordre pour baise. Et le Progrès pour but'. See for instance Auguste Comte, *Système de politique positive*, Paris, Carilian-Goeury et Vor. Dalmont, 1852.

[110] On this topic see Brian Harrison, 'Teetotal Chartism', *History*, 58, 193, 1973, 193-217.

proof of their aptitude as honest and concerned citizens that should be entitled to vote. Political issues are in this sense closely linked to people's moral character.

W. A. Pallister, a temperance activist, writes an article in the monthly *The British League* titled 'The Temperance Movement: An Agent in Civilization', where he argues that teetotalism is essential to social improvement. The temperance cause has 'augmented the number of happy homes, increased the body of sober, reading, and reflecting men, and made additions to the sum total of substantial, virtuous, and intelligent citizenship. These are valuable services. They *are* order and progress. They are real elements of a nation's strength; the best guarantees of loyalty, liberty, and contentment'.[111] The author enhances the moral virtues resulting from temperance. Total abstinence from alcohol has a positive effect in both individuals and society as a whole, insofar as better citizens make better communities. Temperance promotes a virtuous citizenship, which gives rise to social order and progress. A few years later, in 1864, a pamphlet emphatically maintains that 'drunkenness is the curse of England' and the enemy of 'social progress' and 'national prosperity'.[112] Once the selling and consumption of alcohol has stopped, argues Frederic R. Lees, 'Drunkenness is exchanged for Sobriety: Disease for Health: Poverty for Wealth: Heavy Taxes for National Economy: Insanity for Self-Control: Ignorance for Knowlege [*sic*]: Riot and Crime for Order and Progress'. Once again, violence, social distress and turmoil oppose order and progress.[113]

Thomas Hare's system of proportional representation was devised to secure that all classes, including minorities, were represented politically. His *Machinery of Representation*, published in 1857, was an overnight success, sparking a debate on who was to be represented and how. James T. Hoskins, one of Hare's interlocutors, suggests some criticisms. Yet he chiefly endorses Hare's proportional representation because it 'consolidate[s] the position of good country members', who will in turn come up with a proposal that 'guarantees the preservation of all those pure and humane influences,

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[111] His emphasis. W. A. Pallister, 'The Temperance Movement: An Agent in Civilization', *The British League or Total Abstainers Magazine*, V, I, 1847, 102; F. R. Lees, *The Temperance Movement and its Workers: A Record of Social, Moral, Religious, and Political Progress*, London, Blackie, 1892, 166-68.

[112] F. R. Lees, *The Condensed Argument for the Legislative Prohibition of the Liquor Traffic*, London, J. Caudwell, 1864, 148-49.

[113] Lees was a particularly well-known author and temperance activist, who joined the Chartists in his early years and 'made himself the foremost temperance scholar for half a century'. Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872*, second edn, Staffordshire, Keele University Press, 1994, 197. On Lees see 195-98.

which are the essential conditions both of order and progress'.[114] A pamphlet on the situation of Jamaica provides the last fragment I would like to discuss. In October 1865 a major political upheaval takes place in the island, then a British colony. A letter by Edward B. Underhill, leader of the Baptist Missionary Society, stressing Jamaica's poor state of affairs partially triggers the so-called Morant Bay rebellion. The letter draws attention to the natives' unacceptable labour conditions. Furthermore, Underhill emphasises the importance of the country's industrial development 'without which […] it will be impossible to uphold those institutions which are essential to the preservation of order and progress, or even to preserve the social system from anarchy and confusion'.[115] The quotation evokes the newspaper articles analysed above, where order and progress figure as complementary ideas opposed to social and political instability.

4.4 Concluding Remarks

My aim in this chapter has been to offer an interpretation on the joint usage of the concepts of order and progress in the Victorian intellectual context from 1840 to 1899. For this purpose I have devoted attention to the writings of some prominent intellectuals and to a selection of pamphlets and widely-read newspapers. The double focus of attention on both 'public moralists' and popular literature contributes to an understanding of widespread beliefs and political arguments in use and continuous transformation. The study of the recurrent use of the dichotomy between order and progress casts new light on the way foreign revolutionary struggles and colonial affairs are discussed in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth-century. To put it simply, order and progress convey the idea that the well-being of society demands a combination between national peace and enduring institutions on the one hand and a commitment to the improvement of people's quality of life on the other.

In the writings discussed many authors describe England as having historically satisfied both conditions. It figures as a notable exception when compared to foreign

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[114] James Thornton Hoskins, *A Modification of Mr. Hare's Scheme for the Election of Representatives*, London, Emily Faithfull, [1871?], 18.
[115] Edward Bean Underhill, *A Letter Addressed to the Rt. Honourable E. Cardwell, with Illustrative Documents on the Condition of Jamaica*, London, Arthur Miall, 1865, 33. On this topic see Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2002, 209-29.

states. Thus, the British overseas colonial territories or any other countries, like France, where popular upheavals have taken place, are depicted as unfortunate and sometimes backward cases. Newspapers and pamphlets in particular use the dichotomy of 'order and progress' to represent England as an exemplary society in contrast to other countries, being sometimes part of a discourse that legitimises political control over less-developed countries. The chapter has studied these debates by mapping the argumentative usages of the concepts under consideration. It may be seen that they appear in many different situations, when speakers argue their points of view on the social and political problems that either affect them directly or concern them in any degree.

Order and progress operate at both an abstract and a concrete level, in the writings of intellectuals or in everyday language, to make sense of political reality. Their meanings are not settled and open to interpretation, which accounts for their manifold usages. And it is precisely the context in which authors use them and the purposes for which they are used that determine their meanings.[116] Conceptual polysemy has not been regarded as a difficulty that needs to be overcome, but as an opportunity to explore the social and political context that underlies social and political thought.

An analysis of some methodological approaches to study social events reveals that the ideas of order and progress contained political demands, which would otherwise go unnoticed. The projects discussed in this paper assume that, like natural phenomena, society can be studied by focusing on what changes and what remains unaltered through time. It has been noted that when portraying society as sharing these features with natural phenomena, such large-scale efforts to study society both describe it and lay down the principles of social welfare. When they are missing, governments should secure peace and well-established institutions and pursue social welfare. Order and progress have therefore become political goals, and as such political parties will include them among their ideological principles.

Order and progress then represent political ideals that summarise party lines, functioning as their watchwords and emphasising their mutual opposition. Roughly speaking, 'order' stands for the Conservative Party, whereas 'progress' outlines the

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[116] On this point see Freeden on 'decontestation' and political thought. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, 76 and Freeden, 'Essential Contestability and Effective Contestability', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 9, 1, 2004, 3-11.

Liberal Party programme. In order to overcome this marked contrast, thus appealing to a wider audience and legitimising their proposals, politicians of any sign assume the goals of order and progress as an essential part of their political ideologies. Due to their ambiguity, political actors can reformulate them according to their own argumentative purposes, so that they function as an effective political weapon.

Eventually, the chapter aims to a revised understanding of how positivism is reshaped and popularised. Most of the studies dealing with the reception of positivism in Britain focus on either the intellectual relationship between Comte and his British disciples or the religious aspects of positivism.[117] As a philosophical and political doctrine, positivism is 'easy to ridicule', as Pickering has argued.[118] But 'order and progress', a mainstay of positivism, permeates Victorian popular and political culture, as it becomes clear when studying newspapers and political pamphlets. They grant a privileged access to daily public controversies and political arguments. Overall, this study maps the uses of this catchphrase that puts in a nutshell a widespread concern in Victorian Britain: how to reconcile social stability with peaceful change.

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[117] See for instance Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century* and Wright, *The Religion of Humanity*.
[118] Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, I, 1 and Pickering, 'Auguste Comte', in *The Blackwell Companion to Major Social Theorists*, ed. George Ritzer, Oxford, Blackwell, 2003, 37.

A System of Logic as a Palimpsest:
The Relationship between J. S. Mill and A. Comte
in the Light of Textual Revisions

This chapter argues an interpretation of John Stuart Mill's evolving views on positivism and his relationship with Auguste Comte by taking into account alternative readings of Mill's *A System of Logic*. In all of its successive editions from 1843 to 1872, Mill rewrites many passages substantially, which results in a number of new wordings, all of them available in the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. Accordingly, I draw an analogy between the *Collected Works* and a palimpsest, which helps to represent Mill's *A System of Logic* as a historically contingent object that changes with the passage of time. The chapter's first and second parts reflect upon the interpretive challenge of dealing with different versions of political texts. I examine in particular how Mill scholarship accounts for his thorough and frequent revision processes. The third part fuels the debate by bringing into play some key notions from the discipline of textual criticism. In the fourth part the focus shifts to a selection of textual variants aiming at recasting Comte's role in the *Logic*. I argue that Mill downplays his intellectual debt by deleting a considerable amount of direct references to the French philosopher and by adding new criticisms.

5.1 What is it to be Interpreted? On Multiple Versions of Political Texts

> That if the study of the frequency and types of revision was possible, it would be a capital source for intimate knowledge of the writer, since it would enlighten us about the secret discussion that takes place, at the time when the work is being done, between the

temperament, ambition and foresight of the man, and, on the other hand, the excitements and the intellectual means of the moment.[1]

When interpreting the ideas of political thinkers, historians of political thought scrutinise their writings. Such a task involves studying texts from authors at issue, their interlocutors and interpreters. To be sure, scholars rely heavily on texts when arguing their points of view. As a result, the typical scenario is that we find different and even opposite readings of a single work, especially as regards the so-called major figures in the history of political ideas. In other words, 'there is more than one way to read, interpret and understand the works that comprise the tradition of political philosophy'.[2]

In many of these interpretive exercises there is an underlying assumption: key texts in the history of political thought are invariable objects, as if frozen in time. They are considered fixed groups of words, arranged in a particular order, upon which interpretations draw. The text is supposed to be something settled; texts, the argument reads, remain unchanged over time. For instance, current scholarly analyses of John Stuart Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* gravitate to a definitive text, that is, almost in every case they take for granted an idea of *Representative Government* as a text consisting of a determinate sequence of words displayed in a concrete manner.

In this chapter, one of my aims is to challenge the theoretical assumptions that lead commentators to think of political texts as abstract and monolithic entities. The next part of the essay draws attention to Mill's *A System of Logic* as an example of a work that exists in more than one version and examines how academic literature gives account of this particular fact. Mill's revisions transform the *Logic* in unforeseeable ways and almost every fragment changes its wording with the passage of time. Such features cast doubts upon the interpretive practices that flesh out the study of Mill's texts and justify a selective approach to some ongoing debates in textual studies, which is the object of the third part. The argument continues by suggesting that, although Mill

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[1] Paul Valéry, 'On Mallarmé', in *Selected Writings of Paul Valéry*, tr. M. Cowley, C. D. Lewis and J. Mathews, New York, New Directions, 1950, 217.
[2] Terence Ball, 'The Value of the History of Political Philosophy', in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Political Philosophy*, ed. George Klosko, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 49. Ball's point on 'the inescapability of the interpretation' makes this assumption, Ball, *Reappraising Political Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, 6-12.

scholars have overlooked his revision practices, its study can be helpful in order to link Mill's ideas with his personal and historical backgrounds. The fourth part maps out a group of textual variants from chapters nine, ten and twelve of the *Logic*'s sixth book, namely, Mill's major recasting of Comte's intellectual prominence between 1843 and 1851. I argue an interpretation of these changes that delves into their personal and intellectual relationship. Overall, the chapter gives an insight into Mill's methodological approach to social and political phenomena and his evolving opinions on the social consequences of positivism.

John Stuart Mill's writings have a history of their own, preventing us from taking them as immutable research objects. Mill revises every new edition of his books and changes their content, his common practices being adding, rewriting and deleting words, full sentences or even entire chapters. Therefore, each new version differs from the previous ones in significant ways. To continue with the example, given that *Representative Government* sees three revised editions, which version do scholars have in mind when arguing their views? John Robson's *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, nowadays the standard reference, adopts the text of the last edition published during Mill's lifetime.[3] Most scholars, then, do really study *Representative Government*'s third edition, published in 1865, not the two previous ones, both published in 1861.[4]

These widespread conventions are a central issue for those who study political ideas against their different historical backgrounds. Contextual historians, for instance, argue that we better grasp past political views by going deep into their authors' historical settings. Accordingly, it seems justified to appraise changes in revised texts, since they may as well reveal shifts in opinions and responses to a variety of events. Still, such a practice clashes with our tacitly assumed idea of what a text is. John Pocock pictures the history of political thought as consisting 'in the first place largely of texts –that is, of more or less coherent written or printed texts preserving their verbal content over long

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[3] Editorial footnotes draw attention to textual variants from earlier editions. Robson justifies this decision as regards the *Principles of Political Economy* as follows: 'the 7th edition best represents Mill's considered judgment, and is, because of the constant re-readings, more reliable than any previous edition. For him, and for the student of political economy from 1871 to the present, this is the best text': John M Robson, 'Textual Introduction', in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, II, lxxx.

[4] First edition: 1861; second edition: 1861; third edition: 1865. John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), CW, XIX.

and unfinished periods of time'.[5] Thus, instead of 'preserving' its verbal content, *Representative Government* changes over the next few years after its first publication. As I explain later, this is no exception among Mill's works.

Although seldom noticed, the study of the creative process behind philosophical works, both before and after its release, has proved valuable. Peter Laslett's critical edition of *Two Treatises of Government* clearly illustrates this claim.[6] Laslett shows variant readings of many of Locke's passages by drawing upon different materials, which consequently challenges some traditional understandings.[7] It follows that the choice behind what counts as a philosophical text has strong consequences for historical practice. However, multiple versions of texts are not always welcome. According to Mark Bevir, insofar as we do not have a 'single manuscript or book that we would describe without equivocation as Locke's own text of the *Two Treatises*,' we should 'postulate Locke's own version of the text'.[8] Hence, we come to a decision about what constitutes the *Two Treatises*, that is, we solve the problem by reaching an agreement on which stabilised text requires close study. Notably, whereas Bevir's 'postulated object' rules out textual variants, Laslett's edition preserves them for future scholarly analyses. Different versions of political texts, then, can unlock authorial intentions and opinion shifts. Following Valéry, revisions illuminate 'the temperament, ambition and foresight of the man' as well as 'the excitements and the intellectual means of the moment'.[9] Rather than an obstacle, they represent a particularly useful source of information.

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[5] John Pocock, 'Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought', in *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, 107.

[6] John Locke, *John Locke's Two Treatises of Government: A Critical Edition with an Introduction and Apparatus Criticus, ed. Peter Laslett*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960. Skinner claims that he 'wanted to do for Hobbes what Laslett had done for Locke', although he 'never succeeded': Quentin Skinner, 'Quentin Skinner on Encountering the Past: Interview by Petri Koikkalainen and Sami Syrjämäki, *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 6, 2002, 42.

[7] Skinner, 'Quentin Skinner on Encountering the Past', 41.

[8] Mark Bevir, 'The Text as a Historical Object', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 4, 2000, 203. And after a few pages: 'A text is an ambiguous but stable entity with, at any given moment, a determinate content available for historical study', 213. See also: Bevir, 'What Is a Text? A Pragmatic Theory', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 42, 2002, 493-508. I point out that Bevir's proposed definition of text implicitly takes for granted its historically stable content, although I am aware that he engages in a broader debate with post-structuralism, deconstruction and reception theories that is not the object of this chapter.

[9] Valéry, 'On Mallarmé', in *Selected Writings of Paul Valéry*, 217.

5.2 The Peculiarities of Mill's *A System of Logic*

Over the last few years an increasing number of research projects have provided new ways of assessing the writing process by taking advantage of digital technologies. Some projects make accessible previously unpublished manuscripts and handwritten marginalia, while revealing the otherwise invisible creative process behind every philosophical work. Outstanding examples are *Transcribe Bentham*, *James Mill's Commonplace Books*, the *Wittgenstein Nachlass* and *The Newton Project*.[10] Although far from being an exhaustive list, it illustrates a renewed emphasis on the contingent and evolving character of texts. Similarly, though in printed format, Eduardo Nolla discloses Tocqueville's preparatory drafts in his historical-critical edition of *De la démocratie en Amérique*.[11] John Robson's editorship of *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* already stood for these editorial principles, yet a remarkable feature sets it apart. The general editor unveils both minor and substantive changes taking place throughout the different editions of Mill's works. In contrast with the preceding examples, Robson focuses on publicly available textual variants. In the case of Tocqueville's *De la démocratie en Amérique*, as regards private manuscripts, Nolla warns that 'although they have been brought back to life here, it is advisable not to forget that Tocqueville had condemned them to disappearance'.[12] The claim extends to the rest of examples I discuss here: they bring to light processes and sources that were meant to remain invisible.

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[10] *Transcribe Bentham: A Participatory Initiative*, 2012, http://www.ucl.ac.uk/transcribe-bentham/, accessed 5 November 2012; *James Mill's Common Place Books*, ed. Robert A. Fenn, Sussex, University of Sussex, 2010, http://www.intellectualhistory.net/mill/, accessed 5 November 2012; *Wittgenstein Source Bergen Text Edition (BTE): Diplomatic Presentation*, gen. ed. Alois Pichler (2009-), http://www.wittgensteinsource.org, accessed 5 November 2012; *The Newton Project*, gen. ed. Rob Iliffe, 2012, http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk, accessed 5 November 2012.

[11] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: Historical-Critical Edition of De la démocratie en Amérique*, ed. Eduardo Nolla, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 4 vols., 2010. Critical editions dealing with revised translations of texts emphasise another aspect of its contingent character. See for instance Peter Ghosh, 'Max Weber on "The Rural Community": A Critical Edition of the English Text', *History of European Ideas*, 31, 2005, 327-66. An example not considered here is the Clarendon edition of Hume's works. For a discussion see James A. Harris, 'Editing Hume's Treatise', *Modern Intellectual History*, 5, 3., 2008, 663-41.

[12] E. Nolla, 'Foreword', in *Democracy in America*, I, xxix. George von Wright raises a similar point concerning the Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* and private manuscripts. Wittgenstein ordered 'a great many papers, belonging to all his periods of work, to be burned', since he 'considered [them] useless for his work:' G. H. von Wright, 'The Wittgenstein Papers', *The Philosophical Review*, 78, 1969, 484.

The chapter will pay a detailed attention to Mill's *A System of Logic* within this section and the fourth one. However, since almost every one of Mill's works exhibits similar publication and revision patterns, some general remarks are applicable to other writings. Mill's first published book, *A System of Logic*, takes him nearly thirteen years to write.[13] Yet, long after its publication, he still finds ways of improving it. The text undergoes a considerable amount of changes (4822) throughout eight different editions, from 1843 to 1872.[14] The *Logic* ranks as 'the most carefully composed and revised of all Mill's works'.[15] In my opinion, two points stand out. First, the high number of revisions gives an idea of Mill's long-lasting concern with the public reception of his ideas. After all, Mill thinks that along with *On Liberty*, the *Logic* 'is likely to survive longer than anything else [he has] written'.[16] Second, editions appear over a span of almost thirty years, in which Mill goes through many intense personal experiences. He forms close ties with an impressive number of intellectuals, Auguste Comte among them. In 1851, Mill marries Harriet Taylor, who would die only a few years later. He also becomes a Member of Parliament in 1865.

These insights justify a careful study of the motives and nature of authorial revisions. As Robson points out, 'singly or in groups, [they] cast new light on various aspects of Mill's thought and life, and on attitudes to logic and science in the nineteenth century'.[17] However, as far as I know, the topic constitutes a largely neglected aspect about Mill's writings. Robson's 1974 general textual introduction to the *Logic* sets out the ground for any fruitful eventual study. Still, his analysis yields quantitative results, 'less meaningful than a study of individual variants in context'.[18] Consequently, in Robson's edition of Mill's *Logic* present-day attentive readers find a myriad of text-critical footnotes, many of them indicating alternative readings and publication years, along with an otherwise admirable editorial introduction.

Some Mill scholars have stressed the significance of the *Logic* among Mill's social and political writings. Oskar Kubitz stands as an early example with his view on the

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[13] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VI, lv.

[14] First edition: 1843; second edition: 1846; third edition: 1851; fourth edition: 1856; fifth edition: 1862; sixth edition: 1865; seventh edition: 1868; eighth edition: 1872. See table in Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VI, lxix.

[15] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VI, lxxvii.

[16] Mill, *Autobiography* (1873), CW, I, 259.

[17] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VI, lxxvii.

[18] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VI, lxxx.

'Development of John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic*'.[19] The title gives a misleading impression since, according to Kubitz, such a *development* stops when the book is first published, and he does not take into account differences among subsequent editions. This also applies to Alan Ryan's pioneering approach to the *Logic*.[20] Certainly, both Kubitz's and Ryan's studies were published before Robson's variorum edition, but even afterwards the situation has not changed much: those who insist on the prominence of the *Logic* do not discuss Mill's emendation. John Whitaker, for instance, downplays their potential for further interpretations. According to him, 'the triviality of most of the changes and a certain tendency for the whole enterprise to become weighed down by its own editorial apparatus do raise general questions about the pursuit of that chimera, definitiveness'.[21] Again, variants have been considered by many scholars an obstacle or, at best, an unnecessary burden. After all, Whitaker clarifies, 'our interest lies ultimately in what he said and meant, not how he said it'.[22]

Terence Ball laments more recently that 'few indeed, now read [Mill's] *Logic*'. Therefore, his aim is 'to suggest that it is an error to overlook the *Logic* and its importance in our understanding of Mill's other, better known works, including *On Liberty*'.[23] John Skorupski's 1989 monograph likewise pursues a similar line of enquiry.[24] Only the latter mentions two of Mill's subsequently added footnotes, although as a minor detail.[25] The idea of the Art of Life, which Mill discusses in the last chapter of his *Logic*, has gained well-deserved scholarly attention in recent years. Commentators argue that the Art of Life plays an essential role in our understanding of Mill's theory of practical reason and political action. Nevertheless, although the editors notice that the expression itself (Art of Life) is only added to the *Logic*'s third edition,

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[19] Oscar Kubitz, 'Development of John Stuart Mill's *System of Logic*', *Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences*, 18, Urbana, University of Illinois, 1932, 203-58.

[20] Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, second edition, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1987.

[21] J. K. Whitaker, 'John Stuart Mill's Methodology', *Journal of Political Economy*, 83, 1975, 1035.

[22] Whitaker, 'John Stuart Mill's Methodology', 1035. Mill's changes as regards Comte, on which I comment below, are mentioned. A similar dissuasive tone, as regards the Clarendon edition of Hume's works: 'It is nevertheless proper to think about the relative emphasis given to textual and to explanatory annotation, and to be cautious of following slavishly the practices of bibliographical scholars when our concern is the history of philosophy, not the history of printing', D. D. Raphael, 'Review Article: Critical Editions', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 8, 1, 2000, 161.

[23] T. Ball, 'Competing Theories of Character Formation: James vs. John Stuart Mill', in *John Stuart Mill–Thought and Influence: The Saint of Rationalism*, ed. Georgios Varouxakis and Paul Kelly, London and New York, Routledge, 2010, 38.

[24] See especially chapter 8. John Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill*, London and New York, Routledge, 1989.

[25] Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill*, 85, 400 n5.

they do not discuss its possible reasons.[26] In this chapter I examine this particular paragraph and offer an interpretation.

It goes without saying that the above-mentioned essays provide really useful insights, even if they disregard textual variants. Their interpretations rest on a conventional view of texts, where a single text affords different and even conflicting readings. In my view, they fail to account for a distinctive feature of Mill's writings. True, the *Logic*'s concluding book establishes some of Mill's key political and theoretical principles.[27] The book lays the foundations for political reform, which, according to Mill, entails a scientific study of society. But also, very significantly, its overwhelming success results in a peculiar situation: the text keeps evolving throughout its eight editions and reflects the passage of time by changing its content.

5.3 The Relevance of Textual Instability for Understanding Authorial Revisions

Textual criticism and editing may help explain one of the reasons for the apparent lack of interest in variants of textual versions. By considering the crisscrossed history of both fields, it is not my aim to contribute to their ongoing theoretical debate. I rather benefit from innovative research concerning the understanding of texts. In what follows I try to adapt some scholarly contributions to shed light on Mill's *A System of Logic*. Indeed, textual criticism focuses for the most part on literary works, although some fundamental theoretical assumptions can be applied to non-literary texts. In addition, this overview, even if brief, suggests interpretive keys to study the contingent character of past political texts.

Until the 1960s the dominant editorial tradition aimed at 'constructing a single text that approximates ideally what an author finally intended to appear before his audience'.[28] First outlined by Walter Greg, and later by Fredson Bowers and Thomas Tanselle, this approach argues that textual scholars should select and establish a best-

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[26] Ben Eggleston, Dale E. Miller and David Weinstein, 'Introduction', in *John Stuart Mill and the Art of Life*, ed. B. Eggleston, D. E. Miller and D. Weinstein, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, 4. See also Wendy Donner 'John Stuart Mill and Virtue Ethics', in *John Stuart Mill–Thought and Influence*, 84-98. Generally, textual variants have received no specific attention. However, below I mention some exceptions.

[27] On this point see for instance Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, ix-x, xxv-xxxiv.

[28] Philip G. Cohen, 'Textual Instability, Literary Studies, and Recent Developments in Textual Scholarship', in *Texts and Textuality: Textual Instability, Theory and Interpretation*, ed. Philip G. Cohen, New York, Garland, 1997, xii.

text or authoritative version (copy-text), 'where the author's "real" intentions resides'.[29] Variants are customarily synonymous with corruption, and therefore they should not remain available to the general reader. Eventually, this influential editorial trend would explain our preference for a single version of a philosophical work and, even, our frequent indifference towards alternative readings of texts.

As a reaction against unity and stability in editorial decisions, some scholars emphasise instead textual instability (Cohen and Bornstein), textual pluralism (Stillinger) and fluidity (Bryant).[30] Already in 1965, James Thorpe problematises what had been termed the Greg-Bowers approach by stressing the underestimated complexity behind editors' choices of what constitutes an authoritative text.[31] In this line, according to Jack Stillinger, 'every individual version of a work is a distinct text in its own right, with […] unique authorial intention'.[32] These theories highlight rhetorical redescriptions and regard works as 'the sites of various conflicts […] between the conscious and unconscious domains of an author's psyche'.[33] The emphasis shifts from the text as a definitive product to the text as a creative process.[34] John Bryant argues that texts are fluid when they exist in more than one version. Fluid texts undergo revision processes 'before, during, and after publication'.[35] Bryant also states the bottom line of the argument: when we read a fluid text 'we are comparing the versions of a text, which is to say we are reading the differences between the versions, which is to say we are

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[29] Jack Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994, 119; W. W. Greg, 'The Rationale of Copy Text', *Studies in Bibliography*, 33, 1950-1951, 20-37; F. Bowers, *Bibliography and Textual Criticism*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1964; F. Bowers, 'Greg's 'Rationale of Copy-Text' Revisited', *Studies in Bibliography*, 31, 1970, 90-161; T. Tanselle, *A Rationale of Textual Criticism*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1989.

[30] Cohen, 'Textual Instability, Literary Studies, and Recent Developments in Textual Scholarship', in *Texts and Textuality,* xi-xxxiv; George Bornstein, 'Introduction', in *Palimpsest: Editorial Theory in the Humanities*, ed. George Bornstein and Ralph G. Williams, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1993, 1-6; Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability*, 118-21; John Bryant, *The Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2002; J. Bryant, 'Witness and Access: The Uses of the Fluid Text', *Textual Cultures*, 2, 2007, 20.

[31] James Thorpe, 'The Aesthetics of Textual Criticism', *PMLA: Journal of the Modern Language Association of* America, 80, 1965, 466.

[32] Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability*, 121.

[33] Cohen, 'Textual Instability, Literary Studies, and Recent Developments in Textual Scholarship', in *Texts and Textuality*, xxiii. On this topic see also D. Madden and R. Powers, *Writers' Revisions*, Metuchen, NJ, Scarecrow Press, 1981.

[34] Bornstein, 'Introduction', in *Palimpsest*, 3.

[35] Bryant, 'Witness and Access: The Uses of the Fluid Text', 24.

reading distance travelled, difference, and change'.[36] Such an awareness of textual instability brings about open-ended questions concerning our readings of past thinkers.

Different authorial versions of texts immediately draw our attention to the motives for emendations which in turn echo their writers' historical contexts. I agree with Philip Cohen when he states that 'textual instability is a powerful if often overlooked weapon in our arsenal'.[37] In accordance with Cohen's point of view, I do not focus on which version of *A System of Logic* is the definitive one. Rather, I reflect upon the interpretive challenge of dealing with different versions of a philosophical work. The notion of textual fluidity puts in a nutshell two ideas that are crucial to a plausible interpretation of Mill's *A System of Logic*. First, instead of privileging a single edition, every alternative version becomes valuable, as it opens up opportunities for innovative understandings. In this respect, the image of a palimpsest vividly illustrates a non-hierarchical theory of textual versions. A palimpsest is a manuscript page that has been scraped off and used afterwards. This ancient practice, due to the lack of paper, allowed to reuse the same sheet, scroll or page.

As a result, a text could survive subsequent writings on the same surface because it was, like later texts, incompletely erased. Indeed, the most striking feature of a palimpsest is that we are able to read different texts on the same piece of paper. George Bornstein uses this 'master metaphor' to highlight 'the multilayered character of major monuments in our culture'.[38] Actually, we can interpret the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* as a palimpsest insofar as we access several textual tiers, all of them available to Mill's contemporaries.

The idea of a palimpsest applied to textual interpretation still leads to a further claim. Arguably, despite recent criticisms, one of the most successful ways to study the history of political thought is by contextualising political writings.[39] In this regard, we question what an author was doing in saying what he or she said.[40] Any author's revision methods positively enrich and refine our responses to that problem. In this

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[36] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, 62-63.
[37] Cohen, 'Textual Instability, Literary Studies, and Recent Developments in Textual Scholarship', in *Texts and Textuality*, xxii.
[38] Bornstein, 'Introduction', in *Palimpsest*, 1.
[39] See, among others, John Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975, and Q. Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 3 vols., 2002.
[40] Skinner, 'Motives, Intentions and Interpretation', in *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, 102.

particular case, the *Collected Works* reflect its composing history, which is simultaneously John Stuart Mill's personal history and his time's. The proposed link between textual revision and contextualist approaches leads to a profitable discussion. In the next paragraph I offer an example of how textual changes can affect our understanding of Mill's *A System of Logic*.[41] By examining a group of emendations, I argue that his rewriting aims at downplaying certain intellectual influences.

5.4 Mill's Revision Process: Recasting Comte's Role in *A System of Logic*

The *Logic*'s concluding book lays the foundations for Mill's science of society. It persuasively describes his methodological stance as regards social and political sciences, that is, what he calls the science of society. Mill ends this book by suggesting that sociology can determine 'what artificial means may be used […] to accelerate the natural progress in so far as it is beneficial'[42] for a community. It seems somehow surprising to find some chapters about society and politics in a logic treatise, but it makes sense if we have in mind that for Mill political reform requires a scientific understanding of social phenomena. Mill shares the ambition with Auguste Comte. Following the *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, Mill concludes that the science of society should attain a reliable understanding of history and establish the empirical laws that explain different 'states of society'.[43] Sociology carries out 'an inquiry into causes, just as physical science' does.[44]

Robson suggests that Comte's work has a decisive impact in the *Logic*'s final manuscript version, which Mill drafts between 1841 and 1843.[45] In July 1842, Mill writes to Comte: 'Had I known [the *Cours*] earlier, especially in its entirety, I might perhaps have translated it instead of writing a new one'.[46] He also acknowledges that

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[41] In chapter number seven I provide another instance concerning Mill's concept of nationality.

[42] *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843), CW, VIII, 929.

[43] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 911.

[44] Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill*, 248.

[45] The *Logic* is first published in 1843. Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, lxvi. Comte is not Mill's only source of inspiration. For a discussion on Tocqueville's impact on the *Logic*'s first draft see: H. S. Jones, ' "The True Baconian and Newtonian Method:" Tocqueville's Place in the Formation of Mill's *System of Logic*', *History of European Ideas*, 25, 1999, 153-61.

[46] Mill to Auguste Comte, 11 July 1842, CW, XIII, 530. Comte's six volumes of the *Cours* were published between 1830 and 1842.

the publication of the *Logic* was delayed due to his reading of the *Cours*'s last volume.[47] For that reason, Robson remarks, Mill rearranges and rewrites the second half of the sixth book.[48]

But Comte's influence turns out to be fundamental not only in the *Logic*'s last drafting stage before publication (1841 to 1843). The French thinker remains a driving force behind significant changes in subsequent editions (1843 to 1872). More precisely, Mill deletes many references to Comte throughout the eight editions of *A System of Logic*. Thus, depending on the edition, Comte's ideas feature in different ways. My aim is to consider to what extent these textual variants mirror their personal and intellectual relationship. I therefore call attention to the two-way link between textual history and extra-textual or contextual history. Accordingly, this section examines variants appearing in the sixth book, chapters number nine, ten and twelve.

The focus has narrowed to these chapters for three reasons. First, as pointed out above, Comte exerts a powerful influence on the concluding part of the *Logic*. Second, Mill's sixth book is one of the most thoroughly revised (665 alterations out of 4822).[49] Third, chapter number eleven is excluded, since it is added to the fifth edition (1862), and is clearly a response to Henry Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*, published between 1857 and 1861.

A quantitative analysis of changes occurring in these three chapters provides a general idea of Mill's revision strategies over the years (Table 1). The table shows, first, the total number of variants from each edition. The third one is the most revised, containing 139 instances.[50] Second, throughout the eight editions, Mill usually rewrites certain passages (196) and less often deletes (57) or adds words or sentences (36). The chart also shows in brackets the revisions that affect the text's meanings.[51] Relying on Lester Faigley's and Stephen Witte's research, I distinguish between 'surface changes' and 'text-based changes,' that is, 'meaning-preserving changes' and 'meaning changes'

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[47] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, lxix. See Auguste Comte, 28 January 1843, CW, XIII, 567 and *Autobiography* (1873), CW, I, 173.

[48] As Robson's study of the manuscript indicates, there are revisions and additions between the fifth and tenth chapter, although 'the changes are most evident' in chapters nine and ten: Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, lxxvi. On Comte's influence on Mill see also chapters three and six.

[49] See table in John M. Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VI, lxix.

[50] The result is consistent with Robson's general quantitative analysis. See Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, lxxix.

[51] Notice that Mill's proof changes (first column), namely, changes between the manuscript and the first edition, do not modify the meaning of sentences as often as in other editions.

respectively.[52] Only a careful reading can determine which emendation strategy Mill is using at each occasion and whether the resulting changes differ in meaning.

If we focus on the revisions affecting Comte, the picture looks slightly different (Table 2). Changes regarding Mill's direct references to Comte gather in the second (18) and third editions (9), and most of them are rewritings (14) and removals (13). In sum, Mill deletes many Comtean references in the second edition, and in 1851 he takes away a few more instances, up to a total of 29 changes. Some scholars have pointed out the existence of variant readings in this respect. Early examples are two of Mill's most brilliant biographers, Alexander Bain and Michael Packe. Although Mill leaves out 'the high-pitched compliments to Comte,' Bain remarks, 'his altered estimate of Comte never extended to the views appropriated from him on the method of Social Science'.[53] Bain picks out some examples of Mill's omissions, whereas Packe simply notes the fact but does not go into further detail.[54]

Walter Simon's monograph on European positivism provides the fullest record of variants by comparing Mill's treatment of Comte in the first and eighth editions. However, it does not specify when the changes happen, since it only considers the *Logic*'s first and last versions. Furthermore, Simon's analysis is somehow ambiguous, mainly because he does not detail how a paragraph changes and vaguely summarises every variant by saying 'omitted,' 'substantially retained' or 'toned down'.[55] Robson's 1974 textual introduction offers some interpretive keys, on which I elaborate below. Although he does not quote any example, his insights help explain 'Mill's disillusionment' with Comte. In any case, the previous examples of non-systematic and

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[52] L. Faigley and S. Witte, 'Analyzing Revision', *College Composition and Communication*, 32, 1981, 403. In order to understand how do writers revise their texts throughout subsequent editions, I turn to cognitive psychology studies. I assume Fitzgerald's widely accepted definition of revision, in J. Fitzgerald, 'Research on Revision in Writing', *Review of Educational Research*, 57, 1987, 484. My study also benefits from Faigley's and Witte's taxonomy of revision processes, although for the sake of the argument I have simplified it. While they distinguish four different types of rewritings, my analysis gathers every kind of rewriting under a single heading. On scholars' general agreement with Faigley's and Witte's taxonomy, see L. Chanquoy, 'Revision Processes', in *The Sage Handbook of Writing Development*, ed. R. Beard, J. Riley, D. Myhill and M. Nystrand, London, Sage, 2009, 87.

[53] Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, London, Longmans, 1882, 72.

[54] 'Mill left out most of the laudatory passages that had so much gratified his colleague:' Michael St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1954, 280.

[55] Walter M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963, 275-79.

somewhat anecdotal accounts of textual variants suggest some fruitful paths for future research.

In what follows, I discuss a selection of several significant passages whereby Mill recasts his views on Comte and positivism.[56] Then, I suggest a joint interpretation of their personal and intellectual relationship in light of these changes. Mill's revisions follow four patterns. First, in many cases Mill removes sentences that reveal his intellectual debt to Comte, although he retains the ideas previously acknowledged as being of Comtean inspiration.[57] Less frequently, second, he cuts out some flattering comments on Comte's prominence as a philosopher.[58] Third, Mill tones down his compliments, but does not eliminate them.[59] And fourth, only twice he criticises Comte.[60]

Examples of the first kind of revision strategy spread throughout the three chapters. For instance, while the first edition reads: 'The Social Science, therefore (which I shall henceforth, with M. Comte, designate by the more compact term Sociology,) is a deductive science,' for the second and subsequent editions Mill prefers: 'The Social Science, therefore (which *by a convenient barbarism, has been termed* Sociology,) is a deductive science'.[61] Mill's omissions in the second edition (1846) include: '[I]t is therefore well said by M. Comte,'[62] 'according to the judicious remark of M. Comte,'[63] 'with the single exception of M. Comte,'[64] 'as M. Comte remarks with much justice'[65] or 'M. Comte proceeds to illustrate, with his usual sagacity and discrimination,'[66] to name but a few. Sometimes changes of this type appear gradually to the third edition, also by deleting direct references to the *Cours*[67] or France.[68] Apart from such drastic actions, strikingly, sentences remain almost intact.

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[56] I record every one of Mill's revisions that concern Comte (as contained in table 2). Variant readings appear in footnotes alphabetically ordered: *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 895c; 897r, s, u, v (897v contains two variants); 903i; 901q; 912l; 914g, h, j; 915q, r, b, c; 916h; 918a, b; 919h (919h contains two variants); 928a; 930k; 948d, i (also an annexed footnote in 948i); 949a; 950c; 952c.

[57] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 895c; 903i; 910q; 914,g, h, j; 915b; 916 h; 918a, b; 919h; 930k; 948d.

[58] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 897r; 915r; 958d, i; 952c.

[59] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 897s, u, v; 915q, c.

[60] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 928a; 949a.

[61] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 985c. Changes in italics.

[62] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 910q.

[63] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 914g.

[64] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 914j.

[65] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 916h.

[66] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 919h.

[67] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 918a.

The second and third sorts of rephrasing typically consist of leaving out or moderating Mill's laudatory allusions to Comte. By 1851 some praises had vanished from the *Logic*, such as 'the greatest living authority on scientific methods in general,'[69] 'he alone, therefore, has arrived at any results truly scientific'[70] or 'mankind must ever be principally indebted to the genius and industry of ethical and sociological philosopher'.[71] In certain cases, Mill glosses over Comte's reputation by referring to him as a thinker, instead of a philosopher,[72] or by placing him within a school of thought, and not as a self-taught theorist.[73]

As seen above, Mill frequently minimises his debt to Comte by reducing the number of direct references when revising his writings over the years. In addition, the purge of complimentary remarks suggests Mill's certainly grudging admiration. Readers of the second and third editions could still notice that Comte's work is a main source of influence, but not nearly as easily as a reader of the first edition would notice. On this point, it seems crucial not to overemphasise emendations. A balanced reading of this group of variants has to assess not only what Mill modifies but also what remains unchanged. Mill holds on to the core of Comte's methodological insights and does not modify it substantially during his lifetime. He values Comte's methodology for social science throughout his life, the historical deductive method, or the division between statics and dynamics. Nonetheless, as it will become clear, he eventually rejects Comte's blueprint to reform society.[74] As Robson argues, 'Comte's tendency towards

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[68] Mill removes the reference to France in this sentence, preventing readers from thinking of Comte: 'This method, which is now generally adopted by the most advanced thinkers on the Continent, *and especially in France*, consists in…': *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 914h.

[69] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 897r.

[70] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 915r.

[71] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 952c.

[72] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 897s.

[73] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 915q.

[74] *Auguste Comte and Positivism* shows clearly both tendencies. On Mill's partial agreements, see: Mill to J. Nichol, 30 September, 1848, CW, XIII, 738-40; Mill to Richard Congreve, 8 August 1865, CW, XVI, 1086-87; *Autobiography*, CW, I, 211; Angèle Kremer-Marietti, 'Introduction', in *The Correspondence of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte*, ed. Oscar Haac, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1995, 6; Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century*, 184; J. M. Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, 97-98, 103; Bain, *John Stuart Mill*, 72. The correspondence between Mill and Comte (1841-1846) is also an excellent example, since it starts with a profound admiration, but ends up with some disagreements concerning psychology, economics and specially the role of women in society. See: L. Lévy-Bruhl, *Lettres inédites de John Stuart Mill à Auguste Comte*, Paris, Félix Alcan, 1899. An English translation: Oscar Haac, ed., *The Correspondence of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte*. By drawing mainly on their controversies, I think Lewisohn misses the point: David Lewisohn, 'Mill and Comte on the Methods of Social Science', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 33, 1972, 315–24.

absolutism, in Mill's estimate an aberration, is not inherent in the method, but results from a misapplication of it'.[75]

A deep understanding of the complex relationship between Mill and Comte has to account for affinities and differences between both authors. However, the fact that personal issues are closely intertwined with intellectual disputes does not simplify the task. Mill's passages showing honest admiration are as frequent as those including severe criticisms.[76] A particularly sensitive matter, Comte's opinion on the social status of women, deserves closer attention. Whereas the French philosopher believes in women's inborn inequality, Mill expects that education can change women's social position.[77] In Mill's correspondence with Harriet Taylor, she predictably expresses her great disappointment at Mill's patronising attitude. Furthermore, she considers that Comte has a 'partial and prejudiced view' and, more conspicuously, that he is 'essentially *French*, in the sense in which we think French mind less admirable than English –Anti-Catholic, Anti-Cosmopolite'.[78] A few years later Mill admits that he 'was dissatisfied with the concessions he had made to Comte'.[79] Besides, Robson argues that Harriet Taylor, 'who took profound exception to Comte's attitude to women, and who married Mill in that year,' prompts Mill's changes concerning Comte in the third edition.[80]

Together with the rewriting strategies mentioned so far, I would like to elaborate on one of the criticisms Mill levels against Comte, that appears as a major rewriting of

[75] Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 105. See also Bain, *John Stuart Mill*, 71-76; Iris W. Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1956, 107; Alan Ryan, 'Mill in a Liberal Landscape', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*, ed. John Skorupski, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 498-99.

[76] Mill offers Comte financial help when the latter loses his academic position. Afterwards, Mill similarly persuades G. Grote and W. Molesworth with the same end. See Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 3 vols., 1993, I, 551.

[77] Vincent Guillin, *Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill on Sexual Equality: Historical, Methodological and Philosophical Issues*, Leiden, Brill, 2009, 74-80. Comte's enthusiasm for phrenology partly explains his opinions on women. See: Richard Vernon, 'The Political Self: Auguste Comte and Phrenology', *History of European Ideas*, 7, 1986, 271-86.

[78] Harriet Taylor Mill, *The Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill*, ed. Jo Ellen Jacobs, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998, 337-38 (her emphasis). See also Mueller, *John Stuart Mill and French Thought,* 112, 123-24, and Evelyn L. Forget, 'John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor and French Social Theory', in *The Status of Women in Classical Economic Thought*, Robert Dimand and Chris Nyland, Cheltenham ed., Edward Elgar, 2003, 285-310.

[79] Bain, *John Stuart Mill*, 74.

[80] Robson, 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, lxxxiii. After all, Taylor plays an active role in the draft and later revision of several of Mill's works. On this topic see: J. M. Robson, ' "Joint Authorship" Again: The Evidence in the Third Edition of Mill's Logic', *The Mill News Letter*, VI, 2, 1971, 16-17; J. E. Jacobs, *The Voice of Harriet Taylor Mill*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2002, 195-254.

paragraph number six, in chapter twelve.[81] For the third edition (1851), he seizes the opportunity to show a different ideological stance by criticising Comte's recently published work, *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* (1848). In the *Logic*'s last chapter Mill blames Comte for lacking 'a general doctrine of Ends,' or teleology, that sets common goals for society. In Mill's view, art and science require each other, that is, 'the art proposes to itself an end to be attained, defines the end, and hands it over to the science'.[82] Three different practical arts, morality, prudence or policy, and aesthetics, make up the Art of Life. Each one can 'determine the goodness or badness, absolute and comparative, of ends, or objects of desire'.[83] Science, therefore, subordinates to the Art of Life.

Comte's scientific speculations govern society alone, which opposes Mill's views on art and science as complementary to each other. Comte's doctrine considers that 'a philosophical estimation of Ends' is 'needless'.[84] In Mill's 1851 wording, 'no writer, who has contributed so much to the theory of society, ever deserved less attention when taking upon himself the office of making recommendations for the guidance of its practice'.[85] Mill attacks Comte's controversial design of society according to positivism in this newly added paragraph, where the formula 'Art of Life' originally appears. Antis Loizides wonders about this detail 'what inspired Mill to include such a section'.[86] Although I do not tackle this question, definitely part of the answer will have to address Mill's renewed emphasis on the dangerous effects of ruling society without a general doctrine of ends, as Comte proposes. It is not a coincidence that some of his comments seem to be inspired by Comte's shortcomings: 'a scientific observer or reasoner [...] is not an adviser for practice,' or a few lines below, 'a writer on moral and politics

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[81] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 949a. For the 1843 and 1846 versions of this paragraph see 'Appendix H', CW, VIII, 1154-55. Also, with the same purpose, Mill cuts out his reference to the *Cours* as a systematic treatise that aims at 'constructing, on scientific principles, the general theories of the different arts:' *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 948i.

[82] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 944. On this topic, see Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind*, 160-68; Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, 190-94; Eggleston, Miller and Weinstein eds., *John Stuart Mill and the Art of Life*; Donner, 'John Stuart Mill and Virtue Ethics', in *John Stuart Mill–Thought and Influence*, 84-98.

[83] A *System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 951.

[84] A *System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 950.

[85] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 950-51b. For the fourth edition (1856) Mill rewrites the paragraph but retains his criticism until the eight edition. See 950b, c.

[86] Loizides raises the question as regards Eggleston's collection of essays on the Art of Life. Antis Loizides, 'Review: Ben Eggleston, Dale E. Miller and David Weinstein (eds.), *John Stuart Mill and the Art of Life,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 304', *Utilitas*, 23, 2011, 463.

requires [the principles of Teleology] at every step'.[87] Comte's despotic social reorganisation figures as a major driving force behind Mill's comprehensive theory of practical and political reason.

It is crucial to point out that Mill's added remarks in the last chapter are entirely consistent with his later opinions on positivism: Comte 'aims at establishing (though by moral more than by legal appliances) a despotism of society over the individual'.[88] Mill restates his doubts repeatedly in *On Liberty* (1859) and later in *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865),[89] when Comte has already published two extensive and controversial works explaining how to organise society in a positivist manner.[90] By means of textual revision, Mill anticipates what later would become one of his main targets. Moreover, Mill's changed passages mirror how his opinions and attitudes towards Comte and positivism evolve through time.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

The starting point of this chapter has been the response to a frequently unspoken assumption regarding the history of political thought, namely, that any particular text allows for different interpretations. As such, the formula does not raise any debatable issues. However, while it is quite common to discuss opposite readings, studies dealing with alternative textual versions are not frequent. Moreover, even though critical editions record textual variants and authorial revisions, contemporary academic literature does not usually pay particular attention to such aspects. This is precisely the case of *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*. As new editions of Mill's books were released, he managed to extensively revise them, adding, rewriting or cancelling fragments. Robson's admirable variorum edition (1963-1991) collects them and provides Mill's alternative reading for every published edition of his writings. Every volume captures the textual instability and historically contingent character of Mill's

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[87] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 950.
[88] *On Liberty* (1859), CW, XVIII, 227.
[89] *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), CW, X, 261-368. See also *Autobiography*, CW, I, 219, 221; Mill to John Nichol, 30 September 1848, CW, XIII, 738-40; Mill to Émile Littré, 22 December 1848, CW, XIII, 741-42.
[90] *Système de politique positive* between 1851 and 1854, and *Catéchisme positiviste* in 1852. Auguste Comte, *Système de politique positive, ou traité de sociologie*, Paris, Carilian-Goeury, 4 vols., 1851-54. A. Comte, *Catéchisme positiviste*, Paris, Garnier Frères, 1830.

political ideas. In this sense, I have suggested they can be viewed as palimpsests, since it is possible to keep a continuous track of all their different versions. Likewise, the metaphor of a palimpsest suggests that textual pluralism is helpful, and even indispensable to understand Mill's revision strategies.

When turning to the challenge authorial revision presents, three points require further analysis. In the first place, the very existence of an undetermined variety of textual versions addresses radical epistemological questions on the nature of historical sources. In this chapter I have touched upon these topics only superficially. Although I have disregarded the controversy about what constitutes a text, it remains possible to turn satisfactorily to other related issues at stake. A second point concerns how to interpret what has changed from one version to another. What does a writer intend by modifying a word or group of words? I have argued that an author is then *doing* something, in the Austinian sense of the term. A more accurate answer would only be possible by attending to concrete circumstances surrounding each textual change. In the third place, alternative versions of texts require an in-depth study of Mill's personal and intellectual background in order to refine and enrich current debates.

Mill's *A System of Logic* represents a paradigmatic example of a fluid text. It goes through eight editions and it is one of his most thoroughly revised books. In many cases, Mill's formulas change substantially; in other instances, they *survive* an exhaustive rewriting process that lasts almost thirty years. Arguably, it becomes almost impossible to picture *A System of Logic* just as a work published in 1843. On the contrary, Mill takes up the opportunity that every new edition offers and engages in the task of re-vising and re-writing his own text. It is in this sense that 'revisions enable us to witness the writer as reader'[91] and throw light on Mill's ideas as they are being shaped. The fluid condition of Mill's writings invites us to study the *Logic*'s drafting context, but also the history underneath its subsequent editions. Nevertheless, commentators barely notice variants, since they come across as either pointless or confusing. Against these beliefs, one of my aims has been to highlight the prominent role they play in contextual approaches to the history of political thought: textual variants provide invaluable information on how authors' views evolve over time.

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[91] Bryant, 'Witness and Access: The Uses of the Fluid Text', 27.

The chapter's last section has put the foregoing ideas into practice and has argued for an interpretation of a group of variants appearing in the *Logic*. Towards the end of his first major book, Mill modifies a number of passages concerning Auguste Comte. Mill underplays his debt by deleting a considerable amount of direct references to Comte and by seldom adding new criticisms. These revision strategies point to crucial aspects of their personal and intellectual relationship. In general, revised fragments 'constitute the taking up of some determinate position in relation to some pre-existing conversation or argument'.[92] More precisely, Mill prevents readers from assuming that he sympathises with the undesirable practical consequences of positivism, only uncovered in Comte's later works. On the one hand, Comte's 'extravagances' and 'absurdities'[93] partly trigger the disappearance of many laudatory fragments, possibly under Harriet Taylor's influence. On the other, Comte's financial problems and his disturbing opinions on women jeopardise their friendship. Eventually, Mill's thorough and recurring revision practices also emphasise his own unshakable beliefs. His general scientific approach to the study of social phenomena remains largely unchallenged until the end of his life. First articulated in *A System of Logic*, a general science of society, including politics, leads Mill's later reformist agenda.

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[92] Skinner, 'Motives, Intentions and Interpretation', in *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, 115.
[93] *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 341-68; Richard Congreve, 8 August 1865, CW, XVI, 1086-87.

Table 1. Total number of textual variants in *A System of Logic*, Book VI, chapters IX, X and XII.

	1st ed. 1843	2nd ed. 1846	3rd ed. 1851	4th ed. 1856	5th ed. 1862	6th ed. 1865	7th ed. 1868	8th ed. 1872	Total
Rewritings	54 (4)	25 (17)	90 (46)	6 (1)	7 (3)	2 (1)	6 (2)	6 (3)	196 (77)
Additions	3 (2)	4 (4)	16 (14)	4 (4)	3 (2)	2 (2)	1 (1)	3 (3)	36 (32)
Deletions	7 (2)	12 (9)	33 (22)	1 (1)	3		1		57 (34)
	64 (8)	41 (30)	139 (82)	11 (6)	13 (5)	4 (3)	8 (3)	9 (6)	289 (143)

Table 2. Textual variants concerning Auguste Comte in *A System of Logic*, Book VI, chapters IX, X and XII.

	1st ed. 1843	2nd ed. 1846	3rd ed. 1851	4th ed. 1856	Total
Rewritings	1	9	4		14
Additions		1	1		2
Deletions		8	4	1	13
	1	18	9	1	29

6

Natural Imagery and Metaphors in Mill's Science of Society

When examining the role natural or experimental sciences play in nineteenth-century British social and political thought, commentators usually consider the impact of evolutionary theory on the study of society. For that reason, a considerable number of scholarly works focus on mid-to-late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, Henry Maine, Leonard T. Hobhouse, John A. Hobson or Thomas Hill Green.[1] As a way of enriching these views, this chapter engages with John Stuart Mill's use of naturalistic metaphors and the vocabularies of experimental sciences in *A System of Logic*, a book first published in 1843, then reprinted in revised form eight times until 1872. The focus adds to the abovementioned approaches in three ways. A first distinctive aspect is that I examine Mill's social and political thought, which is less studied when dealing with the argumentative convergence between natural and social and political sciences. Although the chapter considers chiefly Mill's *Logic*, it also attempts to map some of the *Logic*'s underlying ideas in his later writings. Widely considered Mill's most significant contribution to the history of science, the *Logic* provides likewise and opportunity to reassess the political implications of his methodological approach to society.

The chapter discusses, in the second place, the first half of the nineteenth century instead of its last decades, having in mind that Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859. I therefore draw attention to the intellectual context prior to the

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[1] To name a few examples: J. W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966; R. J. Halliday, 'Social Darwinism: A Definition', *Victorian Studies*, 14, 4, 1971, 389-405; Peter Dickens, *Social Darwinism: Linking Evolutionary Thought to Social Theory*, Open University Press, London, 2000; Roger Smith, 'British Thought on the Relations Between the Natural Sciences and the Humanities, c. 1870-1910', in 'Historical Perspectives on *Erklären* and *Verstehen*', *Archimedes*, 21, 2010, 161-85; R. Creath and J. Maienschein, eds., *Biology and Epistemology*, ed. U. Feest, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, see part one; Michael Freeden, 'Biology, Evolution and Liberal Collectivism', in *The New Liberalism: An Ideology of Social Reform*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1986, 76-116.

moment in which Darwin's theory of natural selection appears and builds on those scholarly accounts that explain Darwin's ideas against a background of interdisciplinary dialogue between the natural and the human sciences.[2] Finally, along with assessing the impact of the concept of organism when describing society, I also consider a number of borrowings from other disciplines beyond biology, such as mechanics, astronomy and mathematics. In the picture that emerges Mill's use of disparate naturalistic images stands out. The focus on the linguistic strategies that reinforce the bonds between natural sciences and socio-political theories seems for that reason particularly fitting. Overall, the chapter regards scientific concepts and natural imagery as an important part of Mill's political vocabulary and provides an interpretation of how metaphoric utterances shape his arguments and political claims. The essay hence addresses Mill scholars and in general those historians of political thought and intellectual historians concerned with the rhetorical character of past political ideas.

In the first section I focus on the concluding part of *A System of Logic* and discuss some examples illustrating Mill's uses of natural images and the vocabulary of the experimental sciences. In the second section I comment on the challenges that these metaphoric expressions pose to current scholarly interpretations of Mill's ideas and briefly examine some academic approaches to figurative language. The chapter argues that Mill's evocative use of the natural sciences' vocabulary as applied to the study of society serves a legitimising purpose. Moreover, a linguistic-based historical analysis of these semantic transfers casts light into Mill's approach to society and politics thus assessing the cognitive value of his use of metaphors. In doing so, it shall be seen how Mill's methodological reflections underpin his political beliefs.

6.1 Metaphors and Natural Images in *A System of Logic*

In this section I analyse Mill's borrowings of imagery and vocabulary from the natural sciences when explaining his proposal to study social and political behaviour. In *A*

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[2] Robert M. Young, *Darwin's Metaphor: Nature's Place in Victorian Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 78; Gregory Claeys, 'The "Survival of the Fittest" and the Origins of Social Darwinism', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 61, 2, 2000, 223-40. Similarly, it has been pointed out that Darwin's biological ideas are also indebted to socio-economic theories: Peter J. Bowler, 'Social Metaphors in Evolutionary Biology, 1870-1930: The Wider Dimension of Social Darwinism', in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*, ed. Sabine Maasen, Peter Weingart and Everett Mendelsohn, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995, 107-26.

System of Logic he argues a science that can provide basic general guidelines for 'daily political practice'.[3] The chemical and geometrical methods, which represent the two previous attempts to scientifically understand society, are not valid. While the former wrongly assumes that experiments are possible in the science of society, the latter draws abstracts conclusions without taking into account the data of historical experience. Mill's sociology, on the contrary, follows the model of the physical sciences and seeks to improve 'the backward state of the Moral Sciences' by following its principles and methods.[4] Mill's attempt draws great inspiration from Auguste Comte's positivism. As the reader of the *Logic* notices, Mill's debts to Comte are particularly apparent in its last book, which explains the methods and goals of the historical science of society.

Still an explanation of social events according to models of the natural sciences was not an entirely innovative scheme. On the one hand, Mill suggests his own approach to social phenomena criticising those of Thomas Macaulay and his own father, James Mill, which he labels Chemical Method and Geometrical Method respectively and regards as unfitted for a scientific understanding of society.[5] On the other hand, Mill builds on a tradition that offers naturalistic explanations for social, political and economic events and institutions. More prominently in eighteenth-century France and during the Scottish Enlightenment, philosophers usually regarded the model of physics as valid for understanding society.[6] Johan Heilbron notes in this sense that the expression 'moral and political sciences', to which Mill refers as needing improvement, was coined only in the 1760s by the physiocrats, who leave their intellectual imprint in both Comte and Mill.[7] Yet Comte's methodological outline, particularly systematic and comprehensive,

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[3] John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843), in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, VIII, 916.

[4] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 833-34, 895.

[5] See chapter two.

[6] Johan Heilbron, 'Social Thought and Natural Sciences', in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 7: *The Modern Social Sciences*, ed. Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, 43-49; I. Bernard Cohen, *Interactions: Some Contacts Between the Natural Sciences and the Social Sciences*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1994; Roy Porter, 'Medical Science and Human Science in the Enlightenment', in *Inventing Human Science: Eighteenth-Century Domains*, ed. Christopher Fox, Roy Porter and Robert Wokler, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995, 53.

[7] Björn Wittrock, Johan Heilbron and Lars Magnusson, 'The Rise of the Social Sciences and the Formation of Modernity', in *The Rise of the Social Sciences and the Formation of Modernity: Conceptual Change in Context, 1750-1850*, ed. J. Heilbron, L. Magnusson and B. Wittrock, Dordrecht, Kluwer, 1998.

appeals to Mill as the crowning moment of his philosophical study on the methods of natural and social sciences.

6.1.1 Social Organism, Social Body and Body Politic

Sociology, according to Mill, should rationally explain the different 'states of society', that is, the degree of 'civilization at any given time'.[8] The aim of sociology is thus to understand the causes and consequences of social events, given a determinate state of society. The idea of state of society, which provides Mill with a static image of society, unravels the complexity of sociological enquiry, as I explain below. When Mill presents his views, he refers to society as a 'social organism', 'social body' or 'body politic'.[9] Sociology then operates 'in a manner essentially analogous to what is now habitually practised in the anatomy of the physical body'.[10] Although the organism metaphor also appears in others of his works, it permeates his *System of Logic* strengthening his argument.[11]

Some of Mill's claims follow logically from the adoption of this terminology. There may be a 'healthy' or a 'morbid' state of society, in which case a cure is required.[12] Yet a scientific understanding of social laws should serve as a basis for making the right decisions on social and political problems. Mill laments in this regard that political issues have been traditionally discussed in a rather improvised manner, without any 'previous systematic enquiry' into the foundations and laws of society. Students of politics, Mill stresses, have 'attempted to study the pathology and therapeutics of the social body, before they had laid the necessary foundation in its physiology; to cure disease without understanding the laws of health'.[13] Mill attempts to correct what he

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[8] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 918.

[9] The chapter discusses some illustrative examples that shall be referred to below. The references for every usage are detailed so as to help future research on this topic. Examples of 'social organism' in *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 901, 912, 918, 919; 'social body' and 'body of individuals': 688, 876-77, 884; 'body politic': 796, 899, 923.

[10] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 918.

[11] In other writings: 'Social organism' appears in *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), CW, X, 308; 'social body' in *Guizot's Lectures on European Civilization* (1836), CW, XX, 375, 378; 'body politic' in *Coleridge* (1840), CW, X, 139, 148; *Rationale of Representation* (1835), CW, XVIII, 40; *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), CW, XIX, 403; 'The Condition of Ireland, 18', *Morning Chronicle*, 11 November 1846, CW, XXIV, 945; 'Pledges [1]', *Examiner*, 1 July 1832, CW, XXIII, 491.

[12] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 918-19.

[13] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 876.

regards as a misleading course of action by setting out a suitable approach to discovering the essential features of the social world.

As a social *body*, society can develop an illness. Politicians and in general those in charge of solving social and political problems, here compared with doctors, should master the principles and laws that govern society. The image of society as a body or organism and of statesmen as physicians not only justifies a scientific research on society, but also gives authority to its conclusions. Social conflicts need to be addressed by both relying on a well-founded science of society and turning to those who possess a master specific knowledge of it. Yet Mill warns his readers about the complexity of the task: there is no single panacea for the question of government, no 'remedy [that] can cure all diseases'.[14]

Another example insists on the comparison between doctors and politicians in these terms: 'As there are quack physicians, and scientific physicians, so there are quack politicians, and scientific politicians'.[15] The underlying idea is that men of science, whether politicians or physiologists, have certain theoretical knowledge of their disciplines and apply it to particular cases. Scientific politicians establish the 'general laws, according to which it is observed, or inferred, that the phenomena of human society regulate themselves', whereas the quack or 'empiric' kind neglects the elemental principles of the discipline.[16] The analogy between society and living organisms appears recurrently in Mill's writings, where politicians are accordingly compared with doctors or physicians that have acquired the expertise for dealing with public issues. But even if Mill acknowledges that people might not have an in-depth knowledge of politics, they are 'sufficiently qualified to judge, by the evidence which might be brought before them, of the merits of different physicians, whether for the body politic or natural'.[17]

Laymen, in Mill's opinion, choose a politician who represents them on the same basis as they can choose a doctor: not because they are experts, but because *everyone* can make wise political judgements. Those who have devoted their time to the study of

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[14] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 877.

[15] *Paper Currency and Commercial Distress* (1826), CW, IV, 111.

[16] *Ibid*. The example resembles the Platonic dialogues in general, and *The Gorgias* in particular, which establishes an analogy between rhetoricians and physicians. Mill translates the dialogue into English and publishes it in 1834. *The Gorgias* (1834), CW, XI, 97-151. The argument is echoed one of Mill's debating speeches 'Parliamentary Reform, 2', August 1824, CW, XXVI, 284. On this topic see Nadia Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy: From the Athenian Polis to Representative Government*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002, 47-54.

[17] *Rationale of Representation*, CW, XVIII, 40.

political matters should then 'discover and apply the remedy' to difficult problems.[18] One of Mill's newspaper articles emphatically questions: 'Why should we have one rule for the body politic, another and an opposite one for the body natural?'[19] The article goes on to defend that society may benefit from the insights of professional and competent politicians. People should therefore choose the person that is best suited for the task of government.

The conditions for social welfare figure as an underlying theme of Mill's approach to politics, sometimes expressed by evoking images that come from medicine and related fields. In a 'healthy state of political life' political parties represent opposite interests and compete with each other.[20] Discrepancies and public debate, within certain limits, do not damage social institutions. However, while Mill stresses that differences of opinion within society are to a certain degree beneficial, a major social and political conflict would jeopardise the mere existence of government, for it would challenge the mainstays of society. A state is then on the verge of a civil war 'when the questioning of these fundamental principles is (not the occasional disease, or salutary medicine, but) the habitual condition of the body politic'.[21] Mill defends that in this case a temporary dictatorship would be a solution, provided people have democratically elected it. A dictatorial government or a 'good despotism' may be a 'necessary medicine for diseases of the body politic', though only if it aims at securing freedom. Otherwise an undemocratic government would be 'senseless' and 'dangerous'.[22]

The social organism metaphor has been fruitfully examined in relation to social Darwinism.[23] In fact, scholarly literature has sometimes regarded social Darwinism as establishing the paradigm for organicism. Frequently dominating the debate, the idea of

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[18] *Ibid*. See also the first review on Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*: 'Provided good intentions can be secured, the best government, (need it be said?) must be the government of the wisest, and these must always be a few. The people ought to be the masters, but they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves […]. A man's control over his physician is not nugatory, although he does not direct his physician what medicine to administer. He either obeys the prescription of his physician, or, if dissatisfied with him, takes another', 'De Tocqueville on Democracy in America, I' (1835), CW, XVIII, 72.

[19] Mill argues that 'a man will choose his legislator as he chooses his physician'. 'Pledges, I', XXIII, 491.

[20] *On Liberty* (1859), CW, XVIII, 253.

[21] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 923.

[22] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 403.

[23] See for example Dickens, *Social Darwinism*; Robert Bannister, *Social Darwinism: Science and Myth in Anglo-American Social Thought*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1979; Michael Freeden, 'Biological and Evolutionary Roots of the New Liberalism', *Political Theory*, 4, 4, 1976, 471-90.

social evolution logically presupposes the existence of a social organism.[24] The ways in which Darwin's theories strike Victorian society have justifiably attracted considerable scholarly attention, especially as to how his ideas were used by social theorists. Leaning on these approaches, some commentators have pointed out that social and biological ideas were part of the common intellectual context at that time. Darwin's theory of evolution, it has been argued, owed much to the ongoing social and economic debates, expressing 'a preexisting train of thinking'.[25] Indeed, the problem of how profound social changes came about was already discussed among intellectuals from the late Enlightenment after the challenges posed by the American and French revolutions. Edmund Burke and Samuel T. Coleridge in Britain, or Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte in France are examples. Even though the scholarly emphasis on social Darwinism may be misleading, the image of society as a physiological process is not exclusive to social Darwinism.[26] Such authors, among whom Mill may be included, illustrate these earlier attempts to explain social change by comparing it with a social organism.

6.1.2 Consensus

Depicted as an organism, society also shares other features with a living body. Mill claims that every change in any of the elements that define a state of society affects the other elements as well: 'religious belief, philosophy, science, the fine arts, the industrial arts, commerce, navigation, government, all are in close mutual dependence on one

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[24] See for instance Robert C. Bannister, 'Sociology', in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 7: *The Modern Social Sciences*, 329-34.

[25] Claeys, 'The "Survival of the Fittest" and the Origins of Social Darwinism', 226. See also Young, *Darwin's Metaphor* and Ernst Mayr, *One Long Argument: Charles Darwin and the Genesis of Evolutionary Thought*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1991.

[26] Heilbron, 'Social Thought and Natural Sciences', 51. On Burke see John MacCunn, *The Political Philosophy of Burke*, Kitchener, Ontario, Batoche Books, 2001, 29-38. On Coleridge see Samuel T. Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each*, London, Hurst, Chance & Co, 1830, 61-73; Pamela Edwards, *The Statesman's Science: History, Nature and Law in the Political Thought of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, 130-35. On Comte see Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 3 vols., 1993, I, 617-22; Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, *Memoire sur la science de l'homme* (1813), in *Œuvres choisies de C.-H. de Saint-Simon*, Brussels, Fr. Van Meenen, 3 vols., 1859, vol. II, 7-54; Barbara Haines, 'The Inter-Relations between Social, Biological, and Medical Thought, 1750-1850: Saint-Simon and Comte', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 11, 1, 1978, 19-35.

another'.[27] Whatever affects any of these elements individually, will have an impact on the rest of them as a whole, which will in turn lead to a different state of society. Mill uses the term 'consensus', which he borrows from physiology, to elaborate on this interdependence among social events. The 'consensus of the various parts of a social body' explains the causal relationship that links together the features whereby Mill describes any state of society.[28] Yet the term 'consensus' at that time refers to the necessary coordination or agreement that the different parts or organs of a body need in order to perform their respective functions.[29] From a physiological perspective, the various organs of a body are mutually dependent on the activities of each other. But Mill uses the word to describe the relationship between social events: there are connections among body parts as well as among the different parts of society. In other words, there is a consensus that explains how different parts of a whole work in harmony.[30] The term 'consensus' thus shifts from the scientific argumentative context to the social and political discourse. As such, it crystallises in expressions like 'consensus politics' or simply 'social consensus'. Mill's non-standard use of the term at that time highlights the manner in which he understands the social realm as a whole.

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[27] *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 308. He gives additional details regarding the elements configure a state of society in the *Logic*: 'What is called a state of society, is the simultaneous state of all the greater social facts or phenomena. Such are, the degree of knowledge, and of intellectual and moral culture, existing in the community, and in every class of it; the state of industry, of wealth and its distribution; the habitual occupations of the community; their division into classes, and the relations of those classes to one another; the common beliefs which they entertain on all the subjects most important to mankind, and the degree of assurance with which those beliefs are held; their tastes, and the character and degree of their aesthetic development; their form of government, and the more important of their laws and customs', *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 899.

[28] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 912.

[29] Mill himself acknowledges his borrowing. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) dates the first figurative usage of the term to an 1854 essay titled 'Comte's Positive Philosophy', by George Brimley. The author comments on Comte's positivism and notes Comte's borrowing from physiology, but as the chapter shows, Mill already elaborates on this term in 1843. George Brimley, 'Comte's Positive Philosophy', *Essays*, London, Macmillian & Co, 1858, 320. 'Consensus', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edn, CD-ROM, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992. *The Historical Thesaurus of the OED* shows how terms have been used in different contexts. On 'consensus' see *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary: With Additional Material from A Thesaurus of Old English*, hereafter HTOED, ed. Christian Kay, Jane Roberts, Michael Samuels and Irené Wotherspoon, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2 vols., 2009, vol. I, 205, 839, 1213, 1331. I take the OED as a starting point for a political and social conceptual history, according to Melvin Richter's point. Melvin Richter, 'For a History of Political and Social Concepts in English', in *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995, 156-57.

[30] 'Consensus' appears in *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 899-900, 912, 918, 919. In other works: *An Examination of William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865), CW, IX, 270; Mill to Comte, 25 November 1844, CW, XIII, 648; *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 284, 309.

Every social fact is both cause and consequence of other equally important elements, for they depend and influence each other.

As to how a single change can affect both the other constituents of society and the whole state of society, Mill is not particularly clear. He emphasises, however, the significance of human knowledge in this process. By analysing history, Mill concludes that a development of 'the moral and political state of a community' has always resulted from a shift in people's beliefs.[31] In *On Liberty*, for instance, Mill unfolds this claim and argues that a plurality of opinions and cultural diversity promote a more civilised society.[32] The emphasis on knowledge also accounts for his long-lived concern about the development of national education.[33] An advance in people's knowledge, with its consequent shift in public opinion, brings about a new state of society, which here is synonym with the improvement of society. Freedom of action and thought, expressed as the liberty to diverge from custom or the appeal to 'different experiments of living', rests on the same ground: every single action influences the whole state of society.[34]

Mill's approach combines in this manner a comprehensive view of society with a focus on the individual. Rather than a paradox, the two-level explanatory model makes sense when viewed through the prism of biology and the idea of consensus. On the one hand, social facts are weaved together into a state of society, which offers an all-embracing picture of society. On the other hand, this mental image only emerges after considering individuals' actions and beliefs, which justifies the separate study of sociology's branches. A consensus among social events, 'similar to that existing among the various organs and functions of the physical frame of man', accounts for the dual focus of attention on both individuals and states of society.[35] And the development of different fields of research within sociology makes sense 'just as in the natural body we study separately the physiology and pathology of each of the principal organs and tissues'.[36] Mill's *Political Economy* (1848) published a few years later, and

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[31] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 926. See also Frederick Rosen, 'The Method of Reform: J. S. Mill's Encounter with Bentham and Coleridge', in *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. N. Urbinati and A. Zakaras, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 124-46.
[32] See especially chapter 3, *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 260-75; Michael Levin, *Mill on Civilization and Barbarism*, London, Routledge, 2004, 94-121.
[33] Bruce Baum, 'Millian Radical Democracy: Education for Freedom and Dilemmas of Liberal Equality', *Political Studies*, 51, 2003, 404-28.
[34] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 261.
[35] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 899.
[36] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 900-901.

Considerations on Representative Government (1861) partially fulfil this purpose, just as his unwritten treatise on ethology would have done. As it may be seen, the ideas of social body, social organism or body politic somehow narrow what can be imagined as possible concerning the scientific enquiry into society and politics. They help Mill explain the interconnected nature of social events as well as argue for the benefits of an expert knowledge of society. Mill pictures society as a complex, yet empirical object that can change for better or worse. Additionally, an analysis of the social organism metaphor contributes to an understanding of the arguments that Mill develops in the *Logic* and those later writings that adopt a clear political tone, along with his methodological long-term project to scientifically explain social phenomena. Mill's borrowings of vocabulary and imagery from the experimental sciences not only illuminates his methodological approach in general, but also some of his political beliefs.

6.1.3 Statics and Dynamics

Both biological metaphors and physics imagery spring up in *A System of Logic* as complementary argumentative strategies.[37] Along with borrowing the term 'consensus' from physiology, Mill also draws an analogy with the science of mechanics in order to explain the interdependence among social events. He emphasises the similarities between the principle of causality in politics and the inorganic world: 'every change in any one part, operates immediately, or very speedily, upon all the rest. […] [f]or in politics as in mechanics, the communication of motion from one object to another proves a connexion between them'.[38] The natural laws that explain the movement of inanimate objects can also apply to society, hence both the inorganic and social worlds obey to a similar cause-and-effect relationship and are subject to motion and external forces.

Under the influence of Comte and Saint-Simon Mill believes that it is possible to discover to some extent the regularities that govern social phenomena. Unlike them, he

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[37] Alan Ryan, who has devoted a monograph to Mill's *Logic*, simply points out that Mill follows the model of physics. Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, second edition, Houndmills, Macmillan, 1987.

[38] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 919.

does not argue that a science of society can predict social events, but only serve as guidance. Even if Mill does not agree with the possibility of an exact science of society, he still uses a variety of images from mechanics, which serve his argumentative purposes. In this particular regard, Mill's methodological framework resembles that of eighteenth-century philosophers who, following Newtonian mechanics, argued that human behaviour could be explained by discovering the laws of motion in physical bodies.[39] Though with some important differences on the degree of precision that social laws can achieve, Mill contributes to an ongoing debate on the proper methods for the study of society.

As regards the basic design that the science of society should adopt, Mill's account closely mirrors Auguste Comte's sociology, earlier named social physics.[40] Sociology consequently reproduces the methodological approach of the physical sciences to both determine its goals and organise its findings. After all, Mill regards human behaviour as a more complex kind of natural phenomenon, but still a natural phenomenon.[41] Sociology's general outline follows the science of mechanics,[42] the part of physics that studies the behaviour of bodies when subject to external forces. Just as statics and dynamics are the two branches of mechanics, sociology's subordinate disciplines are social statics and social dynamics. In Mill's time, statics considers why bodies remain balanced or the conditions of equilibrium, while dynamics analyses why they change, namely their conditions of movement.[43] Therefore, the terms 'statics' and 'dynamics',

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[39] Jernej Pikalo, 'Mechanical Metaphors in Politics', in *Political Language and Metaphor: Interpreting and Changing the World*, ed. Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo, London and New York, Routledge, 2008, 41-54.

[40] Mill does not use 'social physics', but 'sociology' and 'science of society'. However, as new editions of the *Logic* appear, he modifies this terminology. He writes 'social science' or 'social' instead of 'sociology' or 'sociological' respectively. See for instance the variants appearing in *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 912l, 898w, 905e, 908a. On this topic see chapter five.

[41] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 895.

[42] Today also called classical mechanics.

[43] 'Statics' and 'Dynamics', *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 'Statics' and 'Dynamics' in Samuel Johnson and John Walker, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, London, William Pickering, Chancery Lane, George Cowie and Co. Poultry, 1828; Samuel Johnson, *Johnson's Dictionary*, Boston, Charles J. Hendee, 1836; Samuel Johnson and Austin Nuttall, *Johnson's Dictionary of English Language*, London, Routledge, 1856; James Henry Murray, ed., *Johnson's Dictionary*, London and New York, George Routledge and Sons, 1874. See the entries in the HTOED, vol. I, for 'social statics', 1234; 'statics', 538; 'dynamics', 782.

until then confined to the language of experimental sciences, take an active part within Mill's social science, thus becoming 'social statics' and 'social dynamics'.[44]

These two research fields examine respectively the conditions whereby a community exists for a period of time and the elements that promote an improvement in every aspect of social welfare. Needless to say, these findings have an eminently practical significance and support the idea of sociology as a necessary requisite for political reform. Mill's 1865 general appraisal of Comtean positivism makes this point clearer. In his essay *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865) Mill extends the aspects of statics and dynamics to every kind of phenomena, not only social, but also organic and inorganic. On the one hand, social statics is the study of social order and the 'conditions of existence and permanence of the social state'. It deals with the 'equilibrium' of society. On the other hand, social dynamics considers the reasons that explain social change, understood here as a moral and economic development of society. Its object is 'motion' or 'the laws of [social] evolution'.[45]

Comte and Mill derive their ideas of statics and dynamics from both the mathematician Joseph Louis Lagrange and the biologist Henri de Blainville. The former employed the terms statics and dynamics as they were used in mechanics, while Blainville applied them to organic life and studied every organism by focusing on their unchanged structures and progressive development over time.[46] Thus for Mill, social statics and social dynamics mirror 'the distinction in mechanics between the conditions of equilibrium and those of movement' and 'in biology, between the laws of organization and those of life'.[47] This remark on Mill's twofold source of inspiration accounts for the overlapping of biology and physics imageries in the *Logic*. When describing the method to make social phenomena intelligible, Mill turns to the models of physiology and mechanics. While in some fragments society appears as an organism,

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[44] See chapter three on the correspondence between social statics and social dynamics and order and progress respectively.

[45] *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 309.

[46] Angèle Kremer-Marietti, 'Introduction', in *The Correspondence of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte*, ed. Oscar Haac, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 1995, 11; On Lagrange, see Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. Harriet Martineau, London, J. Chapman, 2 vols., 1853, 125, 516; Craig G. Fraser, 'Lagrange's Analytical Mathematics, its Cartesian Origins and Reception in Comte's Positive Philosophy', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 21, 2, 1990, 143-56. On Blainville see: Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, I, 59; Henri Marie Ducrotay de Blainville, *De l'Organisation des Animaux our Principes d'Anatomie Comparée*, Paris, F. G. Levrault, 1822, ix.

[47] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 917.

susceptible of being ill or enjoy good health, in other cases society is depicted as an inanimate object that may be subject to external forces. I further explore this seemingly paradoxical conclusion, which does not undermine Mill's argument.

The academic literature on Mill has hitherto disregarded the division between statics and dynamics.[48] It is not only the basis for Mill's science of society broadly understood, but also for its more specific areas, such as political economy and political philosophy.[49] Mill's consistent use of the division figures moreover as one of the most enduring legacies of positivism, even if he strongly disagrees with Comte's later overregulated blueprint for society and politics.[50] True, Mill believes that Comte 'aims at establishing […] a despotism of society over the individual', but the first steps of his methodological outline follow essentially those of Comte's positivism.[51] The recurrent usage of the dichotomy also throws some light on the way Mill represents society as a distinct, living entity shaped by opposite forces. When analysing social phenomena through the prism of statics and dynamics, Mill offers a temporal perspective on social and political reality. The static dimension points to something that does not change over time, a number of elements that confer stability to a particular community, while the dynamic dimension emphasises its mutable character. In short, statics and dynamics refer to a social process that unfolds *in* time.

6.1.4 Astronomy and the Progress of History

Mill also illustrates this point of view by comparing social development with the transit of planets, thus adding to the temporal a spatial perspective. The science of society mirrors astronomy in this instance. Considered over time, the course of 'human affairs' describes a 'trajectory or a progress' instead of a 'cycle or an orbit'. Human actions, argues Mill, do not lead to a periodical recurrence of the same circumstances, but to 'a

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[48] An exception is John M. Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind: The Social and Political Thought of John Stuart Mill*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968, 96-99.

[49] *Coleridge* (1840), CW, X, 151-52; Mill to John Sterling, 28 September 1839, CW, XIII, 405-406; *The Principles of Political Economy with Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy* (1848), CW, III, 705; *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 383-85.

[50] Walter M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1963, 184.

[51] *On Liberty*, CW, XVIII, 227. See also *Auguste Comte and Positivism*, CW, X, 261-368; *Autobiography* (1873), CW, I, 219, 221; Mill to John Nichol, 30 September 1848, CW, XIII, 738-40; Mill to Émile Littré, 22 December 1848, CW, XIII, 741-42.

course not returning into itself'.[52] Here Mill understands progress, as he himself notices, in terms of motion across space and over time, meaning simply moving forward.[53] In a similar sense, he explains how history unfolds in time by talking about 'progressive movement', 'progressive development' or 'evolution' of society.[54] Reinhart Koselleck has studied the history of the concept of progress and its importance for understanding historical time as process.[55] He distinguishes between different phases in the conceptual change of progress: from its uses in individual histories to its uses as collective singular. Koselleck understands collective singulars as highly abstract guiding historical concepts that '[tie] together numerous experiences into a single term'.[56] Mill's remarks on the progressive development of society illustrate Koselleck's intermediate phase, in which it is possible to talk about 'the progress of history', progress not being yet a 'subject of itself'.[57] Yet Mill distinguishes between progress as onward movement and progress as an abstract historical agent, calling into mind the different layers of meanings that Koselleck would scrutinise many years later. When it comes to his views on history, both tiers of meaning provide Mill with a subtle distinction.

A further consequence follows from Mill's understanding of history as a progressive development, in contrast to a cyclical pattern. Since historical change does not lead to a periodical repetition of events, there is room for uncertainty, failure and eventually for free will. Individuals accordingly should try to contribute to general welfare, which is not determined by any fixed predetermined law. Only when picturing social history as describing a trajectory, contingency arises and individuals can take control over their own fate. It is in this sense that metaphoric expressions narrow what remains conceivable: people are responsible for the future direction of human history. Even if Mill believes that 'the general tendency is […] one of improvement, […]

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[52] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 913.

[53] The term is originally used to refer to the onward movement of a journey or expedition and later, in a figurative sense, meaning 'advance' 'growth', 'development', and 'advance to better and better conditions, continuous improvement'. 'Progress', *The Oxford English Dictionary*. On the way spatial metaphors function in everyday language see George Lakoff, 'The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor', in *Metaphor and Thought*, second edn, ed. Andrew Ortony, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, 202-51.

[54] See chapter two on this topic.

[55] Reinhart Koselleck, ' "Progress" and "Decline:" An Appendix on the History of Two Concepts', in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, 218-35.

[56] Koselleck, ' "Progress" and "Decline:" An Appendix on the History of Two Concepts', 229.

[57] Koselleck, ' "Progress" and "Decline:" An Appendix on the History of Two Concepts', 229-30.

towards a better and happier state', he clarifies that historical change does not presume social improvement, which depends on human behaviour.

Fortunately, the laws and fundamental principles that regulate social change can be studied so that the outcome remains to be decided according to specific purposes. Being its goals collective happiness and social welfare, Mill's effort to develop a science of society embraces this principle. Human understanding, according to Mill, can unravel social life as an empirical phenomenon by taking history into account. The past then offers a particular kind of wisdom that is a valuable part of political decision-making and may guide a future political agenda.[58] As for many of his contemporaries, one of Mill's more acute concerns is social stability, particularly after the threats posed by the popular upheavals that spread across Europe. In order to achieve social welfare, it is necessary to secure a peaceful and harmonious society. Social statics, the newly created branch of sociology, analyses past communities and finds out the features that have led to a long-lasting social existence.

6.1.5. Cohesion and Mathematics

When setting out the 'conditions for stability in political society' Mill employs a mechanical metaphor, which I consider in what follows. Mill points out three conditions that have been present in enduring social unions for a long period of time: a common system of education, a shared feeling of allegiance or loyalty and a 'strong and active principle of cohesion among the members of the same community or state'.[59] Mill explains what he means by 'principle of cohesion' in a paragraph that was thoroughly rewritten as new editions of the *Logic* appeared. From 1843 to 1872, a period in which eight different editions of this work are released, Mill seizes the opportunity to introduce new fragments, as well as to delete or rewrite some passages.[60] Until 1851, when the third edition was published, the fragment quoted above on the principle of cohesion reads: 'The third essential condition which has existed in all durable political

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[58] For a discussion of the relevance of history in politics see Stefan Collini, Donald Winch and John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, 185-205.

[59] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 923.

[60] All of them are available in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*.

societies, is a strong and active principle of nationality'.[61] Thus for the third edition, when Mill replaces 'nationality' with 'cohesion', he is describing the principle of nationality as a principle of cohesion. Mill then goes on to develop his idea of nationality, 'not in the vulgar sense of the term', but as 'a principle of sympathy, not of hostility; of union, not of separation'. It accounts for a shared feeling of being 'one people'.[62]

The textual amendments not only reflect Mill's concern for his readers' interpretations but also unveils yet another naturalistic explanation of social reality. Nineteenth-century dictionaries define 'cohesion' as a concept primarily used in scientific contexts. In 1848 it refers to 'the act whereby the atoms or primary corpuscles of bodies are connected together so as to form sensible masses'.[63] In its first sense, cohesion is a property of bodies that explains why particles stick together forming a solid instead of a fluid matter. Discussed among natural philosophers from the seventeenth century onwards, the force of cohesion is central to the discourse of modern mechanics.[64] A figurative sense also exists, according to some dictionaries, but only as a second, less frequent meaning of the word.[65] Mill devotes some pages to discuss the role of cohesion and the attraction among body particles in the *Logic* and uses the term extensively in the remaining of his writings mostly in a scientific sense, which suggests that he is more familiarised with the first and main sense of the word at that time.

As Jernej Pikalo argues, the metaphor of individuals as atoms permeates 'narratives, images, symbolism and thinking in day-to-day politics'.[66] This is also the case of Mill's *Logic*, although only implicitly assumed when using the term cohesion. Societies, or in Mill's example states, are thought to be aggregate of particles. In metaphoric terms, nationality is the principle of cohesion whereby individuals hold together in the same society, just as particles or atoms shape bodies. It becomes clear why Mill defines nationality as a principle of 'sympathy' or 'union'. The principle of cohesion explains

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[61] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 923. In chapter seven I elaborate on this borrowing.

[62] *Ibid*.

[63] 'The act whereby the atoms or primary corpuscles of bodies are connected together so as to form sensible masses. Figuratively, cohesion signifies the state of union or inseparability both of the particles of the matter, and other things'. 'Cohesion', *Barclay's Universal Dictionary*, London, George Virtue & Co, 1848.

[64] R. W. Home, 'Cohesion', in *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*, ed. Johan Heilbron, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, 163.

[65] 'Cohesion', *The Oxford English Dictionary*. See also the HTOED, vol. I, 160, 520, 536, 891.

[66] Pikalo, 'Mechanical Metaphors in Politics', 46.

accordingly why a group of individuals feel that 'they are one people', since they may be represented as attracted by an internal cohesive force, as if they were atoms within a bigger whole. Nationality is, in short, one of the conditions for society to become a single entity and remain in the same stable condition over time.

The term is first rooted in science and only later is used as a metaphor referring to society. The idea of *social* cohesion has become a commonplace in present day politicians' speeches and political party programmes. Cohesion has almost lost any scientific connotations in everyday language and it is frequently used as in *social* cohesion, namely to talk about feelings of common belonging among members of social groups. For that reason, the metaphoric expression may not be immediately noticed unless the reader delves into the historical meanings of the terms that Mill uses. While some of the examples discussed in this chapter obviously point to scientific discourses, others are particularly opaque. A contextualisation of Mill's political thought contributes to both interpret and identify metaphors, whose terms have sometimes become part of everyday language and lost their evocative force. The next section shall address once more this claim as part of the contemporary academic views on metaphors.

The last example I would like to elaborate on is Mill's comparison of sociological enquiry with mathematics. He praises the efforts of 'the advanced thinkers on the Continent', among whom is Comte, to discover a 'law of progress'. Once established, they argue, it is possible to 'predict future events, just as after a few terms of an infinite series in algebra we are able to detect the principle of regularity in their formation, and to predict the rest of the series to any number of terms we please'.[67] However, Mill rejects this strong version of sociology that can establish 'laws of nature' or exact laws, and maintains that sociology cannot make predictions, but only discover 'empirical laws', that is, the trends or patterns observable when analysing the past. The empirical laws can only offer guidance for the future, but not certain results. The analogy between sociology and mathematics illustrates the epistemological limits of sociology. But even if the model of exact sciences is out of reach, it does not render sociology useless, for 'it is not necessary even to the perfection of a science, that the corresponding art should possess universal, or even general, rules'.[68] The achievements of sociology, although

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[67] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 914.
[68] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 877.

not having a predictive value, are enough for 'the more common exigencies of daily political practice'.[69] Mill's science of society examines the laws that govern society with an eminently practical aim, which means that its findings not only describe social and political reality but also prescribe political choices. Mill's method can determine 'what artificial means may be used […] to accelerate the natural progress in so far as it is beneficial'.[70] Metaphoric expressions play an important role in shaping his political philosophy by outlining a theoretical framework whereby political claims would be justified. His reformist demands assume an in-depth study of society which though not having precise results, is still useful and necessary for political practice.

6.2 Contemporary Debates on the Relevance of Metaphors: Interpretive Insights into the *Logic*

Metaphors and images from the experimental sciences spread over Mill's last book of the *Logic*, and particularly when he details his method to gain a better knowledge of society in accordance with that of the physical sciences. Mill is no exception among philosophers when it comes to his use of metaphoric expressions. Mark Johnson has gone as far as to state that 'without metaphor, there would be no philosophy'.[71] Even if nowadays few would deny the importance of metaphors in political theorising, a study of Mill's *Logic* in this regard is yet to be carried out. In this section I present some preliminary remarks that could promote a more detailed research on this issue. I begin by exploring some of the challenges that the present-day reader of the *Logic* faces.

6.2.1 The Task of Understanding Mill's Use of Figurative Language

In the first place, a background knowledge of natural sciences' methods and concepts seems appropriate, not only to understand but also to identify the vocabularies of natural sciences. In an increasingly specialised academic world, mapping Mill's metaphoric language requires a cross-disciplinary perspective, which Irmline Veit-Brause has

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[69] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 916.
[70] *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 929.
[71] Mark Johnson, 'Philosophy's Debt to Metaphor', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 39.

labelled disciplinary 'bilingualism'.[72] Such standpoint is particularly demanding when analysing mid-nineteenth-century social and political theory, insofar as the boundaries between current academic fields were either blurred or non-existent at that time. Moreover, it requires an analysis of the interaction and shaping of scientific disciplines' vocabularies in a temporal perspective that gives an account of the role that metaphoric utterances play in this process.[73]

The second difficulty arises when the reader ignores or misjudges the historical meanings of the terms that Mill uses. His comments on nationality as a principle of cohesion can be easily interpreted in light of the most common meaning of 'cohesion' nowadays, that is, social cohesion.[74] Still, the metaphoric dimension of the term would probably go unnoticed if present-day readers overlook the historical change in the meaning of 'cohesion', which can qualify as a kind of anachronism.[75] It follows, therefore, that in order to both interpret and identify past metaphoric utterances, historians of political thought, and in general scholars interested in Mill's work, need to study the argumentative context in which these terms made sense. This requires, to say the least, a grasp of what the term or terms involved commonly meant. Only because we delve into what 'consensus' meant *in Mill's context* it is possible to realise that he is using a metaphor and interpret its meaning. Mill's non-standard use of consensus, for instance, which *unusually* serves him to describe a property of society instead of a feature of living organisms, determines Mill's proposal about a way to view the social and political world.[76]

Third, scholars concerned with the significance of naturalistic imagery in Mill's *Logic* may be puzzled about the variety of disciplines from which Mill borrows vocabulary. He draws analogies mostly with biology and physics, but also with

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[72] Irmline Veit-Brause, 'The Interdisciplinarity of History of Concepts – A Bridge Between Disciplines', *History of Concepts Newsletter*, 6, 2003, 12.

[73] On the challenge that the 'historicization' of metaphors pose, see Rieke Schäfer, 'Historicizing Strong Metaphors: A Challenge for Conceptual History', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 7, 2, 2012, 28-51.

[74] This may be an example of what has been called 'dead metaphor'. Max Black, 'More about Metaphor', *Dialectica*, 31, 3-4, 1977, 439.

[75] On anachronism see Petri Koikkalainen and Sami Syrjämäki, 'Quentin Skinner on Encountering the Past', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 6, 2002, 57-58; Richard Rorty, Jerome B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner, 'Introduction', in *Philosophy in History: Essays in the Historiography of Philosophy*, ed. R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Q. Skinner, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984, 4.

[76] Ina Loewenberg, 'Identifying metaphors', in *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, ed. Mark Johnson, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1981, 155-79.

astronomy and mathematics. His arguments elaborate on a wide range of concepts, evoking disparate images and making multiple comparisons between the social and the natural worlds, which leads to contradictory views. For instance, whereas sometimes society is compared with an organism or a living body, there are cases in which it is depicted as a machine, subject guiding impulses or forces. Mill's theoretical model for a science of society mirrors physiology or mechanics respectively. Yet the argument is perfectly intelligible, even if it seems contradictory.

A fourth and last potential pitfall concerns the interpretation of Mill's usage of metaphors and figurative language against the background of his later works. Does its analysis improve our reading of Mill's subsequent writings? The question points to the broader issue of whether it is possible to understand Mill's methodological approach to social phenomena, which he develops for instance in the *Logic*, as playing any role in his later, better-known works whose contents are overtly political, like *On Liberty* and *Considerations on Representative Government*. Even if some scholars have recently argued in favour of this view, the *Logic* is still largely considered as a history of science book, thus being of secondary interest with regard to Mill's political thought.[77] By way of discussing some examples, in the first section I have pointed out how Mill's analogies and metaphoric expressions convey a particular picture of the situations they describe, encompassing a general approach that set the limits of conceivable knowledge and action. In this sense their study may be relevant, since it illuminates his comprehensive picture of history, society and politics. Yet when arguing this point, I am touching upon an ongoing debate on the ubiquity of metaphors in both everyday language and specialised academic fields that has occupied linguists, philosophers, psychologists, political scientists and historians since the 1960s.[78] A brief sketch of the main voices in this debate can clarify my position concerning the interpretive value of Mill's metaphors while suggesting how to overcome the third and fourth puzzling aspects mentioned above.

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[77] Compare with Collini et al., *That Noble Science of Politics*, 155. Terence Ball has lamented more recently that 'few indeed, now read [Mill's] *Logic*'. Terence Ball, 'Competing Theories of Character Formation: James vs. John Stuart Mill', in *John Stuart Mill – Thought and Influence: The Saint of Rationalism*, ed. Georgios Varouxakis and Paul Kelly, London and New York, Routledge, 2010, 38. See also Urbinati, *Mill on Democracy*, 142-43.

[78] For an overview see Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., 'Metaphor and Thought: The State of the Art', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, 3-13.

6.2.2 The Controversies on the Cognitive Value of Metaphors

Either expressly or tacitly, historians of political thought and political philosophers take a stance towards the role that metaphors and analogies play in their interpretations. Scholarly approaches encompass a determinate perspective on figurative language, regardless of whether they focus on figurative language or not. If we take Mill's social and political texts as an example, commentators may attach different values to metaphoric expressions. To begin with, scholars can understand metaphors as irrelevant to Mill's socio-political arguments, either superfluous or merely decorative figures of speech. According to this perspective, Mill would have been able to convey the same message by avoiding metaphors and paraphrasing his words. As Hans Blumenberg has put it, metaphors are 'makeshifts destined to be superseded by logic' or 'leftover elements'.[79] Since this position is rarely spelled out, the result is a prevailing lack of attention to Mill's use of metaphors among scholarly studies. Being ornamental elements, there is no particular reason why scholars should consider 'how' Mill said something instead of 'what' did he say. When shifting the focus to Mill's metaphors, moreover, there is a risk of 'belittling' him as a philosopher, to use Max Black's expression.[80]

In a different sense, it is also possible to maintain that Mill's use of metaphors undermine his arguments by introducing ambiguity, imprecision or simply by making them incoherent, especially given the usage of overlapping imageries from a variety of experimental sciences. Advocates of this opinion underline that not only Mill could have been able to avoid using metaphors, but also that he should have done so. Metaphors are, accordingly, 'viewed as literary statements that corrupt knowledge of "reality".'[81] An alternative position towards figurative language is somewhat a reaction against the previous two. Sabine Maasen, for instance, has argued that, instead of introducing ambiguity, the use of metaphors is 'constitutive for scientific theorising'.[82] More recently, Ernst Müller has extended the claim, insisting that 'the boundary-

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[79] Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, trans. Robert Savage, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2010, 3.

[80] It would be like 'praising a logician for his beautiful handwriting': Max Black, 'Metaphor', in *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1962, 25.

[81] Pikalo, 'Mechanical Metaphors in Politics', 43.

[82] Sabine Maasen, 'Who is Afraid of Metaphors', in *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*, 12-13.

crossing processes of semantic transfers' between disciplines is not only crucial to explain scientific theorising but also any other disciplinary formation.[83] Yet among those who agree that metaphors are not purely decorative, there is a lively debate on the role they play, which has resulted in an ever-growing interdisciplinary academic literature.[84] Black's 1962 *Models and Metaphors*, widely considered as a breakthrough, inaugurates what has been later labelled 'metaphormania'.[85] Although scholars have since then developed more detailed views on metaphors, Black's pioneering insights are still widely discussed and accepted by many.

The present chapter elaborates on the third viewpoint and argues that Mill's metaphors and borrowings from naturalistic imageries help him legitimise his science of society while opening up new perceptions of society and politics. Mill represents the facts of one sort (social) as if they belonged to some other sort (nature), which is one way of describing what metaphoric thinking is about.[86] When establishing this comparison, argues Black, metaphors perform a cognitive function in reorganising the view of the object that is described. According to Black, metaphors act like a filter or a pair of glasses that render certain views as prominent.[87] Mill's description of social phenomena as natural phenomena, whether organic or inorganic, accordingly emphasises and de-emphasises certain features of society, reinforcing particular perceptions of it. In this case Mill emphasises the long-term consistency and regularity that social facts display, which suggests not only that causes and effects can have a rational explanation but also that their scientific-like knowledge is plausible and helpful. Sociology can achieve a certain level of accuracy and predictability, which even if not as complete as in the natural sciences, it may have a positive impact on social welfare.

Drawing on the examples discussed in the chapter's first section, 'the generally accepted characteristics' that people associated with natural phenomena at that time also

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[83] Ernst Müller, 'Introduction: Interdisciplinary Concepts and their Political Significance', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 6, 2, 2011, 49.
[84] Jean-Pierre van Noppen, *Metaphor: A Bibliography of Post-1970 Publications*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1985 and Jean-Pierre van Noppen, *Metaphor II: A Classified Bibliography of Publications, 1985 to 1990*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1990.
[85] Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. On 'metaphormania' see Mark Johnson, 'Preface', in *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, ix.
[86] C. M. Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor*, Michigan, University of South Carolina Press, 1970, 46. Black, 'More about Metaphors', 436.
[87] Max Black, 'Metaphor', 41.

apply to social reality, regardless of whether such features were actually true or not.[88] A thorough knowledge of the natural world is not required for a metaphor to develop its cognitive function, since they work at the level of people's widely held beliefs. If this is so, there is no contradiction when Mill brings into play images and metaphors from a variety of experimental sciences, since the resulting effect in each case is similar: Mill highlights the manner in which the social and natural worlds mirror each other when exhibiting certain uniformities or regularities. Both organic and inorganic realms are therefore susceptible of rational explanation, according to the cannons of experimental sciences.[89] Mill's borrowings support his proposal for a new science while conferring scientific rigour and objectivity to his research method. Being less concerned with the internal coherence of his arguments, he aims at enhancing the prospects of sociology.

Some scholars have insisted that metaphors not only affect the meaning of the objects involved in metaphoric descriptions, but may also bring about new understandings of the world.[90] As Maasen has put it, metaphors 'contribute and may constitute worlds of both possible meaning and possible action'.[91] Representing reality under a certain light, metaphors shape our views on a subject and determine in accordance with these views what may become possible in the future. It can be argued, as the first section shows, that Mill's images and metaphors put forward a particular understanding of social and political theory. In virtue of its similarities with the natural world, the social sphere turns from being puzzling and scientifically unworkable into having a rational explanation. Social events, stresses Mill, afford an in-depth study that establishes the laws of social change. Metaphors open up a new imaginative horizon that determines the limits of conceivable knowledge and future actions. But perhaps more importantly, metaphors also help characterise the object under investigation. When talking about a social organism, Mill evokes an empirical reality, a fixed group of

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[88] Max Black, 'Metaphor', 40.

[89] Blumenberg has warned in this regard that philosophers have historically understood mechanical and organic metaphors do not work in opposition, but complementary. Blumenberg 'Organic and Mechanical Background Metaphorics', in *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, 62-76.

[90] Sabine Maasen, 'Metaphors in the Social Sciences: Making Use and Making Sense of Them', in *Metaphor and Analogy in the Sciences*, ed. Fernand Hallyn, Dorddrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000, 199-244. Terrell Carver and Jernej Pikalo, 'Editors' Introduction', in *Political Language and Metaphor*, 1-12.

[91] Maasen, 'Metaphors in the Social Sciences: Making Use and Making Sense of Them', 205. See also Gibbs, 'Metaphor and Thought: The State of the Art', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, 3.

present and past processes that, although complex, can nevertheless be understood by adopting a scientific approach. Alternatively, mechanical metaphors point to causes and effects, actions and reactions, that can be singled out. The past provides to that end valuable information on how social change has taken place, which in turn lays down the guidelines for future political decisions. Naturalistic descriptions of social laws have also become the normative criteria that define a good government.[92] In analysing the past, desirable ends become apparent and human understanding capable of pursuing them.

Society is imagined as an organised whole of interconnected social events, which justifies a comprehensive methodological approach. Even if slowly or tentatively, the science of society that Mill argues aims to influence the political agenda. Mill regards social welfare in terms of a balance between movement and stability in both mechanical and organic terms. Sociology should accordingly focus on the study of the elements that promote both in equal degree, which he encapsulates in the ideas of order and progress.[93] The science of society provides scholars with the theoretical framework for assessing his long-standing concern with an accessible education that ensures diversity of opinions, both in and out of political institutions, and therefore progress.[94] An inexact and somewhat provisional science of society, as Mill's own political demands illustrate, is therefore a useful help in governing society. Such science requires nevertheless specific training and expertise suggested in the comparison between politicians and physicians. The idea of a professional politician becomes conceivable as someone who has specialised insights when doing politics and masters the political art.[95]

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[92] This claim also applies to the writings of Victorian intellectuals I examine in chapter four.

[93] See chapter three.

[94] On this topic see chapter one.

[95] On the professionalisation of politics in Great Britain see: Uwe Jun, 'Great Britain: From the Prevalence of the Amateur to the Dominance of the Professional Politician', in *The Political Class in Advanced Democracies: A Comparative Handbook*, ed. Jens Borchert and Jürgen Zeiss, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, 164-86. On Mill's idea of political art or practice see *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 947.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

In the first section I have presented a selection of outstanding examples that leave no question as to whether Mill actually employed metaphors and imagery from the natural world and experimental sciences in *A System of Logic*. This non-exhaustive account nevertheless shows Mill's large-scale project to study society as guided by metaphoric thinking. In line with other philosophical attempts, both contemporary and previous to the *Logic*, Mill rationally unveils the complexities and the laws behind the temporal development of society. Yet metaphor analysis begs the question of its significance for those scholars who aim at understanding past political utterances in their historical settings. If metaphors encompass determinate assumptions that modify speakers' perceptions on a subject and narrow future conceivable knowledge and action, one of the tasks of philosophers and historians of political thought is to find out how these assumptions work within the authors' context of production.

The chapter's second section draws accordingly on an ongoing scholarly debate that calls into question the cognitive value of metaphors in philosophical writings. From being almost exclusively relevant to aesthetics, metaphor analysis appears as an important issue in a variety of academic fields. The debate, of an increasingly interdisciplinary character, provides an opportunity to revise and enrich our readings of past political thinkers, such as John Stuart Mill. In doing so, scholars face some challenges that have been sketched in this chapter. Even if preliminarily, these points at issue set out the agenda from which to continue research on Mill's usage of figurative language and its relevance for present-day interpretations of his social and political thought.

I have argued, following these insights, that a study of the cognitive significance of metaphors may enrich the research perspectives on Mill scholarship. By elaborating on the physical sciences model, Mill's science of society gains a systematic shape, resembling their rigour and epistemological prestige. Metaphors act as elements of persuasion, an argumentative strategy that enhances sociology's public legitimacy. Moreover, metaphors constitute society and politics as an intelligible, seizable world that can be scrutinised and eventually modified. Complex social and political processes become empirical realities whose causes and effects are not beyond human

understanding. But intelligibility comes at the price of contingency. Human beings have both the possibility and the responsibility of taking control over their political fate. The question of how to achieve this goal is one of the defining features of Mill's political demands.

Mill's Concept of Nationality:
Enriching Contemporary Interpretations through Contextual History[1]

This chapter argues an interpretation of John Stuart Mill's idea of nationality. It takes stock of the preceding chapters by fleshing out three previously-examined claims. To begin with, Mill's use of concepts provides a focus for discussion. In one of the passages from *A System of Logic* (1843) where he explains the idea of nationality, he describes it as a principle of cohesion. The meaning of the term 'cohesion', rooted at the time in the natural sciences vocabularies, uncovers some of the distinctive features that Mill's understanding of national feelings display. The chapter thus illustrates the relevance of Mill's borrowings from the natural sciences and metaphoric expressions for scholars' interpretive task nowadays. Beyond its decorative function, metaphor analysis throws light on Mill's idea of society as susceptible of being rationally studied. Scientific language helps Mill shape his opinions and beliefs about political and social issues.

In the second place, this essay aims at interpreting a particular textual variant occurring in Mill's *Logic*. By taking advantage of the fact that Mill amends his text over the years, as new editions of this book appear, the chapter emphasises the historical and contingent character of Mill's ideas. It therefore takes into account the background analysis of Mill's revision processes as discussed in chapter five, '*A System of Logic* as a Palimpsest: The Relationship between J. S. Mill and A. Comte in the Light of Textual Revisions'. Mill explains what he means by nationality in a passage from the *Logic* that was carefully revised throughout his life. The substitution of the term 'nationality' by 'cohesion' stands out as a meaningful detail that triggers an interpretation of Mill's

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[1] A previous version of this chapter has been published as Rosario López, 'El principio de nacionalidad en John Stuart Mill: Propuestas para un estudio desde la historia contextual', *Telos. Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios Utilitaristas*, forthcoming 2013.

opinions on the nationality question. Far from being an obstacle to scholarly accounts, textual variants provide invaluable information on how Mill's views evolve, thus enriching our understanding of his work.

One of the main themes of this dissertation has been the role that the dichotomy between order and progress plays in Mill's social and political thought, studied in detail in chapter three. 'Order and progress' provides Mill with the guidelines for the study of social events and particularly politics, economics and history. Mill's scientific study has practical aims, for he believes that once understood both how society evolves and how it holds together, it may be possible to make wiser decisions, rendering politics more efficient. The principle of nationality, which Mill also describes as a principle of cohesion, precisely contributes to order, social stability and peace. Still the manner in which Mill's social and political writings encompasses claims of order and stability is an overlooked topic in academic literature, the main reason being that they are frequently framed within conservatism. The chapter accordingly examines to what extent national feelings perform a cohesive function and their place within a more general scheme of Mill's political thinking.

Paying attention to the use of political language as one of the main research materials in the history of political thought, the chapter suggests a way of highlighting the dismissed properties of Mill's principle of nationality. The argument benefits from some scholarly approaches that have criticised rather biased analyses of Mill's writings towards liberal nationalism.[2] By reviewing the recent academic literature on the topic, the first section shows that very frequently scholars' readings rely exclusively on Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), disregarding other textual sources. Partly for that reason, mainstream interpretations of *Representative Government* depict Mill as a liberal or civic nationalist who adopts cultural identity feelings as the main criterion for political organisation.

The chapter's second section challenges these views by focusing on Mill's *A System of Logic*. By examining other texts beyond the best-known passages of his 1861 treatise on representative government we gain a deeper knowledge of Mill's opinions. Yet the fact that the *Logic* undergoes major textual revisions proves useful to the aims of this

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[2] Georgios Varouxakis, *Mill on Nationality*, London, Routledge, 2002; Paul Smart, 'Mill and Nationalism: National Character, Social Progress and the Spirit of Achievement', *History of European Ideas*, 15, 4-6, 1992, 527-34.

study. Quentin Skinner's approach to past political texts justifies the focus on both what cohesion means by the time Mill uses it and the historical and intellectual background of his thought. Samuel T. Coleridge and Auguste Comte appear accordingly as two of Mill's major interlocutors. Overall, the chapter argues that, contrary to present-day interpretations of Mill as an early advocate of nationalism, his approach does not regard nationality as intrinsically valuable, but rather as ancillary to more important aims such as order, progress and liberty.

7.1 Present-day Interpretations of Mill's Concept of Nationality and *Considerations on Representative Government*

In order to understand John Stuart Mill's concept of nationality scholars typically turn to *Considerations on Representative Government* whose six-page chapter sixteen provides a brief, clear-cut explanation of what he means by nationality. Commentators seem to agree on rating *Representative Government* as one of the nineteenth-century classic works on nationality. When collecting a basic bibliography on the subject, Eric J. Hobsbawm's *Nations and Nationalism* includes, along with Renan's famous lecture 'What is a Nation?', Mill's *Representative Government*.[3] Hobsbawm's interpretation of Mill's idea of nationality focuses exclusively on *Representative Government*'s sixteenth chapter, drawing chiefly on its best-known fragments. Hobsbawn is certainly no exception among recent scholarship on nationalism. From the 1990s onwards nationalism as a historical, political and cultural phenomenon has aroused considerable interest. When tracing back the historical origins of nationalism, Mill's *Representative Government* almost invariably comes up.[4]

The Millian idea of nationality as it stands in his 1861 treatise is a commonplace in both general works and contemporary case studies dealing with the development of nationalism.[5] Yet it is in the academic literature on liberal nationalism or civic

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[3] Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1992, 2.

[4] See for instance the compilation of texts in Stuart Woolf, *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: A Reader*, London and New York, Routledge, 1996.

[5] Examples of general works are Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, fourth, expanded edition, Oxford, Blackwell, 1994, 127-28; Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory*, Harlow, Pearson Longman, 2005, 31-34; Anthony Smith, 'The Limits of Everyday Nationhood', *Ethnicities*, 8, 4, 2008, 563; Frederic Rosen, 'Nationalism and Early British Liberal Thought', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 2, 1997, 177-88;

nationalism that Mill's arguments play a crucial role. Authors like Will Kymlicka, Yael Tamir, David Miller or Margaret Moore, among others, bring into play Mill's arguments on nationality in order to show that political liberalism is compatible with demands on national and cultural rights.[6] According to Alexander Motyl, for instance, it has been mistakenly believed for much of the twentieth century that liberalism and nationalism 'must be in conflict to one another'.[7] However, Mill's 'strong endorsement of nationalism and national self-determination'[8] supports the opposite point of view. The fact that the political thought of a pivotal figure of liberalism such as Mill encompasses a theory of nationality has served as an argument of authority in academic literature. Remarkably, a large majority of studies draw exclusively on Mill's *Representative Government*, disregarding others of his writings. Partial readings are even nowadays rather the rule than the exception, although a number of scholars have taken a broader research perspective. In this line some authors have challenged a stereotyped view of Mill as a predecessor of nationalism by, for instance, supplying wider textual evidence and examining Mill's opinions concerning colonialism and international relations.[9]

Stephen May, *Language and Minority Rights: Ethnicity, Nationalism and the Politics of Language*, New York and London, Routledge, 2012, 22-24; Slobodan Drakulic, 'Whence nationalism?', *Nations and Nationalism*, 14, 2, 2008, 221-39. Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994. Case studies are for instance Philippe Van Parijs, 'Must Europe be Belgian? On democratic Citizenship in Multilingual Polities', in *Demands of Citizenship*, ed. Catriona McKinnon and Ian Hampsher-Monk, London, Continuum, 2000, 135-56; Paolo Dardanelli and Nenad Stojanovic, 'The Acid Test? Competing Theses on the Nationality – Democracy Nexus and the Case of Switzerland', *Nations and Nationalism*, 17, 2, 2011, 357-76; Antoine Chollet, 'Switzerland as a "Fractured Nation"', *Nations and Nationalism*, 17, 4, 2011, 738-55; John Kane, 'Liberal Nationalism and Multicultural State', in *Political Theory and Australian Multiculturalism*, ed. Geoffrey Brahm Levey, New York, Berghahn Books, 2008, 71.

[6] David Miller, *On Nationality*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1995; David Miller, *Citizenship and National Identity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2000; Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993; Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1992; Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001. Will Kymlicka and Magdalena Opalski, *Can Liberal Pluralism Be Exported? Western Political Theory and Ethnic Relations in Eastern Europe*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, 245-46; Margaret Moore, 'Normative Justifications for Liberal Nationalism: Justice, Democracy and National Identity', *Nations and Nationalism*, 7, 2001, 1-20; Margaret Moore, 'Nationalist Arguments, Ambivalent Conclusions', in *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict: Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. Nenad Miscevic, Chicago, Open Court, 2000, 186.

[7] 'Liberalism', *Encyclopedia of Nationalism: Leaders, Movements and Concepts*, Alexander J. Motyl, gen. ed., London, Academic Press, 2 vols., 2001, vol. II, 297-98.

[8] *Ibid*. See a similar point of view in Chandran Kukathas, 'Nationalism and Multiculturalism', in *Handbook of Political Theory*, ed. Gerald F. Gaus and Chandran Kukathas, London, Sage, 2004, 260.

[9] Varouxakis, *Mill on Nationality*; Smart, 'Mill and Nationalism: National Character, Social Progress and the Spirit of Achievement'; Duncan Bell, 'John Stuart Mill on Colonies', *Political Theory*, 38, 2010, 34-64; Duncan Bell, ed., *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in*

When reviewing how scholars of nationalism make sense of *Representative Government* it becomes apparent that their accounts rely heavily on Mill's plainest statements, neglecting his subtle clarifications on the matter that occur in the same chapter. Mill presents his best-known definition of nationality in terms of sympathy and feelings among a group of people. Such feelings, caused by a common history, language, religion, political antecedents and geographical limits, foster the ties that ensure cooperation. National feelings also account for their willingness to being under the same political roof. Once Mill clarifies the most common causes of the feeling of nationality, he presents concrete exceptions to this standard rule. Mill recalls some historical examples showing that 'none of these circumstances […] are either indispensable, or necessarily sufficient by themselves'.[10] In other words, nationality feelings may not exist among a group of people even when the mentioned conditions do take place or may be present, although some of these requisites are missing.

Mill's tentative attempt, therefore, does not fully accommodate the variety of specific historical situations, though it nevertheless describes what he regards as the most common case. Where 'the sentiment of nationality exists' among a group of people, he argues, 'there is a *primâ facie* case for uniting all the members of the nationality under the same government, and a government to themselves apart'.[11] Again, while at first sight a shared feeling of nationality is a reason why people should remain under a same government, he mentions some special cases. When different nationalities are 'so mixed up as to be incapable of local separation', Mill suggests that they should either merge with one another or 'reconcile themselves to living together under equal rights and laws'.[12] As it may be seen, Mill does not endorse *unconditionally* that every nationality should have a separate government, as many scholarly accounts of his work have suggested for decades.

Nineteenth-Century Political Thought, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007; Beate Jahn, 'Barbarian Thoughts: Imperialism in the Philosophy of John Stuart Mill', *Review of International Studies*, 31, 2005, 599-618; Michael Levin, J. *S. Mill on Civilization and Barbarism*, London, Routledge, 2004; Alan Goldstone, 'John Stuart Mill on International Legitimacy', Paper delivered at the *Oceanic Conference on International Studies University of Queensland*, 2008, available at http://www.polsis.uq.edu.au/OCIS/Goldstone.pdf, accessed 10 February 2013.

[10] John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* [hereafter CW], gen. ed. John M. Robson, Toronto and London, University of Toronto Press & Routledge and Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, XIX, 546.

[11] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 547.

[12] *Ibid*.

The prevailing view of Mill as an advocate of nationalism may originate in Lord Acton's criticisms of *Representative Government*. Acton rebuts Mill's idea that 'free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities'.[13] He argues, contrary to Mill, that it is a multinational state what improves civilisation.[14] By disregarding Mill's exceptions to the general rule, Acton possibly ranks as the first commentator that builds up his criticism on a fragmentary reading of *Representative Government*. Since then, the Acton-Mill debate has been widely regarded as setting out the bases for the two main opposite points of view on nationalism.[15] Acton's image of Mill has prevailed, hence the view of Mill's *Representative Government* as simply denying that different nationalities can coexist under a single state. True, Mill maintains that 'it is in general a necessary condition of free institutions, that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities'. Yet immediately afterwards, he weighs up what is 'liable to conflict in practice with this general principle'.[16] He then provides a significant number of empirical examples that do not fit the normal pattern, justifying the fusion of nationalities under certain circumstances.[17] One of his conclusions, which seems particularly close to what Lord Acton argues, is that 'whatever really tends to the admixture of nationalities, and the blending of their attributes and peculiarities in a common union, is a benefit to the human race'.[18] Only a superficial or biased reading of Mill's chapter may lead us to believe that he unreservedly advocates nationalism. Still, Lord Acton's view of Mill has crystallised, mediating many of the current interpretations on Mill's concept of nationality.[19]

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[13] *Ibid*.

[14] John E. E. Dalberg-Acton, 'Nationality' (1862), in *The History of Freedom and Other Essays*, London, Macmillan & Co., 1907, 290.

[15] See how Ernest Barker and Alfred Cobban elaborate on the Acton-Mill debate in Ernest Barker, *National Character and the Factors in Its Formation*, London, Taylor and Francis, 1927, 116-41; Alfred Cobban, *The Nation State and National Self-Determination*, London, Collins, 1969, 62, 131-32. For an overall perspective see Walker Connor, 'The British Intellectual Tradition ('Self-Determination: The New Phase'), in *Ethnonationalism*, 3-27.

[16] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 548.

[17] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 549.

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] In contrast to Mill's liberal nationalism, Acton is labelled as 'Mill's liberal-multinationalist counterpart' in Dardanelli and Stojanovic, 'The Acid Test? Competing Theses on the Nationality – Democracy Nexus and the Case of Switzerland', 359.

Framed in his treatise on representative government, the conciseness of Mill's descriptions and the 'casual air' of his analysis stand out.[20] Still, as a careful reading of *Representative Government* shows, Mill's understanding of nationality does not point to the intrinsic value of national peculiarities, but relates them instead to the conditions for political stability and social prosperity. Nationality is not worth protecting by itself, but only as it contributes to social welfare.[21] Mill aims at establishing the conditions for good government, namely, representative government, wondering to what extent national feelings help achieve this goal. His argument concerns the need for political unity, disregarding the relevance of ethnic and cultural aspects by themselves. As I also suggest in the chapter's second section, Mill sees no point in preserving everyone's own nationality if it does not promote a good and enduring government. On this basis he accordingly supports the mixture of nationalities as a 'gain to civilization', provided such blending promotes people's general happiness. Hence the merging of 'small' nationalities or 'backward portions of human race' into 'highly civilized and cultivated people' may be a benefit to the former.[22] This point is missing in some scholarly accounts, which typically emphasise that for Mill the correspondence between nationality and political union is indispensable for the well-functioning of a representative government. Mill is accordingly depicted as encouraging social homogeneity and rejecting cultural diversity.[23] Since Mill does not rule out the possibility of a multinational state, as we would it call today, these views are partially misleading. Besides, throughout his life he strongly endorses diversity and active public

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[20] See Eric Hobsbawm's point on the 'casual air' of Mill's account in Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 43.

[21] On this point I agree with Varouxakis, *Mill on Nationality*, 23.

[22] *Considerations on Representative Government*, CW, XIX, 549-51.

[23] Dardanelli and Stojanovic, 'The Acid Test? Competing Theses on the Nationality – Democracy Nexus and the Case of Switzerland', 359; John A. Hall, 'Liberalism and Nationalism', in *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism*, ed. Athena S. Leoussi, New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 2001, 173-76; Ephraim Nimni, 'Nationalism, Ethnicity and Self-Determination: A Paradigm Shift?', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 9, 2, 2009, 320-21; Margaret Moore, 'Normative Justifications for Liberal Nationalism: Justice, Democracy and National Identity', 7-8; Moore, 'Nationalism and Political Philosophy', in *The SAGE Handbook of Nations and Nationalism*, ed. Gerard Delanty and Krishan Kumar, London, Sage, 2006, 96-97; Yael Tamir, 'Theoretical Difficulties in the Study of Nationalism', in *Theorizing Nationalism*, ed. Ronald Beiner, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1999, 83; Daniele Conversi, 'Democracy, Nationalism and Culture: A Social Critique of Liberal Monoculturalism', *Sociology Compass*, 1, 2007, 9.

discussion of opposite points of view, which calls into question the supposed homogeneity that democracy requires.[24]

As noted above, the writings of early liberal theorists, among whom Mill figures prominently, help the advocates of liberal nationalism argue their positions. Will Kymlicka and Yael Tamir, for instance, rebut the frequent view that a liberal perspective is 'individualistic' or 'atomistic' by showing that some outstanding liberal theorists have stressed the importance of belonging to a community. According to Kymlicka, Mill, along with L. T. Hobhouse, T. H. Green and John Dewey, illustrate how liberal claims may encompass a sense of cultural membership.[25] In line with these canonical philosophical perspectives, liberal nationalists aim at reinstating a political liberalism concerned with communal identification no less than with individual liberties. Liberal normative positions escape in this manner the frequent criticism of excessive individualism. Hence in their view national feelings and cultural identity are worth regaining in present-day liberal societies. Insofar as Mill's *Representative Government* is seen as advocating national identity, Mill has been referred to as the 'founding father of the liberal-nationalist thesis', as an 'early theorist of nationalism' or as having put forward 'the first and still-influential civic argument for nationalism'.[26]

While it seems plausible to argue that Mill's political philosophy emphasises the role of individuals within political communities, liberal nationalists' readings fail to locate his concept of nationality within the broader context of his writings. Their interpretations narrow to the best-known formulas of *Representative Government*. Moreover, by basing their understandings solely on Mill's texts, scholars tacitly assume that 'nationality' refers to the same social and political phenomena both in Mill's time and at present. Mill's statements on nationality are usually presented without problematising whether the concept of nationality has changed over time. Thus Mill's theory becomes fully conversant with current positions on liberal nationalism, disregarding in which ways his ideas mirror the historical context in which they were discussed.

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[24] I develop this point in chapter one.

[25] Kymlicka, *Liberalism Community and Culture*, 9-10, 207-209; Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 18-19.

[26] Dardanelli and Stojanovic, 'The Acid Test? Competing Theses on the Nationality – Democracy Nexus and the Case of Switzerland', 358; Paul Lawrence, *Nationalism: History and Theory*, 31; Ronald Beiner, *Liberalism, Nationalism, Citizenship*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 2003, 8.

The nationality question as Mill discusses it in *Representative Government* proves useful to some authors in legitimising the defence of minority rights and cultural identity in an increasingly multicultural and globalised world.[27] Even if, as Kymlicka rightly claims, Mill's concept of nationality involves an idea of political community, Mill is oblivious to these topics, which have otherwise remained crucial to understand international politics from the twentieth century until today.[28] In the next section I suggest a way of contextualising Mill's ideas on nationality that additionally relates Mill's *Representative Government* with other writings in which he also discusses nationality. The second section further challenges an interpretation of Mill as conversant with twentieth-century nationalism.

7.2 Reshaping Mill's Concept of Nationality: *A System of Logic*

This section aims to widen the perspective to study Mill's brief and rather impressionistic description of nationality in *Representative Government* by examining the passages he devotes to the topic in *A System of Logic*, first published in 1843. Building on the preceding section, in what follows I provide further textual evidence that challenges some prevailing interpretations of Mill's ideas on nationality. While an attentive reading of *Representative Government* may partially undermine the arguments that portray Mill as a champion of nationalism, a contextualised analysis of some fragments from the *Logic* will introduce additional nuances to this claim. This section takes part in the debate that authors like Georgios Varouxakis and Paul Smart have begun when criticising some oversimplified perspectives on this topic. It elaborates, moreover, on the interpretive approaches currently available to philosophers and historians of political thought to understand past political concepts such as Mill's idea of nationality. I discuss with that purpose some methodological insights from what has been termed the contextual history of concepts as developed by Quentin Skinner.

A System of Logic was published after a thirteen-year research process in which Mill enquires into the methods to study physical reality, including the social and political world. While the first five books present Mill's proposal on how to discover

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[27] See Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, 57.

[28] Accordingly, the term 'nationalism' does not come up in his writings.

the laws that rule natural phenomena, the last book pursues an analogous goal as regards the social and political spheres. Mill depicts society as an empirical entity that exists over time. In its ongoing process, some social aspects remain constant, while others change. Mill's science of society seeks to find out what phenomena belong to each group. An in-depth knowledge of society and politics, argues Mill, aims to contribute ultimately to social welfare and practical politics. Mill regards peace and long-term stability as desirable goals, along with the increase in general prosperity and the improvement in the quality of people's life. His attempt to underpin political stability points to a historical background of widespread social unrest, in which revolutionary upheavals need to be avoided for they threat the basic pillars of society. The feeling of nationality appears in this line of argument as one of the aspects that do not change over time, thus contributing to social stability.

7.2.1 The 'Vulgar Sense' of Nationality: Recasting its Meaning as a Principle of Cohesion

Mill insists in the *Logic*'s first edition that one of the 'prime requisites of a stable political union' is a shared feeling of nationality among its members. Yet the fragment in which he presents what he means by nationality is subject to a thorough process of textual revision, which occurs between 1843 and 1872, as the eight different editions of the *Logic* were released.[29] In every new edition, Mil seizes the opportunity to change some fragments. I explore how the paragraph on nationality has changed over the years and how this may enrich our understanding of the topic. In the first two editions (1843 and 1846) the passage reads:[30]

> The third essential condition [of stability], which has existed in all durable political societies, is a strong and active principle of nationality. We need scarcely say that we do not mean a senseless antipathy to foreigners; an indifference to the general welfare of the human race, or a cherishing of absurd peculiarities because they are national; or a refusal to adopt what has been found good by other countries. In all these senses, the nations

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[29] See chapter five.

[30] The dates of the different editions are: first edition: 1843; second edition: 1846; third edition: 1851; fourth edition: 1856; fifth edition: 1862; sixth edition: 1865; seventh edition: 1868; eight edition: 1872. For more information on the drafting and revision processes see 'Textual Introduction', CW, VII, 30-70.

which have had the strongest national spirit have had the least nationality. We mean a principle of sympathy, not of hostility; of union, not of separation. We mean a feeling of common interest among those who live under the same government, and are contained within the same natural or historical boundaries. We mean, that one part of the community shall not consider themselves as foreigners with regard to another part; that they shall cherish the tie which holds them together; shall feel that they are one people, that their lot is cast together, that evil to any of their fellow-countrymen is evil to themselves.[31]

For the third edition (1851), when making the most extensive rewriting of the *Logic*, Mill changes substantially the paragraph, which then remains intact until 1872, when the eight and last edition in Mill's lifetime is published. As a result from the new drafting,

The third essential condition *of stability in political society, is a strong and active principle of cohesion among the members of the same community or state*. We need scarcely say that we do not mean *nationality, in the vulgar sense of the term*; a senseless antipathy to foreigners; […] indifference to the general welfare of the human race, *or an unjust preference of the supposed interests of our own country*; a cherishing of *bad* peculiarities because they are national, or a refusal to adopt what has been found good by other countries. […] We mean a principle of sympathy, not of hostility; of union, not of separation. We mean a feeling of common interest among those who live under the same government, and are contained within the same natural or historical boundaries. We mean, that one part of the community *do* not consider themselves as foreigners with regard to another part; that they *set a value on their connexion* – feel that they are one people, that their lot is cast together, that evil to any of their fellow-countrymen is evil to themselves.[32]

By means of textual amendments the passage gains in accuracy. Over the years Mill achieves what he considers to be a more satisfactory drafting. Readers of the *Logic*, accordingly, may better grasp Mill's ideas when attending to the minute process of textual revision. Moreover, the textual variants suggest a multiple level of intentionality

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[31] *A System of Logic, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (1843), CW, VIII, 923.

[32] Rewritings and additions in italics. Deletions identified with […].

in a text,[33] which reflects not only possible changes in Mill's opinions, but also different ways of putting into words the same idea, thus elaborating on an issue. When considering this particular paragraph, it is possible to argue that some variants do not alter substantially the meaning of the sentences, although others introduce subtle nuances that clarify and may transform our understanding of his idea of nationality. For instance, when Mill substitutes 'they shall cherish the tie which holds them together' for 'they set a value on their connexion', the meaning remains largely the same, although the sentence is less ambiguous. Similarly, the swap of 'absurd' for 'bad', while preserving the meaning, offers a conceptual precision of the kind of feeling that Mill does not support.

Yet when he adds the phrase 'nationality, in the vulgar sense of the term' Mill describes in more detail what he means, perhaps being aware of potential misinterpretations of his words. Introducing a new detail, it is now clearer what Mill finds worth preserving: a common group feeling that promotes social stability and holds people together. As distinct from nationality 'in a vulgar sense', Mill's proposal does not involve an unconditional preference for what are commonly seen as a community's characteristic features. These attributes are not valuable as such and should be abandoned when found 'absurd' or 'bad'. National peculiarities are pointless if they do not contribute to social stability, because in that event they would threaten general happiness. When amending the passage, Mill highlights his support to national feelings for practical reasons, doubting their benefit beyond that. The secondary importance that Mill attaches to national features, unnoticed in many recent scholarly accounts, shows that contemporary readings of Mill need to be revised in light of these remarks.[34] They illuminate, furthermore, the distance between his ideas and those of some twentieth-century theorists of nationalism. Kymlicka, for instance, stresses that minorities need to be protected in virtue of their distinctive cultural identity, since it would otherwise mean a coercive assimilation of some 'weaker' into 'stronger' nationalities.[35] David Miller

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[33] In chapter five I further elaborate on this idea and suggest reading Mill's *Collected Works* as a palimpsest.

[34] Georgios Varouxakis has gone as far as to relate Mill's idea of nationality to what he calls 'cosmopolitan patriotism'. In this chapter I adopt a narrower approach, discussing how present-day scholars can enrich their understanding of Mill's concept of nationality. Georgios Varouxakis, ' "Patriotism", "Cosmopolitanism" and "Humanity" in Victorian Political Thought', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 5, 2006, 100-118.

[35] Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, 52-53.

has equally underlined the ethical value of protecting national identity.[36] Although generally overlooked, both Kymlicka's and Miller's points of view differ from Mill's. In this chapter it is not my aim to assess the normative value of the liberal nationalists' claims, but rather I suggest that Mill's understanding of nationality does not support, but undermines their arguments.

7.2.2 Textual Revision and Quentin Skinner's Insights

I shall turn my attention to the first variant that occurs in the passage quoted above, which may prove useful to the chapter's aims. Until 1851, when Mill publishes the *Logic*'s third edition, one of the conditions for political stability is 'a strong and active *principle of nationality*'. After 1851, however, and until the *Logic*'s last edition (1872), the sentence reads: 'The third essential condition of stability in political society, is a strong and active *principle of cohesion* among the members of the same community or state'.[37] As it may be seen, the term 'cohesion' takes the place of 'nationality'. The rewording, which qualifies the idea of nationality as a principle of cohesion, poses an opportunity to both elaborate on some interpretive approaches to social and political writings and identify several moot points of Mill's theory of nationality.

We may begin by reformulating the question of why did Mill replace 'nationality' with 'cohesion' by bringing into play Quentin Skinner's insights into methodological ideas on the study of past political texts. In a rather Austinian tone, it is possible to ask what is Mill *doing* in saying what he said.[38] According to Skinner, who owes this point to both John L. Austin and Ludwig Wittgenstein, political theorising may be interpreted in terms of linguistic action. When rewriting his text, accordingly, Mill is *doing* something by redefining nationality as a principle of cohesion. Thus Mill's fragments, from a Skinnerian perspective, take part in pre-existing controversies by accepting, denying or reformulating certain views that were available to him. Scholars interpreting Mill's writings should then trace back his interlocutors, explore the ongoing debates in

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[36] Miller, *On Nationality*, 49-80.
[37] My emphasis. *A System of Logic*, CW, VIII, 923.
[38] Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics,* vol. I: *Regarding Method*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 114-17.

his time and build up a picture of his intellectual and historical background, which will help understand what was his 'point' or 'move' in the debates in which he participates.[39]

This perspective challenges a scholarly understanding of texts as self-sufficient sources of interpretation, whose argumentative development fulfils itself the demands of current readings.[40]It challenges, ultimately, contemporary approaches to Mill's theory of nationality that exclusively rely on his rather sketchy chapter in *Representative Government*. From the point of view of what has been termed contextual history, on the contrary, the interpretation of Mill's text requires a study of his intentions as embedded within a historical context. In turn, Skinner's view of context points to certain conventions or unspoken assumptions, namely, 'what it is that people, in general, when behaving in a conventional manner, are usually doing in that society and in that situation in uttering such utterances'.[41] To put it differently, Skinner suggests that the understanding of a text requires two ingredients. The first one is an enquiry into the historical meaning of the utterances and concepts involved, while the second one is a grasp of the argumentative context in which the text has been written, or in this case also re-written. In Skinner's opinion we should study not only *what* is said, but also *how* and *why* it was said.[42]

Thus 'to understand a particular concept and the text in which it occurs, we not only need to recognise the meanings of the terms used to express it; we also need to know who is wielding the concept in question, and with what argumentative purposes in mind'.[43] Whereas contemporary studies of Mill's concept of nationality seem to base their analyses on what Mill did say, thus regarding the text in itself as sufficient for the

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[39] Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8, 1, 1969, 38; Skinner, *Visions of Politics,* vol. I, 115; Kari Palonen, *Quentin Skinner: History, Politics, Rhetoric*, Cambridge, Polity, 2003, 35-38.

[40] Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', 34-35; Skinner, *Visions of Politics,* vol. I, 81.

[41] Skinner, 'Conventions and the Understanding of Speech Acts', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 20, 79, 1970, 130.

[42] The understanding of *how* and *why* it is even a precondition of the *what*, as Palonen suggests. Palonen, *Quentin Skinner*, 32. 'We need to understand why a certain proposition has been put forward if we wish to understand the proposition itself'. Skinner, 'A Reply to My Critics', in *Meaning and Context*, ed. James Tully, Cambridge, Polity, 1988, 274. 'What I am interested in is what texts are doing as much as what they are saying, so my concern is to provide the kind of contextual and inter-textual information that enables us to say, of any text that interest us, what kinds of intervention in what kinds of debate it may be said to have constituted'. Correspondence between J. Guilhaumou and Quentin Skinner, quoted in Jacques Guilhaumou, 'La historia lingüística de los conceptos: El problema de la intencionalidad', *Ayer*, 53, 2004, 56.

[43] Stefan Collini, 'What is intellectual history?', *History Today*, 10, 1985, 51. Skinner, *Visions of Politics,* vol. I, 115.

task of interpretation, it is my aim to emphasise rather the *how* and *why* of Mill's ideas and beliefs, exploring his intellectual context and his intentions in saying what he said. The perspective narrows, nevertheless, to *A System of Logic*, frequently disregarded for the analysis of Mill's political thought, and delves into the replacement of nationality with cohesion. Skinner's contextualist approach seems especially helpful in making sense of this particular textual variant, even though Skinner himself has not discussed how different versions of texts can affect our readings of them. Yet when examining textual revision we gain access to various and manifold levels of *doing*, since the text reflects how Mill recasts the concept of nationality.

7.2.3 The Meaning of 'Cohesion' and the Argumentative Context

I then follow Skinner's suggestions in trying to understand Mill's concept of nationality redefined as a principle of cohesion. The attention focuses on both what the concept means and what Mill may have meant by what he said. In the first place, I consider the very meaning of the term cohesion attending to its uses over time. The argument continues, in the second place, by elaborating on the argumentative context and examining Comte's and Coleridge's influence on Mill's social and political thought. This approach can help us pinpoint Mill's principle of nationality within a more comprehensive picture of his thought. As it turns out, Mill is concerned with nationality insofar as it strengthens long-term collective stability and cooperative ties, and therefore social welfare. National feelings, along with other aspects, may help cement societies in turbulent revolutionary times.

As regards the meaning of 'cohesion', both nineteenth-century dictionaries and Mill's use of the term throughout his writings provides a general idea of its meaning at that time, which slightly differs from our current use of it. In 1848 cohesion primarily refers to 'the act whereby the atoms or primary corpuscles of bodies are connected together so as to form sensible masses'.[44] In its first and most common sense, cohesion is a property of bodies that explains why particles stick together forming a solid instead

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[44] 'The act whereby the atoms or primary corpuscles of bodies are connected together so as to form sensible masses. Figuratively, cohesion signifies the state of union or inseparability both of the particles of the matter, and other things'. 'Cohesion', *Barclay's Universal Dictionary*, London, George Virtue & Co, 1848. R. W. Home, 'Cohesion', in *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*, ed. Johan Heilbron, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, 163.

of a fluid matter. Mill consistently uses the term cohesion, in the *Logic* or elsewhere, as a physical law.[45] Mill's evocative use of scientific jargon may not be noticed, since cohesion, as in *social* cohesion, has become part of both everyday and political discourses. Yet in grasping the meaning of cohesion by the time Mill uses it, his concerns come into view. Mill seeks to explain how individuals hold together in a same society, just as particles or atoms shape bodies. He thinks that those societies in which their members remain together will manage to resist the threats of revolutionary movements and social instability that spread across Europe. National feelings, as a principle of cohesion, 'sympathy' or 'union', serve this aim. Once again, nationality subordinates to what Mill regards as most important goals: stability and order, which in turn are indispensable conditions for social progress.[46]

Nationality is not, however, the only factor that gives rise to enduring and stable political unions. In order of appearance in Mill's text, the first condition is a common system of education, with a restraining discipline, in order to 'train the human being in the habit, and thence the power, of subordinating his personal impulses and aims, to what were considered the ends of society'.[47] The second is the 'existence of the feeling of allegiance or loyalty'.[48] The object of this loyalty is 'something which people agreed in holding sacred', namely the principles of 'individual freedom and political and social equality' in Mill's eyes.[49] The third and last condition is a principle of cohesion, also called principle of nationality.

In the *Logic*'s 1851 edition, education, loyalty and cohesion are the means whereby a society can 'pass through turbulent times'.[50] Mill's anxieties about the possible outcome of popular upheavals and violent social disorders are common to Samuel Coleridge and Auguste Comte, two of his lifelong interlocutors. Mill learns from them that unless social and political stability are achieved, it is not possible to improve the quality of people's life. Along with Coleridge and Comte, Mill finds concrete evidence for this claim when studying both the native turmoils in colonial territories and the

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[45] On Mill's use of scientific terms and how they shape his understanding of society, see chapter six.
[46] I agree with Michael Freeden when he points out that 'models of political cohesion, and conceptions of affective ties may be gleaned from non-nationalist as well as nationalist conceptual configurations', Michael Freeden, *Liberal Languages*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, 214.
[47] *A System of Logic*, CW, VII, 921.
[48] *Ibid*.
[49] *A System of Logic*, CW, VII, 922.
[50] *Ibid*.

European revolutionary struggles, among which the French strifes serve as the paradigmatic example at that time.[51] How to reconcile social harmony with the moral and economic development of society remains a pivotal element of Mill's political project. In Comte's formula, it is indispensable that a 'state of modern civilization' overcomes political polarisation by combining the principles of order and progress, also represented by reactionaries and revolutionaries, the two main opposite political forces. According to Coleridge, similarly, permanence and progression become the two great interests of society that governments should pursue.[52]

The passages where Mill describes the three conditions of social stability first appear in his 1840 essay on *Coleridge* and three years later in *A System of Logic*, where Mill explains the conditions for order and progress. This overlap indicates that he regards Comte's and Coleridge's ideas as analogous. National feelings play a subsidiary role in this picture. National peculiarities, argues Mill, when bringing about enmities among peoples, thus threatening stability, should be abandoned as pointless or even a hindrance to the overriding goals of order and progress. When Mill comments on the revolutions of 1848-49, in his *Vindication of the French Revolution of February 1848*, the subordinate status of nationality is spelled out more clearly. He disapproves particularly of the struggles that take place in Germany and 'the backward parts of Europe' in these years.[53] Mill laments that 'the sentiment of nationality so far outweighs the love of liberty, that the people are willing to abet their rulers in crushing the liberty and independence of any people'.[54] Revolutionary movements should be guided, on the contrary, by 'the spirit of freedom' rather than nationality. In other words, 'nationality is desirable, as a means to the attainment of liberty', insofar as it promotes social union, thus enduring political bonds among people.[55] In agreement with the *Logic*, 'nationality in a vulgar sense' is regrettable and 'characteristic of barbarians' when it does no contribute to the general good and the achievement of liberties.[56]

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[51] See Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State, According to the Idea of Each*, London, Hurst, Chance & Co, 1830, 17; Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, trans. Harriet Martineau, London, J. Chapman, 1853, vol. II, 3-5.
[52] See chapter three and four.
[53] *Vindication of the French Revolution of February 1848* (1849), CW, XX, 347.
[54] *Ibid*.
[55] *Vindication of the French Revolution of February 1848*, CW, XX, 348.
[56] *Ibid*.

Mill's intellectual debt to Comte not only involves an acute awareness of the revolutionary dangers, but also reaches his methodological approach to the study of society. Both Mill's and Comte's sociologies aim at understanding and influencing social and political decisions, although Comte was more confident in the prospects of his new science. Mill admits that he revised the *Logic*'s manuscript after his reading of the *Cours* in order to make 'his work harmonise better with his present way of thinking'.[57] Like Comte's positivism, Mill draws inspiration from 'the methods of physical science' to argue his social science, employing several terms and models from the experimental sciences.[58] The substitution of 'nationality' by 'cohesion' unveils yet another borrowing from physics, which implicitly conveys the image of society as a natural object, made up of individuals that stay together like a group of atoms shape a body, and that may be rationally and scientifically studied. This particular revision of the *Logic*'s text suggests Mill's adherence to the positivist approach to society, since both make use of scientific terms in order to legitimise their proposals. Unlike Comte, Mill does not regard sociology as being capable of forecasting the future of civilisation and he strongly disagrees with Comte's overregulated blueprint for society. Yet Mill and Comte still agree on the joint practical purposes they attach to science and policy.

Taking up Skinner's insights, Mill's replacement of nationality by cohesion may be seen as a move in a pre-existing argument: Mill contributes to a particular tradition, defending a line of argument and showing a distinct attitude towards an issue under discussion.[59] When using a concept like cohesion, conventionally part of scientific vocabularies at that time, Mill shows his agreement with the Comtean methodological approach to society, but also clarifies his understanding of nationality. On the one hand, the term 'cohesion' highlights his idea of nationality as a unifying criterion or a social tie. Social union is important, according to Mill, because it is a requisite for political stability and therefore progress. Nationality is ancillary to this aim in Mill's scheme. On the other hand, his view of nationality as a principle of cohesion is embedded in a social and political context of growing unrest. Any social improvement should first get rid of the anarchy and violence that revolutionary processes bring about. Via Comte and Coleridge, Mill focuses on a science that aims to ensure both.

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[57] Mill to Comte, 28 January 1843, CW, XII, 174.

[58] *Autobiography* (1873), CW, I, 106. See chapter six on metaphors and figurative language.

[59] Skinner, *Visions of Politics,* vol. I, 102.

7.3 Concluding Remarks

The chapter has offered an interpretation of Mill's concept of nationality that calls into question some prevailing understanding of the topic. According to conventional accounts of the nationality question and indeed most liberal or civic nationalists, Mill ranks as a forerunner of nationalism. These readings frequently underpin a normative view of political liberalism that appealingly combines individual liberty with community and cultural identity rights. Since Mill's theory of nationality figures in secondary literature as illustrating both apparently opposite claims, his writings serve a legitimising purpose. The first section has showed that these arguments build chiefly on Mill's best-known fragments on nationality. While it has been briefly pointed out in what ways an attentive consideration of Mill's *Representative Government* undermines liberal nationalists' interpretations, this chapter has also aimed at going beyond Mill's most representative texts for the study of his political thought.

The second section has accordingly provided new textual evidence to support the need to revise contemporary understandings of Mill's idea of nationality. The focus on *A System of Logic* further illustrates an underlying theme of this dissertation, namely that although apparently a work on the history of science, the *Logic*'s last part represents a landmark study in Mill's social and political theory. It provides some key points for an interpretation of Mill's intellectual relationship with Auguste Comte and Samuel Coleridge, and more precisely concerning Mill's idea of nationality. Thus nationality, when viewed as a principle of cohesion, draws an analogy with natural phenomena that points to Mill's indebtedness to positivism. By understanding society as an empirical entity where individuals hold together due to external forces Mill places the emphasis on the nature and conditions for an enduring social and political union. An analysis of the semantic change of cohesion and its framing within scientific vocabularies has cast light on Mill's distinctive approach to the issue. Far from endowing national peculiarities with paramount importance in social and political practices, their value depends on their effectiveness in promoting cooperation and durable social ties. In short, nationalities may well be blended together when it comes to guaranteeing peace and order against revolutionary social unrest. Mill's concerns come

into view when contextualising his statements, which consequently distances him from liberal nationalists' claims about the inherent value of cultural and minority identities.

Finally, the chapter has examined a small group of textual variants that affect scholars' points of view as regards Mill's concept of nationality. The attention has gravitated, nevertheless, towards the replacement of nationality by cohesion. What may not seem at first sight a significant variant in Mill's text has proved helpful in supporting a nuanced interpretation of Mill's ideas on the topic. In order to understand Mill's intentions when substituting these terms, Skinner's approach to past political texts offers a starting point. In this regard, Skinner's contextual history questions what an author was doing in saying what he or she said, overstepping the boundaries of the text and diving into its intellectual and historical context. I have suggested in this essay, in line with other chapters of the dissertation, that Mill's revisions of the *Logic* over the years provide additional means of gaining access into their intentions. Any author's revision methods, in sum, positively enrich and refine our responses to Skinner's methodological questions.

Conclusions

In a rather benevolent tone, Alexander Bain describes Mill as never 'afraid to encounter an able opponent', and continues: 'simply because to change an opinion, under the force of new facts or reasonings, was not only not repugnant, it was welcome'.[1] Mill's willingness to face philosophical adversaries was more than a feature of his personality. To some extent, it was his personal experience that led him not only to respect, but also to learn from rival schools of thought. Remarkably, he did not have to completely agree with a given thinker in order to take in the ideas or opinions that he found valuable and true. The dissertation's first chapter in particular has emphasised Mill's creative eclecticism, which gives his social and political thought a distinctive colourful shape. Mill's own ideas and opinions have either emerged from or resisted the struggle between competing viewpoints. The chapter assesses more precisely his personal and intellectual ties during his youth, which has led to explore what some authors have termed as Mill's 'francophilia'.

As pointed out above, Mill's fondness for genuine argumentative discussion is not merely a personality trait. My reading has suggested that it becomes almost impossible to disentangle his personal enthusiastic habit of crediting his adversaries from his philosophical views on history, politics and scientific method. The existence of multiple views in contention provides the backbone for his understanding of the historical development of different societies and performs both descriptive and evaluative functions in his social and political thought. The dissertation has focused more closely on one particular form of antagonism that appeals to Mill, namely the distinction between order and progress, which he recasts in many of his writings as permanence and progression or statics and dynamics, among other formulations.

Generally underrated in Mill scholarship, the dichotomy between order and progress bears the imprint of Mill's reading of Samuel Coleridge, François Guizot and

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[1] Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, London, Longmans, 1882, 157.

Auguste Comte. The influence that these thinkers exert on Mill has been considered mostly a secondary issue for a number of reasons, among them the most important being their dubious liberal pedigree. However, the dissertation has shown that their weight goes beyond Mill's early writings. The study of Mill's argumentative usage of this pair of concepts in their diverse terminological forms not only places him in the mid-nineteenth-century Victorian intellectual climate, but also contributes to our understanding of how deeply he was concerned about the social and political problems of his time.

Along with a number of his contemporaries, one of Mill's pressing challenges was to sort out the correct manner of proceeding in political and social sciences in order to achieve a systematic, reliable knowledge. Previous attempts, which he identifies with the models argued by Thomas Macaulay and his father, James Mill, dissatisfied him. Auguste Comte's recently established sociology was his immediate inspiration, although Mill differs in important aspects from the French philosopher. Mill thus spends thirteen years writing the *Logic*, eventually published in 1843, which aims at settling the ongoing debates on scientific method. By so doing, Mill envisaged a science of society that helped understand the basic conditions for a happier society while following the model of experimental sciences. His outline of sociology unsurprisingly emphasises the characteristics that in Mill's opinion natural and social phenomena had in common: both changed gradually despite certain stable features remaining immutable over time. To put it differently, they both exhibit order or stability and progress or change.

In Mill's opinion, the 'more advanced' civilisations have historically exhibited a similar underlying pattern of change. At first sight, for Mill, change and stability are opposites, that is, mutually inconsistent and contradictory to each other. Still, he aims at combining them at various levels, thus overcoming their apparent incompatibility.
Order and progress are jointly used in his arguments to understand history, but also as the two branches of his sciences of society, politics and economics. He advocates a wise equilibrium between the principles of order and progress, which in practice amounts to a harmonious and peaceful social development. I have read such claims against the background of the threats that revolutionary upheavals and political turmoil posed to both Britain and the rest of the world. As the previous examples illustrate, Mill's idea of

antagonism means more than a personal habit of hearing opponents' arguments. Still, they represent the two main political forces of his epoch, summarising the conservative and progressive political party lines: the 'party of order' and the 'party of progress'. Mill seeks to incorporate both ideals within a single political group, which he termed as an 'advanced Liberal party'. Provided the difficulty of this goal, Mill alternatively endorses that both ideological forces take turns in government, even though he aspires to a deep regeneration of the Liberal party.

I have brought Mill's manifold uses of these catchwords to the forefront. The ambiguity and vagueness of both labels account for their versatile and to some extent disparate uses. A close reading of the argumentative usages of order and progress has unveiled their interconnected meanings while recasting Mill's texts as fundamentally embedded in their historical and intellectual contexts, taking part in public ongoing controversies. The dissertation has attempted to unravel the arguments that fuelled those debates by focusing on Mill's conceptual uses. Addressing publicly disputed topics, Mill defines his own opinion in contrast or in agreement with someone or something. It is precisely by analysing the conceptual plasticity of Mill's political language that it becomes possible to account for social and political changes.

The study of the writings of several Victorian thinkers, popular newspapers and pamphlets has provided a more vivid picture of British society and politics, while casting light on the way Mill's ideas both impact and elaborate on contemporary debates. Although his social and political thought has been the focus of attention, an interpretation that turns to the intellectual and historical context may positively enrich the existing secondary literature on Mill. Likewise, a survey of popular political thought through newspapers and pamphlets endeavours to understand the bidirectional link that exists between the writings of intellectuals and the way people represent social and political reality. The dissertation therefore takes into account the ordinary political thinking beyond well-known canonical texts, in line with many recent scholarly analyses that regard them as valid sources for the study of the history of political thought.

Chapter four has concluded in this regard that the public usage of order and progress fairly corresponds with the writings of intellectuals previously examined. They help represent England as a peaceful, prosperous society that becomes an exemplary

model in contrast to the growing number of countries trapped in unresolved international conflicts. The fact that order and progress are widely used arguably stems from the fact that it encapsulates a fundamental concern in the epoch on how to prevent social unrest while improving the quality of people's life. The result from this analysis might be seen as contributing to fill a gap in the literature on the concept of progress. Scholars have frequently regarded this concept as one of the most powerful ideas in Victorian society and politics. Although this claim might not be mistaken, an exclusive focus on the concept of progress presents a somewhat misleading picture. The thesis has drawn on this neglected area by examining how the concept of progress is jointly used with that of order.

The reading of Mill's *A System of Logic* as a foundational text in Mill's social and political philosophy has led me to examine the relationship between him and Auguste Comte, from both an intellectual and a personal point of view. Although they never met personally, their frequent correspondence, which lasted from 1841 to 1846, has left a print record of their controversies. In order to assess their ties, the dissertation has jointly examined personal and intellectual aspects, for their relationship begins with a profound admiration but ends up with some important disagreements. Eventually, Mill's 1865 essay *Auguste Comte and Positivism* reveals that while Comte's influence on Mill remained undiminished with regard to some methodological points, Comte's meticulous planning of society repelled Mill. In arguing a nuanced interpretation of Mill's debt to Comte, the dissertation has studied a group of textual variants located in the concluding part of the *Logic*. It may be seen that Mill frequently minimises his debt to Comte by both reducing the number of direct references when revising his writings over the years and adding some criticisms concerning the risky effects of ruling society without a general doctrine of ends. Mill's textual emendations have added a temporal and contingent dimension to his texts, thus providing a challenging opportunity to interpret his writings by addressing his changing intentions.

Mill's use of concepts in arguments has been a matter of interest in this thesis. Accordingly, chapter six has been entirely devoted to Mill's usage of naturalistic metaphors and the vocabularies of experimental sciences, even if chapters three, four and seven include relevant remarks on this topic. Since figurative language permeates the last part of the *Logic*, where Mill explains his science of society, the emphasis has

been placed on how metaphoric utterances shape Mill's arguments and political claims. It analyses, therefore, Mill's rhetorical strategies for legitimising his methodological proposal to study and understand political communities. The issue, hardly ever studied as regards Mill's writings, concerns the interdisciplinary nature of political vocabularies. Elaborating on the challenges that these metaphoric expressions pose to current scholarly interpretations of Mill, the study has mapped his theory as one of the several pre-Darwinian attempts to explain social change using models and images from the natural sciences.

The main findings of chapters three, five and six form the basis of an interpretation on Mill's concept of nationality, which I develop in chapter seven. I have suggested a reading of both Mill's best-known passages on the topic and those more frequently disregarded, thus challenging mainstream interpretations of Mill as a forerunner of liberal nationalism. The replacement of the term 'nationality' by 'cohesion' has triggered a revisionist account of Mill's idea of nationality that also draws inspiration from Quentin Skinner's approach to past political texts. The chapter has accordingly elaborated on the interpretive possibilities that result from an analysis of Mill's textual variants and the study of the metaphoric expressions that he employs when arguing his views on society and politics. Moreover, it highlights the significance that Mill attaches to both political stability and enduring social bonds. Mill's concept of nationality, it is argued, does not have an intrinsic value, but figures as rather ancillary to more important goals such as order, progress and liberty.

Following some of the methodological insights of the 'New History of Political Thought' and Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte*, the dissertation has aimed at placing Mill's thought within a wider historical and intellectual setting, thus favouring an interdisciplinary approach to his political thought that fruitfully engages the disciplines of philosophy, history, linguistics and political science. In line with these two approaches to the history of political ideas my interpretation relies on a wide-ranging selection of primary texts, penned by both Mill and his contemporaries. Moreover, newspaper articles from the popular press, dictionaries, pamphlets and the writings of several Victorian 'public moralists' have contributed to sketch Mill's intellectual and political environment. Concerning Mill's writings, his best-known works have been discussed along with the so-called minor essays, newspaper articles, private

correspondence, book reviews, parliamentary speeches, public talks, pamphlets and his autobiography.

In this process *A System of Logic* has emerged as greatly significant for an interpretation of his political thought attentive to history. Academic debates have largely focused on Mill's most provoking and perhaps most straightforward essays on political philosophy, such as *On Liberty* and *Considerations on Representative Government*. Without minimising their value, the dissertation has drawn attention to the *Logic*, among others writings, in unveiling the relevance that both Mill and his contemporaries attached to it.[2] The ostensibly apolitical tone and content of Mill's first treatise on scientific method probably accounts for the lack of attention to the *Logic*. However, as it has been pointed out, its last volume explains the methods and goals of the historical science of society and spells out the fundamental distinction between 'political science' and 'political art'.

The overall result of this oversight is twofold. First, Mill's methodological and political views remain often unrelated to each other. In other words, very frequently those who discuss Mill's views on scientific method do not present them as having anything to do with his political insights, and vice versa. Second, Mill's *Logic* was published in 1843, whereas his most popular books appeared in his maturity, mainly from 1859 to 1869. His earlier writings, accordingly, are comparatively less studied and deemed as less representative of the major themes of his work. Although there is still much to be done in this regard, the dissertation has helped to restore the value of Mill's *A System of Logic* for an understanding of his social and political thought.

The thesis, eventually, has pointed to future topics of study and opened up research questions from which to continue the scholarly work. Making no pretence of offering a comprehensive account of Mill's political writings, several issues have been disregarded, which encourages further academic discussion. The intellectual relationship that Mill maintains with an astonishing number of Victorian intellectuals and political activists still deserves further attention. His commitment to 'many-

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[2] Once again, Alexander Bain, Mill's personal friend and first biographer, offers an insightful comment concerning the *Logic* and the *Principles of Political Economy*: 'His work, as a great originator, in my opinion, was done. […] Not that his later writings are deficient in stamina or in value; as sources of public instruction and practical guidance in the greatest interests of society, they will long hold their place. But it was not within the compass of his energies to repeat the impression made by him in 1843 and again in 1848', Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, 91.

sidedness' as a rejection of the narrowness of mind, along with his ability to learn from intellectual adversaries explains his bonds with other authors regardless of their ideological background. The study of Mill's eclectic variety of acquaintances may still render fruitful results. In this sense, his relationship with Thomas Carlyle, which has not been studied in this dissertation, seems to be based on the belief that every philosophical theory is *partially* true and therefore valuable.

As a way of conclusion, I would like to briefly point out three topics that strike me as requiring extensive discussion in view of the findings of the dissertation's findings. In the first place, the analysis of Mill's use of figurative language has narrowed to naturalistic and scientific metaphors, leaving metaphoric expressions and borrowings from other fields aside. Although the relevance of metaphors in philosophical thinking has been widely acknowledged, Mill's social and political thought, as far as I know, has not been examined in this regard. Besides, my interpretation of figurative language has mainly focused on his *Logic*. Mill's vast collection of philosophic works is worth considering, as well as his parliamentary speeches and relatively spontaneous political discourses. Relevant questions are to what extent metaphors shape Mill's arguments beyond the *Logic* and how an enquiry into the significance of this literary figure may enrich our understanding of his political thought. A fully-fledged methodological apparatus needs to address the challenges of the metaphoric use of language, particularly as regards our analysis of figurative language and conceptual change in past political texts.

Second, Mill's proposal of an 'advanced Liberal' party has not been sufficiently assessed in secondary literature. As pointed out in the first chapter, Mill introduces himself as 'the candidate of advanced Liberalism', which differs and surpasses liberalism because it also embraces the teachings that history provides. A temporal perspective helps shape the prevailing public image of the two main rival political ideologies in the second half of the nineteenth century: while conservatism intended to restore past institutions, liberals advocated change and progress. Liberals and conservatives were perceived as mutually opposing each other in virtue of their different positions regarding social change. Yet Mill suggests a renewed set of ideological liberal principles that, although drawing on political liberalism, is partially innovative, for it entails a favourable attitude towards the teachings of the past that was

generally identified with conservatism. Mill's rhetorical strategy, which originates in his growing interest in history, reshapes political liberalism by making it more appealing to moderate political groups. Mill shares this view with several of his contemporaries, both intellectuals and political activists, who argue for this ideological and political alternative not only from within Parliament. Notably, the idea of 'advanced Liberalism' partly overlaps with political radicalism at that time, which may lead to revise the discursive interactions between both ideological constructs. A comprehensive study of those who defined themselves as advocates of 'advanced Liberalism' in Victorian society is yet to be conducted, which may refine the contemporary efforts to explain twentieth-century new or revisionist liberalism.

In the third place, the thesis has brought into focus the interpretive possibilities that the admirable variorum edition of the *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* opens up for contemporary scholarship. During Mill's lifetime several editions of most of his works were published that included countless textual changes now available thanks to John Robson's editorship. The interpretation has narrowed to the concluding part of *A System of Logic*, and only as it concerns on the one hand Mill's references to Auguste Comte, and on the other hand his concept of nationality. Hence the bulk of variants, in the *Logic* or elsewhere, have not been taken into account. A detailed appraisal seems timely, after more than two decades since the last volume of the *Collected Works* was published. The fluid condition of Mill's writings invites us to consider the drafting and publication contexts, but also the history underneath their successive editions. Along with the *Logic*, *The Principles of Political Economy* is one of Mill's most reprinted works, with eight editions. The text of the *Principles* and its later rewritings may be understood by analysing Mill's attitude towards the unprecedented political and economic changes of his time. Still, Mill's treatise served as an economic textbook to several generations, and a comparison among the versions may well reflect the unfolding of different economic theories. Given the high number of editions and variants, an interest on the reasons behind the changes contained in the *Principles* seems worth pursuing, although certainly the unstable and multi-layered condition is common to most of Mill's texts. Since Mill's philosophical works have already lost their apparent fixity, Mill scholars may need to revise their strategies when approaching his thought. Yet in return textual

revisions necessarily add a historical dimension to our interpretations, throwing light on both Mill's own intellectual itinerary and the critical reception of his work.

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Appendix:[1]
Conceptos y contextos históricos
en los debates intelectuales del liberalismo:
Un estudio sobre la filosofía práctica de Mill

1. Objetivos de la investigación

Esta tesis doctoral propone una interpretación sobre los escritos sociales y políticos de John Stuart Mill. Se sirve para ello de las propuestas teóricas desarrolladas por la denominada 'New History of Political Thought', tal y como ha sido formulada en los trabajos de John Pocock y Quentin Skinner, entre otros, y la historia conceptual, cuyo representante más destacado es Reinhart Koselleck. La comparación y el contraste entre ambas perspectivas para el estudio del pensamiento político, en línea con los planteamientos de Melvin Richter y Kari Palonen, ofrecen la oportunidad de repensar algunos aspectos centrales del pensamiento político de Mill, arrojando luz sobre temas normalmente menos estudiados y revisando algunas interpretaciones vigentes en la literatura académica al respecto. De acuerdo con estos objetivos, la tesis doctoral examina los modos en los que las ideas de Mill forman parte de los debates que conciernen a sus contemporáneos y contribuyen en los mismos. El estudio de los usos de los conceptos y las estrategias argumentativas de Mill proporciona una mejor compresión de la historia del pensamiento político y, más precisamente, del liberalismo político como un discurso que depende del contexto histórico e intelectual en el que se desarrolla.

En numerosas ocasiones el pensamiento de John Stuart Mill ha supuesto un reto para aquellos que tratan de enmarcarlo dentro de una corriente de pensamiento determinada, por lo que ha sido definido de formas diversas en la literatura académica.

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[1] De conformidad con el artículo 15 del Real Decreto 99/2011, por el que se regulan las enseñanzas oficiales de doctorado, y el artículo 22 del Reglamento de los Estudios de Doctorado de la Universidad de Málaga, el apéndice presenta un resumen en español, dado que está redactada en inglés, de la tesis y sus conclusiones con objeto de poder optar a la Mención Internacional en el Título de Doctor.

La imagen de Mill como una 'voz liberal ancestral',[2] ciertamente dominante, discrepa con aquellos que lo describen como un 'libertario radical', 'conservador',[3] socialista[4] o nacionalista liberal,[5] por nombrar algunos ejemplos. Su prolífica carrera como filósofo y activista político, la inmensa cantidad de trabajos publicados a lo largo de su vida, la complejidad y variedad de temas que trata, así como la heterogeneidad de influencias intelectuales que recibe, explican parcialmente la aparición de descripciones tan dispares. Aunque este estudio no resuelve dichas divergencias, contribuye a entender su pensamiento político emplazado en un contexto histórico determinado y como tal interviniendo en las controversias que surgen en la sociedad de su tiempo.

El proyecto político de Mill asume el reto de diseñar métodos efectivos para solventar dos de las mayores preocupaciones de su época: mejorar la calidad de vida de los ciudadanos, satisfaciendo a la vez las demandas políticas populares y previniendo la agitación social. Mill propone estudiar los eventos sociales de acuerdo con el modelo de las ciencias naturales, en línea con algunos proyectos filosóficos de su tiempo, aunque su propuesta no defiende una ciencia de la sociedad que pueda predecir eventos futuros al estilo de las ciencias experimentales. De acuerdo con Mill, las explicaciones naturalistas sobre los acontecimientos económicos, sociales y políticos solo ejercerían de guía para las reformas políticas, siendo valiosas en cuanto tales. Para sostener argumentalmente su proyecto Mill estudia el desarrollo de diferentes sociedades a lo largo de la historia, siguiendo las ideas de autores como Samuel T. Coleridge, Auguste Comte, François Guizot y otros pensadores franceses. En parte gracias a ellos Mill se da cuenta de que mientras algunos elementos sociales se han transformado a lo largo de la historia, otros han permanecido estables. Esta situación, que describe como una lucha entre fuerzas antagonistas, es además particularmente beneficiosa para el bienestar social. Mill no es el único victoriano que valora positivamente la interacción entre poderes sociales y políticos opuestos y contrapesados entre sí, como se muestra en el

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[2] John Skorupski, 'Introduction: The Fortunes of Liberal Naturalism', en *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, 2.

[3] John Gray, 'John Stuart Mill: Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations', *Literature of Liberty: A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought*, 2, II, 1979, 7.

[4] Bruce Baum, 'J. S. Mill and Liberal Socialism', en *J. S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. Nadia Urbinati y Alex Zakaras, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007; William Stafford, 'How can a Paradigmatic Liberal call himself a Socialist? The Case of John Stuart Mill', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 3, 3, 1998, 325-45.

[5] En el capítulo séptimo se pueden encontrar referencias sobre esta denominación.

desarrollo de la tesis, aunque su obra entiende de modo especialmente fructífero el debate argumentativo y la consideración de diferentes puntos de vista.[6]

A través del estudio de las estrategias retóricas que Mill emplea y el contexto intelectual de su pensamiento político la tesis presta atención a algunos asuntos que no han sido suficientemente estudiados en la literatura académica. En primer lugar, contribuye a esclarecer la relación que Mill establece entre su propuesta metodológica para estudiar la sociedad y visión de la historia, la sociedad y la política de su época. Con este objetivo se ha prestado atención a la relación intelectual que Mill mantiene con autores como Coleridge, Guizot y Comte. La perspectiva interdisciplinar que caracteriza a la historia conceptual ayuda a alcanzar los objetivos de dicho estudio, pues advierte del significado cambiante de los conceptos en la historia fruto de los diferentes usos argumentativos que se hace de ellos. Se justifica, por tanto, un estudio contextual, en línea con las propuestas de autores como Skinner y Pocock, que pueda aprehender más allá de las fronteras disciplinares el modo en el que se discutían los asuntos metodológicos, históricos y políticos. Como resultado, se redibujan los límites que existen actualmente entre especialidades académicas, tomando conciencia de las diferencias a este respecto entre el siglo XIX y la actualidad.

En segundo lugar, la tesis ayuda a restablecer el valor de la obra *Un sistema de la lógica* (1843) para una interpretación de la filosofía política de Mill que tenga en cuenta la dimensión histórica de su pensamiento. Aunque es frecuente que en la literatura académica la *Lógica* se considere un trabajo apolítico, el último libro de los que la componen explica el método y los objetivos de una ciencia histórica de la sociedad. Además de la atención a esta obra, la tesis pone especial énfasis en los diferentes usos que Mill hace de los conceptos, lo que contribuye a difuminar la distinción entre los textos filosóficos de primera y segunda categoría según la relevancia que tienen para la interpretación de su pensamiento político. Junto a sus obras más conocidas, la tesis explora algunos de los denominados escritos menores de Mill, su abundante correspondencia privada, los discursos parlamentarios y su autobiografía, entre otros textos, en tanto que ofrecen una visión de conjunto de su marco histórico e intelectual.

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[6] Mill resume esta virtud con el término 'many-sidedness', que consiste precisamente en la capacidad para considerar diferentes opiniones sobre un tema como condición para formar las propias. A este respecto ver por ejemplo *Autobiography*, en *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, ed. gen. John M. Robson, Toronto y Londres, University of Toronto Press & Routledge y Kegan Paul, 33 vols., 1963-1991, I, 171.

Igualmente se examina una selección de artículos periodísticos y panfletos escritos por sus contemporáneos que ayudan a esclarecer los modos en los que su obra toma partido en los debates públicos de la época. Sin subestimar las obras de Mill más conocidas y estudiadas en nuestros días, se llama la atención sobre la relevancia que la *Lógica* y los *Principios de economía política* (1848) tienen inmediatamente después de su publicación, ya que son las que le otorgan a Mill prestigio como filósofo.

En tercer lugar, los argumentos mediante los que Mill expresa sus opiniones sobre la realidad social y política y el uso concreto que hace de los conceptos se entienden como acciones lingüísticas. Una interpretación plausible de su pensamiento político debe dar cuenta no solo de lo que dice, sino también de qué está haciendo Mill al decir lo que dijo. En otras palabras, la tarea interpretativa debe explorar de qué manera la exposición de sus puntos de vista conlleva asumir y sostener una determinada postura, a favor o en contra de algún asunto. El uso que Mill hace del lenguaje figurado como una estrategia retórica legitimadora recibe atención a este respecto. Se trasciende así la instancia textual que se muestra como insuficiente por sí sola para la interpretación de su pensamiento político. De modo similar, el estudio toma en cuenta un grupo de variantes textuales que son el resultado de las revisiones que Mill hace de su *Lógica* con motivo de la publicación de las diferentes ediciones. Los cambios en el texto desvelan el proceso de composición de la obra y ofrecen una oportunidad para acceder a diferentes estratos de intencionalidad en su redacción. De nuevo, el uso de los conceptos, y en este caso también las modificaciones que Mill hace de la *Lógica*, se interpretan acudiendo a aspectos contextuales que intentan aclarar los motivos de tales alteraciones, lo que pone de manifiesto de nuevo la necesidad de rebasar el mero desarrollo argumental para la comprensión de su pensamiento político.

Finalmente, varios de los capítulos que componen la tesis revisan algunas interpretaciones habituales sobre el pensamiento político de Mill. Esta tarea se lleva a cabo a través del análisis de aquellas partes de su obra que los historiadores del pensamiento político han estudiado en menor medida, examinando sus deudas intelectuales y enfatizando cómo los acontecimientos y las controversias políticas plantean los problemas que Mill aborda en su obra. Sin embargo, es en el análisis sobre el concepto de nacionalidad donde el intento por revisar las interpretaciones contemporáneas es más notorio. Poniendo en cuestión la percepción generalizada de

Mill como un nacionalista liberal, el capítulo séptimo sostiene que Mill no otorga una importancia intrínseca al sentimiento de nacionalidad, sino que su valor depende de la capacidad del mismo para promover la cooperación y lazos sociales duraderos entre individuos.

2. El desarrollo argumental

'Concepts and Historical Contexts in Liberalism's Intellectual Debates' no lleva a cabo un análisis exhaustivo del pensamiento moral y político de John Stuart Mill. Por el contrario, este estudio comprende siete ensayos conectados entre sí cuyo objetivo es enriquecer nuestra comprensión sobre los modos en los que Mill concibe la sociedad y la política de su época. Los diferentes capítulos comparten una misma perspectiva metodológica, profundizando en cuestiones como la naturaleza y relevancia de los textos históricos para la interpretación actual del pensamiento de Mill y cómo estudiarlos en su contexto socio-político. Los capítulos giran en torno a una selección de conceptos tales como antagonismo, historia, orden, progreso y nacionalidad, intentando en la medida de lo posible redibujar el momento histórico e intelectual en el que Mill escribe sus obras.

El primer capítulo de la tesis, ' "The Collision of Adverse Opinions": Views on Social and Political Antagonism', examina el significado de la idea de antagonismo tanto en la vida de Mill como en algunas de sus obras. Mill considera que la existencia de puntos de vista en conflicto es una característica omnipresente y deseable en el presente y el futuro de las sociedades. El estudio de la historia le sirve para apoyar esta afirmación, pues solo aquellas comunidades que han conservado y aceptado cierto pluralismo social y político muestran un alto grado de desarrollo. Asimismo, cuando se considera la idea de antagonismo en un sentido amplio, el enfoque que Mill emplea para estudiar los fenómenos sociales y políticos adquiere sentido. Su método para entender la sociedad, la economía o la política parte del análisis de la historia y sus conclusiones: la sociedad puede ser examinada, según Mill, si atendemos a las fuerzas antagónicas que le dan forma, a saber, las fuerzas de orden y progreso. El primer capítulo sugiere, además, que el alegato de Mill en favor de la confrontación de opiniones en debate como un aspecto esencial de la vida política deriva en parte de su participación en

diferentes sociedades de debate. Especialmente durante su juventud la experiencia del enfrentamiento dialéctico que tiene lugar en estos grupos contribuye al cuestionamiento de las opiniones utilitaristas que habían formado parte de su educación y estimula el interés en las ideas de escuelas filosóficas rivales.

Tanto dentro como fuera del parlamento Mill entiende que la realidad social y política debe estar regulada por un genuino antagonismo, que solo ocurre en la batalla ideológica entre abanderados de opiniones enfrentadas. Por ello, algunas de las propuestas de reforma que Mill eleva en el parlamento se centran en modificar los procedimientos establecidos para la elección de representantes políticos, con el objetivo de reforzar de este modo la deliberación argumentativa. De modo similar, Mill defiende en muchos de sus escritos mediante la discusión y la discrepancia es el único modo de alcanzar las mejores decisiones en el terreno político. El capítulo primero analiza *Sobre la libertad* (1859) a este respecto, pero también una selección de discursos parlamentarios, sus interpretaciones de las ideas de Guizot y Coleridge, la narración autobiográfica de su desarrollo intelectual y otros ensayos sobre filosofía política. Asimismo, el capítulo comienza a desgranar el vínculo que existe entre los puntos de vista metodológicos, sociales y políticos en el pensamiento de Mill, asunto que subyace en la mayoría de los capítulos que componen la tesis.

'The Idea of History: A Rhetoric of Progress', el capítulo segundo, profundiza en uno de los puntos centrales que ya se apuntaba en el capítulo anterior, a saber, la relación entre el estudio de la historia y el modo de legitimar sus propuestas políticas. A menudo la literatura académica ha considerado que las opiniones de Mill sobre la historia son un asunto secundario, quizá porque nunca publica un trabajo monográfico sobre el tema. Sin embargo, el interés que Mill muestra por la historia tiene una importancia crucial para el desarrollo de su ciencia de la sociedad, especialmente cuando se analiza dicha actitud a la luz de su contexto personal e intelectual. El capítulo ofrece una interpretación sobre la depresión temporal que sufre en su juventud, que Mill denomina 'crisis mental', como un proceso que le conduce a sacar a la luz los defectos de la teoría utilitarista como pieza fundamental de su educación. Se examina a este respecto la influencia que ejercen Coleridge, Saint-Simon y Comte, quienes llevan a cabo un estudio histórico de diferentes sociedades, junto a historiadores franceses como François Mignet, Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, Jean de Sismondi, Jules Michelet y

François Guizot.[7] El valor que Mill otorga a la historia se pone de manifiesto a través del análisis de su relación con algunos pensadores franceses de la época y Coleridge. Asimismo, a la inversa, es posible explicar la influencia de los mencionados historiadores en términos del interés que Mill muestra por la investigación histórica de los fenómenos sociales.

De acuerdo con Mill, las condiciones por las que tiene lugar el progreso social solo se esclarecen a través del estudio del pasado. Por tanto, la historia como disciplina independiente debe explicar el progreso de las sociedades para así servir de guía sobre las decisiones de carácter político de acuerdo con sus hallazgos. Sin menospreciar la importancia de la idea de progreso en el pensamiento de Mill y en el conjunto de la sociedad victoriana, el capítulo tercero profundiza en las conclusiones del segundo capítulo, aunque ampliando el objeto de estudio para incluir el concepto de orden. Así como la creencia de Mill en el progreso es un signo de su optimismo generalizado sobre el presente y futuro de la sociedad, su preocupación por la inestabilidad social debe ser igualmente analizada. El tercer capítulo estudia por tanto la relación argumentativa que se plantea entre los conceptos de orden y progreso en algunas de las obras de Mill publicadas entre los años 1840 y 1867. 'The Principles of Order and Progress in Mill's Social and Political Thought' examina cómo la dicotomía entre orden y progreso se extiende tanto por sus escritos canónicos como por aquellos menos estudiados para el análisis de su filosofía política. En este proceso el alcance de la influencia de Coleridge, Comte y Guizot se hace evidente, concluyendo que su influjo se extiende más allá de sus escritos de juventud.

Mill concibe las ideas de orden y progreso de modo amplio, lo que le permite reformularlas en muchas de sus obras de acuerdo con sus propósitos en cada ocasión. Como el primer capítulo pone de manifiesto, Mill sostiene que la existencia de fuerzas opuestas y en conflicto da forma a las sociedades, determinándolas tanto históricamente como en el presente. Este capítulo continúa explorando cómo los conceptos de orden y progreso permiten representar dichas fuerzas inspirándose en una explicación científica de los fenómenos naturales. Una ciencia de la sociedad como la que Mill propone, que pretende explicar los acontecimientos sociales, debe centrarse en averiguar lo que cambia a lo largo del tiempo y lo que permanece inalterable, tal y como hacen las

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[7] La influencia que Bentham ejerce sobre Mill ha sido ampliamente estudiada en la literatura especializada, de ahí el énfasis en los mencionados autores, cuya presencia es considerablemente menor.

ciencias experimentales. Precisamente los conceptos de orden y progreso proporcionan la base del diseño metodológico para la sociología y la economía, pues constituyen las dos ramas de estas dos disciplinas. No obstante, la pareja de conceptos 'orden y progreso' tienen todavía una función más en el pensamiento político de Mill: ayudan a representar y condensar los rasgos fundamentales de las dos principales ideologías de su época, el progresismo y el conservadurismo. En términos generales, Mill sostiene la necesidad de un equilibrio entre los principios de orden y progreso, lo que en la práctica equivale a un desarrollo social armonioso y pacífico, la combinación de una mejora de las condiciones de vida y cierta estabilidad política y social. Dicha combinación contrapesada trae a colación de nuevo su compromiso con la atención a puntos de vista opuestos ya descrita en el primer capítulo. El esfuerzo de Mill, tanto en su vida personal como en lo concerniente a la vida política, se centra en asegurar la existencia de una pluralidad de opiniones, creencias o valores antagónicos.

Los conceptos de orden y progreso, caracterizados por su ambigüedad y polisemia, no solo son centrales en el pensamiento de Mill, sino también en las obras de algunos intelectuales victorianos, así como en los argumentos de la opinión pública entre 1840 y 1899. El capítulo cuatro, 'The Argumentative Usages of Order and Progress: Social and Political Debates in Newspapers, Pamphlets and the Writings of Victorian Intellectuals', sitúa el pensamiento social y político de Mill en un contexto intelectual más amplio y lo pone en relación con las obras de Samuel Coleridge, Herbert Spencer, Auguste Comte, Frederic Harrison, Samuel Alexander y Walter Bagehot. Junto a ello, el capítulo estudia una selección de panfletos y periódicos ampliamente leídos en su época, como *The Times*, *Morning Post*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Economist* y *Daily News*. La pregunta que subyace a este análisis es si, y en qué medida, las ideas de orden y progreso jugaban algún papel cuando se discutían públicamente los asuntos políticos que preocupaban a la población. El capítulo ofrece una respuesta afirmativa a dicha pregunta a la luz de la evidencia textual examinada. Se concluye que los usos que Mill hace de las ideas de orden y progreso, según se examina en el capítulo tercero, coinciden con el modo en el que se utilizan en las obras de algunos pensadores victorianos, así como con los ejemplos que aparecen en artículos de periódicos y panfletos. Este estudio arroja luz sobre el vínculo que existe entre las ideas de algunos intelectuales de la época y los

argumentos con los que ciudadanía delibera sobre los acontecimientos sociales y políticos.

Orden y progreso se convierten en los pilares que articulan algunos proyectos filosóficos que intentan explicar fenómenos como la moralidad, la economía, la política y la sociedad a través de la extensión de la perspectiva sistemática de las ciencias naturales al estudio de la sociedad. Las descripciones de la sociedad que resultan de la adopción de dichas perspectivas, aunque investidas de un tono neutral propio de las ciencias naturales, trasmiten a su vez una idea de la sociedad como un todo equilibrado que se convierte en un ideal regulativo. En tanto que describen la realidad social proponen una imagen de cómo debe ser, aspirando a influir en la toma de decisiones políticas. El equilibrio social perfecto, según los autores estudiados, resulta de fomentar el cambio y el progreso social, la prosperidad económica de los ciudadanos y la satisfacción de las necesidades básicas, así como a su vez el orden, la estabilidad social y la ausencia de violencia. Del mismo modo, a la inversa, en tiempos de agitación política la mejora generalizada del nivel de vida en un sociedad no es posible. Los artículos de periódico y los panfletos estudiados utilizan argumentos similares para describir los conflictos nacionales o internacionales no resueltos, especialmente cuando se narran los levantamientos revolucionarios que tienen lugar en Francia y en otros países Europeos y los conflictos políticos que ocurren en las colonias británicas. Los periódicos describen Inglaterra como una sociedad pacífica y próspera, en marcado contraste con los ejemplos mencionados anteriormente. De acuerdo con los periódicos analizados, los principios de orden y progreso, o estabilidad y cambio, representan objetivos políticos fundamentales. Además, su vaguedad conceptual e indeterminación semántica los hace susceptibles de ser empleados por políticos y activistas de cualquier signo para definir sus programas políticos.

La relación personal e intelectual que existe entre John Stuart Mill y Auguste Comte ocupa el capítulo quinto, 'A System of Logic as a Palimpsest: The Relationship between J. S. Mill and A. Comte in the Light of Textual Revisions'. Profundizando en algunas de las ideas brevemente tratadas en capítulos anteriores, el propósito en este punto es examinar la influencia de Comte en la parte final de la *Lógica*, donde Mill propone su ciencia de la sociedad. En ocasiones la literatura secundaria al respecto ha explicado la deuda intelectual que Mill adquiere con Comte de modo simplista,

concluyendo que Mill rechaza el diseño positivista de la sociedad por regular en exceso las prácticas sociales e impedir la libertad individual. Aunque este juicio no es erróneo, la influencia de Comte es compleja y no se puede resumir en un rechazo contundente de sus ideas. La interpretación que propone el capítulo quinto tiene en cuenta un grupo de variantes textuales que aparecen en la edición crítica de las obras completas de Mill, *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, publicada entre los años 1963 y 1991. Más precisamente, este ensayo se centra en dilucidar las razones por las que Mill elimina una cantidad considerable de referencias directas a Comte. Con motivo de la publicación de nuevas ediciones de la *Lógica*, hasta ocho entre 1843 y 1872, Mill revisa su texto cuidadosamente, añadiendo, eliminando o reescribiendo muchos fragmentos. El texto de la *Lógica* presenta en su edición de las *Collected Works* un gran número de lecturas alternativas posibles como resultado de los mencionados procesos de revisión textual.

La existencia de versiones alternativas de la *Lógica* pone en cuestión algunos de los supuestos teóricos básicos que condicionan nuestro modo de leer y entender los textos filosóficos. Concebir las obras filosóficas como objetos cambiantes e históricos en lugar de inmutables o estáticos plantea algunos interrogantes que me han llevado a explorar la disciplina del criticismo textual. Dicha incursión proporciona la base metodológica para abordar textos filosóficos que existen en más de una versión, como es el caso de la *Lógica*. El capítulo defiende que las variantes textuales ofrecen una información especialmente valiosa acerca de cómo las opiniones de los autores cambian con el tiempo, considerando de este modo la *Lógica* de Mill como un palimpsesto. La reducción del número de menciones directas a Comte se interpreta en este sentido como un cambio de actitud hacia Comte y las ideas positivistas, que tiene su reflejo en el texto a lo largo de los años. De modo más general, el capítulo ilustra cómo un enfoque contextual de la historia del pensamiento político puede enriquecerse a través del estudio de diferentes versiones de textos filosóficos.

En la parte final de la *Lógica*, donde Mill expone su método y los objetivos de la ciencia histórica de la sociedad, llama la atención el uso que hace de un lenguaje metafórico y del vocabulario de las ciencias experimentales. Los principios de orden y progreso, que se abordan en los capítulos tercero y cuarto, son ejemplos de estos préstamos en tanto que Mill los identifica con las disciplinas de la estática y la dinámica, a su vez ramas de la mecánica clásica. Junto a estos ejemplos, el capítulo seis,

titulado 'Natural Imagery and Metaphors in Mill's Science of Society', analiza otros que igualmente nos permiten entender en qué medida la propuesta de Mill está guiada por el pensamiento metafórico. En línea con otras teorías filosóficas de su época, Mill utiliza términos e imágenes propias de la biología, la física, la mecánica clásica, la astronomía o las matemáticas. El análisis retórico de dichas figuras lingüísticas da pie a una interpretación acerca de la relación entre el lenguaje metafórico y las propuestas políticas de Mill. En este capítulo se analiza en qué medida las metáforas que emplea Mill caracterizan la sociedad como objeto de investigación y determinan los límites de dicho estudio. La interpretación propuesta requiere sin embargo esbozar un debate académico interdisciplinar sobre el papel de la analogía y la metáfora en el pensamiento filosófico que a su vez pretende enriquecer una perspectiva contextual para el estudio del pensamiento de Mill.

El último capítulo, 'Mill's Concept of Nationality: Enriching Contemporary Interpretations through Contextual History', analiza críticamente algunas de las interpretaciones más extendidas en la literatura secundaria sobre la idea de nacionalidad que defiende Mill. De acuerdo con estos puntos de vista, Mill aparece como un precursor del llamado nacionalismo cívico o liberal. Una lectura aislada de sus *Consideraciones sobre el gobierno representativo* (1861) es en muchos casos el punto de partida para justificar la posibilidad de un liberalismo político que sea capaz de compaginar la defensa de las libertades individuales con la de los derechos culturales e identidades de las comunidades políticas. El capítulo siete propone entender la idea de nacionalidad de Mill considerando no solo los textos más estudiados en la literatura académica al respecto.

Mi lectura se apoya en tres aspectos tratados previamente en el desarrollo de la tesis. En primer lugar, la interpretación tiene en cuenta el análisis que se realiza en el capítulo seis sobre el uso de expresiones metafóricas y del vocabulario científico. En la *Lógica* Mill define la nacionalidad como un principio de *cohesión*, un término que en esa época pertenece al vocabulario de la física. En segundo lugar, la definición de nacionalidad como un principio de cohesión es el resultado de una revisión textual que Mill lleva a cabo con motivo de la publicación de la tercera edición de la *Lógica*. De este modo, este capítulo retoma uno de los asuntos centrales del capítulo quinto. En tercer lugar, Mill entiende la nacionalidad como una de las condiciones para la

estabilidad social, contribuyendo al orden y la armonía social. El capítulo profundiza en la idea de orden como uno de los principios políticos fundamentales que, en opinión de Mill, todos los gobiernos deben fomentar. El argumento se beneficia asimismo de la perspectiva desarrollada por Quentin Skinner para el estudio de la historia de las ideas, explorando lo que el término cohesión significa en el momento en el que Mill lo emplea, pero también atendiendo a los debates intelectuales de la época y tomando su revisión textual como un posicionamiento en los mismos. El estudio concluye que el sentimiento de la nacionalidad no tiene una importancia intrínseca para Mill, sino que su valor radica en la función que este desempeña para asegurar la estabilidad y la cooperación sociales.

3. Conclusiones y originalidad de la tesis

La obra de John Stuart Mill continua despertando interés en disciplinas como la filosofía, la historia, la ciencia política y la economía, pero también, aunque en menor medida, su obra atañe campos como el derecho, la psicología y las ciencias de la educación. Existe sin embargo un amplio consenso cuando se afirma que la contribución más importante de Mill tiene lugar en el terreno de la filosofía moral y política, donde frecuentemente se reconoce la enorme influencia de sus ideas en la sociedad victoriana. Algunas de sus obras, tales como *Sobre la libertad* (1859) y *Utilitarismo* (1861), son de obligada referencia para entender el liberalismo político y la teoría moral utilitarista respectivamente. Estos ensayos han atraído considerablemente la atención de investigadores, junto a otros como *Consideraciones sobre el gobierno representativo* (1861) y *El sometimiento de las mujeres* (1869).[8] En gran medida el interés se ha centrado en sus escritos de madurez, más conocidos hoy en día. El resultado de ello es una imagen sesgada de su pensamiento político en la que sus primeros escritos son estudiados comparativamente en menor medida y considerados como menos representativos de los grandes temas de su obra. Sus escritos de madurez,

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[8] También traducida al español como *El sometimiento de la mujer* o *La dominación de la mujer*.

como afirma Ross Harrison, son 'los más significativos para nosotros', aunque 'no son los [trabajos] más serios o voluminosos que escribió'.[9]

La tesis se propone mostrar a Mill como un pensador ecléctico, cuya obra arraiga en una variedad de tradiciones filosóficas que aparecen estrechamente entrelazadas en su pensamiento. El propio Mill se enorgullece en algunos pasajes de su aspiración por 'construir puentes y despejar los caminos' que puedan conectar escuelas filosóficas rivales. Intérpretes de su obra, como James Fitzjames Stephen, Gertrude Himmelfarb o Isaiah Berlin han considerado que esta heterogeneidad expone las incoherencias internas de su pensamiento.[10] La tesis de los 'dos Mills' postula la existencia a este respecto de dos mensajes diferentes, inconexos e incompatibles entre sí cuando se considera el conjunto de su obra. En contra de lo que se podría denominar 'esquizofrenia intelectual', John Rees, Alan Ryan y John Gray, entre otros, han defendido un enfoque revisionista que concibe su obra de un modo más sistemático y coherente.[11] Sin involucrarse directamente en este debate, la tesis destaca cómo los escritos de juventud de Mill, y en particular *Un sistema de la lógica*, pueden ser relevantes para interpretar sus publicaciones posteriores. La ciencia de la sociedad, que Mill describe precisamente en el último de los libros que la componen, se centra en proporcionar la reflexión científica necesaria para guiar el 'arte' de la política. A este respecto se exploran algunas formulaciones que subyacen a los trabajos posteriores, principalmente trazando los diferentes usos de las ideas de orden y progreso en el conjunto de su obra, el papel de la historia y el concepto de nacionalidad.

En raras ocasiones la literatura secundaria se ocupa de esclarecer si el método que Mill diseña para la investigación de los fenómenos sociales tiene su reflejo en sus opiniones políticas, independientemente de la postura que se adopte respecto a la tesis de los 'dos Mills'. La *Lógica* se lee normalmente como un trabajo sobre filosofía de la

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[9] 'His late political and moral writings are the most significant for us, although not the largest or more serious that he wrote', Ross Harrison, 'John Stuart Mill, Mid-Victorian', en *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Political Thought*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, 296.

[10] James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* [1874], Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967; Gertrude Himmelfarb, 'Introduction', en John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974, 7-49; Isaiah Berlin, 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life', en *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*, ed. Henry Hardy, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002, 132-51.

[11] John C. Rees, 'The Thesis of the "Two Mills" ', *Political Studies*, 25, 1977, 369-82; Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill*, segunda ed., Houndmills, Macmillan, 1987; John Gray, *Mill On Liberty: A Defence*, segunda ed., Londres y Nueva York, Routledge, 1996; John Gray, 'John Stuart Mill: Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations', en *Literature of Liberty: A Review of Contemporary Liberal Thought*, 2, II, 1979, 7-37.

ciencia o metodología científica, cuya relevancia para el estudio de su filosofía política es menor. La atención se centra así en sus escritos de madurez, más conocidos actualmente, cuyo tono es claramente político, a pesar de que es en la *Lógica* donde Mill establece los criterios científicos que deben guiar su sociología.[12] Muchas de las interpretaciones contemporáneas sobre su pensamiento dependen por tanto en gran medida del tratamiento que Mill hace de ciertos temas en sus obras más conocidas. Sin embargo, estas propuestas no tienen en cuenta que tanto para Mill como para sus contemporáneos, la *Lógica*, junto a los *Principios de economía política*, sientan las bases para toda posible compresión de los procesos sociales en sentido amplio.[13] La tesis muestra a este respecto que solo a través de una ciencia histórica de la sociedad es posible esclarecer los dos principales intereses de toda comunidad, el fomento del orden y el progreso.

Para examinar los escritos de juventud es fundamental dilucidar la naturaleza y el alcance de las influencias intelectuales que Mill recibe. Después de su ya famosa 'crisis mental', Mill concluye que el utilitarismo presenta importantes puntos débiles, aunque no lo rechaza en su totalidad. En el desarrollo de este estudio, se presta atención a este punto de inflexión en su vida y su obra, que puede interpretarse en términos de su independencia intelectual. Este momento coincide además con el comienzo de sus lecturas de Coleridge y un grupo de intelectuales franceses entre los que se encuentran Comte, Guizot y Saint-Simon, entre otros. Su crítica del utilitarismo, sin embargo, no motivará un rechazo total a favor de estas nuevas influencias filosóficas. De nuevo, se mantiene fiel a su intento por alcanzar un síntesis entre opiniones opuestas conservando las ideas que considera acertadas de cada una de ellas. En línea con algunos estudios recientes, la tesis examina algunas de las fuentes principales de inspiración de su juventud, que han sido estudiadas en menor medida, quizá porque pertenecen a tradiciones conservadoras de pensamiento, o al menos no claramente liberales.[14]

Mi interpretación del pensamiento social y político de Mill depende de una selección amplia de textos, aunque de ningún modo pretende ofrecer una visión

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[12] Esta idea constituye uno de los puntos de partida de Frederick Rosen en su reciente monografía sobre Mill, Frederick Rosen, *Mill*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013, 1-30.

[13] A este respecto ver por ejemplo Alexander Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections*, Londres, Longmans, 1882, 91.

[14] Vincent Guillin, *Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill on Sexual Equality: Historical, Methodological and Philosophical Issues*, Leiden, Brill, 2009; Rosen, *Mill*, 97-130; Georgios Varouxakis, 'Guizot's Historical Works and J. S. Mill's Reception of Tocqueville', *History of Political Thought*, XX, 2, 1999.

exhaustiva que agote otras posibles interpretaciones. Junto a sus trabajos más conocidos, se han considerado otros textos denominados menores, artículos de periódico, correspondencia privada, reseñas de libros, discursos parlamentarios, intervenciones públicas, panfletos y su autobiografía. En la lectura de los mismos se hace énfasis sobre los modos en los que sus obras intervienen en los debates que tienen lugar en su época a la vez que estas se nutren de los mismos. Diferentes ediciones de los diccionarios más conocidos en su tiempo, así como el *Oxford English Dictionary* y el *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary*, me han permitido indagar en los significados de los conceptos empleados en la época. Finalmente, la tesis considera una selección de los numerosos estudios sobre Mill y la filosofía política del siglo XIX.

Con objeto de relacionar el pensamiento de Mill con su contexto histórico e intelectual, la tesis estudia el debate vigente en la época acerca de cómo mejorar el bienestar de los ciudadanos a la vez que se garantiza la estabilidad política prolongada. Como ya se ha mencionado, una selección de obras de pensadores destacados de la época, periódicos y panfletos son fundamentales a este fin. La heterogeneidad de recursos utilizados ofrece una instantánea de la sociedad victoriana que permite entender algunos de los asuntos que preocupaban en ese momento y en qué términos se discutían. El análisis pone de manifiesto hasta qué punto la situación política de Inglaterra se describía como un modelo, en contraste con otros conflictos internacionales. Asimismo, el análisis trata de arroja luz sobre los modos en los que la opinión pública reformula y populariza las teorías políticas.

El carácter fluido y contingente de los textos de Mill constituye uno de los recursos fundamentales utilizados en este estudio, que se beneficia de la admirable edición que John M. Robson lleva a cabo de sus obras completas. Gracias a su trabajo la comunidad académica puede acceder al proceso de revisión y reescritura de las obras de Mill en el transcurso de su vida. La importancia de este proceso no ha sido tenido en cuenta en la literatura sobre Mill, con alguna excepción aislada, así como tampoco existen interpretaciones de su pensamiento que reparen en el contenido de dichas lecturas alternativas. Los capítulos quinto y séptimo están dedicados a este asunto. En concreto, las variantes presentan la relación personal e intelectual entre Mill y Comte desde un ángulo no explorado, por una parte, y por otra fundamentan la interpretación del concepto de nacionalidad. Aunque existen cuestiones teóricas básicas sobre el carácter

fluido de los textos de Mill que necesitarían ser tratadas con mayor detalle, la tesis plantea un debate metodológico desde una perspectiva contextual que pueda dar cuenta de la existencia de las varias versiones que existen de un mismo texto filosófico. Se nutre, para ello, de algunas reflexiones que conciernen a especialidades como la crítica textual y la teoría editorial, enriqueciendo así los modos en los que la filosofía política y la historia del pensamiento político se aproximan a los textos históricos.

Junto a una dilatada selección de textos, el enfoque metodológico de la tesis sugiere un modo de leer e interpretar dicha evidencia. La atención recae no solo en lo que los textos de Mill dicen, sino también en la acción que se contiene en dicha formulación, en línea con los presupuestos teóricos de la 'New History of Political Thought'. Con este objetivo, los textos de Mill y sus contemporáneos se han interpretado en tanto que inmersos en los debates de su tiempo, lo que implica trascender la instancia textual, por sí sola insuficiente para alcanzar dicho fin. Consecuentemente, la tesis no dedica un capítulo aislado para describir el contexto histórico, biográfico e intelectual de la obra de Mill, como es costumbre en algunos monográficos sobre pensadores clásicos de la filosofía política, sino que las consideraciones de carácter histórico, que hacen referencia al ambiente intelectual, son centrales en cada uno de los capítulos que componen esta tesis.

Las cuestiones que atañen a la metodología para el estudio de la historia del pensamiento político de Mill adquieren una notable importancia en la investigación doctoral. La reflexión a este respecto es necesariamente interdisciplinar, implicando ámbitos tales como la filosofía, la historia, la lingüística y la ciencia política. El diálogo entre disciplinas enriquece positivamente la reflexión filosófica acerca de las premisas que en la actualidad subyacen al estudio de la historia del pensamiento político. Esta tesis se beneficia de un debate académico sobre los vínculos existentes entre la historia, el lenguaje y el pensamiento político que comienza en los años sesenta del siglo XX principalmente en las obras de Reinhart Koselleck, John Pocock y Quentin Skinner, entre otros, y continúa en la actualidad involucrando a académicos de diferentes disciplinas. [15] En lugar de entender los textos históricos como contribuciones o

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[15] John Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time* [1960], Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989; Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, vol. I: *Regarding Method*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002; Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trad. Todd Presner, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002.

respuestas a las denominadas 'cuestiones perennes' de la filosofía, las obras de estos autores defienden que para entender cualquier texto filosófico es necesario situarlo en su contexto histórico y centrarse en los usos retóricos del lenguaje. De este modo, Pocock y Skinner, por ejemplo, han revisado algunas interpretaciones habituales de autores clásicos de la filosofía política, como Maquiavelo o Hobbes,[16] mientras que Koselleck, se ha centrado en el análisis de conceptos básicos o conceptos-guía de la experiencia entendiéndolos como herramientas para representar el cambio histórico.[17] La comparación y contraste entre ambas perspectivas, según han estudiado autores como Melvin Richter y Kari Palonen, hacen posible una reflexión metodológica que respalda las conclusiones que alcanza esta tesis sobre el pensamiento social y político de Mill.[18] Del mismo modo, el presente trabajo tiene en cuenta perspectivas metodológicas próximas a las anteriormente mencionadas, como la de la 'Escuela de historia intelectual de Sussex', cuyos representantes más conocidos son John Burrow, Donald Winch y Stefan Collini.[19] Especialmente cercanos a la perspectiva contextual de Skinner y Pocock, algunos de sus trabajos tienen como objetivo redibujar la época victoriana 'recuperando y re-situando' las ideas en su contexto, de modo tal que 'resistan las interpretaciones anacrónicas' habituales en la literatura académica contemporánea.[20] Soslayando la adherencia a programas metodológicos bien definidos, sus trabajos han servido de inspiración para este estudio y sus interpretaciones sobre la sociedad británica del siglo XIX han resultado ser particularmente reveladoras.

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[16] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975; Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996; La edición de Peter Laslett de los *Dos tratados sobre el gobierno civil* de John Locke es una fuente de inspiración para Skinner. Ver Peter Laslett, 'Editor's Introduction', en John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1960, vii-xxii.

[17] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Time and Revolutionary Language', *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 9, 2, 1983, 124, citado en Kari Palonen, 'Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives on Conceptual Change: Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 3, 48, 1999, 41-59; ver también Koselleck, 'Introduction (Einleitung) to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*', *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 6, 1, 2011, 7-8.

[18] Melvin Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995; Kari Palonen, 'An Application of Conceptual History to Itself', *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, 1, 1997, 39–69; Kari Palonen, 'Rhetorical and Temporal Perspectives on Conceptual Change: Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck'.

[19] Un ejemplo paradigmático es Stefan Collini, Donald Winch y John Burrow, *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Intellectual History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, y más recientemente Stefan Collini, Richard Whatmore y Brian Young, eds., *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

[20] Stefan Collini, 'General Introduction', en *History, Religion, and Culture: British Intellectual History, 1750-1950*, 14.

La atención a las cuestiones metodológicas enriquece nuestra comprensión de la obra de Mill de varias maneras. Una perspectiva contextual contribuye a clarificar el modo en el que Mill y sus contemporáneos conceptualizan el mundo social y político en el que viven. Su pensamiento pretende dar respuesta a las preguntas de su tiempo y movilizar a la opinión pública sobre aspectos controvertidos. Incluso si su proyecto para estudiar científicamente la sociedad difiere de los de sus contemporáneos en el rechazo de una perspectiva determinista, Mill comparte con ellos la preocupación por cómo obtener un conocimiento riguroso de las causas y efectos de los acontecimientos sociales que permita a largo plazo guiar la práctica política. Aunque la sociología que propone no puede llegar a conclusiones irrefutables como consiguen las ciencias experimentales, es sin embargo valiosa para establecer los principales objetivos que los gobiernos deben perseguir, esto es, el orden y el progreso.

La presente tesis pone de manifiesto que la idea de antagonismo es especialmente útil para entender la variedad de influencias que recibe Mill, especialmente de pensadores como Coleridge, Guizot o Comte. De este modo, la diversidad de su pensamiento político queda patente, lo cual nos aleja de versiones monolíticas y simplistas del liberalismo político. Un estudio contextual presenta, en cambio, la obra de Mill como la confluencia de diferentes tradiciones filosóficas, a menudo encontradas, lo que contribuye a entender el liberalismo político como un discurso plural, determinado históricamente, que concierne a diversas disciplinas y tradiciones.[21]

Finalmente la tesis apunta nuevas preguntas para la investigación académica con las que seguir profundizando en el pensamiento político de Mill. Puesto que no se ha pretendido ofrecer un interpretación exhaustiva de su obra, muchas cuestiones necesitan una mayor reflexión. Por ejemplo, el análisis del uso que Mill hace del lenguaje figurado se ha limitado a los préstamos del vocabulario científico y las analogías que establece entre los fenómenos sociales y el mundo natural que ocurren en la última parte de la *Lógica*. Un estudio más detallado del modo en el que Mill emplea el lenguaje figurado constituye uno de los asuntos que la literatura académica puede abordar. Dicho estudio, sin embargo, tendría que atender cuestiones metodológicas que en este trabajo

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[21] Michael Freeden, *Liberal Languages: Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2005, 8. Un análisis sincrónico arroja luz sobre algunos aspectos del liberalismo politico y la familia ideologica del liberalismo. Para una perspectiva más amplia, ver Freeden, 'The "Grand Projects" of Liberalism', en *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, 141-77.

han sido brevemente apuntadas, como la relevancia del análisis del lenguaje metafórico para la comprensión del cambio conceptual en la historia del pensamiento político.

En segundo lugar, tal y como ha señalado el capítulo primero, la aspiración de Mill por regenerar el liberalismo político, al que denomina 'liberalismo avanzado', no ha sido suficientemente examinada. Su 'liberalismo avanzado' parte de los principios políticos que inspiran el liberalismo político, pero supone una regeneración de los mismos en tanto que tiene en cuenta las lecciones que se desprenden de las experiencias del pasado. Esta actitud positiva en relación a la historia, que como se ha visto caracteriza su obra, se identifica sin embargo en la época con una actitud conservadora en el terreno político, y especialmente con aquellos grupos políticos que se proponen restaurar las instituciones del pasado. Junto a un grupo de intelectuales afines, Mill intenta restaurar la importancia de la investigación histórica también para la práctica de la política y el gobierno efectivo. Su propuesta de reforma del liberalismo político se puede entender como un reclamo para quienes tienen opiniones políticas más moderadas, aunque esta hipótesis necesita ser explorada en profundidad. Del mismo modo, dicho estudio puede contribuir a esclarecer las relaciones discursivas entre este 'liberalismo avanzado' y el llamado 'nuevo liberalismo' británico de comienzos del siglo XX.

En último lugar la tesis ha situado en primer plano las revisiones textuales que Mill lleva a cabo de sus obras. No obstante, la interpretación se limita a los cambios que ocurren en la *Lógica*, y solo respecto a la idea de nacionalidad y a la reducción de referencias directas a Comte. Puesto que ha transcurrido más de dos décadas desde que se publicara la edición crítica de sus obras completas, se hace necesario evaluar los procesos de revisión y escritura ahora visibles. Las posibilidades interpretativas que dicha edición crítica ofrece no han sido lo suficientemente examinadas en la literatura académica. En este sentido, los cambios en sucesivas ediciones no se producen solo en la *Lógica*, sino también en muchas de sus obras. Los *Principios de economía política*, por ejemplo, junto con la *Lógica*, es uno de sus libros más profusamente revisados. Dicha obra, publicada en 1848 se reedita en siete ocasiones, la última en 1871. Su transformación coincide en el tiempo con diversos cambios económicos y políticos de gran calado. La pregunta que se sigue es si el texto de los *Principios de economía política* refleja y de qué manera dichas transformaciones. El análisis de los cambios

textuales de esta obra tiene por tanto un interés académico indudable, aunque conviene señalar que en lo que respecta a la existencia de múltiples versiones los *Principios de economía política* no son una excepción. Perdidas la aparente inmutabilidad y estabilidad textuales de la obra de Mill, parece justificado, por tanto, revisar las estrategias que guían nuestra aproximación a sus textos, pues de ellas depende la plausibilidad de nuestras interpretaciones.