

***Wandering Between Two Worlds: Schopenhauer's Pessimism,
Feuerbach's Optimism, and the Quest for Salvation
in George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.***

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire.

September 2008

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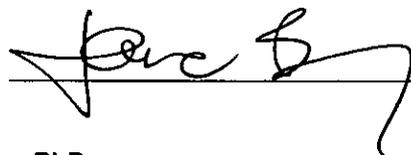
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Abstract

This thesis examines George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* (1872) and Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1896) in the context of the philosophical quest for salvation in a secularising nineteenth century. This is a quest which retains an exalted ideal of human self-realisation, and foregrounds an ethical basis to the relationship between self and the world, individual and society. In the struggle between the potential for seeing the human as a reduced and ephemeral being, condemned to wander without object or value in an essentially purposeless world, and the quest for a still-transcendent vision of human possibility and a progressive future, pessimistic and optimistic visions of human place and the world are central. Fiction and non-fictional literature of the period interrogate the questions of human place, ethics, and destiny in both individual and social terms, and the role of philosophy in offering an alternative to religious constructions of the world is key for both Eliot and Hardy. Arthur Schopenhauer's pessimism is often recognised as having been influential on Hardy's work, while Ludwig Feuerbach's optimism is noted as having influenced Eliot. These two philosophies will be examined in detail, and measured against their value of and accessibility for ordinary existential human individuals in the world.

This thesis makes an original contribution to current thinking by showing the extent to which Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Hardy's *Jude* develop dynamic relationships with *both* Schopenhauer's and Feuerbach's philosophical constructions of the world. This thesis shows that questions of optimism and pessimism rely on a complex set of relations, both in these two novels and in the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Feuerbach themselves, which belie previous critical tendencies to place all four writers in a polarised "pessimistic" or "optimistic" position, and reveals that both novels develop nuanced engagements with both pessimistic and optimistic visions of ethical salvation.

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Acknowledgements

Particular thanks to Dr. Brian Rosebury for his invaluable support, incisive feedback, and for his confidence in this project, and to Dr. Kay Boardman for her advice and encouragement. Thanks also to Professor John Walton and Professor Michael Parker, to Dr. Terry Hopton for a useful discussion of Feuerbach and the loan of books, and to Dr. Richard Walker, particularly for introducing me to W. H. Mallock.

Thanks to my friends and colleagues in the Department of Humanities and the Postgrad community for their support at various points throughout my studies, especially my climbing buddy Dr. Vikki Cook, plus Dr. Esther O'Neill, Dr. Dave Abel, and imminent Drs Helen Monk and Munira G. Patel, Vikki Hulse, Dave McGrath-Wilkinson, Adam Pendlebury, Susan Pomfret, and Andrew Hobbs.

Thanks also to those colleagues whose valuable work behind the scenes in the library, IT and technician departments, is much appreciated, particularly Derek Drummond, Mansoor Ahmed, and Ian Carrie, as well as Research Office staff, particularly Margaret Fisher, without whom 'the hard readers could not read nor the high thinkers live'.

Particular thanks to those who were supportive during the final two years or so of this project, including Professor Anne Wichmann and Margaret Fisher.

I am immensely grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for their funding of this research project. I also thank AHRC staff for their support and understanding during the final couple of years.

*And foremost of all, my deepest love and gratitude always to
Chris, Tom, and Hattie,
and to Uffer and Mimmel,
for their love without measure, Elskan min.*

for my mother, Eileen Ford
20th September 1933 – 4th January 2007.

Non, je ne regrette rien

Introduction

Pessimism, Optimism, and Philosophical Salvation.

'The age of systems is past... System is the childhood of philosophy; the manhood of philosophy is investigation.'
George Eliot 1855¹

'Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience.'
Thomas Hardy 1901²

In 1855 George Eliot agrees that “The age of systems is passed... System is the childhood of philosophy; the manhood of philosophy is investigation” as ‘expressions’ can only ‘have their origin purely in the observations of the senses’ (Eliot “Future” 133, 135). Eliot translated the works of a number of European philosophers in the mid-Victorian period, including German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach whose deconstruction of Christianity as a belief system simultaneously invigorates Victorian secularism with a new belief and direction. For Eliot, Feuerbach’s philosophy reveals an inspirational present and future life without God, but which retains key (Christian) ethical values and the object of salvation in the world, and enables Eliot to suggest that:

The fellowship between man and man which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man: and... the idea of god, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of a goodness entirely human (i.e. an exaltation of the human). (Eliot *Selections* 453)

Nonetheless Eliot rejects the idea of an holistic system of philosophy, even whilst embracing the shift from a religious to a philosophical framework grounded in the existential world ‘of the senses’ (“Future” 135) in fundamental terms. In those for whom religious belief is a thing of the past, questions of human place, individual and social direction, and the moral code of human relations take on a new urgency in letters, articles, philosophical treatises, and fiction of the period.

¹ George Eliot “The Future of German Philosophy”. *Selected Critical Writings*. Rosemary Ashton (ed). Oxford: OUP, 1992, 133.

² Thomas Hardy *The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1962, 310.

The central focus for many is the secularised quest for human self-realisation – for salvation here on earth - and is bound to the question of ethical human relations which transfer core Christian values into a secular interpretation of human existence. Barbara DeMille recognises that:

the question of moral standards and ideal conceptions, the notions of the perfectibility of man according to intangible paradigms... were seriously sapped of their vitality by religious scepticism and scientific discovery by the mid-nineteenth century but their teleological and deontological promptings lingered in the cultural consciousness long after their respective... creeds had waned. (704)

Eliot renounces systematisation for the pragmatic philosophical ground and direction of the senses – albeit in her earlier non-fiction career this appears to be a somewhat exalted direction revealed by ‘treading the uphill *a posteriori* path which will lead, not indeed to heaven, but to an eminence whence we may see very bright and blessed things on earth’ (“Future” 137). Almost half a century later, Thomas Hardy also rejects the idea of an holistic philosophical system whilst also emphasising the necessity of grounding philosophy in the existential world. Hardy argues that ‘*every man*’ should ‘*make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience*’ (*Life* 310, original emphasis), yet also suggests that ‘Pessimism (or rather what is called such) is... playing the sure game’ as it ‘is the only view of life in which you can never be disappointed’ (311). Apart from the overtly optimistic Feuerbach, Arthur Schopenhauer’s philosophy also foregrounds a secularised quest for ethical salvation in the world, and also becomes increasingly well-known in the second half of the nineteenth century, although Schopenhauer’s philosophical position is expressly pessimistic. In mid-1850s Britain, one critic terms Schopenhauer’s philosophy ‘the most disheartening, the most repulsive, the most opposed to the aspirations of the present world’ (Oxenford 394) whilst Feuerbach, as Eliot shows above, appears to offer an optimistic and exalted potential for human realisation. Like Eliot, Hardy also read prolifically, including European philosophy, and took an active interest in the contemporary debates about the ethical and practical direction of the individual and social human in a secularising world. Whilst Eliot’s relationship with Feuerbach’s philosophy is recognised by a number of critics in fairly general and invariably optimistic terms, as will be discussed shortly, Hardy’s relationship with pessimism is equally well-recognised, but also often in

rather general terms. In Hardy's surviving letters and non-fiction writings his perspective on human fellowship tends not to be inclined towards a Feuerbachian exaltation of human existence, even whilst he recognises a necessity for social change. When asked to 'define his concept of progress' (Orel 253), Hardy wrote 'I favour social re-adjustments rather than social subversions – remembering that the opposite of error is error still' (Hardy *Personal* 253). Whilst agreeing on another occasion that a society of 'Thinkers' offers 'ways' in which we can discover where 'salvation lies' (if 'the Thinkers are to get themselves listened to by the Doers', that is), Hardy also questions 'if there be any salvation at all for a world that has got itself into such a deplorable welter, which seems to threaten a new Dark Age, to last may be for centuries before "the golden years return"' (253). Whilst both of these latter comments occurred in the years immediately after the 1914-18 War and thus indicate a particular context for Hardy's pessimism, Hardy's musings on his 'every man' pessimistic philosophy occur two decades earlier at the turn of the century, a few years after his final novel *Jude the Obscure* is published. Whilst both authors appear to reject the idea of an holistic philosophy of life in their non-fiction writings, Eliot's 'uphill... path' to a new future where 'we may see very bright and blessed things on earth' ("Future" 137) marks a sharp contrast with Hardy's 'sure game' of 'Pessimism' (*Life* 311), yet this thesis will show that the question of whether either writer is "optimistic" or "pessimistic" is not as straightforward as this may seem to suggest. This thesis makes an original contribution to current thinking by examining the relationship between pessimism and optimism in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, and indeed within the philosophical systems of Arthur Schopenhauer and Ludwig Feuerbach. This thesis shows that questions of optimism and pessimism rely on a complex set of relations, both in these two novels and in the philosophies themselves, which belie previous critical tendencies to place each writer in a polarised "pessimistic" or "optimistic" position.

Helen Garwood argues that the 'opposing terms' of pessimism and optimism 'are incapable of definition', but finds that the issue of *purposelessness* is the deciding factor as this denotes pessimism whereas an underlying *purpose* is therefore necessarily optimistic (19). Further, one person 'cannot at the same

time be both pessimist and optimist' (16) as, '[i]f the sum of his pessimistic moments exceeds his optimistic then he is a pessimist, and vice versa' (16). Rather than a question of *purpose* or a sum of moments, however, this thesis argues that the terms denote the philosophical relationships between the human and the world on a number of levels which can indeed leave one person with both pessimistic and optimistic positions, and which do not necessarily cancel one another out. Whilst these philosophical relationships include the question of whether the world is recognised as a predominantly "good" or "bad" world (whether or not a *purposive* First Cause enters the equation), the question of whether and to what extent the human individual in that world has a predetermined and unalterable character or can exhibit ethical choice is more important, as this affects how the individual can recognise their relationship with the world and operate within it. Further, whether or not character is fixed and determined, the question extends into whether that character is seen as innately positive or negative in the sense of both moral/behavioural terminology *and* existential value. Most crucially, all of these relationships necessarily include the question of whether the basis of ethics is democratic and accessible to ordinary existential human individuals, and whether self-realisation or salvation is an accessible reality for real people in the world. As such, this thesis recognises the terms pessimism and optimism to be denoting a complex set of relationships between self and world which, in the end, are balanced against the positive value both of and for the existential individual. A pessimistic or optimistic recognition does not therefore necessarily denote a "bad" or "good" perspective in itself as the qualitative factor is placed in the question of individual human value - of philosophical grounds, means and ends and the philosophical, psychological and corporeal impact of these on existential human individuals. Thus, *contra* Garwood, one person, one philosophy, one perspective *can* at the same time be both pessimistic and optimistic, and these terms themselves do not necessarily denote a "bad" or "good" value. A purposive philosophy can contain pessimistic negativity if it entails a form of salvation which is effectively unattainable in real terms, or if it negates existential lives along the way – whether philosophically, psychologically, or materially. Equally, a macrocosmic purposelessness could nonetheless offer a positive optimism if it aims to effect genuine benefit to human individuals during that purposeless existence. The questions of

pessimism and optimism depend upon the implications in real terms for real people of the ground, means, and endpoint of a particular vision of human reality and “salvation”, most particularly in the realisable value of the individual human and of the ethical and salvatory present and future they aspire towards.

The expressly pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer and the exalted optimistic philosophy of Feuerbach form the central theoretical framework of this thesis. Each will be analysed regarding the extent to which the key aspects of their philosophies can be seen to be pessimistic or optimistic, and the particular focus of the analyses will be the philosophical construction and place of the human in the world, the basis of ethics, and the ground, means and accessibility of salvation. The implications of each analysis will focus on how each philosophical system relates to the existential human subject in particular, and questions whether each philosophy can be seen as respectively “pessimistic” or “optimistic” in such polarised terms. The central focus will be the form of ethical salvation that each delineates, discussing the implications of how these two apparently oppositional philosophical positions might be grasped by their readers.

Schopenhauer’s key philosophical work, *The World as Will and Idea*, will be analysed in Chapter 1, with occasional references to his other philosophical writings where appropriate. The examination of Schopenhauer’s pessimism will discuss Christopher Janaway’s question of why the existence of evil in any form can never be counteracted by any amount of good for Schopenhauer, thus ‘any suffering at all invalidates the whole world’ (Janaway “Pessimism” 332). That Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will is of a pessimistic nature this thesis does not refute, but it agrees with Gerard Mannion in identifying ‘the question’ of ‘whether [Schopenhauer’s] metaphysics leads *necessarily* to a world of evil and suffering or whether there is ground for hope’ (14, original emphasis). Chapter 1 shows that Schopenhauer’s ethical writings cast doubt on the tendency to see his worldview as finally and *absolutely* pessimistic, as salvation and ethics are, as Mannion recognises, ‘the most crucial part of his philosophy, because their subject matter is humanity itself’ (37). Yet Mannion finds that Schopenhauer’s philosophical salvation finally resides in the mystical and thus ‘functionally resembles religious systems’ (foreword), whereas this thesis shows that Schopenhauer’s ethical framework is fundamentally grounded in human

existential suffering, and in *most* key respects, salvation from suffering is accessible to all (albeit with qualifications) rather than just the “saintly” few. Chapter 1 shows how Schopenhauer’s philosophical pessimism simultaneously recognises a more optimistic accessibility which qualifies that pessimism to a significant and essentially realisable degree.

Chapter 2 will examine Feuerbach’s philosophical deconstruction of Christianity in *The Essence of Christianity*, which Charles Wilson summarises as the recognition that ‘divinity is not finally about abstract reason but has a flesh-and-blood character to it’, thus positing ‘God-as-human transacts the overcoming of our self-alienation (experienced as sin)’ (394). Wilson also finds that Feuerbach uses ‘Christology’ (394) in coming to see in religion itself ‘the founding of a *community*, not an individualized consciousness’ (390, original emphasis). Chapter 2 will show, however, that the relationship between individual consciousness and community is the site where the extent to which Feuerbach’s philosophy can *realistically* attain its objective is decided. Thomas Wartenberg recognises Feuerbach’s objective to be the point where ‘human beings could come to realize their own divinity, thus creating a world in which the human race could fully realize its potential as a species’ (viii). Chapter 2 will show that Feuerbach’s philosophical consciousness effectively precludes the realisation and the potential of the existential individual human on key levels, even whilst it identifies the means of salvation from the alienation that Christianity and other artificial social constructs effect.

Chapters 1 and 2 will show that the categorisation of a philosophical system as *either* “pessimistic” *or* “optimistic” is a questionable undertaking, evidenced in the analyses of the different levels on which such terminology can depend. Thus the uncritical acceptance of each philosophy as respectively “pessimistic” and “optimistic” in unqualified terms fails to engage with the negotiability and accessibility of their positions to the individual in search of self-realisation or salvation in the world. As such, the influence that these two philosophers may have had on the fiction of Eliot and Hardy is consequently a far more complex relationship than is often recognised.

Chapter 3 will examine how some of the key issues raised in the analyses of pessimistic and optimistic philosophical thinking, as delineated by Schopenhauer and Feuerbach, are also under discussion amongst a range of

thinkers in Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. Both philosophers are introduced to their British readership almost simultaneously in the 1850s, albeit Schopenhauer only really getting a substantial foot-hold by the 1870s by which time Feuerbachian thinking has already become assimilated into the common parlance of secularist theory to a significant extent. The central focus of Chapter 3 will be how both conservative and liberal thinkers during this latter Victorian period raise key questions about the roles of ethics, character and community, and human destiny in a secularising society. This chapter will show that, even amongst a range of secularist social theorists who would all be likely to see themselves as batting for the same side in the quest for a secularist direction in human ethical and social life, there are as many contradictions between pessimistic and optimistic views of human nature and the individual and social future of the world as there are affinities. Both Eliot and Hardy were themselves influenced by, and engaged in discussing, a broad range of ideas and philosophies which are concerned with ethical and moral issues and the question of individual and social human destiny, and they will both be contextualised in Chapter 3 within their contemporary discussions and within the current critical framework. Both Eliot and Hardy were keen to work through these issues in their fiction, and the core focus of this thesis is an examination of two novels published in the last 30 years of the nineteenth century, Eliot's *Middlemarch* in 1872 and Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* in 1896. Following two short Chapters, 4 and 6, which discuss Eliot's and Hardy's direct associations with Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian philosophy, and the specific critical context for the analyses of the two novels, a substantial chapter will be devoted to the analysis and discussion of each novel. Chapters 5 and 7 will examine *Middlemarch* and *Jude* respectively in the light of the theoretical framework, and will show that each novel evidences fascinating engagements with both pessimistic and optimistic thought. These two chapters will show that Eliot and Hardy entered deep and comprehensive engagements with both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian delineations of the human and the world, yet from very different perspectives. The original approach of this thesis is a reassessment of both Eliot's and Hardy's relationships with optimistic and pessimistic thought, and with Feuerbach and Schopenhauer in particular.

Critical approaches to Eliot's philosophical relationships in her literature tend to concentrate on "optimistic" philosophies, of which Feuerbach's is deemed a key influence. Whilst Eliot undertook a comprehensive engagement with Feuerbach's philosophy through translating his primary work, critics who assess her literary relationship with Feuerbach rarely examine his potential influences in detail, but tend to acknowledge an often generalised connection from an optimistic viewpoint. Rosemary Ashton recognises the influence that German philosophy had on Eliot's writing and, whilst her discussion focuses on a number of German philosophers and theorists, Ashton finds that Eliot's novels all predominantly 'testify to her unchanging belief' in Feuerbach's influence, including 'I-Thou relationships, the "divine" efficacy of human love, [and] the redeeming influence of man on man' (*German* 160). This optimistic Feuerbachian influence is echoed by Peter Jones (52)³ and is interpreted in more general positive-humanist terms by Peter Widdowson (18-21), but is taken into a specifically Comtean perspective by T. R. Wright (*Humanity* 180). Like Ashton, Gisela Argyle also recognises the significance of German philosophy for Eliot in equally positive terms, concentrating more on J. W. Goethe and Heinrich Heine than Feuerbach in her own discussion of Eliot (4). Argyle also foregrounds a strongly optimistic-humanist emphasis in Eliot's work and, like many other critics, tends to place Feuerbach's influence in general rather than detailed terms. Most critics do not assess the implications that the less optimistic aspects of *Middlemarch* might have for Eliot's acceptance of Feuerbachian thought, nor assess the more pessimistic aspects of Eliot's ethical or salvatory framework from either a Feuerbachian or Schopenhauerian perspective. Argyle finds that Dorothea is 'sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion', echoing Matthew Arnold's argument 'in favour of a union of the Hellenic and the Christian spirit' (Argyle 50), thus Dorothea's quest is for 'the companion concept to the good to be reconciled with beauty', which is 'truth' (58). Chapter 5 will argue that Eliot's novel does foreground both the senses and what can be termed 'spiritual passion', and both of these form key relationships in the novel which are focused through a reconciliation, but this is not a reconciliation of 'beauty' and 'truth' (Argyle 58), or the Hellenic 'and the Christian spirit' (50). It is instead a

³ - albeit Jones broadens his own approach across a range of European and British thought.

reconciliation of the material and the transcendent in terms which foreground the value and import of the existential human individual, and which raise significant questions about Eliot's acceptance of Feuerbach whilst also marking a fundamental relationship with Schopenhauerian thinking.

E. A. McCobb's discussion of Eliot's relationship with Schopenhauer in *Daniel Deronda*⁴ is a useful starting point for examining Eliot's own exposure to Schopenhauer, and is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 below, while Penelope LeFew-Blake's analyses of Schopenhauer's influence on a number of women novelists introduces an interesting interpretation of Schopenhauerian thinking in *Middlemarch*. LeFew-Blake argues that Dorothea's quest is a Schopenhauerian struggle 'between... the need to be and the desire to cease to be' (24). Chapter 5 will show that Dorothea's struggle for self-realisation not only refuses 'to cease to be' but emphatically recognises 'the need to be' (24) in much more radically Schopenhauerian terms, with significant implications for ethics and salvation in the novel. Gillian Beer's central focus is on Darwinism and science rather than German philosophy, yet her discussion of *Middlemarch* identifies a number of parallels with this thesis in finding Eliot's novel to be 'a study of process and relations' (149), both 'process' and 'relations' being key ways of thinking about the philosophical analysis of *Middlemarch* undertaken here. Beer also recognises the equal significance of the imagination and 'the imagery of transcendence, of the invisible world' (141) for Eliot, because '[p]rojects cannot rest in the present' as 'they rely upon extension and futurity' (142), and this recognition is both pertinent and troubled in the analysis of Eliot's novel in Chapter 5. Beer's own study is not directly connected to the analysis undertaken here, as this thesis shows that the theme of process and relations which underpin Eliot's novel are not wholly bound to scientific Darwinism but have other implications in Eliot's engagements with philosophical optimism and pessimism⁵. The extent to which imagination and transcendence can be seen to relate to 'extension and futurity' and to what Beer terms Eliot's 'domestic epic' (140) will be shown in Chapter 5 to have an unexpected bearing on Eliot's relationship with both Feuerbachian and

⁴ E. A. McCobb: "*Daniel Deronda* as Will and Representation: George Eliot and Schopenhauer", and "The Morality of Musical Genius: Schopenhauerian Views in *Daniel Deronda*".

⁵ Beer's focus is on Darwin's 'Variation Under Domestication' which she finds casts Dorothea's 'domestic epic' (140) into the light of the universal process and endless movement of evolution (144).

Schopenhauerian philosophy. Chapter 5 will show that the process and relations which are central to Dorothea's self-realisation act to undermine Feuerbachian salvation on a number of levels, whilst also foregrounding fundamental aspects of Schopenhauerian philosophical thought in the ground, means and endpoint of ethical salvation. This is particularly significant in what the 'domestic' sphere represents in *Middlemarch* in a number of respects, not least how the ideas of both the 'domestic' and 'extension' become a conscious necessity in the novel even while the idea of 'futura' (Beer 140-2) is both limited and questioned.

The critical reception of Hardy as a fatalistic pessimist who is frequently seen in opposition to Eliot's positive humanist-realism is emphasised by Peter Widdowson (18-21). Virginia Hyman's core focus in her discussion of Hardy is 'the theory of ethical evolution as it came to him through Comte, Mill, Darwin, and Leslie Stephen', and thus Hardy believes 'time was the great illuminator, destroying past illusions and revealing more sober and necessary truths' (3). These issues are central to the analysis of *Jude* here, and will be shown to have a significant relationship with both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian philosophy. A number of critics draw a relationship between Schopenhauerian pessimism and Hardy's novels, albeit a relationship frequently delineated in rather generalised terms in much the same way Eliot's relationship with Feuerbach is often framed, and rarely discussing the less pessimistic elements of Hardy's work⁶. Deborah Collins focuses on Schopenhauer's influence in somewhat more detail than a generalised impression, albeit only exploring facets of the role of a blind purposelessness (46) which is only one aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy and of Hardy's *Jude*, as this thesis will show. A number of critics recognise Hardy's elusiveness regarding his influences and eclecticism regarding his 'every man' (Hardy *Life* 310) philosophy⁷, yet, like Collins, most predominantly focus on the role of an essentialist, non-moral universe in his novels. Interestingly, Collins does occasionally mention Feuerbach, finding that Hardy 'agreed in principle... that "Man has his highest being, his God, in himself"' (Collins 24, quoting Feuerbach *Essence* 281). Robert Schweik also recognises that Feuerbach had some influence on Hardy, but again this is only a somewhat general recognition

⁶ A number of critics also conflate Schopenhauerian influences on Hardy with Eduard von Hartmann's philosophical pessimism, but which differs from Schopenhauer's in fundamental respects, as will be discussed in Chapters 3 and 7 below.

⁷ See Schweik (68) and Björk *Oxford* (388), for example, and Chapter 6 below.

of 'Feuerbach's idea that the Christian god is the product of man's need to imagine perfection' (66). Despite arguing that in both *Tess* and *Jude* Hardy is 'particularly concerned with the inimical relationship of religious mores to human lives... in contexts which suggest that Christianity is a pervasive hindrance to the fulfilment of human aspiration' (56), Schweik's central focus in *Jude* is how 'human aspirations are dwarfed in the vast dimensions of archaeological time' (61-2). Chapter 7 will show that in *Jude* the Feuerbachian recognition of the potential perfection of the human has significant resonances, and relates directly to the 'pervasive hindrance[s] to the fulfilment of human aspiration' (Schweik 56) in fundamentally Feuerbachian terms. This thesis agrees with David DeLaura that Hardy insists on a 'more humane basis for morality in *Tess* and *Jude*', a morality DeLaura finds 'firmly situated in the late-Victorian debate over modernism in the Churches' as Hardy is 'braver and more consistent than the majority of his fellow rationalists, almost none of whom challenged the ethics of Victorian Christianity frontally' (388). This thesis will show that *Jude*'s confrontation of 'the ethics of Victorian Christianity' extends to all artificial social constructs, however, and further, recognises the extent to which these effect so inhumane a form of morality on the individuals who are subject to their oppressive practices and precluded thereby from attaining salvation. William Siebenschuh's argument that there is a potentially positive relationship between person, place and time (774) operating in *Jude* offers some pertinent insights into the relationship between Jude and landscape in the novel, but this thesis will argue that both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian resonances pervade Jude's relationship with his landscape, and these in largely negative terms. Chapter 7 will examine how a specifically Feuerbachian consciousness raises questions about the relationship between pessimism and qualifications to that pessimism in Hardy's novel, and show that optimism retains a subtle and pervasive presence in Hardy's novel in markedly Feuerbachian terms.

In the mid-1850s, at about the same time Schopenhauer and Feuerbach are introduced to Britain, Matthew Arnold's poem "Stanzas From the Grande Chartreuse" (1852-5) laments the loss incurred once religious faith has gone, leaving the human inhabiting a spiritual void and facing an unknown and uncertain present and future:

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
(Arnold "Stanzas" lines 85-8)

Arnold's poetic speaker becomes a ghost, haunting the periphery of both worlds, unable to pass back into the 'dead' world of faith nor into the unborn world of acceptance and certainty. Equally alienated from both worlds, the secularised quest for salvation is suspended between the loss of religious belief and the realisation of a positive human present and future. This thesis will show that in both Schopenhauer and Feuerbach there is an oscillation between the two worlds of pessimism and optimism, the existential human individual forming the key focus of both philosophical systems and the measure of the ethical value that each expresses. The quest for human salvation in the latter half of nineteenth century Britain also recognises the presence of both optimistic and pessimistic positions, Arnold reflecting this in enigmatic terms in the contrast between some of his poems and his non-fiction prose, the latter perhaps reflecting a more optimistic vision, as Chapter 3 will discuss. Once God has been displaced as the object and the vehicle of human salvation, human destiny has been placed firmly in human hands, and questions of ethics and salvation continue to haunt this secularising society and the philosophical quest for human place and object, in both individual and social terms. Whilst Eliot and Hardy refuse to place the existential human into an holistic philosophical system, this thesis will show that both novelists utilise and interrogate the philosophies of both Schopenhauer and Feuerbach in negotiating the quest for human salvation in the world. In Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, the central protagonists become the site of that quest where the theoretical framework is put into practice.

Chapter 1

Schopenhauer and the Pessimistic Vision of Salvation.

*'For the world is Hell, and men are on the one hand
the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it.'*

Arthur Schopenhauer 1851¹

I. Schopenhauer and the positive experience of Hell.

Arthur Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* 1819, translated as *The World as Will and Idea (or Representation)*, became widely known in Britain from April 1853 onwards, following John Oxenford's discussion of Schopenhauer's philosophy in his article "Iconoclasm in German Philosophy" in *The Westminster Review*. British exposure to Schopenhauer via Oxenford was to a fairly comprehensive overview of his philosophical ideas, as Oxenford outlines the specific areas of Schopenhauer's work and quotes pertinent extracts from *The World as Will and Idea*². Oxenford's primary admiration of Schopenhauer is regarding his accessibility, geniality and ingenuity – as well as admiring his invective against his philosophical peers - but he finds 'the doctrine taught... the most disheartening, the most repulsive, the most opposed to the aspirations of the present world' (394). Oxenford sums Schopenhauer's philosophy thus:

All that the liberal mind looks forward to with hope, if not with confidence
-the extension of political rights, the spread of education, the brotherhood

¹ "On the Suffering of the World", *Essays and Aphorisms from Parerga und Paralipomena*, 48.

² Whilst this chapter will primarily focus on Schopenhauer's most well-known work, *The World as Will and Idea*, a number of references will also be made to his other writings, his *Essays* in particular, and *On the Basis of Morality*, as these also became more widely read in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The translation of *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* as *The World as Will and Idea* by Jill Berman is the central text used in this thesis, a translation which acknowledges the distinction between Schopenhauer's *thing-in-itself* as the *will-to-life* rather than the *will-to-live*, the latter emphasis often leading critics to interpret Schopenhauer's Will as advocating a quasi-suicidal hastening of death. *The World as Will and Representation* translated by E. F. J. Payne is referred to particularly in respect of "The Metaphysics of Sexual Love", Chapter XLIV in Schopenhauer's *Vorstellung*, as this is only briefly rather than fully reproduced in Berman.

of nations, the discovery of new means of subduing stubborn nature - must be given up as a vain dream... a professed "Pessimist"; it is his grand result, that this is the worst of all possible worlds... so utterly unsusceptible of improvement, that the best thing we can do is to get rid of it altogether, by a process which he very clearly sets forth. (394)

Oxenford's reading of Schopenhauer is one commonly repeated, and is one which does not address other implications of Schopenhauer's thought. Despite mentioning Schopenhauer's ethics of art, and the 'bad man, the just man, the good man, and the whole rabble of vice and virtue' (405), Oxenford is not alone in producing a reading of Schopenhauer's philosophy that settles a final and unremitting pessimism onto all of his work. Informed by Schopenhauer's 'more austere personage yet' (Oxenford 405), the severe ascetic, who denies the will to life unto the point of 'death... as the completion of their wishes... [with] annihilation... [as] the greatest boon that can be desired' (407), this ultimate position comes to stand in for all of Schopenhauer's thought and its pessimistic designation, without considering whether other aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy might find a more optimistic realisation, nor indeed, how the position of ascetic self-denial itself might offer a form of hope. Whilst this thesis will not be arguing that Schopenhauer's philosophy is optimistic rather than pessimistic after all, it will trouble the notion that Schopenhauer's philosophy is unremittingly pessimistic in its outlook, and ascertain how its interpretation and *accessibility* might be seen to provide glimmers of hope to those bound within a pessimistic world.

Schopenhauer introduces a world in which sensory perception and human experience is of significance, at the same time as advocating the voluntary removal of that experience in order to attain a more *permanent* form of secularised salvation. Yet, this more permanent salvation is something Schopenhauer considers is only accessible to relatively few, advocating other routes to salvation in some form for most people. For Schopenhauer, scientific and philosophical interpretations of the world that do not recognise the primary position of the relationship between our self-knowledge and our perceptions of the rest of the world are approaching the problem from the wrong angle (Schopenhauer *The World as Will and Idea (WWI)* Book I, 12-24; and II §19, 37). The world is one in which the "will to life" is the *thing-in-itself*, the essence,

and is the life-force behind and in all phenomena; phenomena are merely the degrees of its manifestation or objectivity, from the lowest inorganic matter and “natural forces”, through successively more complex objectifications of itself in plants, then animals, then the human. The will-to-life:

...is the inmost nature, the kernel, of every individual thing, and also of the whole. It is manifest in every force of nature that operates blindly, and it is manifest, too, in the deliberate action of man; and the great difference between these two is a matter only of degree in its manifestation, not in the nature of what is made manifest. (*WWI* II §21, 42)

The whole world is, in one aspect, the manifestation and objectification of will (III §30, 97) and the will is ‘the inner, true, and indestructible nature of man; yet [the will] in itself... is unconscious’ (II Supplement, 87). At the same time, the will is also *idea* in being ‘the aspect of the knowable’ (I §I, 4-5) for the perceiving subject. Phenomena are manifestations of the will but are also “ideas” born out of our subjective relationship with objects of perception, appearing in ‘time, space and causality’ as ‘only forms of knowing’ (II §23, 45). Christopher Janaway sees this idealism as a problem in Schopenhauer as ‘material things would not exist... without the mind’ (Janaway *Schopenhauer* 17). Yet Schopenhauer clearly refutes the transcendental ‘purport of *theoretical egoism*, which as a consequence holds all phenomena, excepting its own individual self to be phantoms, exactly as practical egoism does in respect of practical matters – a man regards and treats only his own person as a real person, and all others as mere phantoms’ (*WWI* II §19, 37)³, and this is significant to his vision of salvation. Schopenhauer insists that the living human is the necessary basis and object of philosophy and also the necessary basis of all knowledge (II §19, 36-7), and it is fundamental to his thinking that ‘pain and pleasure... are by no means ideas, but immediate affections of the will in its manifestation, the body’ (II §18m 33). Janaway later allows that Schopenhauer’s delineation of ‘acts of will... places the human subject firmly within the material world’ (*Schopenhauer*

³ Schopenhauer criticises all philosophical ‘attempt[s] to construe the *thing in itself* according to the laws of *appearance*’ (Schopenhauer “On the Antithesis of Thing in Itself and Appearance”, 55).

29), but does not examine how Schopenhauer's philosophy does so in more significant terms.

The placing of the will as the Kantian *thing-in-itself* is evident, for Schopenhauer, through understanding that our own self-knowledge is a:

double knowledge which we have of our own body that gives us information about it, about its activity and its response to motives, and also about what it suffers as a result of outside intervention... about what it is, not [just] as idea, but... what it is *in itself*... as a will... [therefore] at once both will [in essence] and idea [as perceived object]. (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §19, 36)

For Janaway, Schopenhauer oscillates between positing our ability to have immediate 'knowledge of the thing in itself directly', and the qualification that 'even the act of will which we know "immediately" is an event in time, and is therefore part of our representation, rather than the thing in itself' (*Schopenhauer* 32-3). Janaway does acknowledge that Schopenhauer emphasises the will does not appear to us "quite naked" but 'has "to a great extent cast off its veils" in our "inner" awareness of action', thus 'we come closer to knowledge of the thing in itself' (*Schopenhauer* 33). Schopenhauer's position is that this knowledge of will *as one's 'real inner nature'* provides 'the key to the knowledge of the inmost being of the whole of nature... all those phenomena... given to [human perception]... as *idea* alone' (*WWI* II §21, 41) and also signifies the micro-macrocosmic relation between all things as manifestations of the will-to-life (II §29, 83). This gives rise to the potential for reading aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy in more immediately optimistic terms, as a result of the positive knowledge of self and world which recognises what Schopenhauer sees as the true nature of the world and our position in it. Yet, the optimistic potential of this insight into will as the thing-in-itself seems to be undermined by Schopenhauer's insistence that *discord* is essential to the will. For Schopenhauer, the will *consumes itself* in the ceaseless drive to sustain itself as '[e]very grade of the will's objectification competes with the others for matter, space, and time', from plants struggling against each other for light and water, to parasitic plants and animals eating plants and other animals, to the final 'terrible clarity' of '*homo homini lupus*' (II §27, 74): human preying upon fellow human. The will engenders only pain and suffering, as:

all endeavour springs from deprivation – from discontent with one’s condition – and is thus suffering as long as it is not satisfied; but no satisfaction is lasting, rather it is always merely the starting-point of a new striving... [which is always] frustrated in many ways, everywhere in conflict, and therefore we always see it as suffering. Thus, if there is no final goal or purpose in striving, there is no due portion, no purpose in suffering. (*WWI* IV §56, 195)

For Schopenhauer, life offers only endless but pointless suffering, and leads to his refutation of an optimistic ‘best of all possible worlds’ for Dante’s ‘hell’ (IV §59, 205) as ‘everyone is nothing but this will itself, whose manifestation is an ephemeral existence, an always vain, constantly frustrated endeavour’ (IV §68, 250). Whilst the will itself has no goal as such, merely a limitless ‘endless striving’ (II §29, 84), Schopenhauer sees the ultimate goal of existence as annihilation, a goal which proves that life has no value in itself as ‘[b]efore us, certainly, remains only nothingness.... what resists this disintegration into nothing, our nature, is simply only the will to life’ (IV §71, 261)⁴. Schopenhauer’s atheistic philosophy is one in which suffering proves that the world is a pointless accidental happening and not the chosen creation of an omniscient God, and the optimistic world-view is ‘not merely... absurd’ but ‘a bitter mockery of the unspeakable suffering of humanity’ (IV §59, 206)⁵. Evil is a *positive* force in the sense of being experienced, whilst “good” is only relief from suffering, thus *negative*: ‘we are not fully conscious of the assets and advantages we actually have... for they gratify us only negatively by keeping suffering at bay... [whilst] yearning, privation, suffering, is the positive, communicating itself directly to us’ (*WWI* IV, §58, 202)⁶.

If then, for Schopenhauer, the world ‘is Hell, and men are on the one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it’ (“Suffering” 48), where does this leave the secularised quest for human salvation?

⁴ If life ‘were something possessing value in itself, something which ought unconditionally to exist, it would not have non-being as its goal’ (“On the Vanity of Existence”, 54).

⁵ See also Schopenhauer “Suffering”: ‘two things cry out against... [a Leibnizian] view of the world as the successful work of an infinitely wise, infinitely good... infinitely powerful being: the misery of which it is full and the obvious imperfection of... man, who is indeed a grotesque caricature’ (48-9). For Schopenhauer’s critique of teleological optimism, see *WWI* II §27, 76; IV §56, 196.

II. *Human consciousness: suffering, ethics, and time.*

Schopenhauer recognises suffering as intrinsic to existence: everything is will in phenomenal form, and the will endlessly consumes itself to perpetuate its own existence. As such, the will is the source of all evil and existence is pointless to the extent that 'our condition is so wretched that total non-existence would be decidedly preferable' (*WWI* IV, §59, 204). For Janaway, given Schopenhauer's concession that most manage to strive after their goals 'with enough success to protect them from despair, and enough failure to preserve them from boredom' (Schopenhauer quoted Janaway "Pessimism" 331), it is 'still unclear why that is a kind of existence not to be chosen above non-existence', and why the existence of evil in any form can never be counteracted by any amount of good, thus 'any suffering at all invalidates the whole world' (Janaway "Pessimism" 331-2). Janaway agrees with Georg Simmel⁷ that Schopenhauer 'seems guilty of ignoring or stipulating away positive feelings that occur within the pattern of willing and attainment' (Janaway "Pessimism" 333). Yet, Janaway argues against David Cartwright's⁸ suggestion that 'having a desire does not entail being in misery', by claiming that, for Schopenhauer, 'every episode of *striving* entails *some degree* of painful lack or dissatisfaction', marking a distinction between Schopenhauer's use of 'striving' rather than 'mere wanting' (Janaway "Pessimism" 329). For Janaway, Schopenhauer's claim is that 'all lives, even those free of [actual] misery, inevitably contain numerous, if miniscule, dissatisfactions'; most people's lives contain 'some misery and some lives contain mostly misery' ("Pessimism" 329-30). Cartwright's point regarding desire or striving as not necessarily painful is, however, a valid one. It relates as much to the positive experience of anticipated happiness, for '[e]xpected happiness is truly experienced... more by a pleasurable sensation than a painful one' as Simmel puts it (Simmel 64, cited Janaway "Pessimism" 333), as it does to Schopenhauer's sidelining of the moment of happiness as a positively experienced moment. Allowing for pleasure in the experience of striving or

⁶ The will is in its essence 'sinful and reprehensible... [being] the source of all wickedness and evil' ("On Affirmation and Denial of the Will to Live", 63-4); see also "Suffering", 41.

⁷ Georg Simmel *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, discussed Janaway "Schopenhauer's Pessimism", 333.

desiring may be seen as a problem in Schopenhauer, as he appears to allow the prime experience here to be of suffering, with pleasure as a merely illusory secondary factor:

Eternal becoming, endless flux, is essential to the revealing of the will's nature. We see the same thing in human aspirations and desires; the fulfilment of these masquerades as the ultimate objective of our willing, but once we have attained them, they no longer look the same, so that soon, forgotten and out of date, they are almost always set aside (even if we do not admit it) as vanished illusions... desire constantly passes into satisfaction, and satisfaction into new desire – if the pace of this is swift, it is called happiness, and if it is slow, sorrow... (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §29, 85)

If we are lucky, each desire once attained immediately gives way to the next, but if we are unlucky and desire falters, the result is 'dreadful, stultifying boredom, in lifeless yearning without a definite object, a deadening languor' (85). Yet Schopenhauer does not refuse the position of happiness here altogether, he asks that we recognise its necessarily transient and momentary nature. Sated desire immediately moves ever-onwards to the next object, and he clearly sees the state of desiring as preferable to that of boredom. Schopenhauer's delineation of salvation also offers moments of satisfaction, even joy, as will be discussed, and emphasises the distinction which needs to be made between his necessarily pessimistic recognition of what he sees as the true nature of the world and the ultimate pointlessness of existence as such, and what he sees as the necessary quest for salvation *in life*, which, despite his frequent rhetorical flourishes suggesting that it would be better if the world did not exist (IV, §59, 204), forms the basis of his philosophy and imparts genuine value onto human life. Mark Migotti also recognises this distinction, suggesting that, whilst 'there is nothing that makes *being* human worthwhile... [Schopenhauer] does offer his readers a next best thing to an unconditioned good, something that can at least make it worthwhile to live out one's days' (654, original emphasis). Migotti recognises that "pure joy" is accessible via 'will-less contemplation', and claims that what Schopenhauer offers is an *emeritus* or stand-in good of 'complete self-effacement of the will', as 'only by living on can one hope to efface one's will and thereby contribute to the redemption of the world' (657). Migotti does not examine the

⁸ David E. Cartwright "Schopenhauer on Suffering, Death, Guilt, and the Consolation of Metaphysics", 51-66.

implications of these issues in Schopenhauer's thought, however, either ethically or in terms of human value, nor indeed does he raise the implications of *hope* itself.

Whilst life, for Schopenhauer, is suffering and misery, and its ultimate goal annihilation, he also recognises that life and the world are as we *perceive* them to be. The will is the thing-in-itself, and individual manifestations of phenomena in time and space are part of that will, each being 'one and the same, both by its nature and in its concept' (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §23, 45). It is 'only through the medium of time and space' that the will 'appear[s] as different, as a plurality of co-existent and successive phenomena. Time and space are in consequence the *principium individuationis*', the principle of individuation, of individuality, 'the potential for plurality' and the understanding that 'time, space and causality do not belong to the thing-in-itself, but are only forms of knowing' (44-5). As such, individual death should not be feared as it is a natural and inevitable part of life, the individual 'is only phenomenal' and 'receives his life as a gift, rises out of nothing, then suffers the loss of that gift through death, and returns again to nothing' (IV §54, 177). Indeed death is desirable in nature once procreation is achieved as the preservation of the species is Nature's only aim (178)⁹. Whilst this offers a transient and ultimately pointless view of individual human life, it does not denigrate the experience of suffering or the value of the individual as recognising this truth is necessary in order to allow our false perceptions – and suffering itself – to be overcome. Individual consciousness does not continue after life has ended as it is not needed then. Consciousness is 'a mere accident of our being... a fruit, a product, of the rest of the organism... [and] merely serves the purpose of self-preservation by regulating the relations of the organism with the external world' (II Supp. 87)¹⁰. The point here is that, for Schopenhauer,

⁹ Death is in fact an 'awakening' from life, the latter being a 'dream' - appearance only - to which the individual belongs by virtue of their perceiving consciousness; thus death is the 'return to [a state] originally our own from which life has been only a brief absence' (Schopenhauer "On the Indestructibility of our Essential Being by Death", 70), a state which we only *perceive* as annihilation.

¹⁰ Consciousness is 'merely an expedient for helping the animal get what it needs [to survive]', which, whilst reaching 'its peak in us', provides 'cognition only of phenomena, [therefore] is altogether superfluous' ("Indestructibility" 71) after phenomenal life has ended. The will is all that persists after phenomenal life has ended, but this is 'the indestructible primal being' not individual consciousness: see "Indestructibility", 73; and *WWI* IV, §54, 184-5. Also, see Schopenhauer *WWR*, XLIV "Metaphysics", esp.559, for Schopenhauer's specific discussion of the next generation and the species as a whole as that in which the human being-in-itself exists. In both of these discussions

consciousness or intellect is a merely accidental and secondary occurrence to that of the will (which is the First Cause) (87). As such, intellect is demoted from a primary essence, but its importance is elevated through its having reached a stage of development in the human that enables:

self-conscious reflectiveness which ranges over the future and the past, and, as a consequence, deliberation, careful concern, the capacity for premeditated action independent of the present, and... the altogether distinct consciousness of one's own decisions as such. (II §27, 77)¹¹

It is also the case that the *intensity* of our suffering is itself a direct result of our intellectual ability: 'as knowledge attains to distinctness and as consciousness intensifies, there is a proportionate increase in pain, which accordingly reaches its highest degree in man;... the more distinctly a man knows... the more pain he feels' (IV, §56, 196). The implications of this relate to all our perceptions of the world, and act to further exacerbate our own suffering as our understanding extends into time, space and causality, thus we are preoccupied with thinking about the 'lost paradise' (III §38, 122) of the past and our hopes and fears for the future¹². This is Schopenhauer's basis for seeing all striving as suffering in one form or another. Yet, at the same time, our intellect also ensures that we would be bored with life without willing, and thus without suffering as:

Such is life for almost everyone; they desire, they know what they desire, and they strive after it with sufficient success to keep them from despair, and sufficient failure to save them from boredom and its consequences. From this comes a certain serenity, or at least unconcern, which wealth or

of that which *does* continue to exist beyond the life of the individual, it is again clear that pessimism is to a limited extent qualified in terms of offering a consoling view of death. Whilst the individual is indeed annihilated and individual consciousness does not survive, the essence does survive, whether in the macro-cosmic will, or the individual's specific progeny and the species. For Schopenhauer, the sexual impulse of the will-to-life also affirms and perpetuates the *essence*, the will, but in also perpetuating the existence of suffering, it is not therefore to be welcomed philosophically-speaking, although he does concede the possibility of a positive, even *happy*, male-female relationship (*WWR* "Metaphysics", 553-8). The will-to-life fools individuals into believing they will be happy together, thus, once the 'genius of the species achieves its object' (553) and the sexual urge has been fulfilled, 'everyone who is in love finds himself duped' (540) as the reality of their incompatibility becomes apparent.

¹¹ Through intellect, we can 'refer sensation to its cause, and at last perception: whereupon the world will be there, appearing in space, time and causal connection', thus illustrating the role of intellect and 'the merely phenomenal existence of the external world' ("On Philosophy and the Intellect", 121-2).

¹² See also Schopenhauer "Suffering": 'everything is powerfully intensified by thinking about absent and future things, and this is... the origin of care, fear and hope, which, once they have been aroused, make a far stronger impression on men than do actual present pleasures or sufferings ... [and] the measure of suffering increases... far more than the enjoyment, and is very greatly enhanced specifically by the fact that he actually *knows* of death... having it in view... all the time' (44, original emphasis).

poverty really does not alter; for... [none] enjoy what they *have*... but what they hope to *attain*. (IV §60, 207)¹³

Our intrinsic suitedness to willing, then, arguably refutes the suggestion that Schopenhauer definitively posits this as ‘the worst of all possible worlds’ (Oxenford 394, and Janaway “Pessimism” 321), suggesting, paradoxically, that this is not the *worst* of all possible worlds for us as we are manifestations of the endlessly desiring will, thus suited to the world in which we find ourselves. As such, we have an intrinsic need to desire, and we are also able to recognise both the will and our place in the world, which gives rise to immediate implications for attaining salvation. Janaway argues against what he sees as Schopenhauer’s reasoning that the world is the worst *possible* (as, for Schopenhauer, if it were any worse the world would be unsustainable), by countering that it could indeed *be* worse and still exist (“Pessimism” 321-2). My point here is that, for Schopenhauer, we are inherently suited to the world *as it is*, thus it is not the *worst possible* world, although any consolation that might be gained from this point alone is, of course, limited. Other aspects of Schopenhauer’s philosophy argue more distinctly against recognising the world as the worst possible, as will become clear.

Our hopeful relationship with time lies in the ‘anticipation of a happy future which, together with the enchanting products of the imagination which accompany it, is the source of most of our greatest joys and pleasures’ (Schopenhauer “Suffering” 45) (thus our intellect intensifies our anticipatory pleasure), hope is therefore a false position, tied to our false perceptions of time as it is. If, then, ‘no man is happy but strives his whole life long after a supposed happiness which he seldom attains’, life itself is positioned as ‘living *ad interim*’ (“Vanity” 53, original emphasis); passing by without regard in endless expectation of something else, and time is revealed (or reveals itself) as ‘that by virtue of which everything becomes nothingness in our hands and loses all real value’ (51). Here, life *as it is lived* is as much tied to intellect as it is to the will-

¹³ See also *WWI* II §29, 85; plus Schopenhauer “Suffering”: ‘we *require* at all times a certain quantity of care or sorrow or want ... [as] if every desire were satisfied as soon as it arose how would men occupy their lives, how would they pass the time?... some men would die of boredom or hang themselves, some would fight and kill one another, and thus they would create for themselves more suffering than nature inflicts on them as it is. Thus for a race such as this no stage, no form of existence is suitable other than the one it already possesses’ (43, original emphasis).

to-life, can be seen to negate itself in being effectively ignored, and is a miserable, pointless and valueless existence anyway. Paradoxically, negating life appears to be the ultimate ideal of Schopenhauer's philosophy in the more permanent solution he offers to the suffering inherent in existence: knowledge of our true situation leads to *denial* of the will-to-life as a means of transcending this world of suffering, gaining redemption, and attaining a form of salvation. Yet, whilst our intellect distorts our perception of our true situation at the same time as intensifying it (intensifying the pain we feel), it is our relationships with space and time which are the key here. In our preoccupation with thinking about past ideals or sufferings and future hopes and fears instead of life as it is lived in the present, our "hopeful" perceptions of time and existence denote our false relationship with the world. This is the difference between a focus on 'real objects' which 'are only in the present' and a more dream-like existence focussing on 'the past and the future', which 'contain only concepts and fancies', whereas 'the present is the essential form of the phenomenon of the will, and inseparable from it' (*WWI* IV §54, 181)¹⁴. We are always desiring happiness outside of the moment in which we live, and ignoring the present even though, as Schopenhauer insists, 'we must distinctly recognise that the form of the phenomenon of will... the form of life or of reality, is really only the *present*, not the future or the past... the *present* alone is the form of all life, and is... also its sure possession which can never be wrested from it' (180, original emphasis). This recognition is crucial, and has significant, positive implications. Whilst our intellect increases our suffering, at the same time it allows us to recognise the true nature of self and world, and leads to the possibility of salvation. That salvation, in whatever form, is itself a *possibility in life* offers the first and crucial glimmer of hope in the midst of Schopenhauer's pessimistic world view.

Schopenhauer's explicit claim to pessimism is a later and occasional addition to his philosophy, as Janaway recognises, ("Pessimism" 319), but Schopenhauer consistently recognises a pessimistic stance as the only true representation of the world, castigating the optimists and rationalists, whose views are 'a bitter mockery of the unspeakable suffering of humanity' (*WWI* IV

¹⁴ See also *WWI* III §38, 122; and IV §54, 180-3; and "Vanity" 53.

§59, 206)¹⁵. Beneath such explicit points, the pessimistic emphasis of his philosophical position is of course unavoidable, yet Schopenhauer's pessimism is qualified by his placing of the world as one of suffering *and* atonement. In providing the potential for redemption and salvation, Schopenhauer offers forms of hope, and that this is a practical and attainable hope lies in its being placed as accessible *in life*, rather than deferred to after life has ended. This is intensified by the positive potential that his emphasis on reality being only the present moment provides, as 'the *present* alone is the form of all life, and is... also its sure possession which can never be wrested from it' (IV §54, 180). Alongside this, the intellectual capacity and reflective consciousness that the human has realised is not primary, but secondary to the will (II Supp. 90-1). This has two implications. One is its accidental role as a mere 'mechanical aid... needed at this stage of the will's objectification for the preservation of the individual and the... species' (II §27, 76). The other is more significant as it is that through which 'the *world as idea* comes into existence... with all its forms, object and subject, time, space, plurality, and causality' (II §27, 76), and is therefore crucial in recognising the real conditions of existence and attaining salvation.

Schopenhauer's philosophy explicitly examines the human, in essence and subjectivity, in ethical terms, and retains the ideal of salvation as an objective for the human individual. Schopenhauer views each character as determined or fixed, and as such, ethical behaviour is only available to those who have the required character and motive, have perceived the true pessimistic nature of the world, and thus use their knowledge to override their own will to relieve suffering in the world (*WWI* IV §55-56, 187-195). There is no "free will" as such as each individual 'is not free, but subject to necessity... in spite of all his resolutions and reflections he does not alter his conduct' (II §23, 46). As 'individuality is a dominant feature of mankind', and as each 'person has a character of his own; hence the same motive has not the same influence on everyone' (§23, 51). Each individual's 'actions follow with absolute necessity from the coincidence of character with motives' (IV §55, 190), thus each

¹⁵ See also Schopenhauer "On Law and Politics": those who see the world as "an end in itself" and thus... an altogether splendid structure, a regular abode of bliss', and who falsely attribute the 'colossal evil of the world... entirely to governments' (154) are an absurdity for Schopenhauer as such views ignore the reality of suffering and its cause. For Schopenhauer's specific comments on rationalists, see also "On Religion" 195-6.

individual is unique, and responds uniquely – but nonetheless predictably, in line with their individual character – to motive. As the manifestation of the will-to-life in each individual shows itself in ‘the ambition of [each] inmost nature, and the aim [each] pursues accordingly, this we can never change by outside influence’ (193), that is, the essential character of each individual cannot be changed. The will-to-life is blind¹⁶ and, in endlessly seeking to manifest itself ‘undisturbed by knowledge... does, in general, occupy human life’ (IV §59, 206). In this the human who is dominated by willing is egoistic, seeking only to affirm their own will-to-life, inevitably at the expense of someone or something else’s. There are many forms of egoism, which differ only by degree, and whether it involves murder, violence, coercion or lying, the egoistic act is ‘as such wrong because... it aims... to extend the authority of my will to other individuals, and so to affirm my will by denying theirs’ (IV §62, 214)¹⁷. With egoism, ‘each individual is given to itself directly as the whole will and the whole subject of ideas, all the other individuals are given to him initially only as his ideas’ (IV §61, 211). Therefore the egoist ‘regards and treats only his own person as a real person, and all others as mere phantoms’ (II §19, 37) rather than material reality, affirming her or his own will to the extent that ‘the same will manifest in another individual’ (IV §62, 212) is denied. Yet, intellect allows us to transcend the will and ‘there results either the aesthetic challenge to contemplate’ the inner nature of the world ‘or the ethical challenge to renounce’ (IV, §60 207). Deliberately egoistic behaviour can use intellect to inform behaviour intended to compel another’s will to serve the egoist’s will (IV §62, 214) and as such, the position of the egoist is as far away from redemption as it is possible to be (IV §60, 207). In using their knowledge of the true “evil” nature of willing to *deny* the will, thus deny its impinging on another’s will, the individual *not* dominated by the egoistic will moves away from egoism towards salvation. Salvation, or release from the suffering will, can be achieved on a temporary basis in aesthetic contemplation which, as will be discussed, provides

¹⁶ ‘striv[ing] only blindly, dumbly, partially, and immutably... [the] will denotes the being-in-itself... and the sole kernel of every phenomenon’ (*WWI* II, §23, 50-1).

¹⁷ The egoist’s ‘[u]njust or wicked actions are... signs of the strength of [the egoist’s] affirmation of the will to live, and thus how far he still is from true salvation, which is denial of this will, and from redemption from this world’ (“Affirmation” 65). Lies and cunning are, however, acceptable means of self-defence with which to deflect another’s egoistic will (*On the Basis of Morality* §17, 158-9).

a unique access to knowledge as well as a position in which willing is suspended for a time, although this is necessarily short-lived and has less immediately ethical connotations. More lasting redemption from suffering can only take place through deliberate denial of the will, which arises out of knowledge and a recognition and acceptance of the true pessimistic nature of existence rather than false perceptions, whereas the egoistic use of knowledge still involves a false recognition of self and world. After the will-led position of egoism, there are three ethical positions or characters, the first offering a clear and positive departure from egoism, and the other two moving even further away from the will, the final position of severe ascetic self-renunciation offering a more lasting form of redemption, albeit the most pessimistic of all Schopenhauer's routes¹⁸. These ethical positions not only offer the optimistic element of hope for individual redemption, but also of human value. Leaping from the egoist, the furthest from salvation, to discuss Schopenhauer's ultimate ideal of true and more lasting salvation, the position of extreme asceticism, this provides the ultimate pessimism outlined by Oxenford and Janaway, amongst others, wherein true redemption of 'the world's guilt' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §63, 216) (imposed by virtue of its culpable will) and salvation from the world of suffering, can be attained.

Severe self-denial is Schopenhauer's ultimate ideal, offering '[t]rue salvation, redemption from life and suffering, [which] cannot even be imagined without *total* denial of the will' as, until then, 'everyone is nothing but this will itself, whose manifestation is an ephemeral existence, an always vain, constantly frustrated endeavour' (IV §68, 250, my emphasis). Asceticism is recognised by most critics as Schopenhauer's *only* vision of salvation, however, a position which in effect brings an end to the world for the individual in order to attain release from suffering. The ascetic sees through our false perceptions of the world, recognising the pointless and endless suffering that life entails, and our false relations with time, hope, and one another, thus deliberately renounces life for the 'peace and felicity... found in the life of saintly people' (IV §68, 246). To achieve this, the will has to be totally subdued, leaving the subject as:

¹⁸ These latter two ethical positions are not to be confused with Schopenhauer's two paths to his ultimate position, ascetic denial of the will. These are: 'recognition... induced by suffering which

a pure, knowing being, the undimmed mirror of the world. Nothing more can trouble him, nothing can move him, for he has cut all the thousand cords of will which keep us bound to the world, and which, as desire, fear, envy, anger, tear and pull us hither and thither, inflicting constant pain. (IV §68, 246)

The pessimistic aspect of this is clear: in order to achieve release from suffering one has to renounce the world, which effectively ceases to exist for the ascetic subject. Ascetic self-denial appears to deny that any value can be found in existence and provides Schopenhauer's ultimately pessimistic viewpoint, leaving Oxenford and many others to find Schopenhauer's entire philosophy 'the most disheartening, the most repulsive, the most opposed to the aspirations of the present world' (Oxenford 394). Such a path can be seen to offer a form of hope, however, albeit at its bleakest, in at least offering an avenue through which the individual has the potential of attaining a form of release from suffering – of salvation - in life. Thus, whilst hope is recognised as a false position, by offering a tangible escape route from this world of suffering *in life* a form of hope is effectively reinserted. Such a narrow hope afforded by severe asceticism may be further tempered by its primary availability being for the practising individual, the alleviation of another's suffering being an incidental (albeit deliberate) refusal to impinge upon another's will. Whilst Schopenhauer does not preclude the severe ascetic also actively relieving the sufferings of others, the primary concern seems to be the attainment of one's own Nirvana, a peaceful release from suffering through ascetic self-renunciation. For Schopenhauer, asceticism is a position in which one also seeks out as much self-inflicted pain as possible, including flagellation and deprivation, thus any benefit this might offer to other individual people is only by virtue of the ascetic's no-longer-willing will ceasing to struggle against another's will¹⁹. There is a distinction which needs to be made between the two paths Schopenhauer recognises as the route to asceticism in terms of any hope which may be offered here. Whilst asceticism by *choice* offers the individual a limited form of hope in obtaining release from suffering through that person's own actions, the second path to ascetic renunciation is

is merely and purely *known* (and which we freely make our own by penetrating the *principium individuationis*), or by suffering which is directly *felt* by us personally' (*WWI* IV §68, 250).

¹⁹ For Schopenhauer, 'if there is no final goal or purpose in striving', which is merely the perpetual state of the will, 'there is no due portion, no purpose in suffering (*WWI* IV §56, 195), yet he also

formed incidentally in the individual by the personal experience of unbearable suffering (rather than knowledge leading to chosen self-mortification)²⁰. In this case, it is a form of salvation attained when the individual is effectively transformed by complete loss of all hope through circumstance rather than choice (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §68, 248-9). Although even here, the ‘complete resignation’ brought about by ‘fate’ offers purification and sanctification, ‘peace’ and ‘sublimity’ (247), and even ‘inward *joy* and the full peace of heaven’ (245, my emphasis) (not only when death approaches), and Schopenhauer recognises a clearly exalted view of the ‘gleam of silver which suddenly emerges from the refiner’s fire of suffering... salvation’ (248).

Whilst asceticism offers a quasi-mystical, exalted salvation, this is Schopenhauer’s most extreme and most permanent form of salvation, whether asceticism-by-choice or by circumstance. Nonetheless, even this is not a state of permanence as it involves an ongoing battle with the will-to-life as this always seeks to reassert itself, being, of course, the individual’s true essence and the body is the will’s manifestation. The ascetic-by-choice needs to constantly and intentionally break their own will by ‘seeking out the disagreeable, the *freely chosen* life of penance and self-chastisement for the continual mortification of the will’ (IV §68, 247, my emphasis). Whilst ascetic self-denial offers a clearly limited form of optimism, it nonetheless reclaims the idea of individual hope in offering an escape from one’s own suffering in life, accessed by one’s own deliberate actions, thus its pessimism is tempered. Schopenhauer’s emphasis on reality being only the present moment, as ‘only the *present*, not the future or the past... is the form of all life, and is... also its sure possession which can never be wrested from it’ (IV §54, 180), enables the present to become that in which the hope that suffering can be alleviated is enacted²¹. Whilst recognising that Schopenhauer’s view ‘of our nature, which none of our strivings has the power to alter, [insists] some suffering is inevitable and great suffering perfectly possible for any of us... is somewhere near the truth’, Janaway asks ‘what attitude should we [therefore] adopt towards life if it is thus correctly described?’ (“Pessimism”

claims that self-inflicted suffering to subdue the will provides the ultimate ascetic route to salvation, thus does give *this* suffering a perverse “purpose” at least.

²⁰ See footnote 18 above.

²¹ See Schopenhauer “Vanity”: the ‘fleeting present’ is ‘the sole form in which actuality exists’ (51).

334). Janaway sees Schopenhauer's solution of asceticism to be the only answer he offers, and rightly points out the pessimism of becoming 'indifferent to happiness and unhappiness, unattached to the body, not wedded to the furtherance of any goals which an individual being might pursue' that attaining 'a state of detachment from living as an end' ("Pessimism" 340) involves. Janaway points out that this state of Nirvana is attained through 'an exceptionally anti-egoistic vision', but argues that 'the pathos of Schopenhauer is that, revealing to us our "true nature" in the will to life, he sees precisely this as what we must disown before our existence can claim to have value' ("Pessimism" 341). Before this extreme state of ascetic self-renunciation, however, Schopenhauer's anti-egoistic recognition has other, much less pessimistic implications. Whilst knowledge and a pessimistic acceptance of the world *as it really is* can lead to deliberate ascetic self-denial, recognition of the world and one's place in it also leads to a denial of the will which provides the other forms in which redemption can be attained. The underlying basis of Schopenhauer's ascetic position is of an ethical nature, arising from a true recognition of self and world. This recognition, which is delineated in Schopenhauer's discussions of the *I-thou* relationship, has much more positive and potentially optimistic implications regarding the two ethical positions which arise between the two extreme points of the egoist and the ascetic: that of the "just" human and the compassionate human.

Whilst removing the idea of certainty²², intellect frees the human from being 'bound to the present' of willing, a state in which less self-conscious animals remain, and enables us to reflect with 'careful concern' upon both past and future, and, crucially, thereby 'the capacity for premeditated action independent of the present' (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §27, 76-7) becomes possible. The present becomes positive through knowledge of it as the only form of reality, thus removing it from its perpetual negation through false consciousness (where the present is ignored by conscious effort focusing on future anticipation or past loss), at the same time as it becomes positive through being the place in which knowledge of consequence can be enacted. Those with the necessary character

²² The 'unerring confidence and regularity with which [the will] worked till now in inorganic and merely vegetative nature, depended upon its being active exclusively in its original being, as blind impulse, will... without interference from a second and entirely different world, the world as idea... and [which] now meddles in the sequence of its phenomena' thus 'unerring certainty comes to an end' (*WWI* II §27, 76).

and motive to do so are enabled by intellect, and the perception of our true relationship with time and the world, to positively and ethically inhabit the tangible moment. Intrinsically aligned with the human capacity for intellectual thinking – our perceptions of the world, the knowledge and intensity of our suffering, and our capacity for abstract conception of time and consequence - is Schopenhauer's much-ignored ethic of *compassion* rather than of accusation towards others. Here:

The suffering which he sees in others touches him almost as closely as his own... He becomes aware that the distinction between himself and others, which to the wicked person is so great a gulf, belongs only to a fleeting, deceptive phenomenon... recognis[ing] directly and without argument that the in-itself of his own manifestation is also that of others, namely the will to life, which constitutes the inner nature of each and everything... indeed, that this applies also to the animals and the whole of nature, and hence he will not cause suffering even to an animal. (IV §66, 235)²³

Janaway finds Schopenhauer's delineation of compassion difficult to reconcile with his insistence that the primary impulse is that of egoism, and that individuation is "mere phenomena" rather than ultimately part of reality' (*Schopenhauer* 81-3), seeing only Schopenhauer's asceticism as 'the individual's renunciation of his or her individuality... [and] the only attitude which can compensate for... existing at all' (84). Yet for Schopenhauer, 'everyone has to regard all the suffering of the world as his own', as the 'happy temporal life...

²³ Schopenhauer's human ethic is not Eurocentric: he emphatically denounces the enslavement and brutality meted out by 'devils in human form, these bigoted, church-going, Sabbath-keeping scoundrels' upon 'their innocent black brothers whom force and injustice have delivered into their devilish clutches' ("On Ethics" §5, 138). Whilst Schopenhauer makes clearly misogynistic statements, such as that women are 'childish, silly and short-sighted... a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the man, who is the actual human being' ("On Women", §3, 81; see also §1-9, 80-88), these are those very traits highlighted and condemned as resulting directly from the way women are treated, both philosophically and socially, during this broad period by thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792, esp. Chapters 2-4) and J. S. Mill (*The Subjection of Women*, 1869, esp. pages 4 -21). Interestingly, however, Schopenhauer delineates that men genetically bequeath to a child 'the will [which is] the principle of bondage', whilst women bequeath intellect, which is 'the redeeming principle' ("Affirmation", §5, 64), and explicitly claims that whilst 'women are as a rule inferior to men in the virtue of justice, and thus of uprightness and conscientiousness... On the other hand, they surpass men in the virtue of *philanthropy* or *loving-kindness*, for the origin of this is in most cases *intuitive* and therefore appeals directly to compassion, to which women are decidedly more easily susceptible' (*Morality*, III, §17, 151, original emphasis). As David Cartwright points out, Schopenhauer 'believes he can show that compassion is the basis of all virtues', which offers valuable evidence to Carol Gilligan's argument that in Schopenhauer's own terms 'the misogynistic Schopenhauer has more of a woman's morality than a man's' (Cartwright "Introduction" *On the Basis of Morality* xxviii; & fn27, Gilligan *In a Different Voice*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982). Schopenhauer also extends his ethic to non-human animals, and, whilst this is not immediately relevant to the discussion here,

amid the sufferings of countless other people... is only... a dream from which he must awake in order to find out that only a fleeting illusion had separated him from the suffering of his life' (*WWI* IV §63, 218). The 'misery both experienced by oneself and inflicted upon others... always affect the one and the same inner being' (219), and thus the knowledge of suffering and shared existence allows the individual to recognise that 'this thou art' (220). As such, 'virtue must spring from that intuitive knowledge which recognises in the individuality of others the same essence as in our own', and 'ethical value' becomes '*the chief business in human life*' (IV §66, 230, my emphasis) which finds its 'expression not in words, but only in deeds, in action, in the course of a human life' (232).

In positioning the present in the positive terms of lived reality as 'only the *present*, not the future or the past... is the form of all life' (IV §54, 180), these terms provide an optimistic viewpoint in the potential for positive action²⁴. In this present actuality, human actions – whilst always pre-determined due to character and motivation – are wholly attributable to the individual, who is 'a specific personal character... the empirical character – marked by the necessary development in time and the division into separate actions that time imposes' (II §28, 81). As such, 'every person has constant aims and motives in accordance with which he directs his conduct, and he can always account for his individual actions' (II §29, 84)²⁵. This is because human intellect is capable of reasoning consequences and the existence of *choice in action* is realised: 'in man not only does the faculty of ideas of *perception*... reach the highest degree of perfection, but the *abstract* idea, thought, *i.e.*, the faculty of *reason*, and with it reflection, is added' (II Supp. 89, original emphasis). Whilst the will and the intellect are subject to 'a curious interplay within us' (90), the 'intellect calls the tune, and the will must dance to it... behav[ing] like a body which is moved... the understanding behav[ing] like the causes which set it in motion, for it is the

the implications for ethical behaviour necessarily extending to other creatures is evident (also see Schopenhauer's footnote 2, *WWI* IV, §66, 235 and "Religion" §3, 187-9).

²⁴ See also Schopenhauer "Indestructability" as that 'alone which persists' is '*the present*, which is in the strictest sense the sole form of reality, [and] has its source *in us*' (69, original emphasis).

²⁵ See also Schopenhauer "Affirmation": The 'apparitional form of his own, utterly free and primal will... has created for itself the intellect appropriate to it; so that all his actions, however necessarily they may be the result of his character in conflict with the motivations acting on him at any given time, and however necessarily these again may arise as a consequence of his corporeity, are nonetheless to be attributed wholly to him' (56).

medium of motives' (91)²⁶. Thus reasoning can overrule will and act according to the "moral good" rather than the inherently "evil" will as 'Knowledge can always counterbalance' (IV §66, 234) the will in each individual. Each individual can act in a "virtuous" compassionate manner as a direct result of the recognition that all phenomena - both *I* and *thou* - are manifestations of the same will. Recognition of the commonality of suffering leads to deliberate acts of 'renunciation' that are practised 'in order to relieve the sufferings of others' (235), and are 'the source and essence of love and nobility of character' (IV §68, 237) of the compassionate individual²⁷. It is important to clarify that this "renunciation" is acting to relieve another's suffering by not affirming one's own will at another's expense, rather than asceticism, however, as the ascetic takes this a stage further, being 'even ready to sacrifice his own individuality if others can be saved thereby' (237). Compassion effectively reverses the false position of egoism, which Schopenhauer vilifies as equal to that of '*theoretical egoism*, which... holds all phenomena, excepting its own individual self to be phantoms' (II §19, 37, original emphasis). Whilst asceticism also involves the *I-thou* recognition of all phenomena as manifestations of the same will, Schopenhauer's human ethic includes the realisation that all 'true and pure love... and even all spontaneous justice, results from our seeing through the *principium individuationis*'²⁸, thus recognising that there is no distinction between *I* and *thou*, and 'our doing so with perfect clarity brings about complete sanctification and redemption' (IV §68, 250, original emphasis)²⁹. This opens the way for the compassionate "good" human to attain redemption through compassionate

²⁶ See also Schopenhauer "On Psychology": '*Reason* deserves also to be called a *prophet*, for it holds the future up to us (namely as the coming consequence and effect of what we are now doing). This is precisely why it is calculated to keep us in check when... desires... threaten to mislead us into courses which we would later be bound to regret' (171, original emphasis).

²⁷ Compassionate actions include 'tolerance, patience, forbearance and charity' (Schopenhauer "Suffering" 50).

²⁸ The principle of the individuation of things – for Schopenhauer, a false recognition: '*plurality* is necessarily conditioned by space and time, and is conceivable only in them; and in this context we call them the *principium individuationis*' (*WWI* II §25, 59).

²⁹ See also *WWI* IV §61, 210-11; §63, 218-19; and *Morality* III §16, 144; and see "Ethics": Compassion arises through the sensation of 'pity', which makes 'the wall between Thou and I... thin and transparent', even to the point of removing it altogether 'whereupon the distinction between I and Not-I disappears' (134). Pity is not a lofty or patronising sentiment, born out of superiority over one less fortunate as can be construed in English usage, but is one of equality, of compassion for one's comrade-in-suffering. *Compassion*: – das Mitleid (charity, commiseration, compassion, mercy, pitifulness, pity, ruth, sympathy), or das Mitgefühl (emotion, feeling, sentiment); *Pity*: – das Mitleid, or das Erbarmen (mercy).

behaviour *in life*, thus providing an avenue to salvation which falls short of Schopenhauer's ultimate ascetic stepping out of life altogether.

For Schopenhauer, justice provides the first ethical position which offers a clear departure from egoism, but this should not be confused with social "justice" as a punitive justice system can merely disguise cruel and wicked behaviour behind the veil of law (IV, §66, 231-2; and §65, 227). For an individual to exhibit true justice is to 'show[] by his behaviour that he also *recognises* his own nature' in another individual and 'in so far as he places the other being on a par with himself: he does the other no harm' (IV §66, 233, original emphasis)³⁰. To actively and deliberately relieve the sufferings of others enacts the next step, the "good" or compassionate human, offering redemption by a clearly less extreme route than asceticism offers. Whilst the "just" and compassionate positions are a less "ideal" form of salvation than asceticism, offering a less perfect or permanent redemption from suffering in Schopenhauer's exalted terms, they provide more optimistic and accessible routes than total ascetic self-denial. Attaining ascetic salvation is for those rare "saintly" individuals, but the qualities that enable the realisation of the "just" and the compassionate human appear to be common to most people as 'ethical value' is 'the chief business in human life' (230). The movement 'to positive benevolence and beneficence, and to philanthropy' is something which 'may happen irrespective of the strength and energy of the will manifest in such an individual', as 'knowledge can always counterbalance it in him' (234)³¹. Thus the intellect, for Schopenhauer, whilst being a purely secondary element, acts to enable *I-thou* recognition in each individual, and offers the potential to override the dominant will and act with compassion

³⁰ See also Schopenhauer "Suffering": we should view the 'so-called imperfections of the majority of men, i.e. their moral and intellectual shortcomings... without surprise and certainly without indignation: for we shall always bear in mind where we are and consequently regard every man first and foremost as a being who exists only as a consequence of his culpability and whose life is an expiation of being born... [thus] instil in us indulgence towards one another... [our] fellow sufferer... [which] makes us see other men in a true light and reminds us of what are the most necessary of all things: tolerance, patience, forbearance and charity, which each of us needs and which each of us therefore owes' (49-50).

³¹ Whilst in *WWI* Schopenhauer also finds that '*most people* know of the countless sufferings of others... but *do not make up their minds to alleviate them*, because to do so would require some sacrifice' (IV §66, 234, my emphasis), thus suggesting that his intuitive ethical empathy is actively ignored by the egoistic majority, in *On the Basis of Morality*, he argues that 'the appeal... *actually exists in everyone* to act justly and do good, or counterbalance the strong tendencies to injustice and harshness' (III §12, 120, my emphasis). The 'virtue of *philanthropy* or *loving-kindness*... is in most cases *intuitive*', and, interestingly, is a virtue to which women are 'more easily susceptible' (III, §17, 151, original emphasis): see also fn 23 above.

towards one's fellow sufferers. Günter Zöller recognises that Schopenhauer disagrees with philosophical tradition by placing the intellect as 'neither the sole nor necessarily the main factor of the self', and 'distinguishes two alternative but complementary conceptions of selfhood: one in which the will forms the core of the human being and one in which the human being achieves selfhood through the cultivation of the intellect' (18). As discussed earlier, Janaway agrees with Simmel (64) that Schopenhauer overlooks seeing 'positively felt satisfactions' as happiness, wherein 'Life might still be worth living, at least for what feelings of satisfaction it does contain, if that is where we should look for its worth' (Janaway "Pessimism" 333). Yet Schopenhauer implicitly sees value in positively felt satisfactions, as long as they arise out of recognition of the true nature of self and world rather than egoistic relations that seek to fulfil one's own will at the expense of another. He rates the experience of redemption from the state of willing in exalted terms that suggest this is experienced *as* happiness even where he does not explicitly use the word. Setting out a lengthy ethics of justice and compassion to actively relieve suffering in the world clearly recognises the value of each suffering individual. As Schopenhauer also argues that happiness is merely relief from suffering, as such, behaving with justice and compassion in the world must therefore at the very least make positive happiness a possibility. Even outside of deliberate denial of the will, however, happiness appears to be possible for Schopenhauer:

happy marriages are rare... [but] passionate sexual love is sometimes associated with... real friendship based on harmony of disposition, which nevertheless often appears only when sexual love proper is extinguished in its satisfaction. That friendship will then often spring from the fact that the... physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of the two individuals, from which arose the sexual love... [for a child to be produced] are also related to one another with reference to the individuals themselves... and thereby form the basis of a harmony of dispositions. (*WWR* "Metaphysics" 558)

So, whilst love is literally blind for Schopenhauer (553), fooling people into believing they will be happy in love whereas they will soon find out they have been 'duped' (540), happiness in love, in life, which is not associated with denial of the will is nonetheless possible.

Janaway does recognise that Schopenhauer 'is also prepared to describe *aesthetic* experience... as a special kind of pleasure or enjoyment', whereby Schopenhauer appears to differentiate the happiness he associates with 'the

cessation of willing' (*Schopenhauer* 60, my emphasis) from the happiness associated with willing. Whilst such satisfaction and happiness are temporary sensations, and Schopenhauer would argue that they are also moments in which willing, thus life, is transcended rather than positively experienced, the problem for seeing Schopenhauer's philosophy in purely pessimistic terms remains, not least in his advocating that such satisfactions are sought for *in life* by individuals. It is worth mentioning the question of suicide here as critics often presume Schopenhauer's philosophy advocates self-destruction or suicide³². Whilst Schopenhauer views the truly hopeless and resigned individual as 'joyfully embracing death' (*WWI* IV §68, 247) when it finally arrives, he does not advocate suicide as he sees this as actually affirming the life of the egoistic individual – who is merely dissatisfied with their own lot in life thus seeks to annihilate the individual phenomenon rather than the will-to-life itself - and this is clearly an important distinction for him (IV §69, 250-54)³³. Even where 'anyone is oppressed by the burdens of life, who desires life and affirms it but abhors its torments, and in particular can no longer endure the hard lot that has fallen to him personally' has 'no deliverance to hope for from death, and cannot save himself by means of suicide' which, in Schopenhauer's ethical emphasis, 'show[s] itself in a light even less favourable' (IV §54, 183). This is an interesting paradox when following Schopenhauer's delineation of salvation, as, unlike asceticism, genuine justice and deliberately compassionate behaviour, suicide effectively removes value from existence as it does not offer the possibility of ethical salvation *in life*.

³² As will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 7 below.

³³ Schopenhauer also claims that the 'only cogent moral argument against suicide is that it is opposed to the achievement of the highest moral good, inasmuch as it substitutes for a true redemption from this world of misery a merely apparent one' ("On Suicide" 78), thus the question of 'the highest moral good' is paramount for Schopenhauer. At the same time, Schopenhauer exalts the beauty of *I-thou* recognition where it is 'most clearly and beautifully evident in those cases in which a human being already on the brink of death is anxiously and actively concerned with the welfare and rescue of others' ("Ethics" 140). The other individual is recognised as oneself in another manifestation (*WWI* IV §66, 235), thus self-sacrifice *for the sake of the will to life as manifested in another individual* is somehow valuable, again arguing against Schopenhauer's own points that it would be better if life did not exist (IV §59, 204), and that people are 'as a whole, worthless' (IV §63, 216).

III. *Schopenhauer and salvation: individual transformation, hope, and value.*

In this world of Hell, then, human intellect allows the individual to perceive the true pessimistic nature of their relationship with the rest of the world, the suffering inherent in existence, of cause, effect and consequence, and compassion for one's fellow sufferer, thus enabling consciously ethical choices and actions. Equally crucial here is the actuality only of the present moment in time in which ethical practice and individual redemption can be enacted, even merely "hoped for" and worked towards. In positing a world of inevitable suffering, Schopenhauer is not saying that suffering *should be* inflicted³⁴, but that this is how the world is, and his pessimism itself is that which informs his ethic of compassion and salvation. Those who deliberately act to cause suffering to others are placing themselves (and those around them) further from redemption and salvation, whilst those who subsume their own will and devote themselves to behaving with generosity and charity toward others are redeeming themselves at the same time as relieving the suffering of others. The positions of the "just" human, the compassionate human, and the ascetic provide alternatives to the pure willing egoist, and all three ethical positions appear to differ from one another by degree in the same way that the forms of egoism differ only by degree³⁵. For Schopenhauer, whilst will is common to all, 'in man not only does the faculty of ideas of *perception*... reach the highest degree of perfection, but the *abstract* idea, thought, *i.e.*, the faculty of *reason*, and with it reflection, is added' (*WWI II Supp.* 89)³⁶. Compassionate denial of the will provides redemption from this world of suffering, and is potentially available to all - subject to character and motivation - but is nonetheless providing a form of optimism and hope through the notion that suffering can be deliberately relieved by human agency where possible. Release from suffering is enacted both in the compassionate agents who forgo their own will (and thus its consequential pain), and in those whose suffering they act to (temporarily) relieve. This provides the potential for hope and therefore forms of optimism at the same time as it imbues life with value. If

³⁴ Apart from the deliberate pain and self-chastisement sought by the extreme ascetic presumably.

³⁵ See page 25 above.

³⁶ Knowledge is also 'where one may distinguish oneself as 'great' in not allowing 'a preponderant agitation of will take his consciousness over altogether, however much he is urged to do so' (Schopenhauer "Psychology" 175).

individual lives have no value, why bother to delineate an ethics of virtue wherein suffering can be relieved in oneself and in others, in life?

Alongside his ethical framework, Schopenhauer's other avenue to salvation is aesthetic contemplation. Whilst this offers a brief and temporary form of salvation, it also in a sense transforms the individual in two ways by offering a unique avenue to both knowledge and transcendence. It enables the individual to perceive the true nature of the world by grasping a kind of Platonic Idea of the will's manifestation. By attaining such pure, will-less knowing, the individual and thus suffering is transcended at the same time as the individual experiences peace and an intense emotional response to the beauty of the Ideal form. Aesthetic experience allows knowledge of the inner nature of things in apprehension of the Ideal form of the will, and it effects a sublime-beautiful sensual experience through entering a state in which one negates the self and "becomes" 'the self-consciousness of the knowing subject, not as individual, but as *pure will-less subject of knowing*' (III §38, 119, original emphasis). The Ideal form or Ideas 'are the direct and adequate objectivity of the thing in-itself... the will', which art isolates from the rest of the world – 'the stream of the world's course' – whereby 'this particular thing, which in the stream was a minute part, becomes for art a representative of the whole, an equivalent for the endless multitude in space and time' (§36, 109). By not only producing, but contemplating art, we become privy to how art 'pauses at this particular thing; it stops the wheel of time, for art the relations vanish; only the essential, the Idea, is its object' (109), thereby time and individual relational subjectivity is transcended and we perceive the true nature of the world. Whilst salvation attained through aesthetic experience might be brief, then, it appears doubly valuable as it allows for the simultaneous experiencing of insightful knowledge and redemption from suffering, offering, as Janaway recognises, 'high cognitive value, not merely the enriching or therapeutic value of entering into a certain psychological state' (*Schopenhauer* 60). For Schopenhauer, art appears to literally become a *medium*, isolating and allowing access to the thing-in-itself in the form of the Ideas in which it manifests itself, at the same time it becomes a vehicle of momentary salvation, of release from suffering. Like ethical behaviour, art is potentially open to all human beings, although, like asceticism,

it is a redemption experienced at its most pure by a rare few individuals. For Schopenhauer:

the most beautiful part of life, its purest joy (if only because it lifts us out of real existence and transforms us into its disinterested spectators), is pure knowledge to which all willing is alien, pleasure in the beautiful, true delight in art... is granted only to a very few, because it demands rare talents, and even to these few it is granted only as a fleeting dream. (*WWI* IV §57, 200)

The different forms of artistic representation allow a gradation of perception of the will in its ideal forms, and of redemption from the world, depending on how successfully they allow for a disinterested objective contemplation by removing all the relations that tie our knowledge to our own willing self and allow our knowledge to become 'subject purified of will, a clear mirror of the essence of the world' (III §36, 109). The different forms in which we experience aesthetic contemplation encourage the predominance of either the insightful knowledge into the inner nature of things, or the release from ourselves as willing subjects, hence the different intensity of feeling associated with different art forms, from the experience of raw nature and onwards into deliberate art in progressively significant forms (§38, 119).

The contemplation of architecture and 'the inorganic and vegetable worlds' allows 'the pleasure of pure will-less knowing [to] predominate, because the Ideas which are here apprehended are only low grades of the will's objectivity, and are therefore not phenomena of deep significance and rich content', thus the "higher" the grade of the will's manifestation (in representations of animals and people), the greater the aesthetic pleasure in 'the objective apprehension of these Ideas', which offers 'the greatest richness and deep significance' (§42, 135). In aesthetics as in ethics, Schopenhauer insists that all human individuals and all human actions have significance, as 'in everyone and through everything the Idea of man unfolds gradually' (§48, 145). This highlights his insistence that artistic representations of the human should balance individuality of character with the beauty of the Ideal form (145), although Janaway argues that here Schopenhauer is contradicting his claim that 'the point of art is always to express Ideas' (*Schopenhauer* 67). Cheryl Foster argues that, for Schopenhauer, there are different forms of human representation in art, pertaining more effectively either towards the species or the individual: whilst 'beauty is attributed to the shape or

form of a species in general... expression is linked with the character of the particular human individual' (237). As such, the art form chosen is effective depending on the intent of the representation, beauty being better represented by the spatial and temporal possibilities of sculpture, and expression or character through the detail of painting (Foster 237). If the intention is to reveal more of the "inner truth" of the human (and the world), then the medium should be poetry. This is because 'human cognition encompasses self-conscious memory... [thus] the highest degree of will's objectification is obtained in the representation of a series of actions as they occurred through time' (239). Significantly, the potential abstraction into the universal that this idea of "inner truth" might afford is specifically argued against by Schopenhauer, as Foster recognises (239). Schopenhauer claims the writer is able to use the imagination to 'precipitate' from concepts 'the concrete, the individual, the perceptible idea' (*WWI* III §51, 153). Schopenhauer's aesthetic owes a debt to J. W. Goethe, as he himself acknowledges (*WWI* III §45, 142), and suggests an aesthetic kinship with George Eliot and Thomas Hardy as artists who recognise the significance of the representation of individual, even mundane, human lives and actions. Both Eliot and Hardy echo Schopenhauer's own ethical perspective which validates the individual, as will be discussed in later chapters in this thesis. Literature, if it involves 'the more objective kinds of poetry, especially in the novel, the epic, and the drama', offers access to 'the revelation of the Idea of man... chiefly by two means: by accurate and profound drawing of significant characters, and by the invention of poignant situations in which they reveal themselves' (*WWI* III §51, 158). Music offers the purest form of will-less knowing, expressing the 'essential nature' of emotions themselves rather than 'particular and definite' (168) incidents, thus echoing 'our inmost nature, but entirely without reality and far removed from its pain' (171)³⁷. In this, music becomes both a universal language and precise, according directly to the thing-in-itself rather than phenomena, thus 'precedes all form' (170) and thereby the aesthetically-redeemed individual steps out of time and particularity.

³⁷ Whilst allowing that it is not possible to prove his argument (*WWI* III §52, 163), Schopenhauer sees music as 'the *copy of the will itself*' (164, original emphasis) rather than representation of the Ideas that other art forms enact. For Schopenhauer, music copies the will's own gradation from the lowest Ideas (base notes are equivalent to base organic matter) through to the highest self-reflective

Whilst Schopenhauer recognises only the rare individual as capable of attaining the most pure will-less knowing and salvation that aesthetic contemplation allows, the faculty 'must exist in all human beings in a smaller and different degree' to that of the genius artist, as all are capable of enjoying art and experiencing 'the beautiful or the sublime... of knowing the Ideas in things, and consequently of setting aside their [own] personality for the moment' (III §37, 118). For Schopenhauer, tragedy is 'the high-point of literature' as it reveals 'the internal conflict of the will... at the highest grade of its objectivity, and shows itself as something to be dreaded' (§51, 159). Whilst this is concerned with the 'suffering' caused by the will-to-life at the back of nature, it is significant that this also 'proceeds... through the conflicting desires of individuals', and 'through the malice and perversity of the majority' (160). It is in the 'kind of tragedy' caused 'by human action and character' which 'shows us that those powers which destroy happiness and life are such that their path to us... is always open' (161-2), as both victim and perpetrator, and as the ethical human individual able to act within and against these elements of tragedy. Aesthetics then, for Schopenhauer, are also always concerned with the question of suffering, and the ethical value of the individual.

For Schopenhauer, human culpability leads to the punishment of life, and then death, but at the same time to the possibility of atonement and redemption. Gerard Mannion recognises the importance of Schopenhauer's ethical and aesthetic stance, and that the offering of hope itself qualifies Schopenhauer's pessimism:

what best interprets Schopenhauer's worldview and the part which pessimism plays in this, is not the logically deterministic and thus unconditionally inevitable sense of pessimism. If that were so, there would be no room in his philosophy for an objective basis of morality, or of release in any form from suffering, be it via the arts, music, contemplation, mysticism or otherwise. Finally, there would be no room for a doctrine of salvation, and hence hope would be groundless in this world. (37)

For Mannion, mysticism is the most significant factor in Schopenhauer's philosophy, however, finding this ultimately leads to a philosophy that not only

manifestation of the will that is manifest in the human, realised by the digressions and endless return that are enacted in the melody (167).

'functionally resembles religious belief systems' (Foreword), but one that itself becomes a theological system in positing something "beyond" this realm of suffering experience' (284) as the endpoint of his philosophy. Mannion claims that Schopenhauer's 'belief in a moral significance to the world' arises out of finding "religious" longings more intellectually satisfying than the older dogmatic systems which he had now set aside', a path which Mannion sees as one that 'leads into a greater engagement with morality' (284). Mannion argues that *only* through "religious" belief systems that posit a form of reality outside of human experience can one become deeply engaged in the quest for a moral basis in existence, claiming that 'religion and morality are often interrelated because they share common subject matter and are at one in purpose – namely, the fulfilment/salvation of the human being and community, in relation to the ground of being itself' (285). Mannion fails to recognise that religious systems are a vehicle for human concerns, including moral concerns, but are secondary to the human, seeing religious constructs instead as somehow standing by themselves with secularised moral concerns trying to keep up. As will be discussed in Chapter 2, Feuerbach recognises religion to be nothing more nor less than reified human aims and relations, and as such opens the door to deconstructing the alienation of the individual that religious constructs effect. Schopenhauer recognises elements in religion that uphold his own arguments, but argues against the attempt to transcend the reality of human experience in life for a form of salvation beyond life. His advocacy of salvation is the relief of suffering *in human existence*, and as such occupies an accessible terminology rather than seeking to attain union with some form of final reality beyond it. Schopenhauer explicitly draws upon Eastern religions and philosophies, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, at least as much as Christian theology, as Janaway recognises (*Schopenhauer* 15). Eastern religions express the creation and return of life from and to the sublime nothingness of Nirvana (*Schopenhauer WWI* IV §64, 220-22), recognise our perceptions of existence in space and time as false (I §1, 8), and advocate the ideal of ascetic salvation³⁸. Yet at the same time, Schopenhauer clearly foregrounds his salvatory ethic in *practical* human terms, albeit terms that can lead to a form of psychological transcendence for the "saintly" few.

³⁸ See also Schopenhauer "Religion" 190.

Schopenhauer does explicitly argue that the “truth” of Christian ethics ‘is indestructible’ (IV §68, 243), as Janaway recognises in Schopenhauer’s aligning of his own view with ‘the ethical core of Christianity proper’ (“Pessimism” 320), but that Schopenhauer recognises this as a (rightly) pessimistic system (321). Schopenhauer is ‘primarily offended by the notion that the world we inhabit is a fine place, and by the idea that it fulfils some end in itself, indeed by the idea that it, and we, are here for any purpose at all’ (Janaway “Pessimism” 321). Janaway argues that Schopenhauer’s advocacy of ‘an abolition of the will within oneself as the path to what is ethically good... [leads] ultimately to a kind of resigned mystical salvation’ (*Schopenhauer* 23). But for Janaway this is *contra* Mannion’s positive mystical salvation as it leaves the individual ‘not only worthless, but... the very obstacle that must be broken down before true value is glimpsed’ (99). In retaining an ethos of salvation, Schopenhauer does paradoxically offer an optimistic route in offering hope in the first place. Most significantly, however, he imparts a *value* in existence, particularly in his emphasis on ethical behaviour as worthwhile for individuals *in this life*, emphasising that ethical behaviour exists *a priori* of religious delineations as ethical feeling is inherent to our understanding of the world and our relationships with others, and thus salvation from suffering is concretely realisable in human existence. Whilst the goal *of* existence is the final return to nothingness, the goal *in* existence is, at the very least, to act justly towards our fellow sufferers, better still, deliberately act to relieve suffering where we can, thus human knowledge informs behaviour and acts against the *non*-ethical goal in existence that is dictated by the blindly voracious desiring will.

Whilst refuting the existence of God and positing a world of inevitable and perpetual suffering, Schopenhauer retains an objective of salvation in his philosophy. He characteristically expects only a few to achieve the ultimate redemption attainable through severe asceticism as this route is ‘inappropriate to the great majority of people’ (*WWI* IV §68, 242). Across the range of his ethical delineations, Schopenhauer draws a clear distinction between the idea of a life of inevitable suffering to a lesser or greater degree for all and the idea of deliberately condemning our fellow sufferers to suffer for all eternity, which is nothing less than egoism, whether framed within religious dogma or otherwise. Schopenhauer places the finite world of suffering as one which offers the

potential for salvation to those who would deny their own will for the sake of others, the determination of character being a reason why most would not, in fact, be able to attain this in its most extreme ascetic form. In several respects, Schopenhauer's views on the Christian religion coincide with Eliot's and Hardy's own atheistic concerns, particularly in terms of the abhorrence of dogma, of punishment or reward after death - and the refusal to recognise the significance of the real world that arises from this - and their insistence that equality rather than hierarchy should distinguish human relations³⁹. Eliot's ethical deliberations in *Middlemarch* will be shown in Chapter 5 to bear significant relationships with Schopenhauerian thinking on a number of levels, not least in the form that salvation takes in the novel, albeit Eliot refusing asceticism. Schopenhauer in a sense recognises a doctrine of the chosen few in his advocacy of ascetic self-denial as the ultimate ideal of salvation, as this is an avenue that only a few remarkable and "saintly" people would be capable of attaining. Despite this, he places the majority of the human race into the categories of "just" human and "good" human as he insists that compassion is, in fact, a natural urge in everyone (apart from egoists, presumably). This suggests that our predetermined character and motivations, whilst they cannot be changed, thus fall into the "just" or "good" human categories as a norm for most people. Despite his clear atheism, Schopenhauer recognises essential "truths" in the New Testament story of The Fall into sin⁴⁰, because the will itself is the source of all evil in the world, and we are will in phenomenal form (*WWI* IV §70, 258-9), thus we redeem ourselves through self-denial (§68, 242-3)⁴¹. Schopenhauer agrees with the Christian emphasis that its 'god should become man' as 'salvation and redemption from the sorrows of this world can come only from the world itself' (§59, 206), an emphasis on the necessity to ground ethics in the human world which both Eliot and Hardy foreground. For Hardy, the idea that it is the wider world itself which must come up with the goods as far as ethical redemption and human realisation is concerned is central to the discussion of *Jude the Obscure* in Chapter 7, and

³⁹ Schopenhauer's essay, "Religion", was published in *Parerga und Paralipomena* in 1851, four years earlier than Eliot's equally vociferous attack on the doctrine of the few chosen by God for eternal salvation in "Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming" 1855.

⁴⁰ *contra* Pelagianistic innocent birth, and Rationalism: see Schopenhauer "Religion" 194-5.

⁴¹ See also Schopenhauer "Suffering": 'this world [is] a place of atonement, a sort of penal colony... [placing] every man first and foremost as a being who exists only as a consequence of his culpability and whose life is an expiation of the crime of being born' (49-50).

Hardy's relationship with Schopenhauer's thinking forms a key part of this framework.

That Schopenhauer's view of salvation is a potentially optimistic ethic is clearly visible, offering as it does tangible forms of hope of release from suffering, at the very least for the actually lived present, and even the immediate future. Whilst, as Janaway recognises, the present for Schopenhauer always means 'we shall begin willing anew [as] [e]ach present will contain a wish or desire that looks ahead to its own resolution' ("Pessimism" 323), Schopenhauer's goal of salvation can act within this cycle in perpetually seeking to act against the egoism of the will in the present, lived-in world. Salvation is as related to the idea of intellectual understanding as suffering, and suffering itself adds motive/momentum to choice in the deliberate act to relieve the suffering we see all around us. Schopenhauer sees the present moment not as one in which hedonism should reign⁴² but as one in which a positive sense of human compassion is attainable. That all human actions are the responsibility of each individual places the emphasis on our intellect enabling us to choose to relieve suffering through denial of the will, albeit subject to the individual having the character and motive to do so. Our relations with the rest of humanity should be informed by compassion rather than accusation, thus providing the ground for Schopenhauer's ethics. Schopenhauer himself claims his ethics:

demonstrates theoretically the metaphysical foundation of justice and charity, and then indicate[s] the goal to which these, if practised in perfection, must ultimately lead. At the same time it... confesses the reprehensible nature of the world and points to... denial of the will as... redemption from it. ("Affirmation" 63)

Schopenhauer retains the quasi-religious element of salvation in his philosophy, albeit a secularised ideal which does not hint towards the existence of God-after-all, but to a state of human transcendence which seeks to relieve suffering in the world through its attainment. Schopenhauer recognises that we can attain temporary relief from suffering, as well as transformative knowledge, in the arts (including philosophical contemplation⁴³), and offers an ethical renunciation of the will as the route to salvation from perpetual suffering. In this, Schopenhauer

⁴² See Schopenhauer "Vanity", 52.

⁴³ Although intellectual genius transcends the individual body and exists more in the rest of the world, rather than transcending the world altogether: see Schopenhauer "Philosophy", 129-32.

places value in the lived present, and, whilst this is a moment in which one recognises life at the same time as the ascetic ideal seeks to *transcend* life, it is a moment in which ethical behaviour necessarily acknowledges that each individual life does indeed have value (and seeks to improve that value for the existential individual). The important issue here is that Schopenhauer's pessimism is not unmitigated but qualified by offering forms of hope, both in the present and the immediate future, of effecting genuine salvation from suffering.

Chapter 2

Feuerbach, Optimism, and the Accessibility of Salvation.

'The single man for himself possesses the essence of man neither in himself as a moral being nor in himself as a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community and unity of man with man; it is a unity, however, which rests only on the reality of the distinction between I and thou.'

Ludwig Feuerbach 1843¹

I. Feuerbach and the essence of the real.

Ludwig Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841) was first translated into English, *The Essence of Christianity*, by George Eliot in 1854². The main emphasis of this work is Feuerbach's deconstruction of Christian theology to reveal its source and true object as nothing more nor less than human nature. The aspects of Feuerbach's position which are of primary interest here are his construction and placing of the human, his ethical position and its relationship to human consciousness, and the reality and value of his vision of human salvation in relation to his position as a whole. The ramifications and accessibility of Feuerbach's overtly optimistic philosophical salvation form the central focus of this thesis, and his recognition and deconstruction of the means of individual alienation by social constructs also has a significant bearing. This chapter will assess Feuerbach's philosophical system, and examine the extent to which his optimism may actually be undermined within its own framework, as well as by its relationship with the existential world. Feuerbach's *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843) offers elaborations on Feuerbach's position as set out in *The Essence of Christianity*, although *The Essence* was the most widely disseminated of his writings in Victorian Britain, and thus forms the core of this examination of Feuerbach's position.

¹ *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, §59, 71.

² The George Eliot translation is the edition utilised in this thesis: New York: Prometheus Books, 1989.

Feuerbach's philosophical career began more than a decade after Schopenhauer's began, and for several years, Feuerbach and Schopenhauer were writing and publishing their respective works concurrently with one another³. Feuerbach was a pupil of Schopenhauer's antithesis Hegel, but he disagreed with Hegel in crucial areas. These disagreements not only lead to his grounding of philosophy in radically different terms to Hegel's, but Feuerbach's own vision of the human reveals areas of significant interest when juxtaposed with Schopenhauer's position, as will be discussed in this chapter. Feuerbach's position will be addressed from his philosophical ground first of all, moving into the key role that human consciousness plays, before addressing the reality and value of Feuerbachian salvation. Feuerbach's delineations of the human and salvation on all levels are densely interrelated, however, particularly to the central issue of human nature as this forms the key to his philosophical position in every respect, and Feuerbach's apotheosis of salvation-through-consciousness is a constant presence.

First of all, Feuerbach's philosophical construction of the human sets the ground of his optimistic position. Whilst Feuerbach's dialectical approach and use of the concept of alienation is Hegelian, his philosophy is one that critically argues against a Hegelian grounding and endpoint in Absolute Reason⁴. Feuerbach's salvation is proposed as a form of human self-realisation in a secularised but fundamentally corporeal world, and is a vision that Feuerbach's departures from Hegelian abstraction appear to make possible. Feuerbach declares his starting point to be:

³ Schopenhauer read at least some of Feuerbach's work as he criticises 'Herr Feuerbach, a Hegelian (*c'est tout dire*) [that says it all]' for his high estimation of Fichte's ideas as 'even more sublime than Kant's' (*Morality* II §11, 119 fn36). For Schopenhauer, Fichte's works are written in a 'diffuse and tedious style... and really with the idea of misleading, not instructing, the reader' (118), Fichte having now 'displaced... Kant's philosophy... by bombastic superlatives, extravagances, and nonsense in the mask of profound thought' (119). Thus Schopenhauer apparently dismisses Feuerbach by virtue of the latter's Hegelianism and his admiration for the "sublimity" of Fichte. Feuerbach, on the other hand, terms Schopenhauer 'an idealist infected with the epidemic of materialism' (quoted Marx Wartofsky 384).

⁴ Charles Wilson, in examining the relationship between Feuerbach and Hegel, argues against a tendency he sees amongst other critical approaches to place Feuerbach as beginning with Hegel and then going on to develop his own independent critique of his former mentor. Wilson posits instead Feuerbach's primary independence, but one that later 'takes from Hegel a unitive conceptuality' (385).

not the Absolute Mind of Hegel, in short, no abstract, merely conceptual being, but a *real* being, the true *Ens realissimum* – man⁵; its principle, therefore, is in the highest degree positive and real. It generates thought from the *opposite* of thought, from Matter, from existence, from the senses; it has relation to its object first through the senses, *i.e.*, passively, before defining it in thought. (*The Essence of Christianity*, Preface, xv, original emphasis)

Thus Feuerbach marks a significant distinction between his own approach and what he sees as the problem in Hegel's abstractions. Feuerbach recognises the corporeal, existential human as the ground for his philosophy, at the same time as displacing Hegel's primacy of thought into a secondary manifestation which arises from this experiential source. In both these aspects, central to Feuerbach's position, he echoes Schopenhauer's insistence that philosophy must necessarily be grounded in the material world, with consciousness arising out of sensual experience of this world, thus placing intellect as a secondary and uniquely human development⁶. Also like Schopenhauer, Feuerbach sees human *consciousness* to be of crucial concern to his philosophical position. Nonetheless, in examining the ground, reality, accessibility, and value of Feuerbach's optimistic vision of salvation, his placing of the human - particularly in relation to the role of individual consciousness itself - will be seen to undermine his overt optimism in significant terms.

Feuerbach's defining work is one in which he, like Schopenhauer, recognises a "truth" in religion (*Essence* IV, 54). For Feuerbach, this is not a pessimistic recognition of the fundamental culpability of the will-to-life as the cause of the perpetual suffering in the world (or "original sin"), and the culpability of the human as manifestation of this will and the necessarily self-denying route of redemption from it. Feuerbach's position is one that places the human as the exalted species and the true divine object of religion, as, behind all its dogmatic and metaphorical disguises, religion is that which 'fundamentally, not in intention or according to its own supposition, but in its... essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature' (Preface, xvi).

⁵ Feuerbach, like Schopenhauer, represents the human via the generic *Mensch* which translates as "human" or "person" rather than gender-specific *Mann*, but Eliot follows the time-honoured tradition of terming the human as "man". Thomas Wartenberg (xxvi fn18) claims that Eliot's translation obscures Feuerbach's terminology, but Feuerbach's specific emphasis on the importance of gender is clear in her translation.

⁶ See Chapter 1, especially 20-21.

Through religion, the human has become alienated from its own nature which is objectified outside of itself into the Divine form of God. Feuerbach also places previous philosophical thought-systems as the cause of alienation, as here the figure of God becomes an equally abstract Absolute (*Principles* §10, 12-13). In the religious pursuit of salvation the human is seeking to unify itself with its own nature, which in Christianity is through Christ (reified and deified human nature) as unifying object. For Feuerbach, that the divine object of religion is a God with human characteristics, and that the happiness and eternal salvation of humankind is *His* object, not only reveals that human nature is the true object of religion in disguised form but that human nature is itself therefore *divine* to the human (*Essence* I, 30). By *recognising* the true aim of the human as its own “divine” nature, the two being one and the same thing, the human can finally overcome this alienation, a recognition which would come about through Feuerbach’s ‘new philosophy’ (*Principles* §57, 71) itself and concretely act to transform both the individual and society. As Thomas Wartenberg recognises, ‘Feuerbach proclaimed the need for an “anthropological and materialist” philosophy, one that would begin with human beings as they concretely existed and would not posit any reality beyond that in which they lived’, believing that ‘[w]ithout the presence of religious and philosophic abstractions... human beings could come to realize their own divinity, thus creating a world in which the human race could fully realize its potential as a species’ (viii). Charles Wilson goes further, arguing that on a significant level Feuerbach *uses* ‘Christology’ as it ‘guards against abstraction, against identifying divinity... with pure... abstract, reason’ because it ‘represents religious consciousness’ own good sense to oppose the abstract’ (394), Feuerbach coming to see in religion itself ‘the founding of a *community*, not an individualized consciousness’ (390). Warren Breckman pursues this argument into one of direct politicization, arguing that Feuerbach works against the ‘debilitating social and political effects’ of Protestant ‘inwardness’ whilst recognising that the ‘redemptive power’ of love, alongside recognition of the divinity of humanity, ‘make it the potential ally of the true human society if the intensity of its inward feeling could be converted into external activity’ (458). In revealing that religion is, therefore, nothing more nor less than ‘the *immediate object*, the *immediate nature*, of man’ (*Essence* xxii, original emphasis), Feuerbach offers salvation from human disunity or alienation

in a secular teleological process of realisation wherein the universal human condition can be improved, *contra* Schopenhauer's recognition of stasis from which the individual can attain temporary transcendence but the human condition itself cannot be changed. This chapter will examine the implications, stability, and accessibility of Feuerbach's optimistic vision.

The essential nature of the human, for Feuerbach, is a tripartite group of elements or *essences*. These are 'Reason, Will, Affection'⁷ and also form the 'ultimate aim' of the human, as this 'ultimate aim is also the true basis and principle of a being' (I, 4). An aim is itself a necessity, thus a fundamental aspect of the human (4). The aims of Reason and Affection are simply reason and love themselves as object, and of Will 'Freedom of the will' (3). These forces are 'perfect existence' to human perception through the experience of 'an infinite joy' (6) they arouse, although this is only regarding *positive* or "good" original powers or essences, as "good" essences are Feuerbach's only claim⁸. Reason and Affection appear to be antithetical essences which, in opposing one another, seem in perpetual disunity. Reason is 'the self-consciousness of the species', having 'relation to existences, as things' (as parts of the whole), and is therefore also 'the annihilation of personality' (Appendix §4, 285). Affection or Feeling on the other hand, is 'sympathy... [which] arises only in the love of man to man... [therefore] only in community', and is 'aesthetic, human sensation' in which 'man is related to his fellow-man as to himself... alive to the sorrows, the joys of another as his own' (App. §2, 283). Feeling, *contra* reason, 'has relation to existences... as *persons*', being 'the self-consciousness of individuality', and the 'heart sacrifices the species to the individual' (App. §4, 285, my emphasis). For Feuerbach, it is only in the human species as a whole where human nature (Reason, Affection and Will) is in its *perfect* form (I, 7). The individual human is a limited and finite – therefore imperfect – manifestation of the species (App.

⁷ Kit Christensen (350) and Wartofsky (261-4) argue that here Feuerbach is echoing Greek philosophy and the delineation of the tripartite human "soul".

⁸ For Feuerbach, the proof that the human is the "hidden" true object of religion lies particularly in the nature of Affection or feeling, as it is in and through feeling that religion/God/human essence is experienced and known: '[i]f... feeling is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is nothing else than an expression of the nature of feeling' (*Essence* I, 9), and a religious object 'is itself a religious one only when it is not an object of the cold understanding or memory, but of feeling' (10). Feeling is in itself only "good", and this is how he claims feelings as both the essence of the human, and of the divine, asking '[i]f feeling in itself is good, religious, *i.e.*, holy, divine, has not feeling its God in itself?' (10).

§1, 281) and of these elements (I, 23; II, 34). These defining forces are infinite ‘because every perfect existence, every original power and essence, is the immediate verification and affirmation of itself’ (I, 6), thus infinite in the perpetual revelation of themselves spatially and temporally in the species. The individual recognises self-limitation, finiteness, only by virtue of recognising ‘the perfection, the infinitude of his species’, and thus any limitation the individual recognises in the self which they then attribute to the whole of the human race is in error, for the ‘essence’ of the human is both unlimited and perfect (7)⁹. Any “bad” element is individual fault, lack of perfection, and as such, an issue which needs to be addressed is what happens to the less positive human emotions and experiences in Feuerbach’s ethic of salvation.

The Will is the ‘energy of character’ through which we exert our human and individual character-as-object, and we *will* ‘that we may be free’ (3), *free will* being the Feuerbachian Will’s ultimate aim. Yet freedom is only attainable through the understanding, which is itself necessary if we are to exhibit our Will as ‘[o]nly he who thinks is free and independent’ (II, 39). Intellect can also free the individual from corporeal and emotional subjectivity, ‘from the anguish of the heart’, through effecting objectivity, ““want[ing] nothing”” and thereby ““not to subject ourselves to things”” (34). This echoes Schopenhauer’s intellectual transcendence of suffering wherein knowledge of the objective whole, of the world-as-will, effects freedom from individual subjective willing. The operation of *free will*, for Feuerbach, arises from knowledge, from the intellect, as only the thinker can exert free will (39), yet at the same time the Will appears to be a manifestation of species-essence rather than of the individual as such. Feuerbach’s Will acts to overcome individual limitation, being ‘the force of morality’ which suppresses passions or renounces a habit by filling ‘thee with

⁹ The issue of human perfection also relates to Feuerbach’s delineation of aesthetic pleasure, which reaches the height of perfection in the contemplation of the human form. Whilst this might be seen to echo Schopenhauer’s elevation of aesthetic contemplation in art being that which depicts the human (in all art, but particularly in literature), as this allows access to the Ideal human manifestation of the will (an Ideal the will is perpetually seeking) at the same time as it allows access to the individual, for Feuerbach this is because the human (*species*) is the apotheosis of existence, thus is perfection in this sense. The ‘absolute, the perfect form, can delight without envy in the forms of other beings’ (*Essence* I, 7 fn 1) as it finds *itself* ‘more beautiful, more sublime’, having that which enables it to reach ‘the highest form of self-assertion, the form which is itself a superiority, a perfection, a bliss, a good’; it has ‘consciousness’ (7). To find the *individual* human form beautiful, however, is vanity (6), thus a representation can only be perfect if it represents the ideal, the species, rather than the imperfect individual.

indignation against thyself and thy individual weaknesses’, and thus ‘achievest a victory over thyself’ (I, 4), the selfish individual¹⁰. Feuerbach’s Will overrides what he sees as the weakness or imperfection of the individual who is therefore falling short of the perfection of the species; phenomena *contra* essence. Here Feuerbach’s moral will appears on one level to act in the equivalent role of Schopenhauer’s ethical intellect, which overrides the blind-will-as-essence’s egoistic self-affirmation, albeit with a crucial distinction. Schopenhauer’s intellect-driven ethical behaviour arises from *I-thou* recognition of one’s fellow sufferer, and thereby the individual (subject to character) can choose to override his or her own egoistic will or instinctive behaviour to ensure this does not cause *thou* suffering. Schopenhauer’s ultimate position of deliberate self-denial, asceticism, is also one of choice, ensuring that the individual manifestation of the will does not cause *thou* suffering whilst at the same time lifting *I* out of subjective willing. Although on one level predetermined by the unique character of the individual, Schopenhauer’s ethical behaviour (and ascetic self-negation) nonetheless offers itself as a *choice* that individuals can make. For Schopenhauer the primary essence which seeks to override the individual and assert itself is the blind will-to-life, but which can itself be overridden by the intellectual ethical intent of the individual. For Feuerbach on the other hand, the ‘force of morality’, whilst apparently related to species-consciousness (thus reason) in opposing individual limitation, is not ‘thy own personal power’ but is an almost external force which steps in and ‘seizes the mastery of thee’ (*Essence* I, 4). The moral good of the species is an all-seeing essence which overrides the egoism of the imperfect and erring individual, appearing to make egoistic behaviour or evil acts *essentially* “unnatural”, even impossible. How can an individual do harm if the moral will steps in and ‘seizes the mastery of thee’ (4)? For Feuerbach, the species is both predicate and essence, thus the moral force of the species arises and overrides the imperfect and failing individual *in spite of themselves*.

Feuerbach also posits Feeling or ‘love’ as something which is ‘stronger’ than ‘the individual’, being, again, *not* his or her ‘own individual power’ but somehow above and beyond the individual, and this is even a ‘death-conquering power’ (4). The same applies to Reason, ‘which governs and absorbs thee’ (4).

¹⁰ Wartofsky explains Feuerbach’s Will as the ‘divine morality and justice of God’s perfect

The unity of Reason, Will and Affection are the ‘divine trinity in man’, they are ‘the animating, determining, governing [absolute] powers’ and as such are ‘above the individual man’ (3), and are that out of which the human is formed, that is they *predetermine* the human. That these are defining and absolute powers for Feuerbach is clear in that he sees the powers of Reason, Affection and Will to be *a priori* forces in control over the individual human and, therefore, the ‘*absolute* to man is his own nature’ (5, original emphasis). Feuerbach’s “holy trinity” of Affection, Reason, and Will control individual human beings *despite themselves* as their “good” species-essence overrides individual “bad” ‘passion’ or ‘habit’ (4). Species essence, then, not only ‘governs’ but ‘*absorbs*’ (4, my emphasis) the individual. The philosophical ground of Feuerbach’s relationship between the alienated individual and divine human essence effectively negates and thus devalues the individual on a number of levels.

goodness, and... the tension between divine law and divine mercy’ (263).

II. *Human consciousness: the ethics of community, and the question of salvation.*

Human consciousness is at the root of what it means to be human, forming the ground of Feuerbach's ethical position and the means by which alienation is overcome to attain unity, the 'joy' (*Essence* App. §3, 284) of salvation¹¹. The significance of Feuerbach's recognition that human consciousness is above that of other sentient creatures lies in the ability the human has to think about itself, not as an individual but as a *species*, thus:

...a being to whom his own species, his own nature, is an object of thought, can make the essential nature of other things or beings an object of thought... [thereby]... is himself at once I and thou; he can put himself in the place of another, for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought. (I, 2)

For Feuerbach, human nature and human species are the same thing, this thing being *in essence* "good" and the object towards which all human beings necessarily tend (4). His delineation of *I-thou* recognition is part of this object. Religion, particularly Christianity for Feuerbach, takes the place of that *I-thou* inner cognition which pertains only to and between human beings regarding the human species in its 'infinite nature' (2). In showing how religion is conflated with human species-consciousness at the same time as it obscures this relation, Feuerbach posits this unveiling as itself the key to human ethics, and the individual-species unity that is human destiny (*Principles* §57, 71). For Feuerbach, two persons (*I* and *thou*) provide 'the principle of multiplicity and all its essential results' the second person being 'the self-assertion of the human heart as the principle of duality, of participated life' (*Essence* VI, 68). Feuerbach's *I-thou* relationship affirms a positive sense of self and world as it confers meaning onto existence as, without the fellow human through which one recognises that which is essentially the same and thus that which is essentially different, the world is meaningless (VIII, 82). This also confers a positive recognition of individuality (82) to self-consciousness, and opens the door to ethical human relations. As Eugene Kamenka emphasises, for Feuerbach ethics

¹¹ Feuerbach posits his own philosophy as that which enables unity through understanding, and thus overcomes the alienation that religion and (previous forms of) philosophy have effected (*Principles* §57, 71).

must be 'grounded both logically and empirically in man's nature and man's desires... [and] derive moral principles from man and not man from moral principles' (124). On a fundamental level, however, 'man's being went beyond his individual self and could not be understood without going beyond it' (Kamenka 119), and here, for Feuerbach, the individual also recognises the self as *essentially* limited, as the 'powers of humanity [are] not of man as an individual' (*Essence* VIII, 83) but of the species as a whole.

For Feuerbach, human nature is the divine, perfect and infinite good, and presents itself as:

...an infinite plenitude or multitude of predicates which are... so different that the one does not immediately involve the other, [and] is realised *only in* an infinite plenitude or multitude of different beings or individuals... Each new man is a new predicate, a new phasis of humanity... It is true that there are the same elements in every individual, but under such various conditions and modifications that they appear new and peculiar. (I, 23, my emphasis)

These human powers are positive and 'infinite' (VIII, 83) powers only when realised spatially and teleologically in the species (83). Whilst this consciousness of self and other must be understood as grounded in the corporeal, experiential world, in 'concrete or living totality', this is also where 'the identity of self-consciousness exists only as the pregnant, complete unity of *I and thou*' (VI, 66, original emphasis): an expectant unity which always recognises the individual self as *essentially limited* without such unity. This unity 'rests only on the reality of the distinction between I and thou' (*Principles* §59, 71) and, for Feuerbach, reality is that which also exists for others, that is, is not thought only (§25, 39) - thus reality, existence, occurs only in the participation that is found in community. This is particularly exalted in terms of intimate male-female relations (gender-distinction itself being essential to personality), and such relationships are more profound for Feuerbach than 'the monotonous *thou* between friends' (*Essence* IX, 92). Both Feuerbach and Schopenhauer see sexual love as an *essential* object of life. For Schopenhauer this is an essential impulse of the will as it affirms and perpetuates the will-to-life, but in thus perpetuating the existence of suffering it is not a good thing (although he does concede the

possibility of a positive, even *happy*, male-female relationship¹²). For Feuerbach sexual love also affirms the “essence”, but for him this is ‘thy whole principle’ (IX, 92), the divine essence that is human nature, thus a good thing. In being self-consciously ‘*at once I and thou*’ (I, 2, my emphasis), love occupies the unifying aspect, which in Christianity is the position of the Holy Spirit in the Father-Son-Holy Ghost trinity: for Feuerbach it is *I-thou-love* (VI, 67) and is a unity effected through Feeling. Indeed, Affection or Feeling ‘is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is nothing else than an expression of the nature of feeling’ (1,9). As Wilson suggests, for Feuerbach:

Both divinity and the individual undergo a dialectical externalization... [whereby divinity] instantiates itself in the individual when the individual rises to species-consciousness... [and] Religion’s need to be concrete and communal can be honoured; philosophy simply... decodes the Christological moment into a dialectical othering, the famous I-Thou relationship which produces divine humanity itself. (394)

Whilst this potentially places both self and other in positive terms, claims the ground of human ethics in real, lived human community and offers a positive ethic of salvation in and through the unity that community offers, the *accessibility* of such unity for the individual is still open to question. Kit Christensen, drawing a link between Feuerbach’s *I-thou* and Hegel’s delineation of reflexivity of consciousness as mediator of the recognition of self and other¹³, sees that in a real sense the self-awareness of *I* is dependent on the perceived relations with *thou* (343). Because the ‘relationship between myself as an individual and the species, and my relationship to myself, are both necessarily *mediated* by other persons’ (Christensen 343), community becomes *the* formative factor for individual self-consciousness. Christensen fails to examine the ramifications of this in anything other than the positive terms that Feuerbach himself envisages in the exalted form of a unified species-community, however. Whilst recognising that the self-conscious reflection of subjectivity also involves the ‘capacity to take the “point of view” of the conscious other’ (344), Christensen discusses neither the potential ethical relationship this signposts, nor how it might impact on Feuerbach’s individual self-consciousness of *essential* imperfection. On this level alone the relationship between the self-conscious *I*

¹² *WWR* “Metaphysics” (558), and see Chapter 1 (34) above.

and *thou* might form itself in a variety of different ways. The self-conscious *I* might recognise another individual *thou* as another alienated finite and imperfect individual or as the desired object of divine unity, thus paving the way for compassionate human relations. *I* might equally recognise *thou* as more perfect, however, or understand that *thou* also recognises *I*'s failings, therefore compounding the self-consciousness of failure, of diminishing worth. Christensen echoes Feuerbach's delineation of *I-thou* relations in purely positive terms, ignoring the possibility that these could be negative or damaging to an individual's sense of self that the essentialising of *I* as imperfect and *thou* as perfection is equally capable of enacting. Feuerbachian *I-thou* consciousness has further negative implications, however, and on a number of significant levels.

In claiming that 'Love does not exist without sympathy, sympathy does not exist without suffering in common... Sympathy presupposes a like nature' (*Essence* IV, 54), Feuerbach appears to echo Schopenhauer's grounding of ethics in human consciousness of *I* and *thou* as the same in terms which recognise the experience of suffering. For Feuerbach, however, this arises from the recognition of a human *species* which is *in essence* good, perfect, and divine rather than Schopenhauer's ethic of individual compassion for one's fellow sufferer, trapped in stasis within a world of endless will, desire and perpetual suffering¹⁴. Thus for Feuerbach suffering will be dissolved in and by communal human relations. Feuerbach largely effaces the question of suffering, only attempting to answer this problem through his optimistic vision of teleological human destiny wherein human unhappiness – which arises through alienation of the individual from human nature – can always be overcome through species-consciousness. Wartofsky argues that for Feuerbach suffering is always reduced to 'the humanity of God, or... the exaltation of human compassion, human self-sacrifice, human suffering for the sake of another, as divine' (291-2). Suffering, when it does exist for Feuerbach, becomes a quasi-Christian self-sacrifice for the sake of the species as 'to suffer for others is divine' (*Essence* V, 60), with the danger that, as Kamenka recognises, 'much of [Feuerbach's] work suggests a concern to *subordinate* individual "happiness" to the common weal' (142). The

¹³ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), J. B. Baillie trans., New York: Harper Torchbook edition, Harper and Row, 1967, pp229-231.

ramifications of Feuerbach's placing of the essence of human nature as *the good*, *the divine* (*Essence* I, 9-10) extend from the psychology to the fundamental nature of human existence. This is in terms of both individual and species, and concerns the present limitation or disunity (and even culpability) of the individual and the necessary objective of human destiny:

The holy is in opposition to me only as regards the modifications of my personality, but as regards my fundamental nature it is in unity with me. The holy is a reproach to my sinfulness; in it I recognise myself as a sinner; but in so doing, while I blame myself, I acknowledge what I am not, but ought to be, and what, for that very reason, I, according to my destination, can be; for an "ought" which has no corresponding capability does not affect me, is a ludicrous chimæra without any true relation to my mental constitution. But when I acknowledge goodness as my destination, as my law, I acknowledge it, whether consciously or unconsciously, as my own nature. Another nature than my own, one different in quality, cannot touch me. I can perceive sin as sin, only when I perceive it to be a contradiction of myself with myself - that is, of my personality with my fundamental nature. As a contradiction of the absolute, considered as another being, the feeling of sin is inexplicable, unmeaning. (28)

Human disunity - and consequently unhappiness - arises from the alienation of the human individual from its own nature, and both religion and philosophy (from early speculative to Absolute idealism (*Principles* §10, 12-14; §24, 38-9)) enact this alienation. The true object of salvation for Feuerbach is human nature itself, as the quest and desire for moral goodness and eternal human happiness that is projected onto God as His aim for human destination reveals this to be what the *human* desires the destination of the human should be (*Essence* I, 30). The human search for goodness is also the search for happiness, suggesting that God (therefore the human) 'wills that man should be good, happy - for without goodness there is no happiness' (30). Feuerbach reveals how Christianity attempts to posit that only God is good - and is *only* good - whilst the human is 'wicked, corrupt, incapable of good' (28), thus reclaims goodness for the human who must possess it if able to not only recognise goodness but deify it also (28). The impulse to do "good" is a divine instinct as it is 'an inward necessity' sprung 'out of the human nature' (V, 60), but is not external to the human in the form of an abstract God as 'the antithesis of divine and human is... illusory', and should be recognised instead as 'the antithesis between the human nature in general and

¹⁴ Feuerbach's ethic is exclusively pertaining to the exalted human whereas Schopenhauer's

the human individual' (I, 13-14). Yet despite the human species being seen in such positive, indeed exalted terms, the question of whether the individual remains essentially and perpetually in the negative role of alienation is a crucial one. As the 'holy' is *essentially* 'in opposition to me... as regards the modifications of my personality' (28), this may present an insurmountable problem that undermines the extent to which Feuerbach's vision of salvation can be termed "optimistic". Salvation is attained in unity with the species through *I-thou-love* species-consciousness, and alienation is also overcome through individual aim or objective as part of this process, but is equally effected through human consciousness. Feuerbach's apparent perpetuation of the religious bifurcation of the holy-divine from the sinful-human has significant ramifications for individual self-consciousness, and the accessibility of salvation for the individual.

In terms of the aim or objective of the individual, for Feuerbach human existence has an aim as a necessity as the human 'is nothing without an object', and this aim is always related to 'this subject's own, but objective, nature' (4). The 'manifested nature' of each individual is their 'true objective *ego*' (5, original emphasis), and is the modified form of essential human nature that each individual expresses. Their individual aspiration in life is 'the conscious, voluntary, essential impulse of life' and *itself* acts to effect 'the unity of the material and spiritual in the individual' (V, 64). Each individual's aim in life also becomes that through which each can/should overcome their own alienation as an individual (the material limited manifestation of human nature) from their essential nature (their "spirit" or essence), by acting as the medium through which their perfect and divine self is realised. Wilson recognises that Feuerbach is seeking a way in which Christianity's 'separation of nature and spirit must be overcome' (389), and that he is looking for 'a middle ground between sheer acceptance of the sensual (as materialists do) and sheer renunciation of it (as religions do)' (398). Human consciousness for Feuerbach is equally part of human destiny, as the human 'is destined not merely to action, but also to contemplation' (*Essence* I, 5). Whilst intellectual and aesthetic contemplation can effect their own objective transcendence (II, 34) and thus species-

extends to all manifestations of the will: see Chapter 1 (30) above.

consciousness, the role that human self-consciousness plays is clearly fundamental to his philosophical position. Feuerbach offers a positive vision of individual value in claiming ‘that alone is holy to man which lies deepest within him, which is most peculiarly his own, the basis, the essence of his individuality’ as manifested in the particular aims of the individual, whether through what that person recognises as the divine, their version of God (V, 63), or in their own personal objectives in life (I, 4). This manifested aim is a kind of projected image of the alienated self; thus affirmation of an objective is always self-affirmation (6), and in a sense forms a “middle ground” between the individual and the species in being the individual manifestation of human essence. This middle ground is one that Feuerbach recognises as politically and concretely transformative for both individual and society, as Breckman recognises in Feuerbach’s attempt ‘to overcome the *depoliticization* of Christian civil society by grounding human action in a meaningful communal context’ (457). This transformation is, however, in terms that take it into the realms of a divine salvation that again acts to absorb the individual into the species, and thus attain her or his sublime destiny:

Work is worship... And the higher the occupation, the more completely does a man identify himself with it... But through his aim, through the activity in which he realises this aim, man is not only something for himself, but also something for others, for the general life, the species. He... who lives in the consciousness of the species as a reality, regards his existence for others, his relation to society, his utility to the public, as that existence which is one with the existence of his own essence - as his immortal existence. (*Essence* XVIII, 171)

As such, the aim – the work – of the individual becomes a means of overcoming their alienation, each realising their human essence or “perfect” potential by uniting with the species in a *conscious* appreciation of their role within the community, the species. Feuerbach has reclaimed *goodness* for the human, and attempts to place work/aspiration as a means to concrete self-realisation in that it becomes a unifying salvatory force. Yet consciousness is ‘self-verification, self-affirmation, self-love, joy in one’s own perfection’ which ‘is the characteristic mark of a perfect nature... exist[ing] only in a self-sufficing, complete being’ (I, 6) in relation to self as consciously *part of* the divine goodness that is the human species. With the potential difference between work as it is actually experienced and Feuerbach’s ideal of work as ‘worship’ (XVIII,

171), alongside the other negative implications regarding self-consciousness and communal relations, both personal and public, already touched upon earlier, there are clearly problems here. What are the implications for the imperfect individual, for their consciousness of the not-good, of imperfection, in themselves (28), in their relationships with others, in their own aim in life, their less-than-divine work, and in existence, particularly the experience and knowledge of pain and suffering? If salvation is attained through individual aim united with the species through consciousness, the question also needs to be asked how the individual alienated by external relations, whether religious, philosophical, social, personal, or related to their aim in life itself in the real conditions of work for instance, is to attain salvation?

In terms of human feelings, for Feuerbach 'feeling, as such, is religious' (10) and is finally that through which *I-thou* community is attained. That feeling is religious in itself causes 'the distinction between specifically religious and irreligious, or at least non-religious, feelings... [to be] abolished [as] a necessary consequence of the point of view in which feeling only is regarded as the organ of the divine' (10). In Christianity, '[e]ven anger appears... an emotion not unworthy of God, provided only there be a religious motive at the foundation of this anger' (25). Whilst Feuerbach is ultimately placing all feelings *as religious*, the question is whether feelings – directly religious or otherwise - are always positive, and what happens to those feelings which might be deemed negative. This problem is particularly pertinent in the external relations of each individual, subject to the material reality of existence in the world, whether a specifically religious framework or other social structures and relations within society. As Karl Marx points out, Feuerbach idealises human nature and relationships and thus:

never arrives at the really existing active men, but stops at the abstraction "man"... know[ing] no other "human relationships" "of man to man" than love and friendship, and even then idealised... giv[ing] no criticism of the present conditions of life... [for] the individuals composing it. (*Ideology* Part 1, 64)

In discussing those less idealised human elements, Feuerbach suggests that the same religious objectification of human nature that projects this onto the divine form of God also places undesirable elements onto the equally supernatural form

of the Devil - but without examining the nature of these elements in respect of his own quest for unity:

Christians made mental phenomena into independent beings, their own feelings into qualities of things, the passions which governed them into powers which governed the world, in short, predicates of their own nature, whether recognised as such or not, into independent subjective existences. Devils... witches, ghosts, angels, were sacred truths as long as the religious spirit held undivided sway over mankind. (*Essence* Introduction §2, 22)

In this Feuerbach does suggest that the less positive aspects of human nature are nonetheless *part of* the human. In his delineation of the good and divine that is human nature, however, Feuerbach appears to effectively retain the *position* of the less positive aspects of the human and human experience in the individual-as-imperfect, the culpable 'sinner' (1, 28), and thereby undermine the optimistic vision he is keen to frame. By positioning the object of existence in the bliss of salvation that union with the perfect goodness of the species effects, Feuerbach appears to leave the individual in a state of essential and perpetual imperfection, thus remaining in the unhappiness of disunity and alienation. As human essences are in themselves 'perfections... realities', and essentially infinite, having their 'immediate verification and affirmation' (6) in the human species, Feuerbach claims that only negative, untrue elements can be negated at the same time as he clearly places these negative elements in the limited phenomena that is the individual in *essential* terms:

Religion abstracts from man, from the world; but it can only abstract from the limitations, from the phenomena... from the negative, not from the essence, the positive, of the world and humanity: hence, in the very abstraction and negation it must recover that from which it abstracts, or believes itself to abstract... [if] what is denied by it is something essential, true, and consequently incapable of being ultimately denied – it unconsciously restores [this] in God. (27)

Here Feuerbach is also again insisting that the human species-essence is also moral, true, and essential, and thus divine (28-30), but the finite 'phenomena' "man" is the 'negative' 'limitation' (27). If anger can be attributed to the divine only if 'there be a religious motive at the foundation of this anger' (25), presumably fear, pain, anxiety, misery and hatred are also part of the *good* that is human nature *only if* motivated by "religion". Other than "religiously motivated" (however that might be defined but presumably, in the terms of Feuerbach's philosophical position, motivated by species-consciousness) these less positive

attributes are related to *individual* feelings of limitation and imperfection in the knowledge that “goodness”, perfection, exists only in and as the species (28). This may leave the individual human always in a position of self-conscious alienation from *goodness*, and the individual aim perpetually languishing in an imperfect form of realisation.

In Christianity then, negative feelings are still considered in the same realm as the divine in being somehow *superhuman*, *supernatural*, thus essences of the human reified as the Devil (22), whilst “bad” or “evil” feelings being termed by religious theology also as *human* qualities marks a distinction (26-8) (and therefore alienation) between the perfect divinity of God (or species-essence) and the imperfect human, and firmly places the individual human closer to the Devil than to God, closer to evil than to goodness. Yet for Feuerbach, despite removing the cloak of religion to reveal the true object of human nature as its own divine self, those less positive human elements not “religiously” motivated *remain* that which falls short of species-perfection. Any human element which does not pertain to the perfect “goodness” of the species (however that might be defined) is thus negative, not “true” or essential, *is* deniable and presumably is one of those individualistic limitations, “bad” or ‘sinful[]’ (28) passions or habits which the force of Feuerbach’s moral Will seeks to override. Affirmation can *only* occur with positive essences, and the individual, in being necessarily a limited and finite modification (23), is still negative to the divine positive. The individual is self-consciously imperfect, negative, and deniable and as such always comes second to species, sacrificed to the positive truth of species-essence. Feuerbach’s individual is philosophically and self-consciously alienated from the perfection of the divine species, thus self-consciously alienated by and from its own salvation. The final question is how accessible Feuerbachian salvation is in practical and effective terms.

III. *Teleological salvation and the individual: reality and value.*

For Feuerbach, salvation is attained when the individual overcomes the alienation from her or his own essential nature that religion and non-Feuerbachian philosophies have enacted. This leads to the 'joy' (*Essence App.* §3, 284) of unity-through-feeling that is the destiny of the human. This salvation must be grounded in existence, and time plays a key role here for Feuerbach, as it does for Schopenhauer. Wilson argues that through being able to 'soften the negative and locate it within the infinity of reason', Feuerbach is able to 'understand the infinite, not as the *end* of the finite, but as the unfolding of the finite' and that this 'endorses a more incarnational view of the relationship of infinite to finite' (385), although Wilson does not discuss the significant role that time has in this "unfolding". In terms of the essential human elements Reason, Affection and Will, whilst the species-essence is that which pertains to the infinite and the perfect, each individual human has these elements albeit 'under such various conditions and modifications that they appear new and peculiar' (*Essence I*, 23). As such, the 'inexhaustible fulness of the divine predicates is... human nature considered as an infinitely varied, infinitely modifiable, but, consequently, phenomenal being' (23). This is the form in which the infinitude of predicates is enacted over time, and 'Time' *itself* 'not the Hegelian dialectic, is the medium of uniting opposites, contradictories, in one and the same subject' (23), thus becomes the point of synthesis. This occurs on one level in each individual subject-over-(life)time, but true unity is attained in the species over (infinite) time, thus the real, existing subject in time and space *is* the species itself (23). Wilson's suggested "unfolding" of the finite is a useful way of appreciating how individual realisation might operate here, but the question of the *accessibility* of salvation for the essentially alienated individual remains an issue.

Feuerbach places time, and his conception of where the infinite and where reality lies, differently to Schopenhauer for whom the will-to-life as the thing-in-itself is the infinite form, *outside* of time and space; the individual manifestations *in* time and space being finite and transient but, crucially, existential reality. Feuerbach positions real existence in the infinite rather than the finite. The infinite is '*a being* of really infinite qualities or predicates' (23, my emphasis) and can only manifest itself in space and time, in and through the species as a

whole, yet this manifestation is only *real* existence in this macrocosmic form not in the finite and imperfect individual form¹⁵. It is only in the temporal and spatial phenomena of the species that the infinite, divine and *perfect, unified* nature of the predicates exists. On the one hand Feuerbach marks the distinction that needs to be made between fantasy and reality as ‘the infinite fulness [*sic*] of various predicates is a conception without reality’ if it is ‘detached from the nature of man’, leaving it therefore ‘without the truth of sensible existence’ (23). Yet it is clear that it is only in and across the human species *en masse* as the phenomenal form of ‘the nature of man’ (23) that both real existence and the unity that is salvation is attainable. For Feuerbach, qualities are essential to existence (15) and, whilst asserting that ‘[e]verything that exists has value, is a being of distinction’, this is ‘at least... *true of the species*’ (7, my emphasis). Feuerbach places salvation, value, distinction, *existence*, only in the species. The alienated individual attains the salvation of unity through the *consciousness* of community, the species-consciousness of *I-thou* feeling or recognition, and the species is that in which the perfection and divine goodness that is human nature is spatially and teleologically realised: in and through the de-individualised ‘infinite plenitude or multitude of different beings or individuals’ (23) united as the perfect essence of the species. Christensen acknowledges that Feuerbach’s delineation of individual self-consciousness includes the understanding of finitude and limitation ‘in relation to the “essence of man” as such’, and that this ‘entails the experience of the schism between my own particularity and the universality of “essential human nature”’ (352). At the same time, however, Christensen recognises Feuerbach’s intent to affirm the individual as having real, concrete human existence in the historical reality of the human species as one that effectively helps the individual to overcome the consciousness of limitation. By enabling

¹⁵ Feuerbach defines a predicate as ‘divine in its nature... because it expresses no limitation, no defect’ (*Essence* I, 24). As the subject is existence, and the predicate is the essence, the ‘reality of the predicate is the sole guarantee of existence’ (19), thus a God ‘who has abstract predicates has also an abstract existence [as] Existence, being, varies with varying qualities’ (20). A feeling, such as morality, is a predicate, and whilst this also appears to be related to the subjectivity of knowledge in that we only *know* through our intellectual engagement with our sensual existence, and what we *feel* we know to be true, the predicates exist independently of the subject. For Feuerbach ‘in no wise is the negation of the subject necessarily also a negation of the predicates considered in themselves. These have an intrinsic, independent reality; they force their recognition upon man by their very nature; they are self-evident truths to him’ (21) in being divine qualities in themselves, dictated by the essence of the species.

the recognition ‘that they after all do participate in “unlimitedness” by virtue of their being *members* of the human species’ (Christensen 354, original emphasis), this is where ‘the relationships between the species as universal and the person as particular... find their most fundamental and “real” expression’, and thereby ‘the human race taken as a historical whole is freed from... [limitation], particularity, and is thus unlimited and in effect “perfect”’ (355). Here Christensen echoes Feuerbach’s intent, and Feuerbach’s failure to adequately address the experience of alienation for the individual in a delineation of species-essence that appears to perpetuate it. Feuerbach insists that qualities are essential to existence (*Essence* I, 15) and that it is only ‘in the realm of the senses, only in space and time... [that] there exist[s] a being of really infinite qualities or predicates’ (23). Whilst ‘[e]verything that exists has value, is a being of distinction’, in the end, ‘at least this is true of the species’ (7). Feuerbach appears to exclude the real possibility of unity, of salvation, or even of *value* for the self-consciously negative, ‘sinful[.]’ (28), imperfect and limited individual whilst it affirms a sense of positive existence, of unity, perfection and goodness, and both reality and value only in the species.

For Feuerbach happiness and unhappiness are directly related to self-knowledge and self-consciousness, and to whether or not one knows oneself as a “higher being”, the divine human. To ‘know blessedness and not oneself to enjoy it, is a state of disunity, of unhappiness’ and the human knows no ‘higher human good than to love, ...be good and wise; and... no higher human happiness than to exist’ (18). As such, Feuerbachian salvation is, in the end, equated with the conscious happiness of unity with the species. But if one knows one exists yet is unhappy in a world where happiness is possible, where lies salvation? For Feuerbach existence is happiness, which appears to place the unhappy individual in a state of suspended existence, waiting for real existence to arrive. This denies that the experience of unhappiness, pain, misery, is *real*, at the same time that Feuerbach is placing the positive reality of existence as such only in the unity and happiness that is accessed through species-consciousness. Either way, on this level too the real experience of the human individual is negated, and salvation endlessly deferred. As Wartofsky recognises, Feuerbach’s insistence ‘on the specificity of human action as time and space bound... remains a suggestion and goes unfulfilled’ (421). For Schopenhauer, it is only during moments of

happiness that one *transcends* individual existence, but this is only ever a momentary affect. What we usually term happiness is largely a state of mind, a psychological condition in which we ignore life as it is lived in the perpetual quest for a happy future (or the yearning for a long-lost idyllic past)¹⁶. Corporeal, sensual existence is only positively felt when one suffers, yet the consciousness of suffering is where immediate salvation from suffering can be effected in the present time and space of the existential world. For Feuerbach happiness is attained by overcoming alienation and attaining conscious unity with the divine perfection of our true nature, but this only appears to be possible *outside* of individual subjective experience. Feuerbach's delineation of intellect effecting freedom from subjectivity allows aesthetic and intellectual contemplation to access "true" existence, which can only occur when the individual is in objective, contemplative unity with species-consciousness. In placing the individual human somehow outside of reality altogether, however, as an *essentially* limited form of the essence of the human, Feuerbach also claims that the '[d]read of limitation is dread of existence' as all 'real existence... is qualitative, determinative existence' (*Essence* I, 15). Here Feuerbach is positioning two senses of existence: that dread of existence felt by the limited individual, and the *real* existence attained only through and in species-unity. Knowledge of one's self as the imperfect, limited individual is a state of dread and a suspension of real existence, while real existence is only found in and through a conscious knowledge of self-as-species: to exist is happiness, therefore happiness and real existence can only be found in the species, never in the individual¹⁷. Whilst Feuerbach attempts to liberate the alienated individual by exposing the ground and means of individual subjection to the displacing forces of religion and philosophy, and thus opens the door to overcoming this

¹⁶ Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter 1, Schopenhauer does concede that happiness is possible in the world: see Chapter 1 (34) above.

¹⁷ Whilst the essential human essences (which are also predicates) Reason-species and Affection-individual appear equally balanced oppositional essences, *thou* is, in the end, only the same as species for Feuerbach. The potential synthesis the moral Will and Feeling effects is through overriding the individual and asserting the ethical position of the species, thus potentially effecting the unity of *I* with *thou* (*I* attaining moral sympathy with *thou*) at the same time as absorbing *I*. That all three elements are *necessarily* in modified, limited, and unequal form in the individual also precludes this force acting as a true, unifying synthesis. The problem of Feuerbach's moral Will (and Reason and Affection) as *a priori* and external to the individual appears to remain one that excludes individual free will, and most significantly individual value.

alienation, his own ground of existence, delineation of *I-thou* self-consciousness, and means to salvation enacts and perpetuates its own form of alienation.

On one level, Feuerbach appears to reflect Schopenhauer's insistence that the attainment of happiness is both temporary and fleeting in his own recognition that there is a discrepancy between what is desired in life and actual experience, as '[i]n life the feelings are interrupted; they collapse; they are followed by a state of void, of insensibility' (App. §2, 283). Feuerbach suggests that the 'religious problem... is to give fixity to feeling in spite of the vicissitudes of life... to separate it from repugnant disturbances and limitations: [thus] God... is nothing else than undisturbed, uninterrupted feeling... for which there exists no limits, no opposite' (283). Feuerbach posits *feeling* as that through which alienation is overcome, as the individual attains salvation in the freedom and limitless 'joy' that the feeling of unity with essence effects through 'escape from the sense of limitation into unlimited feeling' (App. §3, 284). This, the '*highest feeling of self, freed from all contrarities or disagreeables*' is attained once individuals free themselves from the feelings of 'desire, passion, the conditions of time and place [which are]... limits... thou strugglest against... By means of the will, or the imagination, thou negativest limits, and thus obtainest the feeling of freedom' (284, original emphasis). Feeling or Affection is the human essence which acts as the unifying force, uniting its fellow limited human essences of Reason and Will to overcome alienation in itself effecting the *I-thou-love* of species unity. Whilst the "noble" aims of work can effect a form of species-unity for the individual, it is feeling (meaning the happiness of unity) which is *the* secular-religious apotheosis. Feuerbach attempts to unite the spiritual and the material through the feeling that reason's species-consciousness effects, but at the same time, effects a unity that negates the real. As Wilson recognises, Feuerbach 'wants to save the reality of the world while still sublating it into reason. Sensual particularity must die but not for the sake of a religious afterlife, but for a reason that lives within the sensual' (398). Marx emphasises the problems in Feuerbach's view 'that the existence of a thing or a man is at the same time its or his essence, that the conditions of existence... are those in which its "essence" feels itself satisfied' (*Ideology* 61), Feuerbach's failure stemming from this view also holding that the human is a universal "essence" rather than a socio-historical product (62). For Marx, "liberation"... is not advanced a single

step by reducing philosophy, theology, substance... to “self-consciousness” (61) but by practical means and by historical acts. Liberation or salvation cannot be effected through Feuerbach’s resolution of ‘the religious essence into the *human* essence’, where it is not ‘inherent in each single individual’ as ‘its reality... is the ensemble of the social relations’, thus Feuerbach ‘is compelled... to propose an abstract – *isolated* – human individual’ (Marx *Theses* VI, 122, original emphasis). Salvation from alienation, for Feuerbach, is attainable for the individual but only psychologically; and the feeling of joy that recognising self-as-unlimited-species releases occurs *at the same time* that the element of limitation - the individual self - is effectively negated. The implications for the individual, self-consciously aware of their own limitation and imperfection and of their real experiences of the world, is to perpetuate the alienation Feuerbach intends to overcome and even acts to compound it.

The consciousness that one is unhappy in a world where happiness is possible, is imperfect in a world where perfection and happiness are not only possible but the sole object of existence *and reality itself*, leads to a compounded sense of self-failure which echoes the religious alienation of the imperfect individual from the divine object in fundamental terms. This also affects the individual’s consciousness of how others see them, which in turn impacts on how they see others – the personal manifestations of *thou*. The conscious recognition of self as a failure because *thou-as-species* is perfection, could inform more humane perceptions of *thou-another-individual* and lead to empathy with another’s own self-doubt, which effectively leads us back to Schopenhauer’s ethical stance of *I-thou* recognition of the equality of suffering. Equally, the self-conscious failure *I* could also imagine that other individuals recognise me in the same inferior light, thus compounding the diminishing sense of self. *I* might also recognise the other, personal *thou* as more perfect than me, thus propelling the self further from perfection, and the ever-receding happiness of salvation. Whilst Feuerbach’s *I-thou* sympathy between persons is intended to effect the transition from disunity to unity through a psychological recognition of self as part of the species, his philosophical position also places *I* as seeking unity with the whole human species (*thou*), not as self with another valued individual as such. Here the individual is absorbed into *thou*, thus positive individual human relations slide into the facelessness of species-essence. Beyond the philosophical,

psychological, and material barriers to *I-thou* unity faced by the individual in immediate terms, there are the psychological and corporeal barriers effected by *thou* in broader terms. Feuerbach's salvation through *I-thou* consciousness philosophically undermines the accessibility and optimism of individual salvation by leaving the individual without existential meaning and value and, crucially, fails to acknowledge human relations on both the personal and the social scale in anything other than positive terms. Feuerbach ignores the material reality of existence - including human relations and the real experience of work and other aims - in the human world. That Feuerbachian salvation necessarily relies on consciousness of alienation, and the means to overcome this being effected *en masse*, relies on all other manifestations of *thou* to be working towards the same end. Feuerbach delineates the means by which the human is alienated from realising a sense of their true potential in life, in community and in aspiration, by the human constructs of religion and philosophy in particular, and as such opens the door to realising a positive salvation in life. In failing to accommodate the reality of existence for the alienated individual, however, Feuerbach fails to delineate a practical or effective escape from alienation or an immediately *accessible* form of salvation in a world where the human individual and their aspirational aims continue to find themselves effectively alienated by the "noble" aims of work, by human relations and community, and indeed by the ground, means, and object of Feuerbach's own philosophical salvation.

Schopenhauer's focus is on the thing-in-itself of existence and the realm of human knowledge and conscious agency within this, whereas Feuerbach's philosophy is primarily concerned with conscious, human existence and its forms. Whilst Feuerbach and Schopenhauer differ in terms of the philosophical background to human existence, and their placing of the human in seemingly oppositional "optimistic" or "pessimistic" terms, it is evident that they both consider the grounding of philosophy in living human experience and in ethical human behaviour as central to their positions. Not only Feuerbach's sacrifice of *I* for *thou*, but whole *I-thou* ethic, echoes Schopenhauer's own on significant levels, despite the polarised optimistic and pessimistic starting points of each, and the effective reversal of "pessimism" and "optimism" in each in the accessibility of salvation in the end. Even Feuerbach's assertion that 'to suffer

for others is divine' (*Essence* V, 60) echoes Schopenhauer's affirmation of the beauty of self-sacrifice¹⁸. Whilst both posit the existential individual as a being of value, seeking *individual* ends at the same time as seeking the joy of salvation that release from suffering or limitation is expected to bring, both see egoistic selfishness or individualism as reprehensible. This egoism can be overridden by one's reasoning ethical choice for Schopenhauer (subject to individual character), or apparently involuntarily, despite one's individual self for Feuerbach. Intellect allows free will for Feuerbach, but at the same time Will is not a manifestation of the individual as such but of species-essence, and overrides the individual who can thus never really be free. Free will is also subject to the will-to-life and the determined character of the individual for Schopenhauer, although intellect for him does allow deliberate choice in the individual, overriding (or allowing) the egoism of the will-to-life. Whilst Schopenhauer appears to prioritise the experience and temporary or finite but palpable salvation of the individual, Feuerbach ultimately absorbs the individual into the infinite and abstract salvation that is the perfect unified destiny of the species, thus removing value from the individual in fundamental terms. Feuerbach's optimistic premise is that the human species is *in essence* good, perfect, and infinite, and that the individual can attain conscious unity with the species as the divine object, as its destiny and salvation. This occurs through a psychological recognition of self as part of the whole (whether through human aims or human relations), and is accessed through (and simultaneously attaining) the *feeling* that pertains to a sense of unity. Whilst the exalted feeling of unity that overcoming alienation through species-consciousness effects is psychological, it is also emotionally *experienced* which does afford a form of positive existence for the individual in this at least, but also it seems at most. Feuerbach's individual is perpetually alienated by the self-consciousness of *essential* limitation, and by the real conditions of human existence, thus Feuerbach's salvatory point remains tantalisingly out of reach.

Feuerbach draws aside the veils of theological, philosophical, and ritualistic metaphor to reveal the negativity of abstract constructions of existence, thereby revealing the true object of both religion and philosophy as nothing more nor less than human nature. In showing how these artificial constructs alienate the

¹⁸ Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §59, 204.

individual from realising their own true nature, Feuerbach intends that his philosophy itself can enact the necessary transformation whereby the individual can overcome their alienation and attain the 'joy' (App. §3, 284) of unity with the essence and aim of human existence¹⁹. Feuerbach grounds his philosophy in the real, experiential human, seeking to enact a positive recognition of self and other that confers meaning onto individual existence through community, and posit value on and into the human species in *essential* terms that incorporate an optimistic vision of human existence and destiny. This optimistic vision is undermined by its recognition of and reliance upon only positive human relations, its placing of the finite and imperfect individual in *self-conscious* opposition to the infinite perfection that is both the essence and the object of its own nature, and in the *accessibility* of salvation being equally self-consciously abstract in the non-immediate space and time and perfect unity that is the species. Salvation, for Feuerbach, appears to lead to the subsuming of the individual into the essence, the species, and thereby the *real* individual human effectively ceases to exist. That this occurs through *I-thou self-consciousness* also places the sense of perpetual failure firmly in individual experience (of both self and world).

The positive and the negative aspects of Feuerbachian *I-thou* relations and salvation will be shown in Chapter 5 to have pertinent resonances in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, raising questions about Eliot's unqualified acceptance of Feuerbach. In the discussion of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* in Chapter 7, a number of aspects of Feuerbach's delineations of salvation will be shown to have significant resonances in the ground and the extent of Hardy's pessimism. Feuerbach's recognition of the means, forms, and affects of alienation does open up opportunities for a more pragmatic salvation, effected through practical change to the artificial constructs of society. Feuerbach's own delineation of salvation ensures the individual remains alienated, however, perpetually running on and on towards the happiness of self-realisation that always exists beyond itself, in both time and space. Feuerbach's very assertion of teleological progress towards a vision of salvation itself, alongside a lack of concrete means of

¹⁹ For Feuerbach, the 'unity of mind and heart... consists, not in extinguishing or glossing over their difference, but... in that the essential object of the heart is also the essential object of the mind' for which he posits his 'new philosophy' (*Principles* §57, 71) itself as unifying object.

realisation, ensures that it is one that endlessly remains out of reach, and the 'joy' of 'paradise' (App. §3, 284) remains a shimmering apparition.

Chapter 3

Victorian Britain and the Loss of God:

Is Life Worth Living?

'It is impossible to conceive that this awakening, this discovery by man of himself, will not be the beginning of his decadence; that it will not be the discovery on his part that he is a lesser and a lower thing than he thought he was, and that his condition will not sink till it tallies with his own opinion of it.'

William Mallock, 1879¹

I. Pessimism and optimism: a shifting paradigm.

The previous two chapters have shown that the seemingly polarised positions Schopenhauer's pessimism and Feuerbach's optimism appear to occupy are destabilised within their own philosophical systems, and also share significant points of contact between them. Both insist on the importance of real, experiential human existence as their ground, and on human ethics as central to their positions. Human consciousness is as necessary to both in terms of the grounding of reality, ethics, and salvation and, of course, each retain the ideal of salvation itself thereby at the very least offering the *hope* of relief from human suffering or alienation in this life rather than the next. Both argue that the veil of illusion that Christianity and previous philosophical systems have cast over what each see as the *real* circumstances of human existence must be cast off, in order to reveal to human consciousness the "true" object of human destiny outside of theological propositions. One purports to be a pessimistic philosophy, yet its salvatory ethic is both accessible and pragmatic, giving practical direction to the immediate relief of suffering, and as such its pessimism is at the very least qualified. The other purports to be optimistic, yet effectively perpetuates the alienation of the individual it exposes, holding salvation just out of reach. As

¹ *Is Life Worth Living?* 1879, 151.

such, its optimism is undermined although it does offer a more practical consciousness with the *potential* to effect genuine social change in its deconstruction of the alienating effects of artificial social constructs.

In an increasingly secularising nineteenth century Britain, the question of what now constitutes individual and social human destiny outside of religious delineations concerns many social thinkers, for whom issues of morality are of equal if not greater concern. European philosophy is read, translated, and discussed in Britain in the search for a philosophical answer to the question of where a moral form of human destiny might be found outside of a traditional religious framework. Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*, published in English in 1854, follows a number of optimistic-secularist works which deconstruct religious doctrine and directly discuss more "humanist" versions of moral doctrine and social development² during the nineteenth century, whilst there are relatively few works during this period which overtly discuss pessimism. Whilst Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* (1819) and his other works were not directly available in English translation until the 1880s³, his works were of course available in German from 1819⁴, and a number of secondary sources were available in German, French, and English during the 1860s and 70s⁵. All of the sources in English were preceded by John Oxenford's

² Other works include D. F. Strauss *Life of Jesus* (1842) Birmingham: Taylor & c, 1842-4; Charles Hennell's *An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838) London: Smallfield & Son, 1838; and Auguste Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive*. (1830-42). Paris: [nk], 1830-47.

³ Schopenhauer's first translations into English are as follows:

Beethoven: With a Supplement from the Philosophical Works by Arthur Schopenhauer (1880) by Richard Wagner [includes "On visions and matters connected therewith" (1851) & "On the metaphysics of music" (1818)]. tr. Edward Dannreuther. London: Reeves, 1880.

Religion: A Dialogue, and Other Essays by Arthur Schopenhauer, selected and translated (from *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851) by T. B. Saunders. London: S. Sonnenschein & Co, 1889.

Select Essays. tr. G. Droppers and C.A.P. Dachselt. Milwaukee: Sentinel Co, 1881.

Studies in Pessimism: A Series of Essays by Arthur Schopenhauer, selected and translated by T. Bailey Saunders. London: S. Sonnenschein & Co, 1891, and 1892.

The Complete Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer trans T. Bailey Saunders. New York: Willey, 1896.

The World as Will and Idea (1819) tr. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3 Volumes, London: Trübner/Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1883; 1886.

Two Essays: On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason, and On The Will in Nature. tr. Mme Karl Hillebrand, London: Bohn's Philosophical Library/G. Bell & Sons, 1889.

⁴ *WWI* 1819; *On the Will in Nature/ Über der Willen in der Natur* 1836; *On the Basis of Morality and Freedom of the Will/ Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik* 1839/1841; *Essays/Parerga* 1851.

⁵ Critical studies about Schopenhauer and pessimism available during the 1860s and 70s include: Gwinner, Wilhelm von. *Arthur Schopenhauer aus persönlichen Umgange dargestellt* [...] (1862). Leipzig: [publisher nk], 1862.

---. *Schopenhauer und seiner Freunde* [...] (1863). Leipzig: [publisher nk], 1863.

review of Schopenhauer's philosophy in *The Westminster Review* in 1853. Ralph Goodale argues that the 1870s was a time when Schopenhauer became more widely known, that by 1879 'every person alive to the development of the day must have heard of him... and by 1883 an educated man could not think of pessimism without thinking also of Schopenhauer' (242). Goodale warns, however, that 'in investigating the influence of Schopenhauer one must beware of ascribing to him what is due to Hartmann or the exponents of Buddhism' (243), and must remain conscious of what he terms 'the roots of pessimism under consideration in a number of causes, all of which had begun to operate before Schopenhauer's views were made known' (249). Schopenhauer openly acknowledges the influences of Eastern religious philosophy on his system⁶, and Eduard von Hartmann's philosophical pessimism is derived *directly* from Schopenhauer's. Von Hartmann seeks a reconciliation between Schopenhauer's denial of the Will and Hegel's Absolute Idea, a marriage which develops the Schopenhauerian *Unconscious* will into an evolving Consciousness, thus becoming a Conscious Will which is now aware of the 'torment' which 'is perpetuated endlessly' (Hartmann 142) in existence. As this emergent Consciousness now recognises the suffering in the world, there results the 'complete victory of the logical over the alogical [which] must therefore coincide with the temporal end of the world-process, the last day' (131). Von Hartmann's Conscious Will logically chooses to extinguish itself in a kind of de-individualised mass-extinction 'without residuum' (141)⁷. Christopher Janaway recognises von Hartmann's significant indebtedness to Schopenhauer (*Schopenhauer* 106), although von Hartmann's pessimism moves far beyond Schopenhauer's pessimism in its evolutionary Consciousness, Absolute Logic,

Ribot, Théodule. *La Philosophie de Schopenhauer*. (1874). Paris: [publisher nk], 1874; 2nd and 3rd editions 1885 and 1893.

Sully, James. *Pessimism: A History and a Criticism*. (1877) London: Henry S. King & Co, 1877; 2nd edition Kegan Paul, 1891.

Zimmern, Helen. *Arthur Schopenhauer, His Life and Philosophy*. (1876). London:[publisher nk], 1876.

⁶ See *WWI* IV §64, 220-2; and see Chapter 1 (41) above.

⁷ An extinction which occurs via a sort of inverted Feuerbachian individual sacrifice for the good of the whole (Hartmann 101): the 'utmost world-progress [is] the "strength" of the pessimistic consciousness of humanity' (115); and once the 'illusions are dead, hope is extinct' (117) and humanity as a whole 'foregoes all *positive* happiness, and longs only for *absolute painlessness*, for nothingness' (117-8, original emphasis).

and deliberate extinction, and has very limited relevance to the examination of pessimism in this thesis.

In 1853 Oxenford produced a fairly comprehensive outline of many aspects of Schopenhauer's position, and directly led to Schopenhauer's philosophy becoming more widely known in Britain (and in Germany)⁸. Yet Oxenford finds Schopenhauer's doctrine 'the most disheartening, the most repulsive, *the most opposed to the aspirations of the present world*' (394, my emphasis)⁹. The aspirations of Oxenford's "present world" are, however, far less clearly definable as the unified voice that he suggests. Despite mentioning in passing Schopenhauer's ethics of art, and the 'bad man, the just man, the good man, and the whole rabble of vice and virtue' (405) in his review, Oxenford does not discuss these issues, their implications in Schopenhauer's philosophy, or their potential utilisation in the secularised quest for human salvation. Oxenford was amongst those Victorian Britons interested in European, particularly German, philosophy and able to read German to a highly competent extent. George Eliot was another, and she introduces Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* to mainstream Britain in providing the first English translation, published in 1854¹⁰. Eliot also translated David Strauss' *Life of Jesus* (published 1846) and Baruch Spinoza's works, although her translations of Spinoza were not published at the time¹¹. Eliot's other direct philosophical readings include J. W. Goethe and Auguste Comte, and she published a great number of critical essays and reviews,

⁸ Oxenford also lists Schopenhauer's major works and German publication details in his article, including *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (WWI)*, 1819, *Parerga und Paralipomena (Essays and Aphorisms)* 1851, and *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik (The Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics: On the Basis of Morality and On the Freedom of the Will)*, 1841. Arthur Hübscher has pointed out that Schopenhauer was also mentioned in Britain from as early as 1832 (Hübscher 505, fn1) in Wilhelm Tennemann's *A Manual of the History of Philosophy*, published Oxford: D.A. Talboys, 1832. This work does not actually discuss Schopenhauer as such, however, his name and *WWI* are mentioned, with a footnote (in German) stating that the work also includes a criticism of Kant's philosophy (Tennemann 466, 467, fnS).

⁹ Even three decades later, in *The Saturday Review* in 1882, Paul Carus remarks that with Schopenhauer '[e]verything is destroyed, the reality of God, of duty, of man's personality, and the morality of science... with the denial of free will, conscience and moral obligation necessarily disappear, and virtue is resolved into a form of self-love' (quoted Neugebauer 12). Paul Neugebauer also lists a large number of publications which discuss Schopenhauer, beginning with Oxenford in 1853, and becoming prolific by the 1870s through to the 1890s (96-100).

¹⁰ The translation currently available. Feuerbach's original publication Germany 1841.

¹¹ According to Timothy Hands, this was due to George Lewes' dispute with the publisher at the time of the completion of Eliot's translation of *Ethics* in 1856 (47) during the period of Eliot and Lewes' long collaborative relationship. According to Hands, Eliot's translation of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* 'has not been found' (22). Rosemary Ashton notes that Eliot's translation of Spinoza's *Ethics* was finally published in 1981 (Ashton "Introduction" Eliot *Selected* xviii).

particularly throughout the 1840's and 1850's, in which she engages in questions of morality and human destiny. Thus Eliot herself contributes to the literary debates of the latter Victorian period concerning these issues to a significant extent. Most critics have not examined Eliot's exposure to Schopenhauer, which certainly included the Oxenford article as she was editor of *The Westminster Review* at this time and recommended the article to her friends George Combe and Sara Hennell as 'one of the best in that number' (*Letters* v.II, 95; VIII, 73-74). Oxenford's literary 'present world' then, has been introduced to both Schopenhauer and Feuerbach almost simultaneously, but whether all of Oxenford's contemporaries share his own 'aspirations' (394) is another matter.

II. Victorian Britain: “*Is Life Worth Living*”, and if so, how?

In 1879 the essayist, satirical novelist, and economic and social critic William Mallock published a non-fiction work which asks the question *Is Life Worth Living?* Here Mallock examines secular optimistic thinking, and discusses pessimistic visions of the present and the future. Whilst Mallock does not discuss Feuerbach or Schopenhauer directly in this particular work, he is writing more than 20 years after both philosophers have been introduced to Victorian Britain and engages with issues which both philosophers particularly address. In an essay on George Eliot published the same year¹², Mallock’s discussion shows that he was certainly familiar with Schopenhauer’s philosophy, albeit, like Oxenford, ignoring Schopenhauer’s ethics of compassion, human morality, and salvation, and focusing only on Schopenhauer’s pessimistic view of the world. In *Is Life Worth Living?*, Mallock aims to reveal obvious truths which ‘might be before everybody’s eyes; but instead they are under everybody’s feet... trampled into [the mud] by a headstrong and uneducated generation... [whose] insolence... ignorance, and... stupidity’ (vii-viii) have placed them there - to what he sees as the fatal detriment of society. These insolent, ignorant and stupid people are the optimistic secularists, who do not pertain exclusively to Comte’s Positivist system of thought nor to T. H. Huxley or Frederic Harrison and their expositions of scientific and evolutionary agnosticism and positivist humanism, but to that wherein all secularist thinkers ‘explicitly agree’ (xxiii). Mallock terms all such thinking as “positivism”, and Herbert Spencer points out the tendency amongst what he terms the ‘theological party’ to think of ‘the antagonistic scientific party, under the title of “positivists”’ (3) whether or not they are indeed Comtean Positivists. The secular-optimists, so castigated by Mallock, form part of Oxenford’s commonly-aspiring ‘present world’ who find Schopenhauer’s pessimism ‘disheartening’ and ‘repulsive’ (394), yet 20 years later Mallock fears that optimistic secularist thinkers are themselves tending ‘towards pessimism’ (*Living* xvii). Mallock’s critique is of the fundamental flaws which he believes permeate all forms of secularist thought, expressing his fears that the optimistic-progressive world-view is paradoxically leading to both individual and social

¹² Mallock’s 1879 review of Eliot’s *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* entitled “W. H. Mallock on George Eliot” is discussed in Chapter 4 below.

degeneration. Yet in a further paradox, Mallock himself has a deeply pessimistic view of human nature.

Mallock's polemic against secularism in *Is Life Worth Living?* addresses questions of social happiness and the "highest good", human nature, morality and society, the value of existence, and salvation. Mallock criticises both optimistic secularism and pessimism, yet himself argues from a deeply pessimistic perspective. In enquiring into 'the true value of this human life of ours... and to ask dispassionately if it be really worth the living' (1), Mallock argues that it is secularism itself that has 'produced a moral deterioration' (xvi) in society as a direct result of its refusal of the 'supernatural moral element' (xv). The loss of a supernatural basis of morality leads Mallock to fear that the optimistic 'promised land' of earthly human salvation that positivist 'leaders of progress' claim to be in sight might not 'be splendour, but desolation' (24) - because secularism has *removed value* from life by removing the possibility of spiritual salvation itself as an end. Mallock argues that spiritual salvation was previously the one thing which conferred 'an immeasurable meaning' both in and onto life in the very transformative nature of the proposition that there is 'something more to come' (8). The belief in eternal salvation ensured that misery and worthlessness became 'altogether transmuted' in view of the 'ends that were invisible - to spiritual and eternal destinies, to triumphs beyond all hope, and portentous failures beyond all fear' (8). Christianity, and in particular the Christian God as 'the father of the human soul, and its judge... its rest... its joy, and its desire', enabled the human to appear and feel 'an ampler being' in that 'every detail in the life of a human soul became vaster, beyond all comparison, than the depths of space and time', and thus takes on 'supernatural' (16) proportions. The sense of 'degradation' that has accompanied the fall of this vision is equally intense and even '*more definite*' (16, my emphasis), compounded by the profound loss of hope that Mallock feels this has consequently engendered (16). In the religious belief in Heaven and Hell then, human life was invested with profound meaning and value, whereas it has now been equally profoundly degraded in the attempt to posit value in the very place that it is impossible to find it: in the essentially limited time and space of 'the human race' (9) itself. Mallock has failed to be impressed by the quasi-religious intensity that some forms of optimistic secularism have sought to bestow onto human life and endeavour for its own

sake, a view that Feuerbach's exalted vision of the human overtly seeks to deify and which a number of secularists very much take on board.

Frederic Harrison's '*intellectual* objection to "subliming religion into an emotion, and making an armistice with science"' (DeLaura 387-8, original emphasis) does not prevent Harrison from recognising with Feuerbach that Christianity engenders a "*pessimism as to the essential dignity of man*" (quoted Mallock 17, original emphasis). Such a recognition is seen by Mallock as itself a 'degrading' (17) factor, however, arguing that the increase in scientific development is actually removing human dignity by removing the mystery and imagination that living in the world and the wider universe previously enabled. As a result life and the world are denigrated, 'treated like a courtesan, rather than like a goddess' (19), because such knowledge encourages superficial utilisation rather than profound worship. Ironically, a number of secularist thinkers also express concerns regarding the elision of the less quantifiable areas of human experience¹³. For Mallock, secular optimism has encouraged a detrimental form of 'intense self-consciousness... in the world' which he finds 'is something altogether new to it' (19), but is one he sees as absent from Christian self-consciousness. Here Mallock views religious faith as one that does *not* include the same self-consciousness of 'looking before and after', or of taking 'to pieces all motives and actions' (19), despite earlier explicitly referring to the intensity that living with the certain prospect of either eternal salvation or damnation engenders (16). This is not because - in the religious context - Mallock views such a destiny as predetermined thus outside of the concerns of conscience, but rather that he sees the removal of such clear-cut certainty as itself the problem. The exchange of previously-held "facts" for the knowledge that they are only 'ideals' is a key factor in the degeneration of concrete effectiveness in 'restrain[ing] or curb[ing]' (20) human behaviour. Whilst Mallock's primary concern is the necessity of controlling human behaviour then, he fails to recognise that secularist ideals are equally *seen as* facts by those who espouse them, at the same time as he ignores the 'intense self-consciousness' (19) that the certainty of God's reward or punishment is equally capable of engendering. Feuerbach's premise itself becomes an equally "religious" quest for what is

¹³ See J. S. Mill "Bentham" (65-8) for example; and see discussion below.

recognised as the “truth” that ‘the highest power for man... is the essential, the divine... the certainty which human feeling has of itself, as the... absolute power’ (*Essence* XII, 121). What appears to concern Mallock the most here is that the removal of what was *certain knowledge* (that a higher supernatural authority holds the casting vote over individual salvation or damnation in His hands) has also removed a means of curbing human behaviour that can not be paralleled outside of this framework (*Living* 20)¹⁴. This necessity of curbing human behaviour appears to be at the heart of every argument against secularist thinking that Mallock puts forward.

In analysing the content of utilitarian claims for social happiness, wherein society should aim towards effecting the happiness of humankind rather than one’s own happiness (38), Mallock finds the specific aims of this to be not really “happiness” but merely the *pre-conditions* of happiness. Securing such commonly-agreed basic requirements as life, health and wealth does not in itself ‘secure us happiness’, it ‘simply leaves us free to secure it, if we can, for ourselves’ (39). Thus the optimist-secularists ‘confuse the negative conditions of happiness with the positive materials of it’ (40), and the specific identification of what actually constitutes this “happiness” being sought remains elusive¹⁵. Mallock’s point is, however, clearly recognised by some of those secularist thinkers he condemns. J. S. Mill’s advocacy of utilitarianism is one that has happiness as ‘the only thing desirable as an end’, yet he regards both the objective of ‘morality’ and of ‘rational conduct’ as ‘not solely the pursuit of happiness, but the *prevention or mitigation of unhappiness*’ (*Utilitarianism* 190, my emphasis). As such, Mill holds the Schopenhauerian view that happiness may in fact be ‘chimerical’ in which case ‘there will be all the greater scope and... imperative need’ for the mitigation of unhappiness, ‘so long at least as

¹⁴ Mallock’s illustrative point here is that terrorising a child with stories of ‘a black man’ coming ‘down the chimney’ to ‘take it away’ will restrain that child only if the child does not know that this is ‘only an ideal’, a story (*Living* 20).

¹⁵ Mallock also sees a clear confusion in secularist thinking between the ideals of personal and social happiness, despite the frequent conflation of one with the other, which lies in their hiding a moral contradiction. This contradiction itself arises at least partly from Mallock’s own pessimistic view of human nature, however: ‘The social happiness of all of us means nothing but the personal happiness of each of us; and if social happiness has any single meaning – in other words, if it be a test of morals – it must postulate a personal happiness of some hitherto unexplained kind. Else sociology will be subsidiary to nothing but individual license; general law will be but the protection of individual lawlessness; and the completest social morality, but the condition of the completest personal un-morality’ (*Living* 44).

mankind think fit to live' (Mill *Utilitarianism* 190), and in this last, Mill strongly echoes Schopenhauer's insistence on the necessity to *live on* in order to work towards the "highest moral good": the relief of suffering. Arguing that the secularist goal of the 'highest good' must be a distinguishable 'actual attainable thing... for flesh and blood creatures' (Mallock *Living* 29) rather than what he calls 'transcendental ecstasies' (31), Mallock insists that it must be recognisable to all as 'not only... [must it] satisfy the virtuous of the wisdom of their virtue, it must be able to convince the vicious of the folly of their vice' (31). This is because the human race is '*ever inclined*' to immorality, perpetually 'choos[ing] vice instead of virtue... considering the lower or the lesser happiness better than the greater or the higher' and consequently '*the moralist has to meddle with human nature mainly because it is inconstant and corrupted*' (32, my emphases). Mallock takes a seriously pessimistic view of what he sees as inherent human immorality and thus the destination of what optimistic thought sees as human "progress" is brought into question. For Mallock the key necessity is that human behaviour should be curbed. Whilst he concedes that there is 'good in humanity' (albeit only minimally and briefly mentioned), he criticises the Feuerbachian argument for 'Man as distinct from, and holier than, any individual men' (193), arguing that this does not remove the 'fact of moral evil' as this is 'at least an equivalent match' for goodness, indeed 'in most battles hitherto it is evil that has been victorious' (193). Here Mallock echoes Schopenhauer's position regarding the prevalence of "evil" and suffering to a significant extent, and touches upon a problem within Feuerbach's position in terms of the refusal to adequately acknowledge the presence of "evil" in human intentions or acts. The question of the holy is, however, one that Mallock takes further, critiquing the religiosity that such systems espouse as he sees this very element bringing secularised morality to the point of collapse.

In Feuerbach's quasi-religious salvation, seeking to "return" the human to itself and overcome the alienation effected in the individual through the religious objectification of human essence, he reveals the object of religion as nothing more nor less than human nature, in which resides the essence and aim of the human and the self-realisation of the individual (salvation) in union with the species. Despite turning God into the human, Feuerbach retains the element of mystery, of infinitude and the divine, placing this within the essence of human

nature; thus the human becomes God. Feuerbach's human is the ground of religious feeling – and thus morality – and thereby argues against Mallock's inherently corrupt human. In its subsequently deified form, human nature has 'the ideal, the species, humanity in the fullness of its perfection and infinity', and as 'in the moral as well as the physical and intellectual elements, men compensate for each other' and unity or salvation is attained through the 'imagination' (Feuerbach *Essence* XVI, 155). Feuerbach's unity aims to absolve all failings and imperfections by absorbing both difference and individuality into the perfection of the species, and thus effect a unified organism, the individual parts of which all work with one aim: its whole and perfect self. The practical applications of this are intended to extend from individual aims into the community. Two years before Mallock's *Is Life Worth Living?* is published, William Clifford recognises society in exalted and political Feuerbachian terms, arguing that 'Belief' is a 'sacred faculty which prompts the decisions of our will, and knits into harmonious working all the compacted energies of our being, [and] is ours not for ourselves but for humanity' (*Ethics* 3). Clifford sees society as 'the highest of all organisms' where "actions which, as individual, are insignificant, are massed together into... important movements. Co-operation... is the life of [society]" (Clifford, quoted Mallock 37). Further, it is co-operation (or 'band-work') that has created 'two specially human faculties, the conscience and the intellect', the former of which 'gives us the desire for the good, and the latter instructs us how to attain this desire by action' (ibid). Whilst offering a more overtly practical direction for human aims, Clifford strongly echoes Feuerbachian ideals, both in the delineation of the individual and society and in the recognition of both life itself and human intentions as good and wholesome. Mallock argues from the opposite perspective and claims that such a deification of the human 'reduce[s] goodness to nothing but the higher part of humanity' (my emphasis) which 'at its best can but blaze for a while, and at its brightest can throw no light beyond this paltry parish of a world', and thus its deflection from the possibilities that may exist beyond life onto the existential world actually deprives goodness 'of its whole meaning and hold on us' (Mallock *Living* 194). Despite thinkers such as Clifford identifying a strong sense of positive action in the social 'movements' of 'co-operation' then, for Mallock, the religiosity at the heart of the exalted view of secularised morality is dismantled by a reversal of

the rationalistic argument that sought to dismantle Christian dogma. He points out the contradiction of the secularist use of 'vague' and 'unsubstantial' religious terminology, and 'low and lofty' sentiments, as these form part of the religious 'dreamland' (166-7, original emphasis) that secularism rejects¹⁶. Thus 'truth as a moral end has even more of religion in its composition than happiness has, and... when this religion goes, its value will even more hopelessly evaporate' (116), bringing secularised morality to the point of collapse. This inability to posit any sense of positive feelings, ability, endeavour, or actions in and onto the human outside of religious morality, leaves Mallock with a very gloomy vision indeed.

Quoting Matthew Arnold, who is conscious '*of a void that mines the breast*' (152), Mallock takes Arnold's questioning of the impact that the loss of religious faith has effected to an extreme point, arguing that without religion, 'life, in so far as it is worth living at all, is worth living not essentially but accidentally', and at bottom, 'it can have no abiding value' (137). For Mallock:

It is impossible to conceive that this awakening, this discovery by man of himself, will not be the beginning of his decadence; that it will not be the discovery on his part that he is a lesser and a lower thing than he thought he was, and that his condition will not sink till it tallies with his own opinion of it. (151)

Despite bleaker nuances in some of his poetry and non-fiction prose, Arnold disagrees with Mallock in insisting that, whilst the present and future of secularist thinking must maintain what he sees as Christian virtues of 'pureness' and 'charity', 'the signs of the times point far more to the emergence and progress of... [the common good] than to its depression' (Arnold "Christmas" 237). Yet for Mallock secularism has generated a contagious – and terminal - disease, 'a state of moral consumption' (*Living* 148) which will make steady progress throughout this generation and onward through subsequent generations. This will lead not so much to 'the helpless yet reluctant yielding to vice' as to 'the sadness and the despondency with which virtue is practised', people finding it impossible to experience either 'horror or disapproval' (148) as the world is rendered 'morally colourless' both 'without' and 'within' (149). Mallock envisages secularism as a kind of slow, moral and emotional suicide (in a strange emotionally-pessimistic echo of von Hartmann). Whilst suggesting that if

¹⁶ See also discussion of James Cotter Morison and J. S. Mill below.

optimism is 'simply the exuberance of health... pessimism is, in its very nature, the gloom and languor of a disease' (139), Mallock also effects his own pessimism. Mallock terms his own vision not as 'the denial of human happiness' or 'the denial of human hope', but a 'hypothetical' rather than 'absolute' pessimism as 'human life will degenerate [only] *if* the creed of positivism be ever generally accepted' (141, my emphasis) - thus does seem rather absolute on that front at least. Whilst Mallock does recognise salvation as a possibility, it is attainable only through the re-imposition of an *unquestionable* form of restraint upon the 'inconstant and corrupted' (32) human. Such a form of restraint for Mallock is found only in the Roman Catholic Church, which offers the 'moral sense of mankind organised and developed under a supernatural tutelage' (xx) necessary to invest life with value, and control the inherently immoral human¹⁷. He rules out a return to Protestantism as this is 'evaporating into a mere natural theism', and as such, is - crucially for Mallock - '*losing all restraining power in the world*' (xix, my emphasis). This necessity for a 'restraining power' is at the hub of Mallock's arguments, finally betraying that it is not just secularism but everything outside Catholicism that is to blame for the moral degeneration Mallock perceives all around him¹⁸. For Mallock, the supernatural moral element is itself the answer, seeing the form of restraint that the certainty of Heavenly Judgement and fear of Hell would impose on the inherently immoral human as the only means of saving a human species apparently intent on galloping onwards into secularism, and thereby its own moral destruction.

Whilst Schopenhauer also uses value-laden terminology such as "the highest good", he identifies these in the practical and accessible terms of relieving suffering rather than leaving the vague and undefined notion of either morality or social "happiness" so criticised by Mallock. Schopenhauer's own critique of secular optimists focuses on their seeing the world as 'an end in itself'

¹⁷ Mallock does not recognise any contradiction in seeking to 'restrain[] or curb[]' (20) the 'ever... inconstant and corrupted' (32) human with an *unquestionable* system which he argues 'must be able to convince the vicious of the folly of their vice' (31), whilst claiming that this necessary system, the Catholic Church, also exercises 'justice that comes of sympathy for those that cannot receive [her teachings]... condemns no goodness... condemns even no earnest worship, though it be outside her pale' (217): so not even Mallock expects the Spanish Inquisition.

¹⁸ Feuerbach argues that 'Catholic morality' is 'mystical' whilst Protestant morality is 'rationalistic', and as such, the latter offers a more "truthful" religion in mingling 'the Christian [mystery] with the man, the natural, political, civil, social man' (*Essence* XIV, 139), thus Protestantism grounds the object of morality in the experiential human, albeit still displaced by the objectification of the essence of human nature onto the form of God.

and thus an ‘abode of bliss’, and for attributing the ‘colossal evil of the world... entirely to governments’ (Schopenhauer “Politics” 154). As such, their failure to recognise the inherent nature of suffering in the world is the basis of Schopenhauer’s refusal to accept optimistic visions of universal happiness as in any way valid. Yet Schopenhauer’s own pessimistic vision of human existence as one of perpetual suffering does not lead to Mallock’s vision of terminal moral degeneration, nor to suicide, but to ethical salvation. Schopenhauer insists that it is only by living on that one can contribute to what he determines the ‘the highest moral good’, whereas suicide merely ‘substitutes for a true redemption from this world of misery a merely apparent one’ (“Suicide” 78). Schopenhauer also places the basis of morality in *inherent* feelings of compassion for our fellow sufferers, keeping the issue of morality at the centre of his philosophy in terms that recognise the existence of evil and selfish egoism but avoids Mallock’s condemnation of human nature *per se*. Schopenhauer also avoids the necessity for morality to be based on faith and the supernatural in some form, *contra* both Mallock and Feuerbach. Nonetheless, Feuerbach does at least open the door to practical change in deconstructing the artificial systems of social form as a practical aim, as Clifford recognises in his more explicit delineations of practical aims and effects in society¹⁹, with or without the *divinity* of the human as exalted object.

James Cotter Morison briefly identifies the focus of Christianity in Feuerbachian terms as ‘an anthropomorphic deity’ who is ‘an infinitely glorified and exalted man’ (Morison 43), and recognises that religion ‘often produce[s] as much anxiety and mental distress as it does of joy, gladness and content’ (241), yet also exhibits rather Mallockian concerns. Unlike Mallock, Morison is concerned with issues of secular social transformation, arguing that not all Socialism ‘involves slavery’ as he believes ‘there is a good Socialism as well as a bad; a Socialism of love and mutual help’ (xix)²⁰. Like Mallock, however, Morison also presumes that ‘wickedness and sin’ are ‘naturally’ part of ‘human nature’ (55), fearing that ‘the prevalent anarchy in thought is leading to anarchy in morals’ (10). Yet, *contra* Mallock, Morison believes that Christianity ‘is not favourable to morality’, arguing that ‘members of civilized society can... judge,

¹⁹ See Clifford *Ethics*, and Mallock *Living* 37.

²⁰ See Mallock *Classes*, and *Socialism*.

tolerably well how they ought to act' but they 'want a *motive* to their duty' (88, original emphasis). Feuerbach insists that an aim in life is vital and that this has social direction, 'only activity with a purpose, which is the union of theoretic and practical activity, gives man a moral basis and support, *i.e.* character [thus] [e]very man... must place before himself a God, *i.e.* an aim, a purpose' (*Essence* VI, 64). Feuerbach places *work* as itself a quasi-divine object, related to the individual's perception of their own utility to the wider community (the species) and thus '[e]veryone... justifiably regards his occupation... as the highest; for the mind of man is nothing but the essential mode of his activity', and, therefore, '[w]ork is worship' (XVIII, 171). Like his one-sided view of human nature as only *good*, Feuerbach sees work as an ideal, outside of the material conditions actually experienced by working people, as Marx recognises (*Ideology* 64)²¹. Mill also insists that an aim is itself important, although Mallock criticises Mill's emphasis that it is 'this alone... [that] could give any meaning to work, or make possible any kind of virtue' (Mallock *Living* 28). Mill also considers this question in rather Schopenhauerian terms, feeling that if 'the pleasures of life... [were] no longer kept up by struggle and privation, [they] would cease to be pleasures' (Mill, quoted Mallock 28). Schopenhauer asserts that life without an objective is no kind of life worth living, the result being a 'dreadful, stultifying boredom, in lifeless yearning without a definite object, a deadening languor' (*WWI* II §29, 85). Arnold emphasises the necessity for purpose in life, but echoes Mallock's concerns about the fallibility of the ordinary human without the rigid moral/behavioural structure that Christian morality offers as '*rules to hold possession of our conduct*, and to keep us in the right course through outward troubles and inward perplexity' (Arnold "Marcus" 142, my emphasis). This 'right course' (142) is attained through 'prescribing to human life fixed principles of action, fixed rules of conduct' (141). Whilst Arnold views 'the school from which [Mill] proceeds' to be 'doomed to sterility' (144), he finds that Mill himself deserves 'all attention and respect' due to his "inspirational" 'perception of [Christian moral] truths' (144)²². Arnold claims that these 'truths' (144) have,

²¹ See also Chapter 2 (61 and 68-9) above.

²² Mill actually embraces a broader sense of what constitutes the "truth", arguing that Christian ethics are not 'irreconcilable' with what 'a comprehensive morality requires', thus 'other ethics... must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind' as the 'interests of truth require a diversity of opinions' (Mill *Liberty* 126-7): see also discussion below.

however, through the theological dogma of ‘reward and punishment... [become] strangely overpressed by many Christian moralists, to the deterioration and disfigurement of Christianity’ (158). Arnold clearly argues against Mallock’s position here, and echoes Feuerbach to some extent although with emphasis on the detrimental impact on the religion rather than on the individual. In terms of human behaviour, or “virtues”, Arnold ennobles altruistic motives and actions, claiming these to be an essential part of human nature (158), a view Feuerbach and Schopenhauer also share but that Mallock appears to find impossible: only overt religious *proscription* enables altruistic behaviour (rather than feelings) for Mallock. At the same time, Arnold acknowledges an equally Schopenhauerian revelation - and acceptance - of ‘the hollowness and transitoriness of human life and grandeur’ (163). Whilst both Feuerbach’s and Schopenhauer’s positions agree with Arnold’s emphasis that the object of moral human life is ‘social’ (164) in terms of benevolence, altruism, and self-denial, Arnold also deems Aurelius’ own “noble” qualities to be both exceptional and difficult to maintain amid the ‘meanness and perversity of fellow-creatures’ (165). Here Arnold is echoing shades of Mallock’s pessimistic view of human nature to some extent, albeit singling out a few exceptionally “noble” characters in much the same way Schopenhauer recognises the “saintly” few²³. Feuerbach’s idealised view of human relations recognises actions of meanness and perversity to be the result of the alienation effected by religious and philosophical dogma, whilst Schopenhauer’s position is that allowing the egoistic will-to-life to dominate their actions is what causes individuals to behave less than altruistically towards their fellow sufferers. Mallock on the other hand finds that all human beings are inherently immoral, inconstant, and corrupt (32). For Mill morality consists of two parts, and how these operate for him raise issues about the inherent qualities of the human, and the nature of morality itself. Morality is both:

self-education; the training, by the human being himself, of his affection and will... [and the] other and co-equal part, [is] the regulation of his outward actions, [which] must be altogether halting and imperfect without the first; for how can we judge in what manner many an action will affect even the worldly interests of ourselves or others, unless we take in, as part of the question, its influence on the regulation of our, or their, affections and desires? (Mill “Bentham” 71)

²³ See Chapter 1 (33) above.

Mill seems to be suggesting that ethical thoughts/behaviour are not inherent in each person or automatically in play, and that ethics is, therefore, in danger of becoming possible only through deliberate effort to self-train one's responses.

Whilst Mill insists on the corporeal reality of the human, he also values those elements difficult to evaluate in factual terms, considering the accommodation of human imagination, emotions, and aspirations vital in understanding and pursuing human well-being. This is not least because our self-knowledge leads to a broader understanding, and thus ethical behaviour arises out of our contemplations of our own experience. Mill explicitly rejects the uncompromising kind of Comtean secularism which considers 'only the facts themselves' (Comte *Positive* 8) as exhibited by Jeremy Bentham. For Mill the recognition of the human 'as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness' ("Bentham" 68), is crucial. Whilst Mill's emphasis is an almost Feuerbachian recognition of 'spiritual perfection' in the human, as both aim and consciousness, Mill refutes any 'systemizing' of the human into a single altruistic motivation, asking:

Why is it necessary that all human life should point but to one object, and be cultivated into a system of means to a single end? May it not be the fact that mankind, who after all are made up of single human beings, obtain a greater sum of happiness when each pursues his own, under the rules and conditions required by the good of the rest, than when each makes the good of the rest his only object, and allows himself no personal pleasures not indispensable to the preservation of his own faculties? (Mill "Comte" 337)

Comte believes that social salvation will be found by applying positive philosophy to 'the study of social phenomena', leading to 'a single body of homogeneous doctrine' through which the 'final triumph of the positive philosophy will take place spontaneously, and will re-establish order in society' (Comte *Positive* 29-30). Comte argues that 'the existing evil consists above all in the absence of any true organization' (29) and that 'a fixed social order' is therefore the desired objective of human endeavour, will rid society of evil, and is attainable only through positive philosophy itself. This would lead to 'the return of modern society to a truly normal state' (64-5), Comte positing social salvation as attainable through an evolutionary progression that is in effect a

return, ‘somehow lead[ing] society *back* to a state of peaceful normality’ (Brunning *Salvation* 66, original emphasis). Feuerbach recognises the human as separated from its true state, its own nature, an unnatural position effected by religion which his philosophy seeks to overcome, thus Feuerbach is also keen to “return” the human to its own essential and Edenic nature. That Mallock rejects all forms of optimistic secularism might be seen as rather ironic given his own yearning for a “return to order”, the difference being that for Mallock, order can only be imposed through supernatural rather than teleological-progressive social beliefs of a human-led ‘homogeneous doctrine’ (Comte *Positive* 30) or a conscious recognition of the alienation engendered by artificial social constructs such as religion (Feuerbach *Essence* I, 30).

Like Mill, many secularists argue against Comte’s position, ironically in part echoing Mallock’s own concerns over the eclipsing of imagination and “mystery”. Arnold dismisses Comte’s ‘pedantry’ which attempts to displace ‘that with which our feelings and affections have become intertwined’ (“Christmas” 231). Whilst Walter Buckley argues that both ‘Spencer and Comte have been noted primarily as summarizers and synthesizers of the knowledge current in their age’ (Buckley viii), Spencer disavows Comte’s Positivism, claiming that contemporary scientific thinking is ‘the common heritage bequeathed by the past to the present’ and that ‘adhesion to this scientific doctrine in no sense implicates them with M. Comte’ (Spencer 6). As T. R. Wright argues, the ultimate ‘failure’ of Positivism as a system in itself by the end of the nineteenth century was due in part to its attempt to replace religion with institutional scientific “worship” on the one hand, and its curtailing of ‘mystery, of areas of experience beyond the explanations of scientific rationalism’ (*Humanity* 275) on the other. The Feuerbachian rather than Comtean focus of teleological “optimism” in this thesis also engages with the less quantifiable elements that many Victorian writers were keen to accommodate. Whilst Eliot has argued that ‘the only hope of extending man’s sources of knowledge and happiness is to be found in positive science, and in the universal application of its principles’ (“*Progress*” 18), she found Comte’s Positivist system a too-rigid and finally unrealisable vision, recognising that ‘living, generous humanity – mixed and erring, and self-deluding’ (“*Meister*” 131) would not – and should not – be

compressed into a philosophical system²⁴. As Gordon Haight has pointed out, Eliot's 'adherence to Positivism... never accepted the details of the system, never went beyond the central idea' (Haight *Selections* 318). Eliot's own concerns with 'mixed and erring, and self-deluding' ("*Meister*" 131) humanity will be shown in Chapter 5 to trouble optimistic delineations in favour of more Schopenhauerian concerns. Lennart Björk argues that Comte had a strong influence on Thomas Hardy, particularly 'the belief that "man is essentially an affective being"', whilst at the same time Hardy 'may have had reservations about Comte's optimistic belief in the growth of altruistic feelings and the anti-individualistic basis of positivist social psychology' ("*Reading*" 112)²⁵. Nonetheless, Björk does agree with Basil Willey that 'Hardy was in accord with the general objectives of Positivism: "The grand aims... are the amelioration of the order of Nature where that idea is at once imperfect and most modifiable, i.e. human society; and the triumph of social feeling (altruism) over self-love"' (Björk 112, quoting Willey 206-7). This points equally strongly towards Feuerbach, of course, not least the recognition that the constructs of social form are artificial thus changeable. Björk places Hardy as 'more concerned about emotional, intellectual and spiritual social problems', being 'a man whose social criticism approaches to a considerable extent... the humanistic idealism characteristic of so much of Matthew Arnold's criticism of nineteenth-century society' ("*Reading*" 119). Yet Björk also argues that Hardy was 'ambiguous about democracy', and that 'the evidence in the "*Literary Notes*" indicates that he was still more hesitant about socialism' (118). Mallock argues that 'the lot which is commonly called the lot of the poor is not, as such, a fit subject of any commiseration' as this is 'the normal type of human life', and thus we must put any consideration of their condition 'aside' as they are 'not in any sense a sign or product of anything special in our modern industrial system' (*Classes* 139, cited Ball 383), a view Hardy's work clearly argues against²⁶. Mallock's view of the

²⁴ See also Brunning *Salvation*, 63-92.

²⁵ Geoffrey Harvey also notes that 'Hardy could not entirely share Comte's evolutionary optimism' (15). Björk notes Hardy's long-lasting and close friendship with Frederick Harrison, their letters 'suggesting a harmony of attitudes and taste in various areas' including 'political and social events' and 'the Positive view of the Universe', though also notes their friendship ended in 1919 'when Harrison criticised the pessimism of Hardy's *Moments of Vision*' (*Oxford* 183).

²⁶ Mallock later denounces socialism as iniquitous as 'the class which the socialists fix upon as the subjects of this moral transformation, is precisely... the most notorious, and... incorrigible' (*Socialism* 128).

extreme poverty and misery in which a substantial body of the population exists in a sense echoes Schopenhauer's pessimism concerning the inevitable suffering that existence engenders, but clearly refuses Schopenhauer's ethical call to relieve that suffering. Mallock's position is one that, as John Mason recognises, explicitly argues against the intrusion of 'moral and political considerations... into the application of correct economic theory' (Mason 566)²⁷. David DeLaura agrees with Irving Howe that 'the "problem" in Hardy' is 'the fact "that in accepting the secular determinism of Huxley, Mill, and Spencer, and while regarding it as a kind of intellectual liberation, Hardy should have responded not with their combative energy and hope but with his own low-keyed melancholy"' (DeLaura 395, quoting Howe²⁸). For Andrew Radford, in his earlier career Hardy 'refuses to be trapped by an overwhelming feeling of malaise' and 'conquers it' by 'using arch humour as an expression of defiance' (101). In contrast, Hardy's later career sees *Jude the Obscure* in particular evidencing itself as 'a symptom of the general malaise', while 'the brutal therapy of Time' shows Arnoldian potential 'stripped of ameliorating vision' (Radford 203). For DeLaura Hardy's 'eye is consistently on the *painful* exigencies of modernism, its human cost, and not on its liberating effects' (396). Hardy 'challenges... a dying Christian tradition', particularly through the utilisation of Hellenism in Tess and Sue, but these 'are not developed into a coherent view of life' (396). Yet Hardy not only foregrounds that very 'normal type of human life' (Mallock *Classes* 139) at the centre of *Jude*, but also show his understanding of the material causes, effects, and impacts of 'emotional, intellectual and spiritual social problems' on those "normal types". In so doing, Hardy does forge 'a coherent view of life' (DeLaura 396) in *Jude* by engaging with both Feuerbachian and Schopenhauerian delineations of the world.

Whilst the secularist thinking that Mallock criticises largely considers itself optimistic and progressive, it is clear that there are a number of contradictions of

²⁷ Dan Stone regards Mallock as an active member of the movement of 'aristocratic and Tory revivalism of the Edwardian period... correctly understood as a reaction to the rise of feminism and organized labour, and the concomitant shifts in society and politics... [whose] class-based theories... vehemently condemned the new, radical movements' (Stone 406, and see his fn32 on 422). For Mason, Mallock 'almost single-handedly sought to shift the conservative Party's defence of property and inequality from a traditional to a scientific [economic] basis' (566).

²⁸ Irving Howe "Hardly Hardy" *The New York Review of Books*. Dec. 1, 1966, 32. Harvey finds that '[t]he evolutionary struggle for existence described by Darwin chimed with Hardy's fatalistic temperament, and undermined his religious faith, as it did that of so many Victorians' (12).

opinion here. The more negative social views of some are clearly not shared by the equally teleologically-progressive hopes of Oxenford, who earlier enthuses over '[a]ll that the liberal mind looks forward to with hope, if not with confidence – the extension of political rights, the spread of education, the brotherhood of nations', although even Oxenford betrays a lack of 'confidence' (394). Jeffrey Von Arx argues that it is the progressive evolutionary perception itself that informs the disillusioned perspectives of a number of Victorian intellectuals, as present reality fails to fit into the mould they have prescribed to it, thus they denied 'as retrogressive any tendencies they considered in conflict with progress' (202)²⁹. Mill, Harrison, Arnold, Clifford, Spencer and Morison³⁰ were influenced by other philosophies as well as Feuerbachian arguments and Comtean Positivism, but they all adapted influences to suit their own positions and often disagree with one another, as has been shown. Mill's concerns with the importance of those unquantifiable aspects of human experience are shared by a number of his contemporaries, and Mill also places a particular emphasis on the value of the individual, insisting that self-realisation should not be at the expense either of the self or of others. As such, Mill in particular shares a number of concerns with Schopenhauer and Feuerbach, as well as with Eliot and Hardy. Mill recognises the problems in both asceticism and egoism, as one makes 'everything else painful', and the other 'implies... the equivalent depression of other people' (Mill "Comte" 337). Here Mill's position implicitly recognises and refuses the extremes of Feuerbachian absorption into the unified and homogenous species (elsewhere also arguing explicitly against the dangers 'of making all people alike' (*Liberty* 145)), as well as Schopenhauer's most extreme form of salvation, ascetic self-denial. At the same time, Mill echoes Schopenhauer's concerns regarding the ego-driven basis of human suffering. As discussed earlier, Arnold places high value on Christian moral 'truths' ("Marcus" 144), and whilst Mill does not consider Christian ethics themselves as 'irreconcilable' with what 'a comprehensive morality requires', insists that 'other ethics... must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral

²⁹ Von Arx discussing Leslie Stephen, William Lecky, John Morley and James Froude in particular: see Von Arx, esp. 208.

³⁰ See for example Harrison *The Present and the Future: A Positivist Address* London: Reeves & Turner, 1880; Morison *The Service of Man: An Essay Towards the Religion of the Future*. London: Kegan Paul Trench & Co, 1887; and Clifford *The Ethics of Belief* London: [publisher nk], 1876, reproduced in *The Contemporary Review* January 1877.

regeneration of mankind' as the 'interests of truth require a diversity of opinions' (*Liberty* 126-7). Mill's broader ethical approach to arrive at an eventual "truth" also recognises a need for moral 'regeneration' rather than the quasi-religious term "salvation" as the desired human object. As such, on one level Mill echoes the optimistic belief in teleological human progress that Feuerbach overtly deifies (a *deification* Mill does not share) and Schopenhauer refutes, whilst on another level implicitly recognises society to be in need of moral regeneration. This perhaps denotes a less optimistic vision of existing human social relations, whilst avoiding Mallock's pessimistic side of the coin which sees a society of active moral *degeneration*³¹.

That, for Mill, half of morality consists of 'self-education; the training, by the human being himself, of his affection and will' in order to be able to act as an equal part with 'the regulation of his outward actions' ("Bentham" 71), morality is something that needs to be deliberately learned in order to be effective. For Schopenhauer ethics can not be taught, and need not be so, as ethical behaviour is to a significant extent intrinsic to human nature, arguing that 'genuine goodness of disposition, disinterested virtue, and pure nobility of mind do not result from abstract knowledge... but... a direct intuitive knowledge, which can be neither reasoned away, nor arrived at by reasoning' (*WWI* IV §66, 232)³². Mallock's human is essentially corrupt and immoral with no innate compassion, needs external coercion in order to be controllable rather than ethical, thus is more deeply pessimistic than Schopenhauer's intrinsically ethical and compassionate human (subject to individual character) who needs no such external control. For the state to act as external legislator, as 'an institution for spreading morality and

³¹ For Jeffrey Von Arx, the later social pessimism of Leslie Stephen, William Lecky, John Morley and James Froude is a result of what they see as a regression back to the very High Church interference into political life (18) that Mallock is demanding, alongside their 'unsympathetic response to contemporary political developments' (201). It is ironic that Mallock's own fears regarding mass democratisation and socialism in any of its forms are shared to greater and lesser extents by Liberals and sceptics by the end of the nineteenth century (see Von Arx 201-8).

³² Subject to the character of the individual, some particular individuals being more egoistic (given over more completely to the striving of the will) than others, thus intrinsically less ethical, the 'ultimate foundation of morality... [is] in human nature itself' (Schopenhauer *Morality* III §16, 144), and is 'an appeal that actually exists in everyone to act justly and do good, or counterbalance the strong tendencies to injustice and harshness' (§12, 120). Further, Schopenhauer's sceptical view of externally-imposed laws exposes the pessimism inherent in Mallock's view of human nature. For Schopenhauer, if the belief that external 'compulsion and coercion have bridled and restrained everyone' is imagined 'abolished', the thinking person 'recoil[s] at the expected scene', showing 'what little confidence' society really has in 'the efficacy of religion, conscience, or the natural foundation of morals' (§13, 129).

edifying instruction', is a distortion of morality for Schopenhauer, echoing Mill's concerns in seeing the dangers of 'doing away with personal freedom and individual development, in order to make men into mere wheels of a... machine of State and Religion' (Schopenhauer *Morality* §17, 153). The attempt to sanction cruelty through the 'orthodoxy' (*WWI* IV §66, 231) of social form does not change the act, 'the same degree of wickedness' is effected whether defined as a 'crime' or 'expressed... through... intrigues, oppression, and machinations of every kind' (232). Mill's vision of morality affirms a strong sense of individuality within a mutually-beneficial society, where 'there is need of a great increase of disinterested exertion to promote the good of others... [but] the self-regarding virtues... are only second in importance, *if even second*, to the social' (*Liberty* 148, my emphasis) - albeit Mill effectively relying on each individual self-consciously and deliberately "training" themselves to behave morally towards others³³. Schopenhauer's individual needs no such intervention, acting instead with complete spontaneity and thus avoiding either the fears of social breakdown outside of the external (and internal) impositions of religion, or the necessity for state-regulation, the need for which both Arnold and Mallock explicitly argue, with Mill's individual self-conscious "education" as needful. Feuerbach echoes Schopenhauer in finding morality intrinsic to human nature, being 'the inward impulse to do good', but it is always a self-sacrificing love for the other, 'the divine instinct of benevolence which desires to make all happy, and excludes none' (*Essence* V, 60) still overrides the individual as it is 'given from without, takes [the individual] by violence... [t]he heart overcomes, masters man' as 'his God' (59). Feuerbach's morality is an "external" species-essence which controls the individual, essentially denying the individual volition, choice, and individuality itself. This leaves Schopenhauer's position regarding the moral relationship between individual and society as less *essentially* pessimistic than Arnold, Mill, Morison, or Feuerbach, with Mallock the most pessimistic of all.

Like Mill, Eliot is concerned about the balance between individual and social realisation, understanding that society is 'in bondage to terms and conceptions which, having their root in conditions of thought no longer existing,

³³ John Mason argues that Mill believes the human species is 'not yet highly enough developed morally to make a success of socialism' (Mason 569), Mill anticipating some of the subsequent analyses of the failure of various Communist Revolutions (Hook, 2-3).

have ceased to possess any vitality' ("Progress" 19), concerned that the moral 'line' society attempts to draw 'between the virtuous and the vicious, so far from being a necessary safeguard to morality, is itself an immoral fiction' ("Morality" 132). Eliot also argues that Christian morality, freed from its dogmatic form, will 'strike a firm root in man's moral nature, and entwine itself with the growth of those new forms of social life to which we are tending' ("Progress" 32), as there is a 'tendency towards good in human nature [which] has a force... no creed can utterly counteract, and which ensures the ultimate triumph of that tendency over all dogmatic perversions' ("Evangelical" 170). Whilst Hardy's concern with the struggle between the individual and external elements includes evolutionary ideas³⁴, he also recognises the roles that social form and other artificial proscriptions of human behaviour play here, and is particularly concerned about allowing for natural human emotions. Björk believes that it is from Charles Fourier that Hardy 'assimilated... anti-rationalism, his notion that it is not reason but passion that is the primary motive power in human life' as Fourier argues that 'the greatest obstacle to human happiness is the inability of the modern social order to satisfy the claims of the passions' ("Reading" 107). Hardy also claims that, by 1865, he knew Mill's *On Liberty* 'almost by heart' (*Life* 330). Björk notes that 'Hardy heavily marked' a passage in his own copy which argues that '[t]here is a different type of human excellence from the Calvinistic: a conception of humanity as having its nature bestowed on it for other purposes than merely to be abnegated', and "'Pagan self-assertion" is one of the elements of human worth, as well as "Christian self-denial"' ("Reading" 106).

George Lewes recognises that a fixed view of history can direct adherents of a particular system to claim historical evidence for their own viewpoints, thus 'have a sort of unity given them by the pretension they all have of being founded on history' and thereby the 'Eclectics, the Catholics, and the humanitarians all point to the attestation of history in proof of their systems' (*Philosophy* 643). Yet Lewes falls foul of this himself as, in his own attestation of the progressive social-evolutionary approach, he finds in Comte's Positivist system the 'unity of thought' (650) that will provide the monumental key with which to 'decipher' the

³⁴ Hardy notes from *The Examiner* in 1876: 'Science tells us that, in the struggle for life, the surviving organism is not necessarily that which is absolutely the best in an ideal sense, though it must be that which is most in harmony with surrounding conditions' (*Literary Notebooks* v1. entry 392, 40).

past, itself essential 'if we would understand the present and predict the future' (652). Lewes does concede, however, that applying such a unified and unifying theory to *all* phenomena may have certain qualifications, finding 'phenomena relating to mankind... obviously more complex than those relating to the individual man' (653) as 'the effects of these [Positive] laws' are modified by 'the action of *individuals on each other*, curiously complicated by the action of each generation on its successor' (653-4, original emphasis). As long as this is taken into consideration, Comte's Positive system still offers the unifying theory Lewes deems necessary. Whilst Lewes emphasises that the past should remain as the past, that it 'should have historical, not absolute significance... [as] it is our Ancestry, and not our life' ("Poetry" 132), his developmental view of human "progress" still betrays absolutist and rather Comtean universal ideals 25 years later. In 1878 Lewes argues that:

When science has fairly mastered the principles of moral relations as it has mastered the principles of physical relations, all Knowledge will be incorporated in a homogeneous doctrine rivalling that of the old theologies in its comprehensiveness, and surpassing it in the authority of its credentials. ("Science" 326)

The differences between aspects of 'the aspirations' of even associated secularist thinkers over the decades of Oxenford's 'present world' (394) are clear, and raise questions regarding the critical polarisation of "optimism" and "pessimism" in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Mallock argues that 'if science can take from man his religious faith, it leaves him a being without any moral guidance' (*Living* 168). The bottom line for Mallock is that the 'choices which our life consists of are definite things', consequently, the 'rule which is to guide our choices must be something definite also' (204), a particular concern in respect of his deeply pessimistic view of the inherently immoral and corrupt human individual³⁵. It is only the threat of

³⁵ Mallock's view of human nature is extremely negative in respect of the species as a whole, including historically, but particularly racially. When faced with 'the moral difficulties' thrown up by 'the enormous period of his existence for which man has had no religious history, and has been, so far as we can tell, not a religious being at all; and the vast majority of the race that are still stagnant and semi-barbarous', Mallock asks 'Is it possible that of the swarms, vicious and aimless, that breed upon [the earth], each individual - Bushman, Chinaman, or Negro - is a precious immortal being, with a birthright in infinity and eternity?' (*Living* 199-200). As argued in Chapter 1 above, Schopenhauer finds such views as Mallock's disgusting, denouncing the opinions and subsequent brutality meted out by 'devils in human form, these bigoted, church-going, Sabbath-

purgatory that ‘can bring a belief in future rewards and punishments into anything like accordance with our notions of what is just or reasonable’ (222). For Mallock, the question *Is Life Worth Living?* cannot be answered without considering another ‘decisive question’: ‘Are we moral or spiritual beings, or are we not?... to say Yes without fear... then there will be little more to fear... From this belief in ourselves we shall pass to the belief in God, as its only rational basis and its only emotional completion’ (244) and as such, human nature ‘will be redeemed visibly from its weakness and from its littleness – *redeemed, not in dreams or in fancy, but in fact*’ (246, my emphasis). For Mallock then, salvation (or moral redemption) is *only* attained through and in religious faith, and is of course only attained after death rather than in life. Eliot recognises religious constructs in Feuerbachian terms, particularly the elitist constructions of salvation effected by Evangelical dogma which dehumanises fellow human beings and is thus ‘obstructive of true moral development’ (“Evangelical” 168). This is a position Mill, Schopenhauer, and Feuerbach echo in their arguments against egoism³⁶, and Chapter 7 will show that the terms under which Hardy also sees religious dogma as a barrier to salvation reveals a significantly Feuerbachian vision.

The issue of salvation forms an important focus for Victorian philosophical and social thinkers, whether explicitly or implicitly termed and whether concentrating more on individual or social salvation, although social responsibility resonates at the heart of the issue. For Mallock social *control* is central, illustrating his inability to believe in the capacity of the individual or collective human to have social responsibility as such, leaving the only hope for human redemption and the reversal of what he sees as the effective degeneration of British society to be in a return to the certainties of Catholicism. This supernatural element imbues the human with profundity, value, and meaning (*Living* 8-16), but also imposes strict behavioural codes (20) without which

keeping scoundrels’ upon ‘their innocent black brothers whom force and injustice have delivered into their devilish clutches’ (“Ethics” §5, 138). Feuerbach’s arguments also implicitly recognise the philosophical alienation in Mallock’s position here (see *Essence* Preface xvi; *Principles* §10, 12-13).

³⁶ Mill values the Comtean ‘direct cultivation of altruism, and the subordination of egoism to it’ (“Comte” 339); Schopenhauer argues against both individual and ‘theoretical egoism’ as both treat ‘all others as mere phantoms’ (*WWI* II §19, 37); Feuerbach denounces egoism as ‘criminal arrogance’ (*Essence* XI, 116), although it could be argued that his own position holds the opposite danger of individual negation at the hands of the community/species.

Mallock concedes no ethical content within the mere human being who is 'ever inclined' to immorality, *essentially* 'inconstant and corrupted' (32). Basil Willey, in his study of the history of religious and moral ideas in the nineteenth century, claims that Christianity survived the century of 'biblical criticism and scientific agnosticism' by being founded upon 'Faith' in 'our central experience as moral beings, upon all that responds to value – to truth, beauty, goodness, and the sense of duty... [and] upon modes of knowing higher than the understanding or mind of the flesh' (40). Whilst this echoes Feuerbach's delineation of - and necessity for - faith in the secularised human and as the effective basis of morality in one sense, it argues against Mallock's own position, the hub of which is not so much a return to religious Faith as "truth" but as a certainty of social order, both hierarchical and controlling. Whilst secularists might well be united on one level in the movement away from the dogma of religious constructions of the human and society, and of morality and salvation, the directions this movement might take is fraught with contradiction, from wondering to what extent they need to denounce Christianity in order to be able to move on at all³⁷, to debating the question of whether 'Salvation' is 'necessary?', asking 'What are we to be saved from?... What for?... [and] How?' (Royle 126). Different aspects of each thinker's questions, and their proposed direction towards which the human now needs to aim, involve both optimistic and pessimistic elements. The question of how the individual and the community can live on in a society where the previous certainties that religious structure seemed to afford are crumbling around them, still has as its basis concerns of morality and behaviour, faith and direction, inform fictional literature as much as philosophical and social treatise, and recognise Lewes' "curious complications" at every turn. For those Victorians for whom a return to religious belief is neither possible nor desirable, they sought for hope and belief in another direction, albeit a direction that also asks questions about human morality, value, and duty, at the same time as seeking a higher form of understanding that keeps questions of earthly life – that fragile flesh - very much in view.

³⁷ See Royle (42 and 65).

III. *Aesthetic salvation: 'Will the dreams not continue, when the reality has passed away?'*

Mallock argues that, whilst religious belief might be termed 'dream-land' by secularists, 'it is only for the sake of the dreams that visit it that the world of reality has any certain value for us', asking finally 'Will the dreams not continue, when the reality has passed away?' (*Living* 247). Mallock's final question is unanswerable this side of the grave in a religious context, but is afforded other realms in which answers might be addressed. For those unable to return to faith in religion the questions also remain, and the realm of "dreams" arguably extends into the role that literature as an art form plays in the questions of human morality, value, and salvation that continue to be asked.

Whilst for Arnold 'Art refreshes us, art liberates us, precisely by carrying us into... [a world of fantasy], and enabling us to find pleasure there' as well as 'call[ing] into play our imagination' ("Playgoer" 140), he is amongst those who argue that literature has a highly significant role to play in engendering a more profound sense of human development³⁸. In considering human actions and character, Mill values the role that aesthetic experience plays equally to that of moral and sympathetic experience (Mill "Bentham" 84), placing a particularly high value onto the capacity of artistic creation to 'educate the feelings of abstract thinkers, and enlarge the intellectual horizons of people of the world' ("Comte" 324). As Royle recognises, education is considered '[o]ne of the most important elements in radical activity' (119) during the latter Victorian period, and fictional literature is seen as an important medium of social debate and didacticism, with the theme of morality in fiction of central concern particularly regarding the impact a text may have on the morals of its readership. As Kenneth Graham argues, 'whether they regretted or approved', Victorian critics 'found themselves discussing the credentials of fiction with a greater urgency than ever', concerning 'its moral function in society; its claims to intellectual and imaginative profundity; and the aesthetic principles of its form' (1). Whilst recognising the validity of the question of whether 'to meet the needs of our

³⁸ Rather unsurprisingly Mallock deems that art's 'power and greatness' lies in the "fact" that the 'grand relation of man is not first to his brother men, but to something else beyond humanity' (*Living* 106), that is it represents the 'struggling, or failing to struggle, not after natural happiness, but after supernatural right' (104).

modern life' the predominant subject for education 'ought... to pass from letters to science', Arnold argues that 'a genuine [literary] humanism is scientific' ("Literature and Science" 57) and a significant 'help to knowing ourselves and the world' (58). A purely science-based education without literature is in danger of 'leav[ing] one important thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature' (61). For Arnold 'the powers which go to the building up of human life' are 'conduct... intellect and knowledge... beauty, and the power of social life and manners' (61-2), and we seek to relate these to one another through 'the sense which we have in us for conduct', 'beauty' and 'good[ness]' (63). This is 'the instinct for self-preservation in humanity' (63), and thus literature appears to offer a necessary place in which the less quantitative aspects of the human find a means of sustenance and development for Arnold, to balance scientific knowledge and feeding what he terms the 'humanist... soul' (72). Arnold's thinking regarding human morality and contemporary society contain occasionally conflicting elements, but his emphasis on the value and importance of a literary education is unequivocal – in terms of 'quality' ("Playgoer" 136) literature anyway³⁹. Lewes argues that in literature, 'our moral sense requires to be gratified' and any disappointment here occurs 'when poetical justice is violated' ("Bronte" 91), also focusing on the moral aspects of literature as intrinsically related to aesthetic appreciation. Feuerbach posits 'aesthetic comprehension' as innately within human nature, arguing that our ability to 'perceive the beauty that is presented to [us] externally' is evidence 'to the individual man [of] the holiness and goodness of human nature' (*Essence* I, 28). Yet Feuerbach also values "high art" rather than the aesthetic representation of less sublime issues, as art can only be such if it represents the ideal, the species (7), as to represent the individual human form is only vanity (6), a position presumably extending to representations of the imperfect individual in every respect. Schopenhauer also holds that aesthetic comprehension is innate to all human individuals and reveals the "essence" to the individual, acting as a double knowledge through which the essence, the will-to-life, is revealed whilst

³⁹ Arnold clearly does not mean *all* literature here as he marks a distinction between literature which has 'a quality' (presumably that which appeals to these "ennobled" aspects of the human), and that which might appeal to those members of society he terms 'a little wanting in soul and very much wanting in clear vision' ("Playgoer" 136) (namely literatures that engage with what he terms 'French life' (136) in dealing with infidelity and intrigue, such as *Madame Bovary*).

simultaneously transcending subjectivity (*WWI* III §38, 119). As such, aesthetics access a form of salvation through a cessation of willing and suffering, albeit only temporarily. At the same time Schopenhauer finds aesthetic representation of the unique individual equally valid (III §51, 153), as are all forms of ‘poignant situations in which they reveal themselves’ (158), and tragic representation above all reveals ‘that those powers which destroy happiness and life are such that their path to us... is always open’ (161-2). Whilst claiming his work to be the exposition of a single thought, Schopenhauer also makes a pertinent point about literature:

a single thought, however comprehensive, must preserve the most perfect unity. If, all the same, it can be split up into parts for the purpose of being communicated, then the connexion of these parts must... be organic, i.e. of such a kind that every part supports the whole just as much as it is supported by the whole; a connexion in which no part is first and no part last, in which the whole gains in clearness from every part, and even the smallest part cannot be fully understood until the whole has first been understood. But a book must have a first and last line, and to this extent will always remain very unlike an organism, however like one its contents may be. Consequently, form and matter will here be in contradiction. (*WWR* vI, xii-xiii, original emphasis)

Literature, then, will necessarily disrupt organic unity through the contradiction between its physical structure and the content, at the same time as it needs to be viewed as a whole in order to ascertain the relationships between its parts. The works of fiction discussed in the following chapters also bring ‘form and matter... in[to] contradiction’ (*WWR* vI, xiii) as they explore the relationship between the quest for salvation and the existential individual human negotiating that quest; the potential for contradiction between the theory and the practice that Lewes also recognises (*Philosophy* 653-4).

Like Mill, Eliot places high value on aesthetic experience, arguing that it is the most effective form of education as ‘aesthetic teaching’ is ‘the highest of all teaching because it deals with life in its highest complexity’, and this is a medium through which she herself works to ‘make certain ideas thoroughly incarnate’ (*Selections*, 318). As Suzanne Graver recognises, Eliot sees literature as ‘not only an index but also an agent of social evolution’ (186), Eliot attempting in her own fiction ‘to capture... the forms of belief that characterized past and present communities... [as well as] create... new forms of belief’ (260). Yet Graver sees Eliot’s fictional texts as finally embodying a *failure of intent* in

what Graver recognises as their testament to ‘a myth or vision of organic unity’ (308). The analysis of *Middlemarch* in Chapter 5 will argue that Eliot’s novel does not “intend” to define human existence in such neatly-packaged optimistic terms. The problem with positing a failure in Eliot’s fiction to deliver a perceived promise in her non-fiction writings is due to attempts to position Eliot as an optimistic-positivist humanist rather than examine the relationship between optimistic and pessimistic thinking in her work. Mallock recognises her ‘entire philosophy... [as] an impassioned protest against pessimism’ (“Eliot” 457) yet asks whether Eliot ‘overestimate[s] the causes for hope?’ (458), thus he implicitly recognises a contradiction between these positions in her work. Hardy recognises the contingencies of fashion in literature whereby contemporary art is interested once more in the formerly ‘dormant principles’ of ‘great dramatic motives – setting forth that “collision between the individual and the general”’ (“Candour” 126). This now ‘demands... original treatment’ by showing contemporary concerns such as ‘Nature’s unconsciousness not of essential laws, but of those laws framed merely as social expedients by humanity’ (127). The relationship between the individual, ‘essential laws’ and ‘social expedients’ (Hardy “Candour” 127) in *Jude the Obscure* will form the focus of Chapter 7. For Hardy one of the key problems in the aesthetics of literature in particular is that the necessarily ‘honest portrayal’ of life as ‘a physiological fact’ in literature is proscribed by ‘English society’ (127-8) with its ‘censorship of prudery’ (129). This is dominated by the magazines and ‘Grundyist’ (130) circulating libraries, which enforce the production of ‘puerile inventions’ of which ‘thoughtful readers’ are ‘weary... and famishing for accuracy’ (127). Hardy illustrates his point by arguing that if literature by Shakespeare, Milton and other “classic” authors ‘were issued as new fiction’, they would be ‘exclude[d] from circulation’ and even deemed ‘profan[e]’ (130-1, fn). Hardy’s own determination that the ‘position of man and woman in nature, and the position of belief in the minds of man and woman’ should ‘be taken up and treated frankly’ (133) led, of course, to such uproar that Hardy finally abandoned novel-writing entirely, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. Graham discusses Hardy’s indignation at those who find “theories” in his novels, arguing that, for Hardy, any ‘moral effect of fiction’ should be ‘part of the total impression of the book’, which is itself the imaginative construction of ‘the instinctive pictures of life’ (80). Whilst Hardy’s

“coyness” regarding particular theories in his fiction is at least in part connected with criticisms of his pessimism, Hardy’s reading was extensive⁴⁰, and his ideas on morality and life are, like Eliot’s, unavoidably caught up in the philosophical ideas of the period. Deborah Collins argues that the ‘divergent patterns in religious and philosophic thought’ (29) during the nineteenth century, through which ‘Humanity had not only fallen from grace but from guidance as well’ (31), leaves Hardy’s ‘lifelong refusal to commit himself to a single theoretic position’ as a result of the ‘dense and richly woven’ (29) times in which he found himself. What seems more likely is that Hardy’s rejection of the ‘anti-individualistic basis’ (Björk “Reading” 112) of Comte’s Positivist system, for instance, echoes in his equal rejection of the attempt to fit the complexity of the individual and their unique circumstances into a rigid system, an ethical aesthetic he shares with Eliot. As Chapter 7 will argue, Hardy finds this not only inappropriate but damaging to the ‘actual shapes’ (Hardy *Jude* IV.i, 245) of the individuals concerned. Hardy argues that ‘literature’ is ‘no exception to the general law’ in being ‘conditioned by its surroundings like a river-stream’ (“Candour” 125), and in seeking answers to questions of self-fulfilment and individual human destiny in their fiction, Eliot and Hardy place their characters into contemporary philosophical and social contexts. Both also recognise that the worlds their characters inhabit reflect Lewes’ “curious complications” (*Philosophy* 654) on a number of significant levels.

In examining the ‘struggle between the opposites’ of ‘laughter and despair’ in Victorian novels, U. C. Knoepfelmacher sees these forces as ‘alternative models of reality in which... anxieties could be scrutinized and, ideally, be allayed, arrested, or countered’ (*Laughter* xi-xii) in a kind of shared cathartic experience between author and reader through the medium of the text. For the Victorian:

In a human reality no longer ordered by divine design, despair seemed harder to vanquish [and thus the Victorian novelist,] who was forced to recover paradise in a world where social institutions could provide the only measure of stability... found that his efforts to correct despondency were, by necessity, far more fragile... [and] the gains attained... seem deliberately muted. (Knoepfelmacher *Laughter* xii-xiii)

⁴⁰ See Hardy *Literary Notebooks* for example, and Björk “Reading” 103-5.

Whilst for Knoepfelmacher, laughter in *Middlemarch* attempts to ‘reconcil[e] reader and author to the limitations which the characters are forced to accept’ (and exposes what Knoepfelmacher sees as Eliot’s forced ‘compromise’) (204), in ‘Hardy... laughter becomes ferocious; though still self-protective, it now blends with despair’ (xiv). The question of reconciliation in Eliot’s *Middlemarch* will be shown to be a fundamental element in the text, and the necessary precursor to survival in quite radically pessimistic terms. In recognising the conflict between the opposites of transcendent optimism and despair in the individual, Eliot’s novel examines how the exclusion of either *essentially* precludes salvation. For Hardy, whilst the ironic laughter does verge on a ‘ferocious... despair’ in *Jude*, the novel’s pessimism is identified on two key levels. One of these is an unchangeable and essential part of existence, and the other is haunted by the possibility of a more optimistic vision of salvation which moves Hardy into Feuerbachian delineations of existence in fundamental terms.

Chapter 4

George Eliot, Feuerbach and Schopenhauer: Between Hope and Despair.

That George Eliot is exposed to Feuerbach's philosophy to a deep and significant extent is clearly evident in her providing the first English translation of *The Essence of Christianity* in 1854¹, and her enthusiasm for his philosophy is equally evident in a letter written that same year in which she states that '[w]ith the ideas of Feuerbach I everywhere agree' (*Selections* 132). One of the central tenets of the next chapter, which examines Eliot's penultimate novel *Middlemarch*, is that Eliot's relationship with Feuerbach is not as unproblematic as this appears to suggest.

Critical readings of Eliot's philosophical relationships in her literature tend to concentrate on "optimistic" philosophies, of which Feuerbach's is one. As outlined in the Introduction above, despite her close engagement with Feuerbach in translating his primary work, those critics who assess Eliot's literary relationship with Feuerbach rarely examine his influences in her writing in detail but posit an acknowledged and generalised connection, frequently alongside other influences considered from an "optimistic" viewpoint whether implicitly or explicitly termed. Rosemary Ashton has aligned Eliot with brief but optimistic readings of Comte, Goethe, and Feuerbach (*German* 166-70), and the ethical altruism of Baruch Spinoza (158-9), arguing that all of Eliot's novels predominantly 'testify to her unchanging belief' in Feuerbachian thinking, including 'I-Thou relationships, the "divine" efficacy of human love, [and] the redeeming influence of man on man' (160), an 'unchanging belief' this thesis questions. For Ashton the influences of these thinkers on Eliot include the importance of 'the use of the senses and the faculty of the imagination as central to religious myth and the exercise of moral duty alike' (166), and thus "religious"

¹ Feuerbach's original publication Germany 1841; revised edition 1843. Eliot's translation is still the currently available edition.

feeling is 'channell[ed] into human feelings towards fellow humans' (170), the terms of which will be examined in Chapter 5, alongside alternative implications regarding Ashton's claim that Feuerbach (alongside Spinoza) offers Eliot 'an ethic and a psychology applicable to men in their unheroic everyday' (159). Peter Jones discusses the philosophical relationship between ego and imagination in *Middlemarch* and, whilst acknowledging influences including à Kempis, Rousseau, Comte and Mill, Jones discusses Eliot mainly in relation to Charles Bray and G. H. Lewes (52-3; 60-65), seeing her relationship with Feuerbach predominantly one in which 'man is the criterion of truth, and... religion is reducible to anthropology and psychology' (52). Jones does make some observations pertinent to the examination of *Middlemarch* in Chapter 5, where the characterisation of human individuals, their relationships and human aims will be shown to raise questions concerning the optimistic emphasis that Feuerbachian delineations of the human engender. Eliot, then, is frequently either implicitly or explicitly termed an optimist (Argyle 4) or a positivist-humanist (Widdowson 18-21) by critics, and her views are often seen as reflecting the Victorian period in representative terms. Basil Willey argues that Eliot is probably the single writer who 'fully epitomises the century; her development is a paradigm... of its most decided trend... [moving] from Evangelical Christianity... through doubt to a reinterpreted Christ and a religion of humanity: beginning with God, it ends in Duty' (215). T. R. Wright argues a case of Eliot's 'veneration for the founder of the Religion of Humanity [Comte]' (*Humanity* 180), and that the 'moral framework' of her novels 'is based upon Positivist principles, in particular the channelling of egoistic instincts in altruistic directions by habits of prayer and worship and the need to live openly and rely on the beneficent influence of public opinion' (180). Wright also points out, however, that for Eliot 'Positivist concepts are... sometimes found wanting' (181). Chapter 3 has shown that Eliot's relationship with Comtean thought is clearly problematic², and one of the issues Chapter 5 will examine concerns the other side of the altruistic coin: the danger this might represent to the individual, and how 'the beneficent influence of public opinion' might also be seen as rather a misnomer. K. M. Newton sees Eliot embodying an optimistic Romantic

² See also Brunning *Salvation* (64-7).

humanism within which context Feuerbach assists Eliot's perception that 'morality was rather a natural product of the social life of man; its basis was in human feelings which had become transformed into moral ideas through the interaction of men and society' (*Romantic* 26). This concept will be discussed in relation to *Middlemarch*, particularly in terms of the problematic aspects of the Feuerbachian consideration of only optimistic human relations, a Feuerbachian aspect this thesis will argue Eliot's novel challenges. The relationship between 'knowledge', 'truth', and 'subjective feeling' (Newton *Romantic* 125) in *Middlemarch* will be shown to have significant ramifications for seeing Eliot's work in a less optimistic light. U. C. Knoepfelmacher argues that 'Feuerbach's contention that his man-centred faith would only further the primacy of "Love" in the world of change, suffering, and total extinction, softened considerably the evolutionary ideas that [Eliot] had so stoically accepted' (*Humanism* 54). In seeing Feuerbachian influence as an optimistic means of overcoming the pessimism of an evolutionary world, Knoepfelmacher interestingly suggests a more pessimistic ethos underlying some of her work, albeit in respect of a relationship with evolutionary pessimism. Gillian Beer has examined Eliot's work in relation to evolutionary and scientific social Darwinism, arguing that for Eliot 'the multiple past, both genetic and cultural' (187-8) leads to social enrichment, and that '[p]rojects cannot rest in the present' as 'they rely upon extension and futurity' (142), yet Beer also claims that by the end of her writing career Eliot's earlier 'dependence of the future on the past is brought into question' (169)³. Beer relates this "change" to what she sees in Comte and Darwin as an emphasis on 'the unstayable and ever-extending movement of all phenomena' (180), but in *Middlemarch* this questioning of the 'dependence of the future on the past' (Beer 169) moves Eliot's engagements with both 'extension and futurity' (142) in her 'study of process and relations' (149) outside of direct agreement with Feuerbachian teleological-optimism in radical terms. Suzanne Graver has examined Eliot within the context of an organic, progressive social optimism, arguing that Eliot regards 'human nature not as constant but as continuously developing, moving slowly but comprehensively

³ Gillian Beer does recognise less overtly optimistic aspects of Eliot's work, which she relates to Darwinism (See Beer *Darwin's Plots* 193), but largely finds the 'belief in fixed laws is a sustaining element in George Eliot's sense of the moral nature of plot' (223): see also Introduction (9) above.

toward the improvement of mankind' (16), an improvement brought about through 'tolerance' and 'brotherhood' (57). Graver claims for Eliot the belief in literature itself as 'an agent of social evolution' (186), and that she 'wanted to create through her fiction new forms of belief' (260) towards that optimistic evolutionary end. Yet Graver sees Eliot's fictional texts as finally embodying a *failure of intent* in their testament to 'a myth or vision of organic unity' (308). The next chapter will examine how *Middlemarch* explicitly problematises the idea that human existence can be defined in these progressive-optimistic terms, and how the relationship with Feuerbachian delineations of human place, ethics and destination in *Middlemarch* suggests that Eliot's relationship with Feuerbach is not as unproblematic as her own explicit "agreement" appears to suggest. Whilst Pauline Nestor also aligns Eliot philosophically with Feuerbach, Comte, Goethe, and Spinoza in fairly generalised positivist-optimistic terms, Nestor does raise the importance of recognising the 'complex, unstable and frequently contradictory aspects of Eliot's texts' (161).

Most critics do not examine Eliot's exposure to Schopenhauer's philosophy, nor address her work more generally in relation to pessimism. Eliot's exposure to Schopenhauer certainly began at least as early in her literary career as her exposure to Feuerbach's work with the publication of John Oxenford's article on Schopenhauer in *The Westminster Review* in 1853⁴. Eliot was the editor of *The Westminster Review* at the time and recommended Oxenford's article to her friends George Combe and Sara Hennell as 'one of the best in that number' (*Letters* v.II, 95; VIII, 73-74). According to E. A. McCobb, however, Eliot also later read Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* directly. It seems likely that this occurs nearly two decades after Oxenford's article is published, but at least 10 years earlier than Schopenhauer's work is

⁴ McCobb argues that Eliot's first exposure to Schopenhauer's philosophy began a year earlier, from at least 1852, via the *Westminster Review*, identifying several references to Schopenhauer in *The Westminster Review* over the 12 months prior to the publication of John Oxenford's article, as well as in other journals and books, both in English and German publications. See E. A. McCobb "Daniel Deronda as Will and Representation: George Eliot and Schopenhauer", 533-4. McCobb's earliest source, W. Tennemann's *A Manual of the History of Philosophy*, was in fact published 20 years earlier than this in 1832, although this work only mentions Schopenhauer very briefly and does not discuss any facets of his philosophy.

published in English translation and thus available to a wider audience⁵. McCobb suggests that the evidence points towards Eliot reading *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* between September 1872 and February 1873, but most likely not until ‘immediately after *Tristram Shandy*’ (McCobb “Representation” 535, fn11) which, according to Timothy Hands, Eliot is reading in January 1873 (Hands 129). It is not possible to assert the date conclusively, however, as Eliot does not date the entry itself or refer to the year in which she read the book, but includes Schopenhauer’s work in a list of books with the note ‘Read since September’ (quoted McCobb “Representation” 535)⁶. McCobb’s conclusions regarding the date are drawn from various sources of evidence, including the order in which Eliot lists the books, her manuscript notebooks, letters, and George Lewes’ diary (McCobb “Representation” 535). Having established this link between Eliot and Schopenhauer immediately prior to Eliot beginning work on *Daniel Deronda*, McCobb discusses the relationship between Eliot’s treatment of gambling, moral debt and redemption in *Daniel Deronda* in relation to *WWI*, and elsewhere discusses Eliot, Schopenhauer, and music in relation to the same novel⁷. Significantly, McCobb also notes that Lewes read Schopenhauer widely between January 1869 and 1876 (“Representation” 534), Lewes and Eliot having been living together since 1854, although McCobb does not explore the likelihood or implications of Lewes discussing Schopenhauer’s philosophy with Eliot.

Lewes began his reading of Schopenhauer with *The Fourfold Root* in January 1869 (Schopenhauer’s precursor to *WWI*), moving on to *The World as Will and Idea* itself almost 2 years later in November 1870, the month Eliot begins to write what is currently a story called “Miss Brooke” which has not yet become part of the early germs of her latest novel (see Hands 118). Eliot’s ideas have coalesced into *Middlemarch* by December 1870, and she has completed Books I and II with work progressing on Book III (see Hands 120-123) by the

⁵ See E. A. McCobb “Representation” (535).

⁶ This by no means proves that Eliot did not read Schopenhauer before this date, however, even in part. As William Baker points out, Eliot does not always record her reading in her diaries, Baker showing Sir Thomas Browne’s work as an example of this, Browne is ‘frequently cited by G. Eliot’ including in *Middlemarch* yet ‘there appears to be no mention of reading him in either G. Eliot’s or G. H. Lewes’ diaries’, and the edition of Browne’s work in Dr. William’s library ‘contains various pencil linings by both George Eliot and Lewes’ (Baker xlvi).

⁷ E. A. McCobb “The Morality of Musical Genius: Schopenhauerian Views in *Daniel Deronda*” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 1983 V19, pp321-330.

time Lewes goes on to read *Parerga und Paralipomena/Essays and Aphorisms*⁸ the following November, 1871⁹. Eliot's completed *Middlemarch* Books are published in succession from December 1871 onwards, Eliot producing Books IV to VIII over the subsequent year with the "Finale" completed in October and published on 1st December 1872 (Hands 123-7), and within two months, by February 1873 at the latest, Eliot has read *The World as Will and Idea* for herself (McCobb "Representation" 535). What might have impelled Eliot towards finally reading Schopenhauer is impossible to say without documented evidence but it seems not unlikely that conversations with Lewes, whose knowledge of Schopenhauer since 1869 is first-hand, may well have prompted her own interest regardless of the generally growing awareness and discussions of Schopenhauer mentioned amongst Eliot's acquaintances¹⁰. Even if Lewes or other of Eliot's acquaintances never discussed Schopenhauer with her, however, Eliot's direct engagement itself suggests that her exposure to Oxenford's discussion of Schopenhauer 20 years earlier was finally insufficient to sustain her own questions. Whilst McCobb investigates some aspects of Schopenhauerian influence in *Daniel Deronda*, claiming that the 'empirical evidence suggests that Schopenhauer's works may have exerted some influence during George Eliot's transition from "optimistic realism" to the "pessimistic non-realism" of her last novel' ("Representation" 533), how *Middlemarch* itself may mark a shift in Eliot's position forms the focus of this thesis.

Ralph Goodale points out that Eduard von Hartmann was another 'German pessimist [who] stood very close to Schopenhauer in popularity' in nineteenth century Britain, and warns that 'in investigating the influence of Schopenhauer one must beware of ascribing to him what is due to Hartmann or the exponents of Buddhism' (242-3). Von Hartmann's philosophical pessimism is derived directly from Schopenhauer's, however, and Schopenhauer explicitly recognises the relationship between his own philosophy and Buddhism and other Eastern

⁸ Lewes also reads a book about Schopenhauer's philosophy by Wilhelm Gwinner in November 1871 (see McCobb "Representation" 534). There are two possible contenders: see bibliography below and COPAC.

⁹ Lewes' reading of Schopenhauer listed McCobb "Representation" 534.

¹⁰ See McCobb ("Representation" 535-6) for a brief discussion of Eliot's acquaintances as possible Schopenhauerian sources, although McCobb does not appear to consider Lewes a serious contender here.

philosophy¹¹. Whilst von Hartmann's philosophical approach may have interesting areas to devote to the issue of the unconscious, either with or without regard to the relationships between himself, Schopenhauer, and Freud, his final vision of salvation is a deeply pessimistic evolutionary species-Consciousness, the final endpoint of which is voluntary mass-extinction¹². Lewes was certainly familiar with von Hartmann, and whilst the firmest evidence shows that Lewes appears to be reading secondary material on von Hartmann until after 1873, there is some evidence to suggest that he may have been reading von Hartmann directly in 1869 and 1872¹³. Nonetheless, von Hartmann's brand of pessimism is not pertinent to the relationship between optimism and pessimism in *Middlemarch* discussed in Chapter 5, although it has minimal relevance to Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* as Chapter 7 will discuss. With Lewes reading all of Schopenhauer's works from 1869 onwards, and Eliot reading *WWI* between September 1872 and February 1873 at the latest, the evidence suggests that her exposure to Schopenhauer may have been quite comprehensive by this time. Most significantly, it also indicates that the issue of pessimism is of interest to her by the time she is finishing her work on *Middlemarch*.

Whilst it is evident from her recommendations to Hennell and Combe that Eliot is at least familiar with Schopenhauer from at least 1853, she does not indicate what her opinion of his philosophy is, however, although her appreciation of Oxenford's article could imply her agreement at this point in time with his critique and rejection of what he sees as Schopenhauer's unremitting

¹¹ See Chapter 1 (41) above.

¹² See Chapter 3 (76) for discussion of Von Hartmann.

¹³ See William Baker *George Eliot – George Henry Lewes Library: Gustav Knauer Das Facit aus E. von Hartmann's Philosophie des Unbewussten*, Berlin, [publisher not known] 1873 (Baker entry 1164, p110); Adolf Lasson "Eduard von Hartmann und seine neuesten Schriften", *Deutsche Rundschau*, 8, (September 1876) pp391-417 (Baker 1220, 114); Wilhelm Tobias *Grenzen der Philosophie, constatirt gegen Riemann und Helmholtz vertheidigt gegen Von Hartmann und Lasker*, Berlin, [publisher not known], 1875 (Baker 2160, 200). The Baker listings of Eliot and Lewes' library also includes books on pessimism: Edmund Pfeleiderer *Der moderne Pessimismus*, Berlin, 1875 (Baker 1676, 157); and James Sully *Pessimism: A History and a Criticism*, 1877 (Baker 2110, 196), which discusses both Schopenhauer and von Hartmann in detail.

Lewes' possible primary contact with von Hartmann before these dates: McCobb has found a reference to Lewes reading a *Philosophie des Unbewussten* in December 1869 and April 1872, which may be von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* although no author is mentioned. McCobb also notes that Hausemann's book of the same title in the Lewes Collection at Dr. William's Library was only published in 1874 (McCobb "Representation" 537, fn18). There are no listings on COPAC which would suggest that Lewes' reading here may have been anything other than von Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten* which was first published in 1869 in Berlin. As such, it is quite possible that Lewes is reading von Hartmann simultaneously with his first exposure to Schopenhauer.

pessimism. Whilst Oxenford admires Schopenhauer's style and critique of transcendental philosophy (401), he finds Schopenhauer's doctrine 'the most disheartening, the most repulsive, the most opposed to the aspirations of the present world' (394), present aspirations that Oxenford clearly relates to the whole ethos of his contemporary society¹⁴. Oxenford rejects Schopenhauer's philosophy, concentrating his final polemic against Schopenhauer's advocacy of asceticism, 'that gradual extinction of all feelings that connect us with the visible world... [til] they receded from the visible world and gradually extinguished the "will to live", till death... came as the completion of their wishes' (407). As argued in Chapter 1 above, this is clearly a one-dimensional reading, even misreading, of Schopenhauer, and does not address his ethical position at all. Nonetheless, Eliot was at the very least aware of Schopenhauer's philosophy (albeit most likely only through Oxenford's eyes at this stage) from at least April 1853, a matter of months before she herself introduces Feuerbach to the British readership. Whilst there is little documentary evidence in her surviving papers to suggest what her opinion of Schopenhauer's philosophy might be, it is tempting to read her positive response to Oxenford's article (in recommending it to her friends) as tacit agreement with his conclusions. Whilst this is by no means clear, it is nonetheless the case that this occurs nearly 20 years before *Middlemarch* is published, by which time any earlier agreement there may have been could well have changed or at the very least offered too sparse a resource to engage sufficiently with Eliot's subsequent questions.

Apart from McCobb, another significant critical reading of Eliot and Schopenhauer is Penelope LeFew-Blake's work discussing the influence of Schopenhauer on four women writers. Whilst LeFew-Blake notes Knoepflmacher's brief mention of 'several Schopenhauerian characteristics in *Middlemarch*' (LeFew-Blake 16)¹⁵, and George Levine's suggestion of 'a Schopenhauerian quality to [Eliot's] letters' (14)¹⁶ during her nursing of Lewes' son Thornton during his fatal illness, LeFew-Blake's own basis for Eliot's

¹⁴ See Chapter 3 above for discussion of a number of the diverse viewpoints in Oxenford's 'present world' (394) of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ U. C. Knoepflmacher *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel*. Princeton, 1965; and see McCobb "Representation" 536.

¹⁶ George Levine "The Hero as Dilettante: *Middlemarch* and *Nostromo*" in *George Eliot: Centenary Essays and an Unpublished Fragment*. Anne Smith ed. London: Vision P, 1980, pp152-180.

exposure to Schopenhauer also appears to be based entirely on McCobb's evidence¹⁷. Yet LeFew-Blake cites Oxenford's 1853 *Westminster Review* article on Schopenhauer as having 'earned great praise' (13) and an 'excited response' (8) from Eliot, but does not cite her source: presumably LeFew-Blake is referring to Eliot's letters to Sara Hennell and George Combe here. LeFew-Blake also suggests that Oxenford unproblematically 'welcome[s]' (10) Schopenhauer, and interprets this as Eliot having 'enthusiasm for Schopenhauer's work' (13), the former of which is clearly not the case and the latter is again unsourced. As such, LeFew-Blake's claims for Eliot's enthusiasm and excitement for Schopenhauer at this time appears to contradict the most compelling evidence, as Eliot's recommendation of Oxenford's article actually does no more than imply agreement with Oxenford's position at this stage in her career. LeFew-Blake performs a critical reading of *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* based on a reading of Schopenhauer's philosophy, although LeFew-Blake does not unpack his philosophical position beyond fairly generalised interpretations. LeFew-Blake's analysis will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Eliot's exposure to Schopenhauer appears most likely, then, to have been through secondary sources only before her work on *Middlemarch* is coming to an end, thus any direct impact this may have had on Eliot's approaches to issues in *Middlemarch* can only be conjectural, leaving the novel itself to provide any illustration of what might have led her to explore the question of Schopenhauerian pessimism further. That what little documented evidence there is includes neither Eliot's support for, nor clear rejections of, Schopenhauer's position leaves an examination of how the issues he addresses are treated in Eliot's writings as the central source of speculation. Nonetheless, even if Eliot had declared a direct influence, the *nature* of that influence would still remain a question, not least whether it is positively or negatively expressed in the novel. Eliot's experience of Schopenhauer, following the earlier contact through

¹⁷ See LeFew-Blake, 13. LeFew-Blake also sources Deborah Guth's work on Eliot, but Guth only discusses Schiller in relation to Eliot, not Schopenhauer: see Deborah Guth "George Eliot and Schiller: Narrative Ambivalence in *Middlemarch* and *Felix Holt*". *The Modern Language Review*. 94, 4 (Oct 1999): 913-24. LeFew-Blake's reference to U. C. Knoepfelmacher's *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel* acknowledges Knoepfelmacher's identification of willing in *Middlemarch* with Schopenhauer's 'World-Will' (Knoepfelmacher 111). LeFew-Blake's research clearly draws her argument for Eliot's exposure to Schopenhauer almost entirely from McCobb as her other named sources cast less light on the subject than McCobb does.

Oxenford's articles in the *Westminster Review* in the 1850s¹⁸, is clearly reaching another significant point by the time she is writing *Middlemarch*. Whether or not Eliot had predominantly direct or secondary contact with Schopenhauer before September 1872, the analysis of *Middlemarch* will show that Eliot's penultimate novel engages with Schopenhauerian issues in ways that problematise Feuerbachian delineations of human nature, human relations, and destination, and align Eliot much more closely with Schopenhauer's position than previous criticisms of Eliot have suggested.

Feuerbach insists that there is 'no other essence which man can think, dream of, imagine, feel, believe in, wish for, love and adore as the *absolute*, than the essence of human nature itself' (*Essence* XXVII, 270), and that '[t]he relations... of man to man... all the moral relations are *per se* religious [thus] Life as a whole is, in its essential, substantial relations, throughout of a divine nature' (271). Throughout Eliot's non-fiction prose writings, including her letters, Feuerbach's views resonate, but Chapter 5 will argue that his overt deification of human existence, character, relationships, and salvation are significantly tempered in her novel *Middlemarch*. In a letter written twenty years after her translation of Feuerbach and two years after the publication of *Middlemarch*, Eliot still echoes Feuerbach albeit with a more corporeal emphasis:

The fellowship between man and man which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man: and... the idea of god, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of a goodness entirely human (i.e. an exaltation of the human). (Eliot *Selections* 453)

She also posits human relations as the true object of morality and as such, they urge 'a higher strain of duty... to [an] ideal... [of] human love and moral action', and are imbued with 'sacredness' (454). Yet at the same time Eliot suggests a 'principle of development' (453) which seems to render "teleological optimism" contingent upon the state of human relations rather than an inevitability, and she persistently recognises a less overtly optimistic vision of human "goodness". For Eliot the 'line between the virtuous and the vicious... far from being a necessary

¹⁸ McCobb points out that Oxenford published more than one article on Schopenhauer, including in *The Westminster Review*: see McCobb "Representation" (533-4).

safeguard to morality' is 'itself an immoral fiction', as anyone who experiences 'their own falls and their own struggles' (Eliot "*Meister*" 132) would recognise. This is in no sense the pessimistic vision of the inherently immoral human that W. H. Mallock holds, and that Arnold seems to betray at times, as discussed in Chapter 3 above, but recognises the root not only of "good" but also of "evil" in the choices and relationships each individual may make. In this, Eliot echoes not only J. S. Mill's position, but also Schopenhauer's own philosophy of the human to a significant extent, and the examination of *Middlemarch* will show even greater Schopenhauerian echoes, as the next chapter will argue.

The consciousness of individual failing, viewed in the light of Feuerbach's deification of human essence as Absolute and that which each individual seeks to be unified with (as salvation itself), reflects the perpetual sense of individual alienation Feuerbach is so keen to overcome but which remains intrinsic to his own position. The finite, imperfect individual inevitably falls short of the divine perfection of the species thus remains *consciously* alienated, consciously imperfect¹⁹. In personal correspondence, Eliot frequently expresses a strong self-consciousness of personal failing and, in the twenty years between translating Feuerbach and finally reading Schopenhauer for herself, she reveals the fatal flaw that Feuerbach's positioning of human essence as the divine and sacred ideal of perfection presents for the individual. In a letter written the year in which her translation of Feuerbach is published, she emphasises that individuals need to try to reconcile themselves to this consciousness of self-failure, however difficult that may be. She writes, 'to be a failure of Nature and to know it is not a comfortable lot. It is the last lesson one learns, to be contented with one's inferiority – but it must be learned' (*Selections* 134). In another letter, written 12 years later in 1866 - a few years before the publication of *Middlemarch* - Eliot claims that she has 'a consciousness tending more and more to consist in memories of error and imperfection rather than in a strengthening sense of achievement' (*Selections* 318). In her Journal on January 1st 1874, just over a year after the publication of the final Book of *Middlemarch* and her own reading of Schopenhauer, Eliot records:

The happy old year in which we have had constant enjoyment of life, notwithstanding much bodily malaise, is gone from us for ever. More than

¹⁹ Chapter 2 (57-8) above.

in any former year of my life, love has been poured forth to me from distant hearts. ... Nothing is wanting to my blessings but the uninterrupted power of work. For as to all my unchangeable imperfections I have resigned myself. (*Journals* 144).

Eliot's personal writings express a consistent preoccupation with the self-consciousness of personal failing, and her struggle to learn that 'last lesson' is clearly a struggle between the desire *not to be* a 'failure of Nature' (*Selections* 134) and reconciling herself, therefore, to the consciousness that this is what she feels she is. In resigning herself to all her imperfections, she is thus self-consciously aware that she will always be alienated from the Feuerbachian perfection that Nature "intended" - from attaining a more complete sense of self. Eliot also recognises a consciousness of human existence here which appears to be equally painfully aware of loss and the fragile nature of human "blessings" and positive human relations. It takes Eliot at least 20 years to be (apparently) finally able to mark that transition between self-doubt and the self-reconciliation she deems necessary, and Eliot's recognition of just such a point of self-reconciliation is itself a crucial issue in *Middlemarch*. The relationship between the quest for perfection - for the highest realisable self - and self-conscious imperfection, even despair, in Eliot's penultimate novel will be discussed in the following chapter, and its resonance with the questions of *I-thou* relations Eliot's letters also raise will be examined. Eliot's delineations of Dorothea's relationships in *Middlemarch* form the focus of the study in Chapter 5, which will examine how the novel questions the optimism that Feuerbachian *I-thou* relations are intended to engender.

Seven years after the publication of *Middlemarch* and shortly following that of *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot's contemporary Mallock recognises 'her entire philosophy... [as] an impassioned protest against pessimism... present[ing] the human life and the human lot to us as worthy of all our piety... love and reverence', and this through 'beings who are not isolated, but linked together by countless ties of duty and affection; and... the moral *raison d'être* of existence' ("Eliot" 457). Yet Mallock also recognises a tension between this and what he sees as an evident pessimism in her novels, claiming that whilst Eliot 'is theoretically no pessimist; ... the picture she presents to us of the world we live in almost exactly answers to the description given of it by Schopenhauer, as

nothing better than a “penal settlement” (457). Further, Mallock argues that in Eliot’s novels there is ‘no happy and rejoicing brotherhood... but a sad and labouring race of chained convicts, whose highest glory it is not to attempt escaping’ (457). Whilst Mallock recognises that Eliot ‘does not underestimate the causes for despair’ then, he also asks whether she ‘overestimate[s] the causes for hope?’ (458). This issue will be discussed further in the analysis of *Middlemarch* in Chapter 5, but it is pertinent to note that Mallock not only recognises Eliot’s novels in such pessimistic terms, but that he sees her position to be close to Schopenhauer’s own in relation to Schopenhauer’s pessimistic delineations of human place in the world. The extent of Eliot’s relationship with Schopenhauer’s philosophy will be shown to be much more complex - and much more fruitful - than Mallock’s deeply pessimistic viewpoint.

Chapter 5

Middlemarch, 1872.

‘That Roar Which Lies on the Other Side of Silence’:

Despair, Transcendence, and Salvation in

Eliot’s New Real Future.

‘Some discouragement, some faintness of heart at the new real future which replaces the imaginary is not unusual, and we do not expect people to be moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel’s heartbeat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence.’

George Eliot *Middlemarch* 1872¹

1. Dorothea Brook and the elements of salvation: between ‘self-despair’ and ‘the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self’.

In *Middlemarch*, Dorothea Brook is a yearning and passionate young woman, fervently desiring ‘some lofty conception of the world’ (Eliot *Middlemarch* Chapter 1, 10) which will provide an ideal path upon which to fulfil some practical but elevated activity. Whilst she longs for a ‘directly beneficent’ (48, 455) activity, it must also be a transcendent ideal which reveals ‘the highest purposes of truth’ (2, 20). From the beginning of the novel, Dorothea is aligned with St. Theresa, ‘soar[ing] after some illimitable satisfaction, some object which would never justify weariness, which would reconcile self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self’ (Prelude, 7). Such an epic ideal in Dorothea’s secularising world is, however, ‘helped by no coherent social faith and order’ (7). As such, she faces a struggle to identify and actively fulfil that quest, but the aim itself - that yearning for reconciliation between ‘self-despair’

¹ *Middlemarch* 1872, London: Penguin Books, 1994, Chapter 20, 189.

and 'the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self' (7) - is of crucial importance. Whilst "salvation", that 'illimitable satisfaction' (7), is release from the misery and weariness of self-despair, it is also at a specific point: the moment of *reconciliation* of self-despair with the 'rapturous consciousness of life beyond self' (7). Self-despair then, is not entirely transcended but remains a consciously apparent human presence. The transcendent consciousness of 'life beyond self' (7) is also a conscious presence but one which must be reconciled *with* self-despair rather than attained in its entirety, thus both polarised positions become something against which one should be wholly bound towards. Dorothea's journey of realisation forms the central focus of this chapter, and that her quest for salvation must be a place in which she obtains a balanced consciousness of both 'self' and 'beyond self' (7), egoism and altruism, *I* and *thou*, individual and species, raises significant questions about Eliot's relationship with Feuerbachian optimistic thinking, and moves her into a more Schopenhauerian consciousness².

Dorothea desires to 'see how it was possible to lead a grand life here -- now -- in England' (3, 30) and, whilst her desire for a 'directly beneficent' (48, 455) activity helps fuel her work on designing and urging the building of cottages for the poor, this work does not provide her with that elusive something which will offer her the route to those "greater" possibilities - 'the highest purposes of truth' (2, 20) -- she is also seeking. This is a quasi-religious quest for a transcendent vision which she hopes will determine her means and direction, and her destiny. Feuerbach intends this quest to be shifted into a wholly human environment, placing human aims (both means and object) as a fundamental and necessary aspect of the human, each individual's aim being 'this subject's own, but objective, nature' (Feuerbach *Essence* I, 4). As such, it is their own peculiar construction of character, of human essence, made manifest³. This Feuerbachian grounding of human objectives and delineation of character is illustrated in the close relationship Eliot draws between her characters' personalities and

² The central argument of this Chapter of the thesis has been presented as a Conference paper (unpublished): see Brunning "George Eliot, Feuerbach and Schopenhauer: The Conflict Between Optimism and Pessimism in *Middlemarch*", British Association of Victorian Studies (BAVS) *Victorian Cultures in Conflict* Conference, Liverpool University 7-9th September 2006.

³ Feuerbach recognises each individual as a particular manifestation of the essence of human nature, and it is only in and across the space and time of the species that the necessary deficiencies of both human individuality and individual human aims become perfect through being unified with the whole: see Chapter 2 above.

ambitions in the novel. For Feuerbach, affirming human aim is both affirmation of the individual self and the species, and as such, itself *forms* the middle ground between the individual and the species in acting to effect ‘the *unity of the material and spiritual in the individual*’ (V, 64, my emphasis). Whilst for Feuerbach human aim does not in itself effect salvation (overcome individual alienation) as this can only be fully effected through feeling (through *I-thou* species-consciousness), it does offer a route towards this through its mediating and affirming role of both the material individual and the “spiritual” species in the individual⁴. On one level, salvation in *Middlemarch* appears to be Feuerbachian in seeking to reconcile the dichotomy between self-despair (the material, subjective, imperfect individual) and the consciousness of beyond-self (the “spiritual” element of species-consciousness). Yet, despite retaining this aim, Dorothea’s journey troubles the ground, means and object of Feuerbachian salvation. Whilst *I-thou* human relations are at the heart of both Feuerbach’s secularised salvation and Eliot’s novel, *Middlemarch* examines the problematic aspects of Feuerbach’s vision of human relations, realisation, and destiny, and the implications for the individual quest for salvation. Eliot’s novel foregrounds the obstacles that mar the realisation of a Feuerbachian ideal of *I-thou* human salvation: that ‘living, generous humanity – mixed and erring, and self-deluding’ (Eliot “*Meister*” 131) which thwarts Feuerbachian perfection at every turn. In its delineations of the limitations of individual human knowledge, of individual character, and the negative potential of human relations, *Middlemarch* shows how these elements themselves present *essential* obstacles to individual and social realisation. Eliot’s novel also shifts the ground of human *I-thou* ethical relations on a fundamental level, and subsequently questions both the accessibility and desirability of the Feuerbachian ideal of salvation, but in quite radically Schopenhauerian terms.

With Casaubon’s reputation ‘as a man of profound learning’ (*Middlemarch* 1, 13) and Dorothea’s initial appreciation of his physical likeness to a ‘portrait of

⁴ In seeing the medical profession as ‘offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good’ demanded by his own ‘nature’ (*Middlemarch* 15, 141), Lydgate also demonstrates Feuerbach’s aim as ‘the unity of the material and spiritual in each individual’ (Feuerbach *Essence* V, 64). Lydgate echoes Dorothea on many levels, not least in that he too is ‘an emotional creature, with a flesh-and-blood sense of fellowship’ (*Middlemarch* 15, 141).

Locke' as showing her 'the great soul in... [his] face' (2, 22), Casaubon appears to be offering her the key to what she feels she is as yet unable to see: the path which will reveal to her those transcendent "truths" she yearns towards. She mentally checks her own pre-marital hints of the terrible disappointment to come, such as she feels particularly keenly regarding Casaubon's dismissal of her projects to provide homes for the living when he 'diverted' their discussion to contemplations of the dead and 'the dwellings of the ancient Egyptians, as if to check a too high standard' (3, 34). After a struggle with her 'agitation on this indifference of his', Dorothea considers she has been 'presumptuous in demanding his attention to such a[n implicitly "low"] subject' (34). Her sense of her own ignorance leads her to 'constantly doubt[] her own conclusions' (7, 64), yet Casaubon's dismissal affects Dorothea deeply, her sensitivity evident when previous belittlement over her efforts regarding the cottages causes her to cry out '[w]hat was life worth – what great faith was possible when the whole effect of one's actions could be withered up into... parched rubbish' (4, 38). In blaming 'her own ignorance' rather than Casaubon's, Dorothea asks herself 'how could she be confident that one-roomed cottages were not for the glory of God, when men who knew the classics appeared to conciliate indifference to the cottages with zeal for the glory?' (7, 64), trying to reconcile the vast chasm between her own aims and ideals and Casaubon's by self-blame. Whilst this may be seen to reflect her struggle with what the narrator calls the social 'condemnation' of 'yearning... womanhood... as a lapse' (Prelude, 7), Dorothea's ethical human aims are clearly important ones in the novel, forming an initially implicit and later explicit relationship with Reform in the novel's political context, but also having significant ramifications in terms of Dorothea's own journey, as will become clear. Meanwhile, Dorothea views Casaubon's knowledge as both omnipotent and elusive, concealed from her within the 'masculine' (7, 64) language of learning. She initially attempts to 'fill[] up all blanks' and 'seeming discords' in her early relationship with him, at a time when she still sees him as her own "key" to understanding, by explaining these blanks as the result of 'her own deafness to the higher harmonies' (9, 73) rather than any failure either on Casaubon's part or in their suitability for one another. Dorothea seeks 'deliverance' from 'her girlish subjection to her own ignorance' through a 'union' that would 'give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who

would take her along the grandest path' (3, 30). Yet on one level, her misrecognition of Casaubon as this guide is a mistake which appears to be based on her misrecognition of his character and path rather than the act of 'submission' into a self-subsuming 'union' (30) itself, as this apparently comes to fruition for Dorothea later in her relationship with Will. This later relationship is one in which she might be argued to have found 'that submergence of self in communion with Divine perfection' (26) that Feuerbach delineates in the (destined) aim for unity of the alienated self with the perfect essence of the human embodied in the divine species (*Essence* 1, 28-30). The Feuerbachian transcendence of the individual is questioned in Dorothea's relationships with both Casaubon and Will, however, marking a persistent subjection to individual self-despair in the former relationship, and troubling the apparent absorption of the individual in the latter. Dorothea's initial quest for a transcendent union which will release her from her own subjection is a misrecognition on two fronts, not only misrecognising Casaubon as the key to her transcendence, but also both the possibility and the desirability of transcendence itself.

In the first of these issues, Dorothea's relationship with Casaubon recognises that there are clearly irreconcilable differences between them, both in their aims (their visions of salvation) and in their characters (the individual manifestation of Feuerbachian human essence), and these are marked by a subtle recognition of "elemental" differences that neither is aware of until it is too late. Images of light and shadow, life and death, resonate throughout Dorothea's relationships with Casaubon and Will, and these images form part of the drawing of an intricately 'woven and interwoven ... web' of 'human lots' (*Middlemarch* 15, 137) in the novel, forming a delicately-nuanced but irrevocable series of relationships. Sometimes these webs are a strongly-felt and more obviously coercive 'yoke' and 'harness' (17, 169), but at other times they are 'the hampering thread-like pressure[s] of small social conditions' (18, 175) that form the 'hindrances' (Prelude, 8) to intentions and desires, but also forge more positive relationships. Yet linked by these webs are characters who appear to be *essentially* hindered. Casaubon literally spends his life in his ultimately fruitless quest for the "Key to all mythologies", trying to identify the relationship between elements that will realise the whole (22, 215) but which converges instead with the false promise of alchemy (48, 458). Alchemy, as 'the quest of gold', is 'at

the same time a questioning of substances', however, and as such begets important groundwork in that 'the body of chemistry is prepared for its soul' (458), a "soul" Casaubon is apparently unable to provide or recognise. This not only leads to the failure of his own research, but points to a significant delineation of both character and relationships in the novel which have particular repercussions concerning the quest for salvation. Whilst social or individually controllable conditions play a significant part in the novel, *Middlemarch* uses relationships between elements to identify *essential* conditions which either help or hinder the aims and desires of the protagonists. This includes positioning the central characters themselves as intrinsically related to particular elemental forces, but the elemental nature of these relationships is seen to be unequivocal, and has pertinent implications regarding the Feuerbachian quest for salvation. Whilst Feuerbach delineates the human in terms of the elemental qualities of Reason, Affection and Will⁵, Eliot expands this relationship into one between the alchemic elements, and by so doing, her use of 'antique form animated by Christian sentiment' (*Middlemarch* 19, 185) echoes Feuerbach's essentialism at the same time as she subverts his optimism.

Dorothea's life-affirming and passionate vitality is expressed by her 'exalted enthusiasm about the ends of life' being 'lit chiefly by its own fire' (3, 29), and the symbolic relationship between "fire", "life-affirmation" and human passions is subtle, intricate, and pervasive in the expression of Dorothea's character. She is emphasised as both elemental 'fire' (1, 16) and 'a breathing blooming girl' (19, 183), and the vitality expressed in and by 'the glow in her [...] bright full eyes' (3, 28) is drawn always towards light which is itself 'absorb[ed] into the intensity of her mood' (28), forming a significant and repetitive focal point⁶. In desiring a purpose which will engender an activity both '*directly beneficent*' (48, 455, my emphasis) and transcendent in also revealing 'the highest purposes of truth' (2, 20), Dorothea's feet are also placed firmly on the ground. She is seeking a union of corporeal earthly life with emotional, intellectual and "spiritual" fulfilment, which places her object within Feuerbachian delineations of human aim as the unity of matter and spirit in the

⁵ For Feuerbach, human *essence* is made up of Reason, Affection and Will, all of which are in perfect form across the species but are imperfectly manifest in each individual: see Chapter 2 (50-53) above.

⁶ *Middlemarch* (9, 75; and 19, 184).

individual (*Essence* V, 64). Dorothea's starting and endpoint is kept very much on the ground, whilst expressing this relationship in terms of *elemental* qualities. Casaubon is the antithesis of Dorothea, opposing and choking her life-affirming 'fire' (*Middlemarch* 3, 29) in the dust and decay of the 'dead' that he admits himself he 'live[s] too much with' (2, 19). Casaubon recognises himself as 'something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes' (19). Peter Jones recognises that Casaubon's "wanderings" imply 'an undirected search, and a willing subscription to a passive theory of perception' (28). Yet Casaubon's "wanderings" show a particular failing in his 'undirected search' that has significant implications not only for Casaubon and Dorothea, but in the novel's delineations of human place, aim and destination. Casaubon is both unable and unwilling to engage in the ever-changing and explicitly negative dynamic that life, with its 'ruin and confusing changes' (*Middlemarch* 3, 19), appears to involve, yet does not recognise the full implications of his own preoccupation. In being kept from the life-giving properties of both 'the sunshine and the rain', Casaubon's symbolic earth is subterranean, devoid of all capacity for life and thus is directly opposed to Dorothea's life-affirmation, offering her only 'a virtual tomb' of a marriage which '*produc[es] what would never see the light*' (48, 455, my emphasis). The significance of this refusal of light into a relationship in which Dorothea is explicitly imprisoned (22, 215) is linked to her feeling divorced from existential, sensual and emotional *life* in her marriage. Her 'sense of connection with a manifold pregnant existence' (28, 265) – of 'participated life' (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 68) is severed and she is forced to watch as an increasingly 'distant world of warm activity and fellowship' recedes from 'the door of the tomb' where 'she... stood' (*Middlemarch* 48, 455). Dorothea's life-affirming fire and quest for a corporeal yet spiritually-sustaining object finds 'life made a new problem by new elements' (20, 191) as the dry dust of both emotional and spiritual death that Casaubon's character, life and work brings starves Dorothea of the other necessary elements for life: keeping her away from light and water, both 'the sunshine and the rain' (48, 455), and what Casaubon refers to as 'the grosser air' (2, 24). Whilst the symbolic part that air and water play in sustaining Dorothea will be discussed

later, the most significant element denied to Dorothea's quest and its realisation by her relationship to Casaubon is light.

Dorothea's attraction to light is an analogy for both her human vitality⁷ and the intense yearning towards that transcendent 'beyond self' (Prelude, 7), those 'highest purposes of truth' (2, 20) that form her quest for that as-yet undefined great path she wishes to both identify and live by. Yet light has even greater significance in the novel as it forms that "fifth element" that Casaubon's 'system', forged 'on the basis of the four elements' (22, 215), ignores but which embodies the central role that actual living, breathing, human beings must play in any philosophical or theoretical framework. This is the necessary "soul" needed to transform those basic elements to gold, 'the quest for gold being at the same time a questioning of substances, [thus] the body of chemistry is prepared for its soul' (48, 458). It is the element of light, of "spirit", that is the "life-force", the animating principle in both corporeal and spiritual terms which imbues the otherwise dead earth and disorganised elements with the vitality of life and thus unity of purpose. In mythic terms, "spirit" or "light" binds and governs the other four elements and makes them work in effective harmony⁸. Saleel Nurbhai and K. M. Newton discuss Eliot's close relationship with Kabbalistic literature and Eliot's exploration of the role of "spirit" as animating principle in relation to the Judaic myth of the golem figure, particularly in her subsequent novel *Daniel Deronda*⁹. The golem figure is the 'unformed mass' of lifeless clay (Adam), 'the empty vessel... without the inspiring breath which imparts life and understanding' (Nurbhai and Newton, 1). In Talmudic mythology Adam is so linked 'with the earth, [that] any sundering of Adam and the earth is a denial of his basic spirit' (3). *Middlemarch* is concerned with the necessity of the unifying and directing principle of life, without which the otherwise disparate parts will be doomed to fail, symbolically represented by the frustrations and failures that the other elements effect without its necessary and binding focus. Eliot's epigraph to

⁷ *Middlemarch* (2, 28; 9, 75; 19, 184).

⁸ Eliot read several works relating to ancient Mysticism: see William Baker *The George Eliot – George Henry Lewes Library* (xlvii; xxv). Whilst some of those listed by Baker can only have been read after the publication of *Middlemarch*, particularly when Eliot is researching *Daniel Deronda*, a number were published well before 1872. A significant number of Eliot's and Lewes' books were sold at auction, many uncatalogued, so the list is by no means definitive.

⁹ See especially Saleel Nurbhai and K. M. Newton Chapter 1 "George Eliot and Kabbalism" (25-34).

Chapter 81 in *Middlemarch*, from Goethe's *Faust*, is a moment of 'glad new birth' for Faust (as Chapter 81 is for Dorothea as it marks the beginning of her final union with Will Ladislaw). It takes place at sunrise where '[i]n gold of dawn the quickened world lies gleaming', emphasising the *essential* connection between both aspects of light for human life as one which necessarily involves '[t]he throb of life... with pulses beating' and the 'high resolve... [that] stir[s] my soul to prove life's utmost worth' (Goethe *Faust* II, Act I, lines 67-73, 25). "Light" in *Middlemarch* forms that unifying force in providing the element of life and the transcendent principle of "spirit": the animating principle of individual human life and the transcendent principle of *I-thou* consciousness that together form the 'palpitating life' (*Middlemarch* 80, 750) of individual human existence, aims and desires, and the transcendent 'beyond-self' (Prelude, 7) this also involves. This is equally pertinent to both Feuerbachian and Schopenhauerian delineations of the human, albeit with crucial distinctions made between the two positions, as will become clear.

Feuerbach emphasises the necessity of grounding all philosophy, all human theory, in the living human as without our 'fellow-man... the world would be... not only dead and empty, but meaningless' (*Essence* VIII, 82). Schopenhauer echoes this premise, insisting on the living human as not only the necessary basis and object of philosophy (*WWI* II §19, 37), but also the necessary basis of all knowledge (36). Like Feuerbach and Schopenhauer, Eliot argues against any philosophical system or methodological approach that ignores the living and, as Gillian Beer recognises, Eliot is disturbed by Comte's position when he claims that 'Humanity is composed essentially of the dead' as '[i]f the living are admitted it is, except in rare instances, only provisionally' (Comte quoted Beer 185). Eliot asks if 'our duties are towards [this view of] "Humanity"[,] how are the living and those who are to come to be excluded?' (Eliot cited Beer 185)¹⁰, and herself refuses to move away from living, 'breathing' (*Middlemarch* 19, 183) humanity as the fundamental basis of all theory *and* practice. This essential premise informs both Feuerbach's and Schopenhauer's visions of philosophy, ethics, and salvation, insisting these must be grounded in the actual, in experiential human lives. Yet Feuerbach's own philosophical ground, process

¹⁰ See also Brunning *Salvation* (66-7).

and realisation finally transcend the very reality he insists is fundamental, whilst Schopenhauer's insistence on individual human reality remains clearly in view, both of which have significant implications in *Middlemarch*. In the meantime, Dorothea's vibrant life-affirmation is not only in direct opposition to Casaubon's life-denial, but to her own earlier attempts at asceticism. This exposes her quest to transcend her own subjectivity as a misrecognition of her own essential nature on both terms as her essentially life-affirming nature does not sit easily with either Casaubon's life-denial or her own attempts at asceticism. Dorothea's early ascetic impulses are a false path to the knowledge she seeks, just as her initial imaginary perceptions of Casaubon are, and as false a path as Casaubon's research proves to be for him. Jones argues that Dorothea's initial characterisation as 'self-consciously self-denying' illustrates that:

constructive imagination may encourage a person to think more about an imagined world, whether or not it is set up as a religious ideal or goal, than about the actual world. In this respect Dorothea's "theoretic" nature resembled Casaubon's search for an *a priori* explanation of mythology. (32)

Dorothea's quest for a transcendent ideal is, however, always one she intends should be 'directly beneficent' (*Middlemarch* 48, 455) from the start. K. M. Newton argues that Dorothea's earlier asceticism and decision to marry Casaubon 'must be seen together with her idealistic longing for a complete religious explanation of the world and... Casaubon's aim to create the foundation for this' (*Romantic* 128). Newton also argues that Dorothea has 'potentially dangerous egotistic tendencies' (124) which 'threaten[] to gain control' (132). It is clear, however, that Dorothea's passions perpetually reassert themselves, despite her attempts to subdue them (*Middlemarch* 39, 374), but these are in no sense identified as either dangerous or egotistic in the novel. Dorothea's passions and aims are consistently positive forces in need of the sustenance of direction in the real world. Light represents for Dorothea the animating spark of existential human life *and* her "spiritual" quest for 'illimitable satisfaction' (Prelude, 7). Dorothea's yearning for the self-fulfilment of a 'fuller life' (5, 44) and for something 'beyond' the 'self' (Prelude, 7) illustrates her hunger for participation in the 'world of warm activity and fellowship' (48, 455), the 'participated life' (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 68) that Casaubon refuses.

In bringing to her perception of Casaubon ‘every quality she herself brought’ (*Middlemarch* 3, 25) then, Dorothea presumes her own character and aims – her ‘manifested nature’ (Feuerbach *Essence* I, 5) – to be shared by Casaubon, presuming his intellectual and emotional yearnings are also inspired by the element of “light” and therefore someone who could ‘illuminate principle with the widest knowledge’ (*Middlemarch* 2, 24). Dorothea mistakenly believes that Casaubon will thus illuminate for her the path towards the ‘directly beneficent’ (48, 455) activities she seeks. Whilst she envisages only the glory of being a ‘lamp-holder’ (2, 20) for his studies, the irony is of course that from the first Casaubon believes that inner springs and ‘motives’ - ‘*the germinating grain*’ - should be kept ‘*away from the light*’ (24, my emphases). The lamps, candles and tapers used to illuminate Casaubon’s research represent the false will-o’-the-wisp lights that offer Dorothea a false trail away from life and towards ‘her own doom’ (48, 460), and ensure Casaubon’s work does indeed remain away from the light of realisation in both senses of the word. D. A. Miller recognises that ‘[m]istaken paths function as implicit reminders of the proper but untravelled direction, and ignorant blunders as inferences of perfect but inaccessible knowledge’ (144-5) in the novel. Yet at the same time there is a pessimism of character in *Middlemarch* which appears to preclude certain individuals from attaining salvation, or for enabling the realisation of others around them.

Will recognises that Casaubon’s studies ignore the ‘new points of view’ of the living, which leaves his ‘system on the basis of the four elements’ “out-of-date” as ‘it is no use now to be crawling a little way after men of the last century... and correcting their mistakes’ (*Middlemarch* 22, 215). Yet Eliot uses these very elements, albeit by exposing the significance of the missing principle, to subvert not only Casaubon’s “system” but Feuerbach’s overtly optimistic delineations of human character, aim, and *I-thou* relations. Casaubon’s diversion of the conversation about Dorothea’s project to build new homes for the living into a discussion of the dwellings of ancient Egypt (3, 34) is indicative of the irreconcilable nature of their positions, and further, his preoccupation with the dead ignores the living to the extent that he even neglects to try to save the life of a condemned man (39). In following his false, fading light ‘[w]ith his taper stuck before him [Casaubon] forgot the absence of windows, and... had become indifferent to the sunlight’ (20, 192), and had thus become indifferent to the light

of the animating “spirit” of life itself, leaving both his direction and methodology equally false. As such Casaubon’s quest for the “Key to all Mythologies” is fatally flawed as it ignores the necessary fifth element which brings cohesion and coherence to both the theory of human life and the practice, and without which all else is pointless and both metaphorically and literally dead¹¹. Casaubon is stranded in ‘a world... not only dead and empty, but *meaningless*’ (Feuerbach *Essence* VIII, 82, my emphasis), and threatens Dorothea with the same fate. Casaubon’s ‘unresponsive hardness’ to human life thus ensures his ‘earth bears no harvest of sweetness’ despite calling such ‘*denial* knowledge’ (*Middlemarch* 42, 409, my emphasis). As the novel argues:

whether we believe in the future perfection of our race or in the nearest date fixed for the end of the world; whether we regard the earth as a putrefying nidus for a saved remnant, including ourselves, or have a passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind [...] [t]here is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men. (61, 590-1).

Casaubon’s self-centred traits and his aspirations are, however, as equally deserving of ‘our pity’ as all the ‘other mendicant hopes of mortals’ (10, 83), not least because of the devastating effect his denial has on his own life and aspirations, thus *Middlemarch* insists that Casaubon should be recognised as an equally hopeful and equally suffering mortal. This has implications regarding Dorothea’s own position, and the novel’s relationship with human ethics, and includes both the “optimistic” and “pessimistic” viewpoints Eliot discusses here.

In her marriage to Casaubon Dorothea is brought close to self-despair. This ‘breathing blooming girl’ is set against essentially fruitless testaments to the dead, from the ‘reclining marble’ and ‘grey drapery’ (19, 183) of her honeymoon in Rome to her marital home, that ‘still, white enclosure which made her visible world’ (28, 264). Dorothea, like the ‘bright fire... burning’ in the hearth, is a ‘renewal of life and glow’ thus an ‘incongruous’ presence amongst its cold

¹¹ Gillian Beer recognises that Casaubon’s ‘search for “the key to all mythologies”... gives him no access to the lived world’ (152-3). For Beer, the ‘absence of transformation’ is related to the scientific ‘threads’ of connections which ‘remain themselves, though part of a total fabric’ and which denote ‘the relations within bodily and mental experience as much as the interconnections of society’ (156-7), in both space and time. Gisela Argyle, on the other hand, finds that Casaubon’s ‘narrow selfishness is... evident in the British insularity of his research’, leaving Casaubon doomed by his inability to save himself or his research by reading German and “knowing what is being done by the rest of the world” (*Middlemarch* cited Argyle 43), an argument shared by Rosemary Ashton (153-4).

colours and 'vapour[ous]' 'ghostly' (264-6) insubstantiality. Casaubon's home is clearly in opposition to Dorothea's life-affirming substance and consequently presents a fatal threat to her, and she sinks into the dark and gloomy passages (20, 190) of despair which confine their relationship. Her inward contemplations of light, 'absorb[ed] into the intensity of her mood' (3, 28), are shadowed by images of death in her marriage to Casaubon, Dorothea's youth, life and light literally overshadowed by the self-despair of a living death. The avenue of limes 'whose shadows touched each other', situated outside the windows of her marriage home, represent the emotional and spiritual vista of her marriage to him, obscuring the 'long swathes of light' (28) beyond them from Dorothea's view. These echo the 'long vistas' of 'marble eyes' in Rome which 'seem[] to hold the monotonous light of an alien world' (20, 188) she finds herself in instead of the 'world of warm activity and fellowship' (48, 455) she was hoping for in her marriage. As it is:

...the light has changed [...] in the weeks since her marriage, [and] Dorothea had not distinctly observed but felt with a stifling depression, that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding... were replaced by ante-rooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither. (20, 190)

This unveiling, where Dorothea's imagination-fuelled hopes and expectations have given way to the reality of her situation, shows a distinctly Schopenhauerian emphasis. Dorothea's ideal thoughts about her 'future' with Casaubon 'contain[ed] only concepts and fancies' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §54, 181), but her 'knowledge' has now 'attain[ed] to distinctness' as her 'consciousness intensifies' and she feels 'a proportionate increase in pain... the more distinctly' (IV, §56, 196) she knows, as the reality of her present and future with Casaubon is made clear to her. Yet Schopenhauer insists that 'everyone has to regard all the suffering of the world as his own' in order to understand that the 'happy temporal life... amid the sufferings of countless other people... is only... a dream from which he must awake in order to find out that only a fleeting illusion had separated him from the suffering of his life' (IV §63, 218). This suggests that Dorothea's awakening consciousness is not wholly Schopenhauerian here. Jones argues that imagined '[p]ossibilities' in *Middlemarch* 'become more real than actuality, and dwelling upon them becomes a surrogate for action; at this stage men become passive victims of their distorted mental vision and thus of the

world around them, of which they remain ignorant' (34). Whilst this brings Jones close to my argument regarding the significance of what Casaubon is unable to perceive, it ignores the key role that Dorothea's awakening recognition of actuality plays in the novel. As Brian Swann argues, for Eliot 'the crumbling of the ideal is the construction of the real', pointing out that 'the tradition of the ideal is transformed and incorporated into a new reality' ("Realism" 284). Swann sees Feuerbach as the influential factor here, whereas the new reality that *Middlemarch* exposes will be shown to critique the Feuerbachian ideal on a fundamental level. The reality of Dorothea's marriage brings her beyond disappointment to intense despair, Dorothea finding 'with a certain terror, that her mind was continually sliding into inward fits of anger and repulsion, or else into forlorn weariness' (*Middlemarch* 20, 191). This reaping of "nothingness" has significant resonance with Dorothea's experience in her marriage on every level, yet this is an experience not confined to Dorothea alone and, whilst her consciousness of the reality of her situation may mark a Schopenhauerian emphasis on one level, this gradually reveals itself more deeply Schopenhauerian in significant and fundamental terms. In the meantime, Dorothea's desires continually resurface and focus on a desperate quest to transcend despair. Whilst Dorothea is not a direct representation of Schopenhauerian will-to-life, that for Schopenhauer '[b]efore us, certainly, remains only nothingness.... what resists this disintegration into nothing, our nature, is simply only the will to life' (*WWI* IV §71, 261) does emphasise Dorothea's essentially life-affirming nature. In searching for a cause which will allow 'the reaching forward of the whole consciousness towards the fullest truth, the least partial good', Dorothea recognises that here 'was clearly something better' for her to turn to in her marriage 'than anger and despondency' (*Middlemarch* 20, 197), but also places at the forefront an attempt to resign herself to never attaining her own subjective realisation. Yet there appears to be no real escape from the negative emotions Dorothea reaps in this marriage as her resurgent hopeful expectations are invariably crushed by Casaubon.

Dorothea's hopes focus on her relationship with Will as this appears to offer the only avenue where such hopes might be expressed, from enabling Dorothea to effect some practical assistance (if she could persuade Casaubon to make some form of restitution to Will for the loss of his inheritance) to her

necessity for empathic conversation. Her human need for both emotional and “spiritual” sustenance lies in receiving ‘direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men’ (61, 590-1) as well as giving it. Will’s mere introduction into her relationship with Casaubon is enough to allow the ‘sun’ to ‘pierce[] the grey’, yet ‘the avenue of limes’ still ‘cast shadows’ (9, 75) as this hope will be forbidden her by Casaubon’s attempts to ban his young cousin from their lives. This leaves Dorothea facing only the shifting selection of negative emotions that entrapment within Casaubon’s ‘lifeless embalment of knowledge’ (20, 191) effects as her sense of corporeal, emotional, and “spiritual” human life – of ‘manifold pregnant existence’ – is severed, remaining only ‘painfully as an inward vision’ (28, 265) represented by her reflections upon light. Casaubon’s work brings himself as much as Dorothea to an intense consciousness of self-despair, however, trapping them *both* in the dark ‘winding passageways’ of his mind ‘which seemed to lead nowhither’ (20, 190), offering neither himself nor Dorothea an avenue towards life in any sense, either corporeal sensuous human life or that transcendent “spiritual” path to greater understanding¹². Dorothea had expected to find both “spiritual” and emotional affirmation in her relationship with Casaubon, confirmation of ‘that spiritual religion, that submergence of self in communion with Divine perfection’ (3, 26) and ‘a fuller life’ (5, 44), thus ‘the pregnant, complete unity of *I and thou*’ (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 66): a fruitful, life-affirming union which keeps ‘the embryos of truth a-breathing’ (*Middlemarch* 48, 458). Instead she reaps the ‘nothingness’ (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §71, 261) of an emotionally, spiritually, and literally barren union in which she is entombed among the ‘shattered mummies’ and ‘crushed ruins’ of Casaubon’s life and work, the ‘food for a theory which was already withered in the birth like an elfin child’ (*Middlemarch* 48, 458).

The light which accurately represents Dorothea’s quest for ‘a fuller life’ (5, 44), ‘the highest purposes of truth’ (2, 20) and a realisable ‘directly beneficent’ (48, 455) ideal, is light from natural rather than artificial sources: from gloriously illuminating sunlight (9, 75) and the ‘vivid’ intensity of ‘lightning’ (83, 771)

¹² The marriage proposal and acceptance between Casaubon and Dorothea themselves contrast Casaubon’s self-seeking utilisation of Dorothea’s ‘elevation of thought and capability of devotedness’ to be ‘adapted to aid’ his own dry and death-like ‘graver labours’ (*Middlemarch* 5, 43) with her mistaking his attentions towards her as ‘loving me’ (45): an unbreachable bifurcation between lifelessness and vital life.

rather than the ephemeral and 'dim light' (42, 404) of the lamps, candles and tapers associated with Casaubon. The most significant source of light for Dorothea is of course Will, who is associated with light from the first (9, 75), and he and Dorothea are drawn to one another with such intensity that an *essential* connection is suggested between them, expressed through her seeking light and he providing it. When Dorothea first sees Will he is positioned as 'conspicuous' against 'a dark background of evergreens' (77), lending him associations of light against dark and the promise of both life and renewal. This promise of renewal is emphasised when they are in Rome where his feelings for Dorothea are expressed through his 'showing such originality as we all share with the morning and the spring-time and other endless renewals' (22, 217): sexual love. Here, Dorothea sits 'between the fire and the light' (21, 199), representing both passionate human life and transcendent human ideals. Will's light grows in intensity and significance at this meeting, his 'smile was delightful... it was a gush of inward light illuminating the transparent skin as well as the eyes, and playing about every curve and line as if some Ariel were touching them with a new charm' (199). Significantly, Will's 'transparent complexion flush[es] suddenly' at meeting the ardent and honest humanity of Dorothea's 'exquisite smile of goodwill... unmixed with vanity' (198), and Will's 'smile was irresistible, and *shone* back from her face too' (199, my emphasis), emphasising their reciprocal feeling and that this is focused through light. Their "elemental" connection is clear despite Dorothea being unaware that it is his disturbance at the incongruity of her marriage to that 'dried up pedant' Casaubon that partly causes Will's own confused reaction, albeit a reaction born of his own feelings regarding her as an 'adorable young creature' (199) nonetheless. Dorothea's own troubled feelings regarding Casaubon have lately made her 'all the more susceptible' (201) to any implied criticism of her husband, symbolised in her being 'perhaps not insensible to the contrast' (203) between Will and Casaubon, exhibiting light and gloom respectively, to a significant degree:

Mr. Casaubon was less happy than usual, and this perhaps made him look all the dimmer and more faded; else, the effect might easily have been produced by the contrast of his young cousin's appearance... of sunny brightness, which added to the uncertainty of [Will's] changing expression. Surely, his very features changed their form... and the little ripple in his nose was a preparation for metamorphosis. (203).

This symbolism goes to extreme lengths, Will appearing to emanate light from his very being as '[w]hen he turned his head quickly his hair seemed to shake out light', whereas 'Mr. Casaubon, on the contrary, stood rayless' (203). Whilst Dorothea's experience of the contrast between Casaubon and Will as of dark and light is played out in their relationships, this moment of contrast itself propels her further towards the realisation of *I-thou* ethical human relations. It is here that she first recognises Casaubon's own 'equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference' (205), thus engendering her 'first stirring of a pitying tenderness fed by the realities of [Casaubon's] lot and not by her own dreams' (203).

Through recognising the apparently essential differences between Will and Casaubon, Dorothea's 'moral stupidity' that '[w]e are all of us born in' gives way from 'reflection' to 'feeling' (205), and thus becomes moral understanding. The significance of *consciousness* of self and other in engendering *I-thou* human relations for Feuerbach arises from the ability the human has to think about itself as *a species*:

a being to whom his own species, his own nature, is an object of thought, can make the essential nature of other things or beings an object of thought... [thereby] is himself at once I and thou; he can put himself in the place of another, for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought. (Feuerbach *Essence* I, 2).

Yet for Dorothea Feuerbachian delineations of ethical *I-thou* human relations are only half the story. Whilst Dorothea's recognition of Casaubon's 'equivalent centre of self' (*Middlemarch* 21, 205) arises from her consciousness of *his* essential nature as one equivalent to her own, it is a consciousness of the essential '*difference*' (205, my emphasis) between Casaubon and Will which both emphasises Casaubon's 'lot' (203) (and thus stresses the *irreconcilable* differences between Casaubon and herself) and triggers her 'moral... feeling' (205)¹³. This leads to two more crucial aspects here. Dorothea's 'pitying tenderness' for Casaubon is balanced by her equally painful awareness of *her own needs* for the 'greater freedom' (203) that Will offers her, and her compassion itself arises from her sympathy for Casaubon's own suffering, his

¹³ Whilst Feuerbach also claims *I-thou* recognises that which is *both* the same and different (*Essence* VIII, 82), this is a false distinction as for Feuerbach difference, limitation, is always absorbed into the species, the same (I, 3-5); and see Chapter 2 (57-8) above.

own 'shadows' (205). In the first of these issues, her appreciation of Will's 'young equality' and 'openness to conviction' is directly linked to her feeling 'an immense need of someone to speak to, and she had never before seen anyone who seemed so quick and pliable, so likely to understand everything' (203). This insists on her own need for individual realisation and emphasises Casaubon's preclusion of this, issues which raise significant questions about Feuerbachian salvation in terms of both Dorothea's journey and Eliot's delineations of *I-thou* relations and salvation. In Will offering Dorothea the 'greater freedom' (203) she needs, and in his seeking a cause to which he can devote himself 'not [to] anything in general, but something in particular' (10, 82), he has other "elemental" qualities which are pertinent to his relationship with Dorothea, and shows that his need for Dorothea is equally significant thus that they are *mutually*, "elementally" compatible.

Will terms himself 'Pegasus' regarding his refusal of 'every form of prescribed work' as a "harness" (9, 81), he affords 'a glimpse of the sunny air' to Dorothea in 'her prison' (37, 348), and his 'wings' (34, 317) and the 'Ariel' that plays with the 'inward light' (21, 199) emanating from his face reveal Will's other element to be "air". This is significantly epitomised by his aimless floating around Europe waiting for 'the intentions of the universe' to show its hand 'with regard to himself' (10, 82). His inability to identify 'some vocation' (9, 81) is a problem with which Dorothea sympathises (81) but Casaubon condemns as hedonism and 'a dislike to steady application' (80). On one level Casaubon could be forgiven for terming Will thus as the young man's confidence that 'Genius ... is necessarily intolerant of fetters' (22, 216) might be seen to betray his youthful arrogance and his freedom from those very fetters that Casaubon's allowance privileges him. Yet he does come to recognise the danger it also represents for him, and it is significant that it is meeting Dorothea that effects his realisation, in both senses of the word (216). Will's tilt towards arrogance is one that the narration is at pains to undermine in seeing 'Will's generous reliance on the intentions of the universe with regard to himself' and that of 'Genius' as 'certainly... no mark to the contrary' (10, 82), and this sense of genius - of perfection - is played out in his union with Dorothea. Dorothea's passionately life-affirming character and "spiritual" aspirations (fire and light) aim that 'her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent' (85) and thus

necessarily grounded in the corporeal, existential world (earth). She is excluded from light, however, and left entombed in the lifeless earth and consequential self-despair that Casaubon effects. Will's wait for 'the intentions of the universe' (82) leaves him, for the time being, floating in a transcendent but groundless realm (air), albeit one inhabited by the light of genius as he is 'like an incarnation of the spring whose spirit filled the air – a bright creature, abundant in uncertain promises' (47, 451). That their meeting is both mutual and mutually beneficial is evident in Will providing both the 'freedom' (21, 203) and the 'promises' (47, 451) Dorothea needs (however uncertain these may be, as will be discussed later) and Dorothea providing the passionate, corporeal, and ethical humanity his "airy" promises need to ground them. It is first seeing life against death, seeing Dorothea's vital 'breathing blooming' energy and passion (focused on the "light" of life and "spiritual" ardour the 'sunlight' represents), against the back-drop of 'reclining marble' and 'grey drapery' (19, 183-4) in Rome that propels Will into direction as 'something had happened to him with regard to her' (186). His recognition of Dorothea as 'breathing blooming' (183) life but also 'an angel beguiled' (21, 202) (thus an idealised but less-than-divine, fallible human) prompts Will's simultaneous realisation that Casaubon's 'generosity has perhaps been dangerous' to him, thus he 'renounce[s] the liberty it has given' him and returns to England determined to 'work my own way – [and] depend on nobody else than myself' (22, 216). This independence does relate to the sense of obligation towards someone who *resents* the relationship, however, as he clearly depends on Dorothea's good opinion of him, a dependence that mutually increases as their relationship progresses¹⁴. Will is propelled into a course of action by responding to life in both corporeal and "spiritual" terms, Dorothea effecting his descent from 'that indeterminate loftiest thing' into 'subjects which were visibly mixed with life and action, and the easily-stirred rebellion in him helped the glow of public spirit' (46, 441) in return. This leads to his work towards social and political Reform as he relinquishes his wanderings to settle close to her in England, 'because no one cares for him elsewhere' (37, 356). As Casaubon does not care for him at all it is clearly Dorothea alone who draws Will there and, whilst their relationship progresses into a Feuerbachian union on one

¹⁴ *Middlemarch* (37, 354; and 39, 375).

level, this is simultaneously undermined. Whilst Dorothea is already making her own inroads into improving living conditions for local people, work that clearly impresses Will who vows he ‘will not forget what she has said’ (39, 375), Will’s progression into Reform issues might itself be seen to eventually offer Dorothea a fuller opportunity to pursue the ‘directly beneficent’ (48, 455) activity she desires, although this vision of Dorothea’s future is also troubled, as will be discussed later. In the meantime, this ‘breathing blooming girl’ (19, 183) seeks both the light of ‘illimitable satisfaction’ (Prelude, 7) and a practical activity in the world of ‘here – now’ (3, 30). Whilst Will brings her not only freedom but ‘*something which had gathered new breath and meaning*’, something ‘*alive now*’ (266, my emphases), she appears to provide the human grounding for his transcendent ‘indeterminate loftiest’ (46, 441) quest at the same time he brings the element of light/life to Dorothea.

Will also provides the air of freedom of course, his referring to Dorothea as an ‘Æolian harp’ (21, 203) further placing their relationship as reciprocal, suggesting that it is Will’s air of “freedom” and recognition of Dorothea’s ‘poet[ic] consciousness’ (22, 217) that allows the ‘melodious fragments in which her heart and soul came forth so directly and ingenuously’ (21, 203) to “sing”. Eliot was reading Theocritus whilst preparing *Middlemarch*, and using Idyll XVI to meditate characters for the novel (see Baker ixv¹⁵). Here it is human song – poetry - that ensures meaning in life, and which is given ‘grace’ only through ‘those [who] all love to sing’ (Theocritus Idyll XVI, lines 123; 116). Theocritus’ focus is on transient human lives given meaning through the immortalising elevation of the minstrel’s song, but Eliot shifts this song into Dorothea herself who is personally forgotten rather than immortalised. It is the ‘diffusive’ effects *she has on the world around her* that continue to exist rather than Dorothea herself, who ‘live[s] faithfully a hidden life, and rest[s] in [an] unvisited tomb[.]’ (*Middlemarch* Finale, 795) as will be discussed further later. Dorothea embodies this human poetry, her corporeal but yearning human life is represented by her passionate ‘fire’ (3, 29), her ‘poet[ic] consciousness’ (22, 217), and her desire that ‘her life might be filled with action at once rational and ardent’ (10, 85). As such, the immortalised heroism of classical mythology is rendered both mortal

¹⁵ Baker discussing J. C. Pratt “A ‘Middlemarch’ Miscellany: An Edition with Introduction and Notes of George Eliot’s 1868-1871 Notebook” (280, fn.5, 120ff); see Baker (xlix, ixv).

and humble. Casaubon's earth, devoid of all life, is her antithesis whilst Will's air of 'freedom', light of "spiritual" empathy and 'openness to conviction' (21, 203) appears to be Dorothea's perfect complement¹⁶. Miller recognises that Dorothea makes Will 'feel that "the quality of [his] action is not a matter of indifference"', thus "[b]ut for the desire to be where Dorothea was" Will would never be fighting the political struggles of Reform' (147). Miller also argues that 'Will abandons the order of surprise and discontinuity' (147) in favour of Dorothea's 'final, all-embracing totality' (146), however, finding the 'consistency of Dorothea's character offers so strong and simple a unity that it virtually commands imitation by one whose life has been programmatically dispersive' (147). Yet Dorothea is clearly as "incomplete" as Will, the apparently *elemental* compatibilities that each bring to their relationship being that which elicits their responses to one another, providing both with the unity of a reciprocal and sustaining relationship which bears fruit in every respect. Whilst Dorothea's 'fire' (*Middlemarch* 3, 29) needs the air of 'greater freedom' (21, 203) that Will offers, and his floating inclinations need corporeal earth to ground them (Dorothea leading Will to his 'meditat[ions] on the needs of the English people' (46, 441)), the element of light is clearly the most significant in Dorothea and Will's relationship, signalling both 'spiritual communion' (2, 24) and the principle of life itself, the 'fuller life' (5, 44) Dorothea had hoped her relationship with Casaubon would reap. Dorothea's and Will's union closely echoes the Feuerbachian ideal on many levels, embodying 'the pregnant, complete unity of *I and thou*' (*Essence* VI, 66) unified by love (67), and thus 'the self-assertion of the human heart [as] the principle of duality, of participated life' (68) in terms which clearly recognise such unity as of two *essentially limited* individuals made whole in their species-union (VIII, 83). Theirs is a union which itself appears to provide the Feuerbachian promise of spatial and teleological realisation, as will

¹⁶ Swann recognises a significance in Eliot's use of symbolic elements in *Middlemarch*, acknowledging Casaubon's association with 'the verbal imagery of ruin and decay' ("Realism" 293), and 'Will's "inner light"... complementing Dorothea's "inward fire"', but Swann argues that Will's link to the 'sun which shines so brightly' (298) represents Dorothea's 'effectively *barring herself* from the sunny presence' of a 'new start seeming possible' (298, my emphasis). Swann suggests that Eliot's use of light centres on the library as representative of the 'malignant influence of Casaubon' (298), although also finds that Will's association with light suggests a new start for Dorothea who, interestingly, 'at the end of the novel is well on the way to integrating the dual aspects of her personality, "sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion"' (293, quoting *Middlemarch*).

be discussed further later. In the meantime, Dorothea's exclusion from life in her relationship with Casaubon centres on Will: it is *he* she sees from 'the door of the tomb... receding into the distant world of warm activity and fellowship – turning his face towards her as he went' (*Middlemarch* 48, 455). With Will, Dorothea has found a mutual and empathic sharing of her own ideas and aspirations, the antithesis of the 'depressing' effect of Casaubon's 'blank absence of interest or sympathy' (20, 192). Light/life needs to be mutually felt, mutually shared to bring the other elements to unity and fruition, to perfection and the salvation in unity with species-essence that the *essentially* limited Feuerbachian human can attain. It is significant that Dorothea and Will's first real union of feeling – one could say communion – with fire and air and earth and light meeting and focusing through the reciprocal smiles which 'shone' (21, 199) from their faces in response to one another, is literally a moment of baptism and blessing as water is also introduced into their elemental union for the first time. In their first moment of mutual union, their empathic *I-thou* human emotions are evoked in 'a certain liquid brightness in her eyes, and Will was conscious that his own were obeying a law of nature and filling too' (22, 217)¹⁷.

On an obvious level, this union of feeling between Dorothea and Will allows each to surpass individual limitation through Feuerbachian *I-thou* "religious" feeling, leading to the unity of the individual with species-essence through consciousness, and the salvation that 'feeling' (*Essence* 1, 9) effects¹⁸. Their union is that of 'the *absolute*... essence of human nature' in 'religious' and 'divine' (28, 270-1, original emphasis) human relations in exalted Feuerbachian terms. For Feuerbach two persons, *I* and *thou*, provide 'the principle of multiplicity and all its essential results', the second person being 'the self-assertion of the human heart as the principle of duality, of *participated life*' (VI, 68, my emphasis). This unity is most perfect for Feuerbach in sexual union

¹⁷ For Feuerbach, the water of Christian baptism represents Nature rather than the mind (this latter represented by the bread and wine of communion) (*Essence* 28, 275-7). For Eliot, light unifies and directs the otherwise disparate/damaging elements. Water in *Middlemarch* represents human emotions such as love (rather than passion which is represented by fire), whether empathic *I-thou* love as between Dorothea and Will or egoistic love-of-self as illustrated by Rosamond whose element of water 'fell and trickled like cold water-drops' (64, 628), her 'blank unreflecting surface' of vanity and self-absorption reducing Lydgate's ardour to 'a creeping paralysis' (58, 559).

¹⁸ See Chapter 2 (61 and 68) above; Feuerbach *Essence* (I, 9-10); & Appendices (§2, 283 & §3, 284).

between a man and a woman rather than ‘the monotonous thou between friends’ (IX 92). Unity ‘rests only on the reality of the distinction between I and thou’ (*Principles* §59, 71). Yet for Feuerbach, whilst reality is that which also exists for others (that is, is not thought only (§25, 39)), reality, existence, is only found in the essence of the species (*Essence* VIII, 83) while the limited phenomena (the individual manifestation of human species-essence) are negated in favour of ‘the essence, the positive... humanity’ (I, 27) thus, in the end, reality *only* occurs in the species. This elision of reality from *individual* existence leaves Feuerbach’s intention of grounding his exalted *I-thou* consciousness in the existential human with a fatal flaw: whilst ‘[e]verything that exists has value, is a being of distinction’, this is ‘at least... true of the species’ (I, 7)¹⁹. The essential union affirmed through Eliot’s “fifth element” of living, yearning and transcendent humanity gives rise to a mutuality of human love that affirms both self *and* other, however, conferring value and meaning onto both individual and communal life and thereby engendering human relations based on mutual relations between two existential human individuals. This emphasis thus questions one aspect of Feuerbachian union as Eliot insists this must also affirm the individual in equality of realisation in human relations, and in salvation. Most significantly of all, however, Dorothea’s *I-thou* moral growth allows Dorothea to begin to feel empathy with Casaubon’s own hopes and failures, recognising his own ‘equivalent centre of self’ (*Middlemarch* 21, 205), but this is *not* through Feuerbachian species-consciousness as Casaubon is unable to reciprocate, as will become clear. Eliot’s use of alchemic “elemental” forces to create metaphorical relationships in *Middlemarch* questions the realisation of Feuerbachian *divine* and perfect human relations and human salvation. This marks a shift away from Feuerbach towards Schopenhauerian delineations of human place, human ethics, and human destination on several levels, each more significant than the last. The first aspect of this is the novel’s insistence that human relationships need particular elements in order to be fruitful, thus rendering the salvation of unity extremely rare as these elements appear to be something that certain characters are *essentially* unable to realise.

¹⁹ See Chapter 2 (65-6) above.

II. *'That element of tragedy': despair, self-consciousness, and the ethics of salvation.*

It is evident that Dorothea's union with Casaubon can never achieve any form of happiness for either of them, reaping nothing but the despair which threatens to destroy them both. All three characters in this relationship cannot be united into a fused relationship of a marriage on the one hand and friendships on the other – perhaps more representative of a broader Feuerbachian species-community - as Casaubon's diminishing sense of self and inability to recognise *life* prevents him from sharing in *I-thou* human relations on any level and, significantly, also prevents his own move away from polarised despair. Newton implicitly recognises Eliot's delineation of character as essentially determined by particular 'characteristics' and 'qualities' (140) although does not examine the implications of this in the context of success (salvation) or failure in the novel. Whilst Dorothea does come to recognise Casaubon's 'equivalent centre of self' (*Middlemarch* 21, 205), Casaubon cannot return the complement as his 'soul' is 'too languid to thrill out of self-consciousness into passionate delight', thus 'never flying', and he is therefore *essentially unable* to 'transform[] into sympathy' and thus remains concerned only with 'self-preoccupation' (29, 270). Casaubon clearly faces his own struggle against self-despair but is unable to perceive the route to salvation as he fails to become conscious of other living human beings, thus finds *only* the possibility for self-despair before him as the transcendent flight 'out of self-consciousness' into the transformation of either 'passionate delight' or 'sympathy' (270) eludes his consciousness. Casaubon's *essential* inability to recognise the crucial importance of existential human life either inside or outside of his own preoccupations necessarily includes Dorothea's own 'equivalent centre of self' (21, 205), her own human needs, desires and frailties. This prevents his relationships from becoming true *I-thou* empathy and thus renders Feuerbach's 'participated life' (*Essence* VI, 68) something Casaubon's relationships are *essentially* unable to realise, condemning both himself and Dorothea to polarised despair. Dorothea's *I-thou* sympathy for Casaubon also includes her deeper perception of 'her husband's failure' - which significantly includes her awareness of '*his possible consciousness of failure*' (*Middlemarch* 37, 352, my emphasis). This points her 'along the one track where

duty became tenderness' (352) and towards another disagreement with Feuerbach. This second aspect is the negative potential of *I-thou* human relations epitomised in the destructive affects of Dorothea's and Casaubon's relationship.

These destructive effects impact on Casaubon as well as Dorothea, and recognise human relations in clearly more negative than "divine" Feuerbachian terms. Casaubon's perception of his own failings are exacerbated by his fears that other people's eyes are also judging him, illustrating the negative effects that *I-thou* relations have on Casaubon who comes to feel that acquiring a wife has brought into his life yet another condemnatory judge of all of his efforts instead of the helpmate he expected. Instead of providing himself with a buffer 'against the cold, shadowy, unapplaudive audience of his life, he had only given it a more substantial presence' (20, 195). This further compounds his sense of failure and diminishing self-worth, and acts upon his own dread to the extent that he tries to escape his own self-despair through coercing Dorothea into becoming his last hope. By using her to continue his work beyond the grave, regardless of what this would cost Dorothea, Casaubon hopes to finally lift his 'small... shivering self' (29, 271) out of the despair into which he is irretrievably trapped. There is no possibility of him either attaining salvation for himself or effecting such for others, even had he lived, as his essential character prevents this. The only escape from the polarised despair their relationship effects is death; Casaubon's death thus freeing Dorothea whilst acknowledging that Casaubon's own realisation is precluded on every level. The extent to which Dorothea and Casaubon's relationship is destructive for both of them is laid at the door of their "elemental" incompatibility which, however metaphorically illustrated, nonetheless represents an *essential* incompatibility²⁰. In the Dorothea-Casaubon-

²⁰ The *elemental* disunion between Dorothea and Casaubon is echoed in Lydgate's and Rosamond's relationship, and the disastrous personal consequences of their failings are rendered in equally *essential* and thus unchangeable terms. Lydgate's desire for medical reform and the successful treatment of illness is expressed in terms of 'light' (*Middlemarch* 15, 139) and Lydgate is 'fired with... possibility' (142): his 'native warm-heartedness took a great deal of quenching' (58, 569). Rosamond pours water on his fire, however, her 'voice... fell and trickled like cold water-drops' (64, 628) and her 'blank unreflecting surface' reduces Lydgate's ardour to 'a creeping paralysis' (58, 559). Rosamond is the 'siren' (31, 290) and 'mermaid' whom Lydgate helps to create in his own idealising 'dreamland, in which Rosamond... appeared to be that perfect piece of womanhood who reverences her husband's mind after the fashion of an accomplished mermaid... singing her song for the relaxation of his adored wisdom alone' (58, 555). Her eyes are like beautiful 'forget-me-nots [viewed] under the water', causing this 'warm-hearted and rash' (31, 292) man to pause by the wayside with the offer of an aesthetic, restful repose from his labours. Rosamond's stifling of Lydgate echoes Casaubon's affect on Dorothea, both Rosamond and

Will triangle then, *Middlemarch* emphasises how Feuerbachian delineations of *I-thou* human relations ignore the repercussions of less than divine relationships, as well as the negative impact on the essentially *and self-consciously* imperfect individual. As the self-awareness of *I* is dependent on the perceived relations with *thou*, this also includes negative relationships, exacerbating the diminishing sense of self-worth that the Feuerbachian individual is caught up in²¹. Feuerbach's *I-thou* relations can act to compound the individual's consciousness of their own essential imperfections and limitations, seen in opposition to the perfection that is not only in the species in an abstract sense, but embodied in the perfection that is the individual's *necessary* aim and destiny, their own potentially perfect self (*Essence* I, 6). This can be further echoed in and exacerbated by the perceived "more-perfect" other, as Dorothea experiences in the early part of her relationship with Casaubon when seeing her own knowledge as very much inferior to his. Yet in the end, the novel makes it clear that Dorothea's apparently "instinctive" or *essential* knowledge, her awareness of the necessity for the ground, aim and means of human life that light represents, is the true path all along.

Middlemarch's essentially determined characters echo aspects of Feuerbachian essentialism whilst subverting his optimism, certain characters not only illustrating the failings in Feuerbachian delineations of *I-thou* human relations, but are themselves apparently *essentially* precluded from attaining salvation on any level. The negative affects on Dorothea are clear, and begin in the early days of her relationship with Casaubon when she feels a significant sense of her own limitations, and of herself as excluded from the perfect knowledge which will show her the path she needs to take. Once she realises her hopes in respect of Casaubon providing her with the "key" to this knowledge are mistaken, and Casaubon's own 'denial' (*Middlemarch* 42, 409) effectively negates both Dorothea's existence and his own aims, their negative relationship shifts into one of near hopelessness, Casaubon effecting an alienation from life itself, that 'participated life' (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 68) without which 'the world' is 'not only dead and empty, but meaningless' (VIII, 82). Dorothea's

Casaubon offering a false path which lures the hero to their doom. Lydgate's ambitions are thwarted by the increasing mire of 'new elements in his life as noxious to him as an inlet of mud' (58, 558), obscuring his clear view of his aims and sapping all his energy.

²¹ See Chapter 2 (56-7, and 69-70) above.

exclusion from a meaningful human existence propels her towards self-despair, Casaubon's denial of life ensuring their relationship is fatally destructive for both of them, a living hell for which Casaubon's death acts as the only release - for Dorothea from an intolerably oppressive relationship and his own unhappy release from his own terrors. That this is a release *only* effected for Dorothea through the circumstance that she was too late to promise Casaubon what he wished leaves her potential submission to Casaubon a significant one, and its interpretation is equally crucial to the question of individual realisation or salvation, and is one in which the issue of character is key.

Penelope LeFew-Blake's discussion of the influence of Schopenhauer on four women writers argues that Will Ladislaw signifies Schopenhauer's 'unrestrained, troubling, and seductive *will*', with Dorothea 'assuming the role of the tortured ascetic' (17, original emphasis). Their union thus causes the 'sensuous, hot-blooded, undisciplined Will [to] become[] submissive and docile' (28)²². For LeFew-Blake Will's 'own power is diminished' by Dorothea's asceticism because '[w]hen Will first meets Dorothea, "his admiration was accompanied with a chilling sense of remoteness"... [as] here was a force which did not embrace him' (28). Yet this sensation of 'chilling... remoteness' (*Middlemarch* 39, 374) occurs in Will long after he has met Dorothea, indeed occurs after he has moved to Middlemarch in order to be near her. Will has just witnessed her 'return to that... impetuous manner which had been subdued since her marriage' (373) when she is talking to Brooke about the need to improve the cottages on his land, giving vent to her passionate 'emotion[al]... eloquence' (374). Will's 'admiration' and 'love' for Dorothea is here coupled with his feeling separated from her 'greatness' (374) of vision, however, and also reflects the separation which has been enforced by Casaubon as it is immediately overcome once they speak to one another alone (375). LeFew-Blake also misinterprets Schopenhauer's will-to-life as will-to-*live* here, leading to a

²² Joseph Nichols echoes this recognition of Dorothea as ascetic, but for Nichols, Will and Dorothea's union plays out as an 'analogical reminder... of self-perpetuating cycles in Britain of persistently similar national divisions and conflicts' (173), from the recent struggles and 'divisive confrontation that plagued the nation just before the first Reform Bill' (171) to the Civil War 200 years earlier, thus the 'wedding of Puritan [Dorothea] and... Royalist [Will]... [becomes] emblematic of what a nation needs, but has failed to achieve' (173). Nichols does agree with my argument against other critical readings of Will as a 'failure' or of Dorothea's and Will's relationship as 'non-sexual' (165), however.

misreading of particularly Dorothea as struggling ‘between... the need to be and the desire to *cease to be*’ (LeFew-Blake 24, my emphasis). LeFew-Blake finds Dorothea’s ability to ‘*accept [the] oppression*’ (22, *ibid*) of her marriage to Casaubon becomes her ‘*once again wish[ing] to escape life*’ (23, *ibid*); her union with Will causing Dorothea to ‘experience[] a literal renewal of her will to live’ (29) at the same time as it emasculates Will (28). Dorothea not only refuses to willingly *accept* Casaubon’s oppression, however, but also does not desire to “cease to be” on any level. Her earlier asceticism, as discussed above, is no more true to her essential nature than sympathy is to Casaubon’s²³. Whilst it is possible to argue LeFew-Blake’s reading of Will Ladislaw as will-to-life in some respects, her argument ignores Dorothea’s own will-to-life which continually asserts itself against *Casaubon’s* life-denial²⁴. LeFew-Blake also misses the intimate and broader implications of Dorothea’s and Will’s essential connection, over-simplifies the complexity of Eliot’s pessimistic shift, and ignores the crucial position that both the individual and ethical salvation hold in the novel. Dorothea already *is* life-manifest thus her relationship with Will is more complex, its immediate juxtaposition with Dorothea’s relationship with Casaubon illustrating an ethical argument which has implications concerning both Feuerbachian and Schopenhauerian philosophical positions. Feuerbach’s “elements” are the tripartite human essences of Reason, Affection and Will, and on an obvious level Casaubon, Dorothea, and Will could be seen to exhibit these “elements” in the necessarily unbalanced form that the individual manifests in much the same way each could be seen to exhibit the purely Schopenhauerian qualities that LeFew-Blake argues²⁵. Rather than LeFew-Blake’s interpretation, it would be more

²³ As argued above (129), Dorothea’s asceticism is a false ideal, as both Jones (32) and Newton (128) recognise. Whilst LeFew-Blake’s minimal use of quotations from Schopenhauer or an illustrative interpretation of his philosophy limits her argument in more general terms, her interpretation of particularly Will Ladislaw is interesting although she does not explore the ramifications of Knoepflmacher’s recognition of ‘Schopenhauer’s belief in sympathy and compassion as the only salvation, the only manner of coping with the will short of asceticism’ (17).

²⁴ LeFew-Blake sees Casaubon as Schopenhauer’s ‘will turned inward, making its fitful way through the task of life only to arrive at the culmination of nothingness’ (22), but ignores Dorothea’s own will-to-life, and ignores ethical relationships in both Schopenhauer and *Middlemarch* where Casaubon exhibits Schopenhauer’s egoistic character in key terms.

²⁵ Casaubon shows a predominance of Reason, which has ‘relation to existences, as things’ and also ‘annihilat[es]... personality’ (Feuerbach *Essence* App. §4, 285), annihilating the real, existential person from his theoretical approach to his studies *and* from his more day-to-day considerations; Dorothea’s predominant essence is Affection (or Feeling), and as such embodies ‘aesthetic, human sensation... alive to the sorrows, the joys of another as [her] own’ (App. §2, 283) and ‘has relation to existences... as persons’ (App. §4, 285); and Will as Will of course is the

telling to examine Dorothea as the *phenomenal manifestation* of Schopenhauer's will-to-life, particularly in the light of her relationship with Casaubon as life-denial. Here, the essential connection between Dorothea and Will would show that Schopenhauer's will-to-life is the *thing-in-itself*, the essence, the genius of all existence. Will, as Schopenhauer's will, here shows the necessity for the will-to-life to manifest itself in the corporeal realm, and be thus subject to 'existence... with all its forms, object and subject, time, space, plurality, and causality' (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §27, 76). Such a reading would still be somewhat reductive, however, positing a simple will-to-life vs ascetic self-denial dichotomy (or a will-to-live vs self-annihilation for LeFevre-Blake). Aligning particular characters in the novel with either Feuerbachian or Schopenhauerian "essences" ignores the complexity of both philosophical systems on a number of levels, and also ignores the complexity of Eliot's own position here. *Middlemarch's* use of the alchemic elements reflects a far more complex relationship with both Feuerbachian and Schopenhauerian thinking, particularly in relation to character and ethical relationships.

Swann recognises significant aspects of Dorothea's elemental relationship with Will, claiming that Will is a sun god, Casaubon... Pluto, and Dorothea... a cross between Proserpine and Ariadne (Swann "Myth" 5). Swann also sees 'all the ardour and fire... associated with Dorothea... finally subsumed in Will, a kind of solar deity' where "'the sun... [is] an all-conquering hero'" (3), however, a Feuerbachian subsumption this chapter will argue that *Middlemarch* refuses²⁶.

'energy of character' through which the individual exerts their character-as-object, and we will 'that we may be free' (I, 3), freedom being Feuerbach's will's and *Middlemarch's* Will's aim. Their individual faults and imperfections are attributable to their inharmonious because imperfect manifestation of all three of Feuerbach's human essences, limitations only overcome in the balancing of these elements in the spatial and temporal species, a union that *Middlemarch* questions on every level, not least in Casaubon's *essential* inability to realise *I-thou* relations and thus salvation.

²⁶ Swann is discussing John Fiske *Myths and Myth Makers* here, although Fiske's book was not published until 1873. Beer notes the relationship between Will and light, 'issuing perhaps not only from Apollo' but from the myth of an angel connected to St. Dorothea' and 'set in... too easy contrast' with Casaubon, finding '[t]hese figurative presences give no guarantees of human perfection, but they do enlarge the scale of reference for the fallible present day' where 'Casaubon cannot grasp the ongoing nature of experience, or of knowledge' (166). Beer argues that Dorothea's significance here is that Casaubon 'cannot recognise the Ariadne who could deliver him out into sunlight' (167), echoing my own argument to some extent but in finding that Eliot utilises Max Müller's 'solar symbolism', Eliot 'does not allow it to dominate her created world' as 'the book embraces a free-ranging lateral world of meaning beyond Mr Casaubon's awareness' (167). Gisela Argyle finds that Eliot's 'constant association of Ladislav with light' is a potential connection between the "sweetness and light" of Arnold's culture (47).

Elsewhere Swann does recognise the pertinence of Eliot's insistence on form in art as "an element of human experience [which] must begin with the perception of separateness... before they can be recognized as wholes composed of parts" ("Realism" 289, quoting Eliot²⁷). As such, '[t]he concept of symbolic form which George Eliot was working towards is one in which everything is related to everything else without sacrificing its own *quidditas*, the actuality of its present existence' ("Realism" 289, original emphasis). Despite this recognition, Swann suggests this reaches completion in an implicitly positive relationship with self-sacrifice, and in terms which accept the denial of the individual (Dorothea) this effects. As well as arguing that Dorothea is 'subsumed in Will' ("Myth" 3), Swann also argues that Dorothea 'wishes to sacrifice her life on Casaubon's altar' as 'an exercise in self-knowledge involving the giving up of large and grandiose ideas, personal pride and dignity' ("Realism" 289). Further, Swann argues that *once 'she is able to do this, she is able to give herself fully, able to break down the egotism of Rosamond and the reticent pride of Lydgate'* (289, my emphasis). As argued earlier, Dorothea's early tendency towards martyrdom is always countered by her equal yearning towards self-realisation, thus forms a more balanced position that emphatically argues against being a blind sacrifice at the expense of the individual self. This is why she '*could not submit*' her own '*soul to [Casaubon's]*' (*Middlemarch* 54, 514, original emphasis). Dorothea's struggle with self-despair at the prospect of capitulation to Casaubon's wish is a struggle against saying "'Yes" to her own doom' (48, 460). At the same time, her near-capitulation is due to the 'moral... feeling' (21, 205) which arises out of her *I-thou* recognition of Casaubon's self-despair, and the prospect of being the person whose refusal could crush 'that bruised heart' (48, 459). Dorothea's potential capitulation arises from 'tenderness' rather than 'duty' (37, 352) then, and thus her struggle is itself due to her recognition of *each individual's* self-despair, both Casaubon's and her own: the very 'perception of separateness' Eliot deems necessary 'before they can be recognized as *wholes composed of parts*' (Eliot "Art" 355, my emphasis). For Eliot, the part should not be sacrificed to the whole. That Casaubon's request is clearly negative and would be explicitly fatal to Dorothea (*Middlemarch* 48, 460) directly opposes critical arguments such as

²⁷ See Eliot "Notes on Form in Art" in *Selected Critical Writings* (355).

Swann's and LeFew-Blake's that Dorothea willingly sacrifices herself to Casaubon or anyone else, and counters Feuerbachian delineations of essential human nature and salvation this self-sacrifice suggests. Dorothea's *near-capitulation* arises from a 'moral... feeling' (21, 205) which is Feuerbachian as it *overcomes* Dorothea's own wishes, just as 'the noble habit of the soul reasserts itself' (42, 411) and earlier overrides her 'rebellious anger' (409) towards Casaubon. Feuerbach's delineation of human ethical behaviour is a force of human essence operating *outside* of individual wishes, where the impulse to do "good" is an 'inward necessity' sprung 'out of... human nature' (*Essence* V, 60), being not 'thy own personal power' but an external force 'which governs and absorbs thee' (I, 4). This Feuerbachian moral force appears to act to override Dorothea's individual "imperfect" desires, but is finally refused in *Middlemarch* as her Feuerbachian "imperfections" (her own individual desires) continually resurface and may have caused her to refuse Casaubon still, his death precluding a definitive answer. Newton, on the other hand, argues that Dorothea has a 'strongly egotistic' nature which here 'threatens to gain control', but her 'continuity of self allows her to overcome [her egotistic] crisis' (132) regarding Casaubon. Dorothea is not an egoist on any level, however, but is struggling to realise her own value - struggling against an absorption into Casaubon's blind ego - and Newton ignores the explicitly destructive affects this sacrifice would have on Dorothea. This crisis is *only* overcome by Casaubon's death as she is not only saved from having to capitulate to save his feelings, but would have remained trapped in Casaubon's world of despair had he lived on²⁸. That Dorothea's potential self-sacrifice is clearly a negative act in *Middlemarch* emphasises the problematic aspect of Feuerbachian species-unity which sacrifices the individual to the "goodness" of species-essence, overriding Dorothea's individual "imperfect" feelings, a sacrifice the novel marks as iniquitous and a submission Dorothea explicitly struggles against. On one level,

²⁸ Pauline Nestor also sees Dorothea's 'self-narration... distorted by egoism' (136), although interestingly recognises that the 'ultimate ethical challenge' of *Middlemarch* is to 'transcend the isolation and solipsistic blindness of the individual narrative' by living 'vigilantly conscious of the fact that the other has "an equivalent centre of self"', and this is only ever 'aspirational rather than achievable' as 'the non-self remains intractably alien' (137). Beer argues against seeing Dorothea in terms of 'the desolate privacy of the Romantic ego' as Eliot is 'seeking communal insights' through 'allusions' which 'always yield insights into the accord between any individual's experience and the lived remote world of others' (163).

however, Dorothea's struggle against Casaubon's wish that she should sacrifice herself to his work is apparently a self-sacrifice rejected in the novel only because carrying on *Casaubon's* work is antithetical to life-affirmation and thus will trap Dorothea in self-despair. Dorothea recognises the 'deep difference between that devotion to the living, and that indefinite promise of devotion to the dead' (*Middlemarch* 48, 459), her later 'superstitious' note to her dead husband explains '*I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in*' (54, 514, original emphasis). On this level then, there appears to be a division of the "right" cause for which to sacrifice the self from the "wrong" cause. Dorothea is later apparently 'absorbed into' (Finale, 793) Will's life, and into a cause she *can* believe in. Yet this later Feuerbachian "sacrifice" to the "right" cause is also questioned in the novel, as will be discussed later. In the meantime, the delineation of *I-thou* relations in *Middlemarch* in elemental terms echoes aspects of Feuerbach's essentialism at the same time it also acts to undermine his overt optimism. Crucially, however, Eliot's essentially pre-determined characters, positioned as *unchangeably* either able or unable to progress towards salvation, closely echo Schopenhauer's delineations of character and ethical salvation in increasingly significant respects.

Whilst for Schopenhauer human intellect can act to override the impulse towards selfishness or "evil" driven by the egoistic essential force of the will-to-life, there are four essential "types" of human: the egoist, the just person, the compassionate person, and the ascetic. Whilst Schopenhauer does argue that the human species has an inherent tendency to 'act justly and do good, or counterbalance the strong tendencies to injustice and harshness', and that this is an 'appeal that actually exists in everyone' (*Morality* III §12, 120), there are certain human individuals who are *essentially* precluded. Each individual 'is not free, but subject to necessity... in spite of all his resolutions and reflections he does not alter his conduct' (*WWI* II §23, 46). As 'individuality is a dominant feature of mankind', each 'person has a character of his own; hence the same motive has not the same influence on everyone' (§23, 51) and each individual's 'actions follow with absolute necessity from the coincidence of character with motives' (IV §55, 190). As the manifestation of the will-to-life in each individual shows itself in 'the ambition of [each] inmost nature, and the aim [each] pursues accordingly, this we can never change by outside influence' (193).

Each individual, who 'shows by his behaviour that he also *recognises* his own nature' in another individual, can behave ethically 'in so far as he places the other being on a par with himself' as 'he [thus] does the other no harm' (IV §66, 233). In 'the higher degree', the individual is moved 'to positive benevolence and beneficence, and... philanthropy' which 'may happen irrespective of the strength and energy of the will manifest in... [the] individual' as 'Knowledge can always counterbalance it in him' (234). The egoist is the most reprehensible of all human individuals for Schopenhauer as the egoist 'regards and treats only his own person as a real person, and all others as mere phantoms' (II §19, 37). Thus the egoist affirms her or his own will-to-life to the extent that 'the same will manifest in another individual' (IV §62, 212) is denied, directly causing suffering to those other individuals²⁹. This is clearly reflected in the delineation of Casaubon to a significant extent, the effect of his life 'denial' (*Middlemarch* 42, 409) entraps Dorothea in a 'virtual tomb' (48, 455) and a home of explicitly 'ghostly' (28, 264-6) insubstantiality, leaving her in despair. Schopenhauer places the egoist as far away from redemption as it is possible to be (*WWI* IV §60, 207), a redemption (like Feuerbach's) enabled through *I-thou* ethical relations, but unlike Feuerbach's, Casaubon has an *essential* inability to 'transform[] into sympathy' (*Middlemarch* 29, 270). This leaves Casaubon as the unredeemable egoist, perpetually enmired in 'self-preoccupation or at best an egoistic scrupulosity' (270), and only able to respond to motive in a manner determined by his essential character. Casaubon embodies Schopenhauer's essential egoist rather than Feuerbach's as-yet-unconscious individual as his consciousness is *essentially untransformable*.

Dorothea is not, however, Casaubon's opposite in terms of Schopenhauerian delineations of essential character as she refuses Schopenhauer's most extreme position of salvation, asceticism, as she '*could not submit*' her '*soul*' (54, 514, original emphasis) to Casaubon's. For Schopenhauer, the deliberate acts of 'renunciation' that are practised 'in order to relieve the sufferings of others' (*WWI* §66, 235) are 'the source and essence of love and nobility of character' (§68, 237) of the compassionate individual. Whilst this may suggest that such self-sacrifice is required by Dorothea here, to

²⁹ The egoistic act is 'as such wrong because... it aims... to extend the authority of my will to other individuals, and so affirm my will by denying theirs' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §62, 214).

relieve Casaubon's suffering, this is an ethical renunciation which acts to relieve another's suffering by not affirming one's own will at another's expense rather than asceticism. The ascetic takes this a stage further, being 'even ready to sacrifice his own individuality if others can be saved thereby' (§68, 237), a self-sacrifice Dorothea wishes to refuse despite knowing that her refusal would 'seem[] as if she would be crushing that bruised heart' (*Middlemarch* 48, 459). Her life-affirmation continually reasserts itself despite her earlier ascetic urges and Casaubon's egoistic will repressing her own, but always with compassion as both means and object. In Dorothea's *I-thou* sympathy she is aligned with Schopenhauer's ethics as the compassionate human. *Middlemarch* moves even further away from both Schopenhauer's ascetic and Feuerbachian ethics in more deeply significant terms, however, as will be discussed shortly. In the meantime, whilst social form is marked out as a clearly contributory factor in defining aspects of the characterisations and situations in *Middlemarch* (18, 175), Nature appears to be more significant than nurture. Nurture or experience will not reveal that which is *essentially* unable to be. Casaubon's 'soul' is concerned only with 'self-preoccupation', unable to lift 'out of self-consciousness' and therefore unable to 'transform[] into sympathy' (29, 270). Whilst Casaubon is to be viewed with our 'sympathy', he is '*never to be liberated* from a small hungry shivering self' (271, my emphasis), a very bleak and pessimistic vision of Casaubon's lot. Unlike Casaubon, Dorothea is essentially able to 'transform[] into sympathy' (270) and, whilst she has progressed significantly towards salvation during her relationship with Casaubon, following his death Dorothea's burgeoning *I-thou* awareness awaits a final transition.

The widowed Dorothea's belief that Will and Rosamond are lovers propels her into a deeper consciousness of self-despair than she has hitherto experienced, and this new consciousness leads her to the final reconciliation of self-despair with 'the rapturous consciousness of beyond self' (Prelude, 7) she has been seeking. Whilst this effects Dorothea's move into salvation (a salvation that appears to be *effectual* in both personal and community terms, as will be discussed later), this appears to be a salvation only allowed by her own compassionate 'nature' (80, 749). This echoes Schopenhauer's determination of character wherein actions are not free, 'for every individual action follows with strict necessity from the impact of motive on character' (*WWI* II, §23, 45), yet the

form of Dorothea's salvation also marks a more significant Schopenhauerian movement. The despair necessarily comes first, Dorothea literally writhing in agony 'within the clutch of inescapable anguish' at the loss of 'her sweet dim perspective of hope' (*Middlemarch* 80, 747-8) and, 'with a *full consciousness which had never awakened before*... she discovered her passion to herself in the unshrinking utterance of despair' (748, my emphasis). Her self-despair is both experienced and perceived 'with the clearest consciousness', but becomes an *acceptance of despair* which simultaneously refuses to languish in its polarity:

she had waked to a new condition: she felt as if her soul had been liberated from its terrible conflict; she was no longer wrestling with her grief, but could sit down with it as a *lasting companion* and make it a sharer in her thoughts... It was not in Dorothea's nature, for longer than the duration of a paroxysm, to sit in the narrow cell of her calamity, in the besotted misery of a consciousness that only sees another's lot as an accident of its own. (80, 749, my emphasis)

Dorothea still needs the compliment of *sharing* this new awareness with the full consciousness of 'beyond self' (Prelude, 7), however, to complete the transition into that salvatory point, this a consciousness beyond those connected to her own life in personal terms - 'those three' (80, 750) (Will, Rosamond and Lydgate) who form the first direct object of action for her compassionate thoughts - and out into a more complete *I-thou* consciousness. This occurs literally moments later in the first of two pivotal events which draw symbolic relationships between Dorothea's internal struggles for individual realisation and salvation and the view outside the window, the second of which will be discussed in the next section.

The first of these significant events immediately follows her newly-awakened 'full consciousness' (748) and *acceptance* of self-despair. Dorothea looks out of the window and finally '*felt* the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance', and *knows* herself '*a part of* that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining' (750, my emphases). On one level Miller recognises the subtlety of this position. Dorothea, having '[o]nce more' returned to her 'struggle[] to assert a vision in which "everyday things mean the greatest things"' now asserts this vision, 'though this time with a crucial difference... [as] Dorothea's grief can now yield

to a less disabling vision precisely through a new interest in detail *together with* a speculation about meanings' (Miller 176, original emphasis). Miller posits this attention to detail a 'moment' in which '[m]eaningfulness and life are... reconciled' in terms which ensure 'the everyday emblematically extends and insinuates itself beyond its borders so that it comes to implicate... the entire world... which... now encompasses all that there is to live for' (177). Yet for Miller, however, the 'outside' here offers 'the possibility of *fully absorbing the inside* and of abolishing the polarity between them' (187, my emphasis). Thus Dorothea's vision fails for Miller as this moment also encompasses a 'telling lapse of vision' for her, which passes over 'the social dimension of the landscape, along with the social conditions of her own observation... [as] she is *looking down*, both literally and in terms of social hierarchy' (178, original emphasis). On two crucial levels here Miller ignores the implications of the connection between Dorothea's virtually simultaneous acceptance of despair and full consciousness of 'life beyond self' (*Middlemarch* Prelude, 7). This is a moment which deliberately validates both "detail" and "meaning", inside and outside, in validating Dorothea as *a part of* that world in a positive ethical development which does indeed abolish the polarity between self and world, but also validates both *I* and *thou* rather than herself as remaining separated from or absorbed into it. The idea of *I-thou* ethics as a separation, self-sacrifice, or dissolution is explicitly challenged in *Middlemarch*, refusing both Miller's absorption and that the world 'encompasses *all* there is to live for' (Miller 177, my emphasis)³⁰. Here Dorothea is looking '*out*' (*Middlemarch* 80, 750, my emphasis), not down, in a movement which explicitly dissolves the class barrier and links directly with Dorothea's later physical move away from that 'luxurious shelter' which is now no barrier at all to Dorothea's being 'part of that... life' (750), refusing the alienating principles of both spectatorship and selfishness for empathic sympathy and action. Dorothea's refusal of spectatorship links directly with her refusal of the idealisation of the community around her through art. Those 'simpering pictures', juxtaposed with her experience of the grim reality of those bucolic

³⁰ Swann also argues that Dorothea reaches a positive form of dissolution, echoing LeFevre-Blake's self-sacrificial Dorothea (see 147 above). Beer, on the other hand, obliquely recognises the value of the figures Dorothea sees from the window as 'the numinous must express itself in this book solely through the human', but finds them 'impersonal' and largely mythological figures who 'tell stories' which 'satisfy the need for recurrence' (162).

scenes such as we see at Brooke's aptly-named tenant farm 'Freeman's End' (39, 382) which leaves 'all that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within [her]', were thus 'a wicked attempt to find delight in what is false' instead of trying 'to alter the evils which lie under our own hands' (374). For Schopenhauer human consciousness is the key, and is based in understanding that:

The suffering which he sees in others touches him almost as closely as his own... He becomes aware that the distinction between himself and others, which to the wicked person is so great a gulf, belongs only to a fleeting, deceptive phenomenon... recognis[ing] directly and without argument that the in-itself of his own manifestation is also that of others, namely the will-to-life, which constitutes the inner nature of everything... hence he will not cause suffering... (*WWI* IV §66, 235)

Existence is recognised as predominantly one of suffering for Schopenhauer, but as fundamentally shared, and as *necessarily* one in which each individual is of value. Our uniquely human intellect allows us to transcend our will and 'there results either the aesthetic challenge to contemplate [the inner nature of the world] or the ethical challenge to renounce' (IV §60, 207) suffering. Schopenhauer calls the transcendent possibilities of art that 'pure knowledge to which all willing is alien, pleasure in the beautiful, true delight in art – this is granted to only a very few, because it demands rare talents, and even to these few it is granted only as a fleeting dream', as it simultaneously 'lifts us out of real existence and transforms us into its *disinterested spectators*' (IV §57, 200, my emphasis). For Feuerbach, artistic perfection is found in the representation of the human as a species, as human perception finds itself 'more beautiful, more sublime... the form which is itself a superiority, a perfection, a bliss, a good' whereas art cannot represent the individual as this is not only imperfect but 'vanity' (*Essence* 1, 6-7). Schopenhauer also insists that '[b]ecause true, lasting happiness is not possible, it cannot be the subject of art' (*WWI* IV §58, 203), thus directly links with Dorothea's ethical rejection of the artificial frame, whether it is framing an idealised painting or a world falsely positioned as 'outside' (*Middlemarch* 80, 750) of her own concerns.

Whilst recognising that this moment at the window 'has only given voice to "an approaching murmur that would soon gather distinctness"' (Miller 179, quoting *Middlemarch*), Miller argues that Dorothea's translation of the 'largeness of [her] vision' into the 'smallness... of the first opportunity to carry it through'

(179) (being the determination to “save” Rosamond) is a reduction of her vision as it only succeeds in saving Dorothea, Rosamond only responding as “a reflex of [Dorothea’s] own energy” (Miller 184, quoting *Middlemarch*). Thus for Miller, Rosamond’s inability to sustain the sympathetic impulse beyond their meeting renders Dorothea’s vision valueless. Dorothea’s intervention is an ethical attempt to help both Rosamond and Lydgate, and enables Rosamond’s *temporary* new awareness ‘that she had been walking in an unknown world which had just broken in upon her’ (*Middlemarch* 81, 757) and thus leads to Rosamond exhibiting another ‘little mark of interest’ (760) in Lydgate (as representative of her relations with others). That Dorothea can have had such an affect on an *essentially* resistant character validates the truth of Dorothea’s vision in the novel at the same time it again questions the accessibility of Feuerbachian species-unity through *I-thou*-consciousness. It also suggests a more significantly Schopenhauerian vision of reality. Dorothea’s urge to ‘save Rosamond’ (80, 751) does prompt a ‘need to express pitying fellowship’ (758) in Rosamond, who thus puts Dorothea’s misapprehension right and enables her to make a choice about her own future. Rosamond’s and Lydgate’s own relationship is only temporarily eased as Rosamond, like Casaubon, lacks the necessary “elements” to sustain this fellow-feeling³¹. Newton argues that Dorothea’s ‘sympathetic feeling’ not only ‘discipline[s]’ her own ‘egotistic impulse’, but her ‘intuitive’ intervention with Rosamond shows it can therefore ‘break down even the most impenetrable egotistic barriers’ (155), although does later concede this ‘significant moral effect’ on Rosamond is in the end ‘only a temporary one’ (157). Newton is much closer to my argument, however, in arguing that Dorothea’s journey in the novel is one in which the conditions of reality do not ‘invalidate’ Dorothea’s ‘feelings’:

Dorothea’s early religious idealism is vulnerable because she believes that the world possesses an order and structure which corresponds to her beliefs. Her hopes are inevitably disappointed, but this does not invalidate the feelings which underlie her beliefs. In her later development in the novel, she is able to preserve these feelings while discarding the theoretic religious frame. (Newton 162)

³¹ Lydgate recognises that Rosamond ‘had no more identified herself with him than if they had been creatures of different species and opposing interests’ (*Middlemarch* 58, 568), and this is a lack of identification Rosamond is unable to overcome, despite the brief moment offered through Dorothea’s compassionate sympathy. See also fn 20 above.

Whilst this implicitly acknowledges the essentialising of character in the novel, it is also the case that Dorothea's development is itself a result of her consciousness of the basis upon which this hope is lost: that the reality which awakens her consciousness is a far more pessimistic premise than Newton recognises. Dorothea's transition of consciousness, realising the *equal presence* of both despair and participated life, has enabled her ethical completion and is also her salvation - indeed the former consciousness has effected the latter. This is a realisation which marks a significant shift away from Feuerbachian ethical relations and salvation as it has taken place in a significant respect outside and regardless of her final union with Will (a union which marks the second pivotal event relating Dorothea's internal struggles to what is happening outside the window, as will be discussed shortly). Feuerbach does at one point refer to the consciousness of shared sorrows, as 'Love does not exist without sympathy, sympathy does not exist without suffering in common... Sympathy presupposes a like nature' (*Essence* IV, 54), apparently echoing Schopenhauer's grounding of *I-thou* relations in the consciousness of suffering. Feuerbach's position actually arises from a recognition of the human species which is *in essence* good, perfect, and divine, however, in terms that not only intend to end alienation/suffering through only positive communal human relations - that also absorb the always imperfect individual - but also philosophically denies the real existence of suffering and the realisation of the imperfect, unhappy individual³². Most crucially, Feuerbachian *I-thou* salvation is something that *Middlemarch* recognises as something the majority of individuals are essentially precluded by their fixed character from ever attaining. Whilst Dorothea's union with Will marks Feuerbach's sublime *I-thou* apotheosis in personal terms, her own *salvation* has been effected through a Schopenhauerian acceptance of the perpetual existence and equality of suffering long before this final union takes place.

Jones links Eliot's view that 'no one "could be prepared for true fellowship without having had his share of sorrow as well as of joy"' not only to Feuerbach's one reference to "suffering in common", but also to Hume and Locke and the view 'that all one's ideas are ultimately based upon sensory

³² See Feuerbach *Essence* (1, 3-7, 18-23, and 27-8); Appendices (§2, 283 & §3, 284); and Chapter 2 above.

impressions' (Jones 65, citing Eliot *Letters* V, 213)³³. Yet Schopenhauer recognises that the consciousness of suffering is that which actually leads to ethical human relations and salvation, whilst always keeping the experiential individual and the reality of human suffering clearly in view. Schopenhauer's *I-thou* ethical relations arise *only* from the consciousness of suffering, that the 'misery both experienced by oneself and inflicted upon others... always affect the one and the same inner being' (*WWI* IV §63, 219), and thus the knowledge of suffering and shared existence allows the individual to recognise that 'this thou art' (220). As such, 'virtue must spring from that intuitive knowledge which recognises in the individuality of others the same essence as in our own', individual 'ethical value' being 'the chief business in human life' (§66, 230) which finds its 'expression not in words, but only in deeds, in action, in the course of a human life' (232). In his discussion of the philosophical aspects of Eliot, predominantly in respect of egoism and imagination, Jones does not explore the pivotal role that the self-consciousness of suffering plays in the novel. This is despite his key recognition that to "feel the truth" of a commonplace, such as "we must all die", is very different from the "acquired knowledge" of "merely knowing" that this is true', and that this realisation is 'a necessary step not only towards self-knowledge, but also towards understanding of others' (Jones 46, quoting *Middlemarch*). Thus 'imagination' can *either* allow each to 'understand the actual world' *or* 'deny himself knowledge of himself, his world, and other men' (48). The egoist 'fails to grasp that knowledge of himself and others go hand in hand' (46) thus is unable to 'escape... some of "the miserable isolation" of egoism' (50). All the while '[c]ircumstances never, of themselves, bring about any fundamental change in... character... at most they bring to light, and challenge, previously hidden traits' (37). Whilst the novel suggests "a human being... is a slow creation of long interchanging influences", for Jones both 'Casaubon and Garth are said to have unalterable traits... in each case dominating ones, and it is unclear how much weight should be attached to the notion of changing character' (31). Despite these key recognitions, Jones' acknowledgement of 'an occasional effect of gloom which

³³ Schopenhauer acknowledges his own indebtedness to Hume and Locke regarding his delineations of the fundamental ground of knowledge: see Schopenhauer (*WWI* I §9, 9; 17 and 19); and Berman in Schopenhauer (*WWI* xviii-xxiii).

attends George Eliot's moral precepts' is finally only 'attributable to [a] purely logical postulate about causes' (68)³⁴. Eliot argues that one's own 'heart-cutting experience' should influence a necessary 'effect' in ethical terms, including in literature where the reader 'should be better able to *imagine* and to *feel* the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures' (Eliot *Selections* 217, original emphasis). This is an insistence upon the direct relationship between the consciousness of human individuality, human suffering, and human ethics which pervades *Middlemarch*.

Dorothea's consciousness and acceptance of the equal presence of both 'self-despair' and 'beyond-self' (*Middlemarch* Prelude, 7) appears to be a recognition that others in the novel are prevented from attaining by their essential character, yet it is identified as the necessary place in and through which salvation can be attained. Dorothea's essential character has enabled her full consciousness of both presences and their necessary interconnectedness: the reconciliation between them foregrounds both detail and meaning, individual and species, matter and spirit. These are reconciled within herself, and subsequently sees herself united with *but not absorbed by* community. Eliot's position here appears to mark crucial differences between herself and Feuerbach, and aligns her far more closely with Schopenhauer. This is marked in an ethical realisation and transition to salvation based on the equivalence, reality, perpetuity, consciousness, and *acceptance* of suffering; the inescapable determination of character; and the equal presence then, of 'lights and shadows' (21, 205), transcendence and despair. Through recognising the apparently essential differences between Will and Casaubon, Dorothea's 'moral stupidity' that '[w]e

³⁴ For Jones, 'although experience is the foundation of views about causal sequences, the universality of causal relations' he identifies in *Middlemarch* is only 'a postulate' (68) which fails to bear up under philosophical scrutiny. Whilst there are two types of egoism in the novel, epistemological egoism (private experience) and ethical egoism, this latter 'can be defeated only by further use of the human capacity which helped to sustain it: imagination' (49). Imagination has a 'dangerous freedom' (50) as it also enables the false constructions of the world that feeds egoism (48-9). Yet Jones sees that the role of imagination in the novel 'enables a man to postulate causal connections between phenomena... to construct probable conjectures about the future and unobserved phenomena... [and] for understanding our fellow beings; for we have to interpret the manifestations of their inner lives which are only indirectly available for our inspection' (18-19). Jones is thus remarkably close to Schopenhauer, but without Schopenhauer's double-knowledge of ourselves as manifestations of the same will-to-life which provides Dorothea with that direct knowledge of others.

are all of us born in' gives way from 'reflection' to 'feeling' (205) and thus becomes moral understanding. Dorothea's compassion is not self-sacrificing, however, as her equally painful awareness of her own needs for the 'greater freedom' (203) that Will offers her attests. This also marks a Schopenhauerian rather than Feuerbachian emphasis in Eliot's refusal to invalidate the suffering individual, placing this consciousness at the heart of individual realisation and ethical community. *Middlemarch* clearly recognises the destructive nature of life-denial and its potential to inhabit either "optimistic" or "pessimistic" philosophical positions, placing the consciousness of existential, individual human beings at the heart of both life-affirmation and these apparently oppositional philosophical positions themselves:

whether we believe in the future perfection of our race or in the nearest date fixed for the end of the world; whether we regard the earth as a putrefying nidus for a saved remnant, including ourselves, or have a passionate belief in the solidarity of mankind. [...] There is no general doctrine which is not capable of eating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men. (61, 590-1).

Dorothea's realisation is effected through her experience, consciousness, and acceptance of self-despair, and this itself provides the necessary basis for her consciousness of 'life beyond self' (Prelude, 7) - but without moving from one polarised position into the other. As such, it is a balance – a reconciliation – of two necessary forces rather than a totalising transcendence. This is a salvation effected through her having the necessary elements to allow it to occur, however, 'the dominant spirit of justice within her' having 'once overcome the tumult' of despair had 'shown her the true measure of things', but by keeping that presence of despair with her 'as a lasting companion' (80, 749). Eliot shifts and reduces Feuerbach's emphasis from the perfect, divine human (*Essence* Preface xvi) to what she admires in Goethe, the value of each essentially limited human individual who makes up this 'living, generous humanity – mixed and erring, and self-deluding' (Eliot "Meister" 131). Yet for Eliot, these individuals are *not all* 'saved from utter corruption by the salt of some noble impulse, some disinterested effort, some beam of good nature' (131), even while they provide the necessary basis of value for the attainment of salvation by those essentially able to realise it. Whilst Dorothea's revelation does appear to enable effective

salvation both in herself and in her relations with others *to an extent* (the terms of which will be discussed shortly), this is a salvation which refuses to transcend the individual, refuses to recognise human relations as divine, is always subject to essential character and, crucially, arises from the conscious and perpetual presence of suffering. *Middlemarch* fundamentally questions the accessibility and validity of Feuerbachian salvation for both individual and community, and places Dorothea's moral growth firmly in Schopenhauer's ethics of salvation.

III. *The 'new real future' and the issue of salvation: 'that roar which lies on the other side of silence'.*

Dorothea's final union with Will occurs after her moment of salvation, that reconciliation between the two consciously-present forces of 'self-despair' and 'beyond self' (*Middlemarch* Prelude, 7) which will remain with her from now on. Her union with Will marks her own personal happiness, as is symbolised in the second event which draws a relationship between Dorothea's internal struggles and what is happening outside the window, whilst retaining a markedly Schopenhauerian basis in terms of what comes after. For Miller, whilst the moment of Dorothea's final union with Will brings 'the ideal of fellow feeling... to its full and final expression', it also serves to illustrate how her 'desire for Will is a reduction of her original desire and, in the end, perhaps even a destruction of what its original value had been' (187). As such, whilst Dorothea's earlier moment alone at the window is one where the 'outside offered the possibility of fully absorbing the inside and of abolishing the polarity between them' (Miller 187) (an absorption this thesis argues that *Middlemarch* refuses whilst Dorothea's awakening *does* abolish polarity), this is effectively countermanded for Miller by what the window represents during Dorothea's later meeting with Will. Miller argues that the later window scene 'shows only "the drear outer world"' and thus undermines the earlier 'proposed union between Dorothea and the world', replacing it with 'a union between Dorothea and Will – *against the world*' (187-8, original emphasis). Whilst on one level Dorothea and Will are against the world in going against Middlemarch's idea (not to mention Casaubon's) of what they ought to do by pursuing their lives together, their relationship and future lives become *part of* the world in a clear extension of Dorothea's new awakening to that 'involuntary, palpitating life' (*Middlemarch* 80, 750) in significant terms. Miller argues that there is a contrast at this later meeting between what is happening outside the window and inside the room, as shown by the 'angry spirit' (*Middlemarch* 83, 771) of the storm, which 'symbolically reduces and destroys the original import of Dorothea's [earlier]

vision' (Miller 187)³⁵. As already argued, the first window incident does not present the 'outside offer[ing] the possibility of fully *absorbing* the inside', although it does abolish what Miller calls 'the polarity between them' (Miller 187, my emphasis), marking as it does Dorothea's revelatory moment of consciousness, of knowing herself part of life rather than dissolved into it, and thus realising and validating the human individual as the necessary basis for positive *I-thou* human relations. This later pivotal moment of apotheosis between Dorothea and Will, during which the view outside the window shows 'a coming storm' (*Middlemarch* 83, 767) and the 'light' becoming 'more and more sombre' (770), does not reinstate a polarity between the outside and inside worlds. Instead, it reflects again the symbolic alchemic elements and the necessity for a union which effects both individual and communal realisation, and which must be grounded in and by "light" in both of its aspects: the animating principle of individual human life and the transcendent principle of *I-thou* consciousness that together form 'palpitating life' (80, 750). The elemental storm symbolises that this appears to be Dorothea's and Will's final meeting, both of them aware of 'a fatality that kept them apart' (83, 770). It is the storm too that ensures Will is 'delivered... from the necessity of going away', and ensures that they are united at last: the first flash of lightening triggers their 'look at each other, and then smile', prompting them to speak what they 'had been thinking of' (770); the second 'vivid flash... lit each of them up for the other – and the light seemed to be the terror of a hopeless love', leading to their clearest declarations of mutual feeling and a kiss 'tremblingly' before they again 'moved apart' (771). It is this move apart that triggers the rain to 'dash[] against the window-panes *as if an angry spirit were within it*' (771, my emphasis), the element of water again representing human love. The angry water spirit is appeased when Dorothea's subsequent contemplation of a 'drear outer world' parted from Will becomes him 'seat[ing] himself beside her, and [laying] his hand on hers, which turned itself upward to be clasped', a moment of union which extends 'until the rain abated' and became 'quiet' (771). The anger now becomes Will's own repeated 'anger' (771-2) at their parting, and his final

³⁵ Swann echoes Miller in also arguing that the 'wild stupidity of the elements' ("Realism" 298, fn) of the storm symbolises 'the hostile world outside' (297), predominantly 'the forces of the past' (298, fn), the later ceasing of the rain suggesting that 'fairer weather is ahead as Dorothea begins to see truly' (297) and that they are both 'about to enter the adult world' (299).

exasperated “Good-bye” forces the last metamorphosis, echoing their earlier baptismal union as Dorothea becomes the water spirit and refuses to let them part as she ‘start[s] from her seat, the flood of her young passion bearing down all the obstructions... the great tears rising and falling in an instant’ (772). Dorothea’s union with Will is the perfect manifestation of *I-thou* relations, a union of equals which affirms both individual and species in their perfect compliment of elemental forces. “Light” again forms that unifying force, the element of life and the transcendent principle of “spirit”, that ‘manifold pregnant existence’ (28, 265) of emotional, physical, and ‘spiritual communion’ (2, 24).

Feuerbach’s own privileging of male-female love above all other forms of human love (*Essence* IX, 92) may well play a part in the delineation of their union here, as sexual love is clearly a significant part of Dorothea and Will’s feelings for one another³⁶. On one level their relationship illustrates the positive vision of Feuerbach’s *I-thou* relations, through which individual self-consciousness limitation is realised in unity with the perfection of species-consciousness. Here both *I* and *thou* provide ‘the principle of multiplicity and all its essential results’, the second person being ‘the self-assertion of the human heart as the principle of duality, of participated life’ (*Essence* VI, 68). Yet Eliot’s elemental delineations insist on the realisation of the individual as the necessary basis of communal union at every level, and also exposes Feuerbachian mutual *I-thou* human relations as something that other individuals are *essentially* precluded from ever attaining. Feuerbach’s *I-thou* relations can unwittingly act to compound the individual’s consciousness of their own *essential* imperfections and limitations, seen in opposition to the perfection that is not only in the species in an abstract sense, but embodied in the perfection that is the individual’s *necessary* aim and destiny, their own potentially perfect self. Eliot exposes this

³⁶ Schopenhauer argues that sexual relations between men and women arise from the will-to-life seeking its own perpetuation in the species, thus the will-to-life actually fools those individuals into believing they will be happy together, thus, once the ‘genius of the species achieves its object’ (*WWR* “Metaphysics”, 553) and the sexual urge has been fulfilled, ‘everyone who is in love finds himself duped’ (540) as the reality of their incompatibility becomes apparent. Yet Schopenhauer also concedes that, although ‘happy marriages are rare’, it is the case that ‘passionate sexual love is sometimes associated with... real friendship based on harmony of disposition, which nevertheless often appears only when sexual love proper is extinguished in its satisfaction. That friendship will then often spring from the fact that the... physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of the two individuals, from which arose the sexual love... [for a child to be produced] are also related to one another with reference to the individuals themselves... and thereby form the basis of a harmony of dispositions’ (558). This is a rare compatibility of relationship that *Middlemarch* echoes.

at the same time as insisting that imperfection is inescapable, the fallible human is at perpetual risk of self-despair and inhabits an imperfect world in which suffering is a reality. This is not only a necessary acceptance but *the necessary basis* upon which any form of salvation is possible. Not only did Dorothea initially misrecognise Casaubon as her key to the knowledge she seeks, wherein reconciliation between self-despair and the transcendent consciousness of ‘beyond self’ (*Middlemarch* Prelude, 7) can take place, but Casaubon will never be able to recognise that Dorothea had the key all along.

The quest for human realisation on any and every level must have that which light represents as its overarching principle: human life in its corporeal manifestation, but existing in a Schopenhauerian pessimistic consciousness of reality, must form the basis of *I-thou* consciousness. The living, breathing, human individual leads to the transcendent consciousness of a ‘participated life’ (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 68), both *I and thou*, individual and species, matter and “spirit”, despair and transcendent joy, without which ‘the world’ is ‘not only dead and empty, but meaningless’ (VIII, 82). Eliot’s privileging of the element of light in Dorothea’s and Will’s union encompasses the vital spark of both corporeal life and of transcendental union. This reflects Feuerbach’s own delineation of love-as-holy “spirit” (VI, 67) as the unifying force of *I-thou* relations, of love in community, whilst also questioning the accessibility of this by emphasising individual realisation, the imperfect reality of human relations, and the presence of self-despair. That this *I-thou-unity* is something few characters in the novel can recognise or attain illustrates the failings in Feuerbach’s position here. *Middlemarch* argues for a more pessimistic consciousness of human place and human destination as the necessary basis for human ethics, and for both individual and communal realisation. Dorothea’s relationship with Casaubon imprisons them both in despair, a place which proves finally inescapable for Casaubon. Yet salvation in *Middlemarch* is not an equally polarised transcendence of the corporeal realm (as offered in Feuerbach’s final vision of species-unity which absorbs the individual into the faceless community of species-essence), but the midpoint between self-despair and rapture which retains consciousness of both. Eliot agrees with Feuerbach in recognising human consciousness as crucial, but insists on *equating* the corporeal and the spiritual in the ethical validity of the existential human individual. Dorothea’s salvation is

attained through her consciousness of self-despair reconciled with her consciousness of being ‘a part of that involuntary, palpitating life’ (*Middlemarch* 80, 750), a ‘unity of the material and the spiritual in [the] individual’ (Feuerbach *Essence* V, 64) which shifts salvation away from the totality of Feuerbachian species-consciousness and its attempt to ‘escape from the sense of limitation into unlimited feeling’ (App. §3, 284) which completes the Feuerbachian negation, devaluing, and ‘absorb[ti]on’ (I, 4) of the individual. Dorothea’s union with Will, and her renunciation of wealth and position to marry him (*Middlemarch* Finale, 792), occurs after her salvatory moment. On one level her relationship with Will marks a choice regarding her own personal happiness and fulfilment, the false distinction between self and world having already been destroyed in favour of ethical action. On another level their union also raises concerns about the endpoint of Feuerbachian salvation in relation to what comes after for Dorothea.

Dorothea’s salvation marks a Schopenhauerian shift on three crucial levels: the predetermined nature of character which allows *some* individuals to behave with sympathy or compassion towards others, but not all (many characters in the novel are apparently precluded from attaining salvation in *essential* terms); the necessary condition of salvation being the acceptance of both despair and transcendence (thus must not invalidate the individual); and, most fundamentally, the basis of ethics grounded in the consciousness of suffering. In terms of the future, Eliot’s Schopenhauerian vision is heralded in Dorothea’s burgeoning consciousness:

Some discouragement, some faintness of heart at the new real future which replaces the imaginary is not unusual, and we do not expect people to be moved by what is not unusual. That element of tragedy which lies in the very fact of frequency, has not yet wrought itself into the coarse emotion of mankind; and perhaps our frames could hardly bear much of it. If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel’s heartbeat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. (*Middlemarch* 20, 189)

This reflects a Schopenhauerian insistence on seeing beyond the imaginary state of things and into a reality which has the consciousness of suffering, ‘[t]hat element of tragedy’, at its heart, and a direct link of consciousness and compassion for comrades-in-suffering, that ‘keen vision and feeling of all

ordinary human life' (189). Whilst Eliot places human life alongside itself and other living things in a reflection of Schopenhauer's equation of all manifestations of the will-to-life here, it is the directly ethical connotations for human relations that are crucial to the novel. That 'element of tragedy' is an insistently 'real' and 'frequent' presence, and both the 'imaginary' future and the day-to-day 'silence' are broken by a 'roar' (189) of suffering at its heart which recognises a view of human existence, including the present and the future, fed by a Schopenhauerian pessimistic consciousness of 'one's real inner nature' (*WWI* II §21, 41) and of the 'suffering... in others [which] touches him... as his own' (IV §66, 235). Eliot echoes Schopenhauer's ethical practice as well as his theory, including his essential delineations of character wherein each individual is firmly rendered a particular manifestation of the will-to-life and as such, cannot change in essentials. Only those characters predisposed to exhibit more ethical behaviour can choose to do so. The pessimistic premise which underlies Schopenhauer's ethics appear at the heart of Dorothea's journey to salvation. The consciousness of the perpetuity of suffering, and the vital link which recognises the self as part of all manifestations of the same essence in terms which do not assimilate, sacrifice, or negate that self out of existence, follows Schopenhauer's route of *ethical compassion* rather than his severest form of salvation, ascetic self-denial. The ascetic needs to constantly and intentionally break their own will by 'seeking out the disagreeable, the freely chosen life of penance and self-chastisement for the continual mortification of the will' (§68, 247), a position clearly rejected by the novel's recognition of Dorothea's essential character as one incompatible with ascetic urges. Dorothea's struggles against sacrificing herself to Casaubon (albeit her freedom only enabled in the pessimistic terms of Casaubon's death which also offers Casaubon his only non-salvationary escape route), and the explicitly destructive effects such a move would have (and which Casaubon's life-denial does have) on Dorothea, foreground her need for a compassionate but 'palpitating life' (*Middlemarch* 80, 750). Feuerbach's species-unity, that totality of Feuerbachian species-consciousness and its attempt to 'escape from the sense of limitation into unlimited feeling' (*Essence* App. §3, 284) (which simultaneously completes the Feuerbachian negation, devaluing, and 'absorb[tion]' (4) of the individual), is also questioned in the novel's Finale.

Dorothea, 'enamoured of intensity and greatness' (*Middlemarch* Finale, 793), begins the novel searching for 'some lofty conception of the world' (1, 10) which will enable her to engage in a corporeal 'directly beneficent' (48, 455) yet transcendent activity, and attain 'some illimitable satisfaction' through the 'reconcil[iation of] self-despair with the rapturous consciousness of life beyond self' (Prelude, 7). Her consciousness and acceptance of the perpetual reality of self-despair has led to her consciousness of the equally perpetual and real presence of 'life beyond self' (7), thus the point of personal and of practical ethical salvation is reached even before her final union with Will. Whilst her relationship with Will offers her individual "happiness" in a relationship of mutual compatibility, and opens out the possibility of her attaining that 'illimitable satisfaction' (7) in both personal and communal terms, it also forms a Feuerbachian union which both echoes and undermines Feuerbach's vision of salvation. Whilst Dorothea's and Will's final union is baptised by a suspended moment in which they both 'escape from the sense of limitation into unlimited feeling' (Feuerbach *Essence* App. §3, 284) as 'the flood of [Dorothea's] young passion bear[s] down all the obstructions' (*Middlemarch* 83, 772) between them, the end of the novel raises questions about the relationship between Dorothea's vibrant and unique character and her apparent dissolution. Dorothea ends the novel '*absorbed into the life of another*, and ... only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother', and it is held by '[m]any who knew her' to be 'a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed' (Finale, 793, my emphasis). From the beginning of the novel Dorothea is characterised as 'likely to seek martyrdom', although finally to 'incur [it] after all in a quarter where she had not sought it' (1, 10). Yet the extent to which Dorothea's "end" in the novel can be seen as a martyrdom, or can be viewed in either optimistic or pessimistic terms is explicitly blurred, refusing a polarised position which echoes Eliot's delineation of salvation in the novel. On one level Dorothea is clearly where she wishes to be:

bound to [Will] by a love stronger than any impulses which could have marred it. No life would have been possible to Dorothea which was not filled with emotion, and she now had a life filled also with a beneficent activity which she had not the doubtful pains of discovering and marking out for herself. (Finale, 792)

She has clearly attained personal fulfilment, yet the novel refuses the straightforward “happy ending” with the enigmatic precursor that Dorothea ‘feel[s] that there was always something better which she might have done, if she had only been better and known better’, suggesting that the perfect Feuerbachian self (*Essence* 1, 6) is always receding into the future. Yet the novel also insists that ‘she never repented that she had given up position and fortune to marry Will’ (*Middlemarch* Finale, 792). Dorothea’s life is not explored beyond this moment through her own thoughts and feelings but by distanced reports, which leave Dorothea’s future life an unknown quantity, or rather quality, and provides conflicting “optimistic” and “pessimistic” views of her.

Dorothea’s “end” and her relationship with Will troubles many critics, Miller finding that the novel transfers ‘the original unsolvable opposition between “the meanness of opportunity” and an “epic life”’ onto ‘an equivalent but reduced opposition between Casaubon and Will’ (148). Dorothea’s story is thus ‘at once fittingly concluded and irrelevantly sidetracked... [and,] knowing that this settlement only *appears* to satisfy her original and still persisting desire, she gratefully makes do with the appearance’ (149). Yet Miller also argues that *Middlemarch* becomes a vehicle of meliorism as the ‘conventions of writing and reading the novel will prove to contain its most basic model for “the growing good of the world”’ (154). Interestingly, Miller finds that the role of sympathy in the novel is a ‘touchstone’ which has ‘a strategic double valence... [b]y its “deep”, quasi-primal character, it is exalted to a position of transcendence’ (155). Further, whilst the ‘*nature*’ of sympathy ‘may be supra-ideological... its actual *role* is not’, thus sympathy forms a ‘middle position, between the ideologies of community and romantic individualism’, inspiring ‘the religion of humanity on which the hopes both for a better community and for a more workable transcendence are founded’ (original emphases, 155)³⁷. The oscillation between “optimism” and “pessimism” at the end of the novel echoes Dorothea’s path to and realisation of salvation, and takes its questioning of Feuerbachian salvation to its problematic endpoint, simultaneously questioning Feuerbach’s teleological

³⁷ Whilst Miller also points out the ‘symptoms of a missing sympathy between self and other (indifference, fascination, fear, hostility)’ as ‘the “continually-alienating influences”... that threaten to divide’ (164-5) relationships, these pertinent points merely confirm the limits of narrative form, illustrated in the Finale ‘by briefly extending them to show more of the same’ (191), and ‘the consequent suspension of the meanings that might be attached to them’ (192).

optimistic vision of 'the hopes both for a better community and for a more workable transcendence' (Miller 155) Miller argues this middle-ground forms. For Feuerbach, salvation is both a consciousness and a teleological endpoint in the 'escape from the sense of limitation [desire, passion, the conditions of time and place] into unlimited feeling' and the 'joy' (*Essence* App.§3, 284) of species-consciousness. Time is 'the medium of uniting opposites, contradictions, in one and the same subject' (1, 23), yet each individual is a limitation (28), and species-essence 'absorbs' (4) this individual who is also negated in its ground, process (27-8), and existence (18). Schopenhauer sees time as not only revealing the (pessimistic) reality of human existence behind the dreams of the human imagination, but is also the one place where reality exists as 'real existence is only in the present' (*WWI* IV §57, 197), and is thus where ethical human actions can take place. As such, for Schopenhauer the individual-in-time has both meaning and value. Whilst for Feuerbach '[e]verything that exists has value, is a being of distinction', this is in the end only 'true of the species' (*Essence* 1, 7).

Whilst Dorothea's fate is clearly of smallness and limitation, where the spark towards achieving great things ends at the very least in an undeserved and ineffectual anonymity, Dorothea's literal absorption 'into the life of another' (*Middlemarch* Finale, 793) suggests she becomes *nothing other than* her husband and child. As such, Dorothea as a unique individual effectively ceases to exist, echoing the negation of the individual that Feuerbachian *I-thou* salvation-through-species-unity effects. Feuerbach's vision of salvation, an "elemental union" of the essentially imperfect individual manifestation of human essence with the perfect manifestation of the spatial and teleological species, also simultaneously absorbs the "imperfect" individual as the negative connotations of Dorothea's apparent dissolution recognises. That Dorothea's dissipation into nothing more than the anonymity of wife- and motherhood is an absorption which appears to render her ineffectual is compounded by the recognition that what she has become absorbed into is itself also ineffectual. This relates not only to Dorothea herself, but to the son and particularly the husband into whom she is 'absorbed' (Finale, 793). Whilst Dorothea's son later 'declined' the opportunity to 'represent[] Middlemarch... thinking that his opinions had less chance of being stifled if he remained out of doors' (794), suggesting that the influence of Middlemarch will not 'assimilat[e] him very comfortably' (15, 149) and thus

'paralyse' (58, 559) him as it has Lydgate, he does not appear to have particular aims or abilities which might be so reduced. Dorothea's son lives an equally unheroic, suggestively ineffectual life. Will's own career as 'an ardent public man, working well in those times when reforms were begun with a young hopefulness of immediate good' being effected in the lives of others, is also undermined by such 'hopefulness' having 'been much checked in our days' (Finale, 792). Such checks to hope and effectiveness render Dorothea doubly ineffective, particularly as her union with Will is also associated with issues of social reform (Dorothea's own aims coupled with Will's need for direction). Yet this ineffectiveness is countered to a humble but significant extent by the suggestion that Dorothea's 'being' does have 'incalculably diffusive' effects on 'the growing good of the world' (795). This not only offers a more optimistic perception of her fate but renders both her person and actions effective, albeit "diffusely", and links back to Dorothea's urgency regarding the necessity to try 'to alter the evils which lie under our hands' (39, 374). Thus the 'hopefulness' invested in epic projects that is 'checked' (Finale, 792) over time is given palpable if humble effects on a more immediate level. A further pessimistic twist is formed through the perception that this small but 'growing good of the world' is itself reduced from being seen as an optimistic Feuerbachian teleological inevitability. This is because the reason 'that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been' is 'partly dependent on unhistoric acts' and 'half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs' (795). Meliorism is thus rendered at least partly dependent then, on the nature of human relationships and the essential character of individuals who make up those relationships, rather than an inevitable (Feuerbachian) result of human relations themselves³⁸. Most tellingly of all, human existence is here

³⁸ Interestingly, whilst Marx also recognises this fundamental flaw in Feuerbach's delineations of human relations, Eliot's emphasis on *practical* acts also echo in Marx's reading of Feuerbach. Marx insists on the priority of practical means over Feuerbach's 'liberation' through 'self-consciousness' (Marx *Theses* VI, 122; see Chapter 2, 68-9 above). Eliot deliberately emphasises the ordinary playing out of humble, *unhistoric* acts and their subtle and diffusive - but nonetheless effective - impact, however, rather than any form of Historic revolutionary act, as emphasised in the contrast between the checked hopes of Reform and Dorothea's own subtle "diffusive" effects. Whilst it is not outside the realms of possibility that Eliot's critique of Feuerbach could have been fuelled by reading Marx, Eliot is clearly capable of recognising the ramifications of these flaws for herself. Suggestions that Marx enters into Eliot's reading is limited, although J. F. Blumenbach's *Anthropological Treatises... includes Memoirs [of Blumenbach] by Marx...* Thomas Bendysche (trans), listed in the Eliot-Lewes Library: see Baker (entry 249, 22).

rendered in Schopenhauerian terms, being clearly much less than positive in that lives appear to be delineated in terms of ‘ill’ rather than “good”, but capable of potentially being rendered *less* ‘ill’ than ‘they might have been’ (795) through the actions of others. Therefore Dorothea, and others who also ‘live[] faithfully a hidden life’ of ‘unhistoric’ obscurity, *may* help to make the lives of others less unpleasant than they might otherwise have been, which renders the idea of an optimistic, inevitable ‘growing good’ (795) at the very least questionable, if not negated.

Probably the earliest critical appreciation of a Schopenhauerian quality to Eliot’s novels is W. H. Mallock who wrote in 1879 that, on the one hand Eliot ‘has expressed her convictions somewhere as a creed of “*meliorism*”’ (presumably in her non-fiction writings), yet ‘[i]t might seem that her philosophic theories and her true natural vision were at hopeless war with one another... her diagrams refut[ing] instead of illustrating the text of her proposition’ (Mallock “Eliot” 457). Whilst:

...her entire philosophy is an impassioned protest against pessimism... present[ing] the human life and the human lot to us as worthy of all our piety – all our love and reverence... yet the picture she presents to us of the world we live in almost exactly answers to the description given of it by Schopenhauer, as nothing better than a “penal settlement”... the race of beings [she presents]... forms no happy and rejoicing brotherhood... but a sad and labouring race of chained convicts, whose highest glory it is not to attempt escaping. We are all born, she teaches, with bonds about us, and we inevitably increase their number, prompted by our own cravings, as we live on. (457)

Mallock is himself almost unremittingly pessimistic, not only reading Schopenhauer in the most negative light possible but surpassing Schopenhauer’s most pessimistic arguments with his own views about human nature and the secularisation of society³⁹. For Mallock, Eliot’s “accurate” ‘observation of life’s meanness, sins, and miseries... does not under-estimate the causes for despair’, yet her “unrealistic” ‘higher characters’ are only ‘principles’ (459) rather than real human beings, and thus leave Eliot ‘over-estim[ing] the causes for hope’ (458). Yet Mallock’s identification of Eliot’s position as one that aligns itself with a Schopenhauerian world-view, particularly in its questioning of the creed of meliorism, is clearly a pertinent if rather generalised and overtly pessimistic

³⁹ See Mallock *Is Life Worth Living?* and Chapter 3 above.

one. Whilst Eliot's position in *Middlemarch* is Schopenhauerian rather than Feuerbachian, this is in terms which recognise Eliot's position as more perceptively Schopenhauerian than Mallock's own reading of either Schopenhauer or Eliot suggests. Whilst T. R. Wright argues that *Middlemarch* is 'firmly anchored in the material world... [t]he leading characters... involved in a perpetual struggle against those [external] conditions' (Wright "*Middlemarch*" 91) in which they live, this only tells half the story⁴⁰. Wright's recognition that the novel ends with 'a sober and somewhat sad affirmation, the product of a self-critical and sophisticated liberal humanism, no longer full of confidence in the grand narrative of progress but committed to a gradual, difficult and possibly only partial improvement' (92) points equally towards Eliot's shift away from Feuerbach into Schopenhauerian pessimism. Her questioning of an optimistic teleological meliorism merely adds to the Schopenhauerian delineations of essential character, and to a modest but palpable ethics of compassionate acts arising from the consciousness of despair. The only sure knowledge by the end of *Middlemarch* is that lives will indeed suffer 'ill' (Eliot *Middlemarch* Finale, 795), but *may* be rendered *less* so by the unsung actions of others - subject to essential character and human relations. This echoes Schopenhauer's own critique of teleological optimism, the core of his philosophy insisting that suffering is the one inescapable inevitability in the world, and itself leads to a 'humble path to... ethics' (*Morality* III §13, 130). Here suffering might at least be relieved and existence rendered less painful for those who feel the immediate effects (*WWI* IV, §66, 233) of the actions of compassionate individuals. Whilst bringing 'unerring certainty... to an end', intellect frees the human from being 'bound to the present' of willing, a state in which less self-conscious animals remain, and thus enables us to reflect 'over the future and the past, and, as a consequence, deliberation, careful concern, [and] the capacity for premeditated

⁴⁰ U. C. Knoepfelmacher similarly argues that Dorothea's ideals, and those of the other characters, have to learn to 'conform[] to the motions of an imperfect world' (*Laughter* 172), arguing that Will Ladislav is 'malleable' rather than having his own ideals, thus he is excepted from all other characters' necessary modification or abandonment of their 'goals' (73). Yet, interestingly, elsewhere Knoepfelmacher also finds that Eliot 'stress[es] man's dependence on the actions of his fellow man' (*Humanism* 112), *Middlemarch* 'test[ing] the efficacy of ethical conduct... reduc[ing] mystery to a verifiable experience', although her fiction is 'concerned with an artistic interpretation of "truth" and not with the resolution of metaphysical inconsistencies' (113).

action independent of the present' (II §27, 76-7) subjection to suffering becomes possible.

Wright acknowledges Suzanne Graver's argument that *Middlemarch* 'reveals... "a double consciousness", aware both of the need to continue the search for "truth" and of its inevitable failure, holding out a vision of human fellowship while revealing "the conflicts that obscure and complicate" such a vision' (Wright "*Middlemarch*" xii, quoting Graver 148). Yet Wright argues for a further stage of abandoning 'all attempts to impose unity on the novel, focusing instead on the play of voices in the text... whose truth-claims can only be relative' (xii). Wright recognises that *Middlemarch* is concerned with 'a world no longer to be seen as a stable, fixed reality but to be described in terms of complex patterns of relationship... "the search for *the thing in itself* [being] chimerical: the thing [is] a group of relations"' (Wright "*Middlemarch*" 5, citing Lewes *Problems* II, 27). Wright does not recognise the significance of these relations, however, or why and how the novel refuses a form of totalising unity. Graver's position hints towards the crucial issue at the heart of *Middlemarch*, a 'double-consciousness' (Graver 148) which refuses Feuerbachian totalities through the insistent presence of the existential human individual, living in a less-than-ideal world and forming the necessary basis for individual, social, intellectual and emotional realisation-in-community on any level. *Middlemarch* offers a Schopenhauerian double-consciousness of self and other, despair and transcendence, and an intellect which allows us to transcend our will either for 'the aesthetic challenge to contemplate [the inner nature of the world] or the ethical challenge to renounce' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §60, 207) suffering. As such, a form of *balance* rather than either "unity" or "totality" can be achieved, a balance which acknowledges desire and contingency, transcendence and despair, success and failure, whilst arguing against Graver's 'inevitable failure' (148, my emphasis) by marking the small successes and the ongoing potential for relieving suffering. All the while the novel insists on the truth of Dorothea's path, which runs between two polarised and polarising positions and offers the middlemarch, the middle ground as the only route, and where there is what we might call 'a "mature" acceptance of human limitation' (Wright "*Middlemarch*" xiii) and of ethical human transcendence rather than the final lack of signification that Miller argues (191-4), a 'gloom' based on a 'purely logical postulate about causes'

(Jones 68), or a question about the relativity of truth (Wright "*Middlemarch*" xii), albeit one which 'need not lead to the lack of a strong moral response to experience' (Newton 167). Wright's "'mature" acceptance of human limitation' (xiii) echoes what Schopenhauer would see in terms of our having 'recognised that pain, as such, is essential to life, and inescapable... it might induce a considerable degree of stoical equanimity' (*WWI* IV §57, 201).

Whilst Schopenhauerian asceticism is clearly rejected in *Middlemarch*, thus rejecting his most pessimistic form of salvation, Eliot's novel marks a significant departure from Feuerbachian ideals towards a Schopenhauerian "humble ethics" and the small, individual acts that relieve the inevitable suffering in the world, the consciousness of this suffering itself giving rise to 'directly beneficent' (*Middlemarch* 48, 455) ethical behaviour. Eliot does not progress as far as Schopenhauer, who would emphatically deny *any* possibility of this contributing to a "growing good" or of 'diffusive' (Finale, 795) effects, the only effects being both immediate to the individuals involved, and momentary. Yet that Dorothea's 'incalculably diffusive' effects are '*on those around her*' (795, my emphasis) does limit such effects to a Schopenhauerian immediacy. Whilst Dorothea's journey and how she ends the novel recognise a Schopenhauerian delineation of the inevitability of suffering in the world, and the necessity for a human ethic which thus seeks to actively relieve suffering by transcending the egoistic 'partial good', that this is the '*least partial good*' (20, 197, my emphasis) always insists on the continued presence of partiality, of individuality, and thus of individual realisation. Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion resonate at the heart of Eliot's novel which insists on the value of each individual within the community, albeit rejecting any form of ascetic self-negation⁴¹. The modesty but immediacy of Schopenhauer's ethical premise is not only reflected in the basis of Dorothea's ethics being the consciousness of human suffering, but also in both the unhistoric and the accessible nature of these acts. Whilst claiming that, in the end, Dorothea 'fail[s]' (Miller 145) then, Miller's point that Fred Vincy 'is able to reduce his desire to the scale of what "reality" can actually satisfy' (145) is equally transferable to Dorothea, although this "reality" is very much a Schopenhauerian one. In Miller's own terms, whilst both Fred and Dorothea can

⁴¹ Or a 'martyrdom' (*Middlemarch* 1, 10) which renders the individual a utility to be sacrificed to the greater good: see Feuerbach (*Essence* XVIII, 171); and Chapter 2 (57-8) above.

be seen to be as successful and happy *as it is possible to be* in a world which recognises the contingencies of both external and internal realities, being the elements both within and without the individual which contribute to the realisation of their 'human lots' (*Middlemarch* 15, 137), it is clear that *Middlemarch* posits something more: that human transcendence and human despair can and should find their satisfaction in empathic and corporeal human relations, thus in a necessarily limited rather than 'illimitable' (Prelude, 7) form for the individual. For Schopenhauer, that 'real existence is only in the present', individual value, ethical behaviour and salvation become both positive and accessible, yet 'this present flees without hindrance into the past, constantly passing over into death' (*WWI* IV §57, 197, my emphasis). Because the will is endless:

all endeavour springs from deprivation – from discontent with one's condition – and is thus suffering as long as it is not satisfied; but no satisfaction is lasting, rather it is always merely the starting-point of a new striving... [which is always] frustrated in many ways, everywhere in conflict, and therefore we always see it as suffering. (IV §56, 195)

Thus, coupled with Dorothea's self-knowledge of suffering and the knowledge that all are manifestations of the same existential life, *and* that each individual phenomena is of value, the ethics of compassion are born and, perversely but fruitfully, the positive knowledge of suffering itself makes both the pessimistic consciousness and ethical behaviour *purposeful*. Feuerbach's 'undisturbed, uninterrupted feeling... for which there exists no limits, no opposite' (*Essence* App. §2, 283) remains a transitory moment, the baptismal moment of union between Dorothea and Will being one which momentarily 'escape[s] from the sense of limitation into uninterrupted feeling' (§3, 284). This is necessarily followed by existence in the world, thus such 'feelings are interrupted; they collapse; they are followed by a state of void; of insensibility' (§2, 283). In *Middlemarch*, however, this interruption is the ongoing reality of a more mundane but 'palpitating' (*Middlemarch* 80, 750) human existence, not a Feuerbachian 'void'. That 'illimitable satisfaction' (Prelude, 7, my emphasis) shimmers on in possibility and actuality in those 'incalculably diffusive' (Finale, 795) effects which may ripple outwards and onwards into the broader community, both spatially and teleologically, the individuals of which are therefore less unhappy than they might otherwise have been.

Whilst Eliot owes an undeniable debt to Feuerbach's revealing of the "true essence" of religious constructions of the positive aims of humanity as already in human beings in essential, individual, and communal terms, she moves away from his overtly optimistic delineations of the divinity of human essence, human relations, and human destiny into a significantly Schopenhauerian framework. Eliot's use of the alchemic element of light in *Middlemarch* is a doubled aspect, embodying both the animating and transcendent principles, the reality of the human individual and transcendent human realisation: the living, breathing and aspiring actuality of the individual human 'soul' (48, 458). Eliot's novel balances both living matter and transcendent spirit, despair and rapture, individual and community, brought together into the human individual who thus forms the basis of ethics and salvation, indeed individual self-realisation and communal human relations can only be effected on these terms. *Middlemarch* identifies and refuses the problematic aspects of Feuerbachian transcendence which ignores, absorbs, and effectively invalidates the individual. Casaubon's denial of life echoes Schopenhauer's condemnation of 'theoretical egoism, which... holds all phenomena, excepting its own individual self to be phantoms, exactly as practical egoism does in respect of practical matters – a man regards and treats only his own person as a real person, and all others as mere phantoms' (*WWI* II §19, 37) rather than material reality, affirming her or his own egoistic will to the extent that 'the same will manifest in another individual' (IV §62, 212) is denied. Eliot clearly argues the necessity of grounding both philosophical theory and practice in the living human, recognising the implications for Feuerbach's own vision of salvation that without our 'fellow-man... the world would be... not only dead and empty, but meaningless' (*Essence* VIII, 82). In using the alchemic elements to symbolically represent the central characters and relationships in *Middlemarch*, particularly Dorothea's relationships with Casaubon and Will, Eliot's novel emphasises that without the principle of existential human life at its core the other necessary elements of life remain without meaning, either transcendent or corporeal, theoretical or practical. Ignoring this principle leads to the real danger of remaining polarised in self-despair, as shown most disturbingly with Casaubon essentially trapping not only himself but Dorothea in his barren existence of fruitless researches amongst the

relics of the dead. This pessimism is paralleled in Lydgate's fate, its juxtaposition with Dorothea's escape from Casaubon and positive future with Will showing that certain relationships remain not only meaningless but *essentially destructive*⁴².

Whilst Dorothea's relationship with Will appears to provide the personal empathy, practical direction and activity they both need, on one level her relationship with Will appears to merely shift her subservience from trying to aid one man's great ideal to another's, thus still sacrificing herself albeit this time to the "right" course. It is clear, however, that their relationship is a mutual union not an assimilation, Dorothea "grounding" Will's floating inclinations into the necessary focus of living, breathing human life and a corporeal aim, his reaction to her propelling him into the determination to 'work my own way' (*Middlemarch* 22, 216). At the same time, Will values and acts upon Dorothea's opinion, his eventual work towards Reform echoing her own desires to actively relieve the miserable conditions affecting the community around them. The suggestion at the beginning of the novel that Dorothea might finally become a 'foundress of nothing ... [whose] loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness tremble off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some long-recognisable deed' (Prelude, 8) proposes that she may not achieve or effect the salvation she craves. That Dorothea has had a significant (if not lauded) impact on ordinary human lives (Finale, 795) questions the extent to which her influence can be argued to have been completely 'dispersed', however, and focuses on how the 'long-recognisable deed' (Prelude, 8) is itself interpreted. Eliot bases this in the 'unhistoric' (Finale, 795) nature of ordinary human lives, even if those equally unremarked lives do not know to whom they are indebted

⁴² Dorothea is set in juxtaposition with Lydgate in the Finale. Lydgate not only 'always regarded himself as a failure [as] he had not done what he once meant to do' (*Middlemarch* Finale, 791) but is conscious that he has been effectively 'murdered' (792) by Rosamond. Lydgate's failure is not a mirror of Dorothea's final dissipation as she escapes her own 'doom' (48, 460) that her relationship with Casaubon effected, thus emphasising Dorothea's own escape from a similar fate. Whatever their future hardships, Dorothea's and Will's mutual *I-thou* relationship ensures they will not suffer this polarised despair. Mutually sympathetic human relationships are necessary to endure whatever webs entangle 'certain human lots' (15, 137), and thus how that ever-present sense of self-failure is perceived determines whether the 'rapturous consciousness of life beyond self' (Prelude, 7) is ever realised. Dorothea's association with Lydgate and Rosamond does have some positive affects on Lydgate's lot and his relationship with Rosamond, yet this alone is insufficient to remedy Lydgate and Rosamond's *essential* incompatibility, marking a literally hopeless relationship which echoes Dorothea's and Casaubon's. Lydgate's fate is the perpetual despair of loneliness as Rosamond is unable to develop the spark of true *I-thou* relations and as such, both Lydgate and Casaubon are only relieved of their self-despair by death.

for any relief from their suffering. Theocritus' focus is on transient human lives given meaning through the immortalising elevation of the minstrel's song. Eliot shifts this song into Dorothea herself, who is personally forgotten rather than immortalised as it is the 'diffusive' effects she has on the world around her that continue to exist rather than Dorothea personally, who, once she has 'lived faithfully a hidden life', rests 'in [an] unvisited tomb[]' (795). Placing Dorothea's "end" as merely 'the negative image of a successful transcendence' (Miller 145) ignores what it actually is Dorothea has been seeking and has achieved. She was seeking the balanced mid-point between despair and transcendence, and this becomes the necessary condition of her own realisation, providing the only form in and through which human salvation and positive *I-thou* relations can be attained. Transcendence is only half the story, and is clearly a position which must simultaneously hold on to the fully human, recognise the equal presence of despair and thus truly ethical *I-thou* human relations which value *both I and thou*, *Middlemarch* countering those paths which perpetuate the elision of living, breathing human beings or the absorption of the individual. By the end of the novel Dorothea has attained that point of reconciliation between polarised despair and transcendence, and thus realises the path to salvation in more than purely personal terms, bringing not only reconciliation to the individual but identifying the path to ethical *I-thou* relations, albeit only in immediately Schopenhauerian terms.

For Miller, the novel's solution ensures the 'problem... remains unsolved' (149), yet *Middlemarch* places both the problem and its means of address in Dorothea's quest for the reconciliation between polarity. Both the question and its potential for resolution are raised in Feuerbachian terms and addressed from a Schopenhauerian perspective. *Middlemarch* does not present a neat solution, but insists on the necessity of keeping a Schopenhauerian reality of human despair and the realisation of the existential individual always in view as the necessary basis of approach to the question. For Dorothea 'all that dirt and coarse ugliness like a pain within [her]' leads to the ethical challenge 'to alter the evils which lie under our own hands' (*Middlemarch* 39, 374). For Eliot it is human consciousness that effects this transition, but in fundamentally Schopenhauerian terms as 'pain must enter into its glorified life of memory before it can turn into compassion' (78, 741). This itself is rendered in pessimistic terms as the ability

to transform from despair into sympathy is precluded from many characters in essential terms, and if pain remains estranged from compassion, it leaves the sufferer 'tottering in the midst [of a world in ruins] as a lonely bewildered consciousness' (742). Casaubon is left in polarised despair and thus 'never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self' (29, 271), a very bleak and pessimistic vision. It seems that even the "perfect" Feuerbachian union between Dorothea and Will is one that can only occur through a rare and unique meeting of *complementary* elements which must keep the significance of that 'involuntary, palpitating life' (80, 750) clearly in view. This ethical position offers the only means of salvation, and forms a vision of salvation which retains individual realisation as a necessary *condition* of communal realisation. Indeed, salvation itself becomes nothing more nor less than this very awareness, this balanced mid-point between the equal consciousness of 'self-despair' and 'life beyond self' (Prelude, 7). This is the only route through which both individual realisation and broader community needs can be attained on any level, and even here only in a humble but immediate manner which may at the very least pass unnoticed, or even fail. Eliot moves away from Feuerbach's premise of *inevitable* teleological progress, through which the human condition will necessarily improve, by insisting on the perpetual presence of suffering, and the humble path to salvation. In moving into Schopenhauerian pessimism, Eliot stops short of Schopenhauer's refusal of *any* teleological improvement by suggesting that individual acts may have 'diffusive' effects on 'the growing good in the world' (795) (subject to essential character), a spark of teleological and broader spatial hope Schopenhauer refuses.

The Feuerbachian moment of 'infinite joy' (*Essence* I, 6) in Dorothea's and Will's elemental union of perfect human essences is recognised as a necessarily finite moment rather than infinite, followed as it is by the knowledge of the 'hindrances' (*Middlemarch* Prelude, 8) that come after, and coupled as it is with the insistence that the consciousness of self-despair for each finite individual remains the insistent basis as well as equal part of salvation. Dorothea's ongoing 'feeling that there was always something better which she might have done, if she had only been better and known better' (Finale, 792) recognises that the Feuerbachian perfect self is endlessly receding into an unattainable future. Dorothea's and Will's union refuses the absolute optimism Feuerbach places in

this fusion of the individual with species-essence, *Middlemarch* recognising the pessimism inherent in the negation of the individual this appears to entail. Dorothea does continue to exist, albeit “diffusely”, and crucially, in a ‘new real future’ (20, 189) informed by a Schopenhauerian pessimistic consciousness.

Chapter 6

Thomas Hardy:

Pessimism, Optimism, and Dissimulation.

Thomas Hardy appears most likely to have come into contact with Schopenhauer through secondary sources first of all, and read Schopenhauer directly between the 1880s and early 90s, some years before the publication of *Jude the Obscure* between 1894 and 1896¹. A selection of Schopenhauer's writings were translated and published from 1880², and *The World as Will and Idea* was first translated into English in 1883. According to Deborah Collins, Hardy read *The World as Will and Idea* 'in the late 1880s' (61), although she does not show her sources for this³. Carl Weber discusses only the *Fourfold Root*, which he claims Hardy purchased within 1 year of its publication in 1889 (219), suggesting that the extensive notes Hardy made in it show that it 'kept his mind and eye riveted' (221). According to Lennart Björk, Hardy's *Literary Notebooks* show he 'may first have approached Schopenhauer through secondary sources before he read

¹ *Jude the Obscure* was initially serialised in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* from December 1894 to May 1895: Vol. 90, New York: Harper & Bros., 1895. The first instalment was entitled "The Simpletons", subsequent instalments "Hearts Insurgent", finally published in novel form as *Jude the Obscure* in 1896.

² The translations of Schopenhauer available in English during the 19th century are as follows (source: COPAC, see Bibliography):

Beethoven: With a Supplement from the Philosophical Works by Arthur Schopenhauer (1880) by Richard Wagner [includes "On visions and matters connected therewith" (1851) & "On the metaphysics of music" (1818)]. tr. Edward Dannreuther. London: Reeves, 1880.

Religion: A Dialogue, and Other Essays by Arthur Schopenhauer, selected and translated (from *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851)) by T. B. Saunders. London: S. Sonnenschein & Co, 1889.

Select Essays. tr. G. Droppers and C.A.P. Dachsels. Milwaukee: Sentinel Co, 1881.

Studies in Pessimism: A Series of Essays by Arthur Schopenhauer, selected and translated by T. Bailey Saunders. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, [1872?]; 1891; 1892.

The Complete Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer trans T. Bailey Saunders. New York: Willey, 1896.

The World as Will and Idea (1819) tr. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3 Volumes, London: Trübner/Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1883-1886; 1891.

Two Essays: On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason; On The Will in Nature.

Tr. Mme Karl Hillebrand. London: Bohn's Philosophical Library/G. Bell & Sons, 1889.

³ Walter Wright suggests that Hardy's copy of *WWI* could have been either the 1883 or the 1896 edition (39).

Studies in Pessimism in May 1891' (LN v2. 28-31). Björk notes elsewhere that Hardy also owned *The World as Will and Idea* and *Two Essays: The Fourfold Root, and On the Will in Nature* (Oxford 388). Walter Wright dates Hardy's copy of *Two Essays* as the 1889 edition (40).

Björk finds that 'there are surprisingly few direct allusions' to Schopenhauer 'in Hardy's writing' (LN v1. 374) given the critical interest in this area. Hardy mentions Schopenhauer a number of times from 1881 onwards as well as noting a couple of extracts from Eduard von Hartmann⁴. Two of the secondary references to Schopenhauer in Hardy's *Notebooks* are particularly significant, however, as they suggest a fairly comprehensive exposure to Schopenhauer. The first is an extract from Théodule Ribot's *La Philosophie de Schopenhauer*, noted in 1886 or 7 in the original French. This describes Schopenhauer's Will or "Force" as the basis of all manifestations of life in substance and essence, as the reality of all existence, and the basis of knowledge, consciousness and suffering. It also includes a section about the tragedies of love, suffered for so little reward (Hardy LN v1, entry1436, 182-3). The second is at least as pertinent as in early 1886 Hardy notes extracts from James Sully's substantial work *Pessimism: A History and a Criticism* (e1367-68, 170). This work is a critical discussion (in English) which includes fairly comprehensive discussions and comparisons of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, including a discussion of Schopenhauer's ethical 'virtue' (Sully 100-1), albeit Sully views both philosophers largely negatively (82-105). It seems evident from Hardy's own *Notebooks* then, that his secondary associations with Schopenhauer's thinking are fairly comprehensive by 1886, and by May 1891 at the latest Hardy is reading Schopenhauer directly, making notes from Schopenhauer's essays published as *Studies in Pessimism* (LN v2, e1782-1800, 28-31). As such, the 'few direct allusions' (Björk LN v1. 374) to Schopenhauer in Hardy's *Notebooks* may be less surprising if Hardy has access to substantial bodies of work including Sully, and by 1891 at the latest Schopenhauer directly.

⁴ For Hardy's direct references to Schopenhauer, see *Literary Notebooks* vol. 1 (entry 1232, 141; e1367-8, 170; e1436, 182-3; e1529, 203; e1630, 219). Hardy's references to Eduard von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious* are in v1 (e1443-4, 185): see also Chapter 3 (76) above for discussion of von Hartmann.

As well as Hardy's well-known determination to ensure a particular version of himself is left to posterity⁵, he is often contradictory in respect of certain works which may have influenced him, as Robert Schweik (68) and Björk (*Oxford* 388) also note⁶. Weber argues that 'one must be all the more cautious in attempting to draw conclusions' (220) in the light of the number of erroneous claims made by critics on very little evidence. Whilst Weber claims that Hardy reads *Fourfold Root* in 1889, at least five years before *Jude the Obscure* is published, Weber ignores *Jude* in his own discussion, concentrating - like a number of critics - almost entirely on *The Dynasts*⁷. Unlike his fellow critics, however, Weber ignores von Hartmann here in seeing *The Dynasts*' emergent Consciousness as purely Schopenhauerian (224), whereas more recent critical assessments of Hardy recognise the influence of von Hartmann on this particular work⁸. Schopenhauer emphatically refuses any idea of teleological progressive development, whether individual or evolutionary, and thus *The Dynasts* offers more useful relationships with von Hartmann than Schopenhauer on this level at least, albeit inverted into a more positive Consciousness than that espoused by von Hartmann. Björk shows that in 1908 Hardy 'claimed... the Will in *The Dynasts* is "regarded as becoming conscious; & it teaches other evolutionary doctrines that have grown up since Schopenhauer's time"⁹, a view that also 'makes him "hope" in the following year that his own philosophy is "much more modern than Schopenhauer"' (Björk *Oxford* 388). Whilst Hardy lists Schopenhauer among pessimistic philosophers 'who have my respect' (*Personal* 58) as late as 1922, Björk argues that from 1907 Hardy begins distancing himself from Schopenhauer, and by 1924 'downgrades Schopenhauer's importance' (Björk *Oxford* 388)¹⁰. This does not mean that Hardy's later comments necessarily show an accurate assessment of his earlier reactions to Schopenhauer's philosophy, nor do Hardy's fluctuating emphases and assertions refute the potential influence that Schopenhauerian thinking may have had on

⁵ Hardy destroying papers, which included 'most of his personal notebooks and diaries' (Björk *LN* xxxi), and penning his own Biography, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, to be published by Florence Hardy after his death.

⁶ See also Michael Millgate *Biography* (199).

⁷ See Deborah Collins (57-8), Helen Garwood (77), Ralph Goodale (253) and Robert Schweik (68).

⁸ See especially Walter F. Wright and Deborah Collins.

⁹ As Deborah Collins also notes (60-2).

¹⁰ See also Hardy *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings* (58), and *Hardy Letters* (vol.6, 259).

Jude, written a decade earlier than this ‘sensitivity to remarks about his “pessimism”’ (Orel 58) appears to escalate. Even had Hardy been absolutely clear about the extent of Schopenhauer’s influence on any of his works, the specific nature of that relationship still remains to be examined. Considering Hardy’s gradual attempts to distance himself from Schopenhauer between 1907 and 1924, it seems a reasonable assumption that he will have been reading *The World as Will and Idea* some years before this period, and reasonable to assume this will have been at around the time he has left the clearest evidence of his active interest in Schopenhauer, therefore most likely between 1881 and 1891 when he is reading his other primary Schopenhauer texts.

Whilst Schopenhauer is frequently mentioned in critical appraisals of Hardy for much of the past century, this has largely been in relation to the most deeply pessimistic aspects of Schopenhauer’s philosophical position, rarely addressing the nuances of Schopenhauer’s philosophy nor how Hardy appears to engage with these – whether positively or negatively. The question of whether Hardy was influenced ‘beyond the level of... popular summaries’ (Schweik 69) of Schopenhauer’s philosophy is an important one, not least because, as this thesis shows, the critic interpreting the extent of this influence is often prone to similar such generalisations. Most critics rarely unpack Schopenhauer beyond the popular themes of Will as blind purposelessness, and self-renunciation as the only route to salvation, and frequently equate the denial of the egoistic will-to-life with negating the will-to-live, thus to be advocating suicide or self-destruction in some form. Schopenhauer’s ethical position involves the denial of what would more accurately be termed the selfish egoistic Will in order to effect the relief of suffering *in life*, rather than a ‘renunciation of life’ (Schweik 69) altogether. Chapter 7 will examine the extent to which Hardy’s novel engages with Schopenhauerian philosophy in specific terms, including how issues of character and ethics are delineated, and how the idea of renunciation is itself determined.

Helen Garwood discusses Hardy and Schopenhauer, although the latter is unpacked in somewhat superficial terms, leaving the “illustration” to be presumed from the issues raised in a more general sense. Garwood discusses the irony of chance in Hardy’s novels and how ““brute chance” runs riot’ (60),

arguing that 'fortunate chances, the saving encounters are never [his] theme', such one-sidedness 'mak[ing] it untrue to life as a whole' (61)¹¹. Ralph Goodale's judgement is that '[a]s Hardy had read from both' Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, 'he could not himself have told to what extent he was indebted to either' (253), although Goodale does not examine the fundamental differences between them nor to what extent either evidence themselves in Hardy's works in specific terms. Goodale does point out that Hardy was writing about 'the cruelty of Nature in verse composed in 1866', seeing this as 'too early for probable influence from Schopenhauer' and relating Hardy's influences here 'to the disclosures of modern science' (253). Other influences are important considerations but nonetheless do not exclude Schopenhauer's influence on these issues in later decades. Walter Wright argues that 'Hardy was rather well acquainted with Schopenhauer's theories before he turned to the modification of them by Hartmann' (39). Wright also points out that, in 1893, Hardy finds the suggestion that a 'spiritual society' is 'slowly climbing' to ascendancy over a pessimism which 'has had its day' a 'comforting but false' (Hardy, quoted Wright 42) idea¹². Robert Schweik's discussion of Hardy and Schopenhauer is also invariably interlinked with von Hartmann, suggesting that the influence of both leads to Hardy's 'interest in more abstract questions about the nature of what fundamental force or forces might underlie the universe' as these concern Hardy more than a Feuerbachian and Comtean 'repudiation of religious belief' and provision of 'an alternative to Christian ethics and values' (68). The issue of Feuerbachian influence will be addressed shortly, but in respect of Schopenhauer, Schweik finds Hardy's 'unsystematic and generalized "impressions"... no doubt

¹¹ Interestingly, Garwood states that Hardy's response to her query about the influence of Schopenhauer *confirms* that his philosophy is 'a development from Schopenhauer through later philosophers', thus Garwood argues that '[i]nfluence is too strong and definite a word for the result attained, sympathy comes nearer to it' (11). Garwood's interpretation of Hardy's reply is queried by Carl Weber, however, who suggests that Hardy's reply to Garwood actually states that his works 'show harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Hume, Mill, and others, *all of whom I used to read more than Schopenhauer*' (Hardy c1911, quoted Weber 220, my emphasis), thus Hardy's letter to Garwood reflecting his post-1907 distancing of himself from Schopenhauer.

¹² See Hardy *LN* (v2, e1908, 55). This note by Hardy also quotes the *Contemporary Review*'s comment that 'in philosophy Schopenhauer has given place to Hegel – the hope of cosmic suicide to the thought of' this 'spiritual society' (55), so whether Hardy would agree with the *Review*'s idea that it is Schopenhauer rather than von Hartmann who is associated with 'cosmic suicide' or sees that as equally 'false' is an interesting question, which again can only be addressed by analysing how potential influences manifest themselves in his works.

in part influenced by the writings of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann' (68)¹³. Schweik also recognises an eclecticism in Hardy, who ties the 'central ideas' of both philosophers to 'such concepts as Herbert Spencer's suggestion that there may be no 'ultimate comprehension in the universe and John Stuart Mill's observation that consciousness may arise from unconscious causes' (68). Nonetheless, despite von Hartmann's divergence from Schopenhauer in fundamental respects, not least in his philosophical endpoint, Schweik concentrates predominantly on the "philosophy of life" underlying *The Dynasts* in his discussion, and at times implicitly joins those critics who see in this work an over-arching Hardyean philosophy (68)¹⁴.

Hardy's changes of opinion and emphasis permeate his writings, particularly his (auto)biography *Life* where he tries to preclude the "uncontrollable" would-be biographies¹⁵. In 1907 for instance, over a decade after *Jude* is published, Hardy claims that in *The Dynasts* he uses a 'philosophy of life' which is 'a generalized form of what the thinking world had gradually come to adopt, myself included', that 'the Unconscious Will of the Universe is gradually becoming aware of Itself... and ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic' (*Life* 334-5). This suggests a "positive" Hegelian *contra* a pessimistic von Hartmann evolutionary Consciousness, although Hardy also claims it is his 'own idea solely' (335). By December 1914, however, Hardy 'would probably not have ended *The Dynasts* as he did... if he could have foreseen what was going to happen within a few years' (368) with the outbreak of war. Many years earlier, in 1888, Hardy suggests an unconscious, static Schopenhauerian universe in noting that 'He, she, was ashamed and sorry; but not as the Prime Cause would be ashamed and sorry if it knew' (215). The following year Hardy notes the 'woeful fact' that 'the human race is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions, the nerves being evolved to an activity abnormal in such an environment' (218), more suggestive of a Darwinian negativity as well as a pessimistic interpretation of Schopenhauer's human

¹³ Patricia Ingham similarly argues that Hardy uses Schopenhauer and von Hartmann 'to present a more logical explanation for life's cruelty' but finds that Hardy evidences 'no final commitment to any of these ideas' (207).

¹⁴ Including Garwood (77), Collins (57-8), Weber (224), Goodale (253), and see Walter Wright.

¹⁵ See Björk *Literary Notebooks* (xxxix).

consciousness such as Sully recognises (Sully 94). In 1890, however, Hardy makes an observation which is deeply resonant of Schopenhauerian ethics, noting that 'Altruism... will ultimately be brought about... by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they were part of one body... members of one corporeal frame' (*Life* 224). This suggests that Hardy has by now moved from Sully's less nuanced interpretations into a direct engagement with Schopenhauer. There are also numerous examples where Hardy moves away from a focus on "essential laws" altogether. In 1893, a year before Jude first puts in an appearance in *Harper's Magazine*, there are two such instances on one page alone. The first is a report of a conversation about 'the marriage laws', involving such issues as 'the difficulties of separation' and 'the nervous strain of living with' someone 'you know... can throw you over at any moment' (258). The second is Hardy's letter to the editors of Parisian newspaper *L'Ermitage*, in which he wrote:

I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living. To this end I would have society divided into groups of temperaments, with a different code of observances for each group. (258)

These latter points show that Hardy speculates as much about sociological issues as "universal" ones, and it is evident that Hardy's opinions and emphases fluctuate across issues and time in his personal writings as well as his fiction. *Jude the Obscure's* relationship with both essential Nature and society forms the key focus of the analysis in Chapter 7, and will be shown to raise equally ambiguous questions about Jude's journey through life, but which nonetheless create a dynamic framework within which to approach potential answers. Hardy's conflicting and ambiguous opinions will be shown to relate directly to his recognition and prioritisation of the 'individual spontaneity' (258) he foregrounds in his letter to *L'Ermitage*. On the last day of 1901 Hardy urges that 'every man' should 'make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience. He will not be able to escape using terms and phraseology from earlier philosophers, but let him avoid adopting their theories if he values his own mental life' (310, original emphasis). The day after he notes his 'every man... philosophy' (310), Hardy states that 'pessimism... is the only view of life in

which you will never be disappointed' (311), suggesting that his 'every man' philosophy is nonetheless a predominantly pessimistic one.

Whilst critics do recognise the eclecticism of Hardy's influences¹⁶, his eclecticism of viewpoints is at least as pertinent. Björk finds that Hardy has 'ambiguous feelings' in a number of areas, including sociological philosophy where Hardy disagrees with Comte's belief 'that the social feeling is as strong as selfish aspirations' as Hardy 'did not... believe that any significant growth of altruistic feelings had taken place' ("Reading" 109). Björk also suggests that Hardy is 'not likely to have sympathized whole-heartedly with the more pronounced anti-individualistic tendencies of Comte's social psychology' (109). Hardy's prioritisation of the individual, and the question of social feeling in both individual and community relations, will be shown to be central to the analysis of *Jude*, a novel which itself evidences apparent contradictions, not least in bringing both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian delineations of the world into prominence.

The quest to examine the less pessimistic – even potentially optimistic – elements in Hardy's work began at least as early as the decade following the publication of *Jude*. Ernest Bates' 1905 essay argues that Hardy's 'religious pessimism' arises from the 'deepest misery... forced upon him by the... lack of justice in the soulless Order of Things' absolute[] carelessness of human happiness' (473), yet still finds that his novels attest to an 'heroic optimism' (469). Whilst Bates' argument implicitly recognises Schopenhauerian perspectives here, he also frames the optimism he sees overlying this pessimistic world in terms of the 'honor and purity... found based firm as eternal nature in the very character of humanity' (471) where 'the law of cause and effect render[s] possible all ethical activity' (477). Bates does not discuss the specifics of this, however, let alone its Feuerbachian overtones, only emphasising that 'the world for Hardy is not a world where *permanent* happiness and tranquillity are generally attainable' as 'Misery is all about us, and increase of love inevitably brings increase of suffering' (484, my emphasis). Again an un-named

¹⁶ See Björk *Literary Notebooks* v2 (xxviii) and "Hardy's Reading" (103, 107-8, 112-13), Schweik (68), Geoffrey Harvey (26) and Ingham (69).

Schopenhauer haunts Bates' argument, although the results of 'a worthy humanity, true to itself, unconquered by destiny, sanctified by love' (484) again echoes a Feuerbachian ethos. Whilst Bates does not examine how these issues operate, *Jude* refuses the noble sanctity of 'heroic optimism' (469), as Chapter 7 will argue, yet the novel does raise the issues of ethics and 'eternal nature in the very character of humanity' (Bates 471) in specifically Feuerbachian terms. Hardy's direct contact with Feuerbach is less easily definable than with Schopenhauer, being mentioned but rarely in Hardy's personal writings. As Walter Wright argues, however, Hardy probably read 'most of the major philosophers' either 'in the original' or 'in paraphrases and commentaries' despite his autobiography and notebooks 'provid[ing] only fragmentary evidence' (28). Feuerbachian ideas were also fairly widespread amongst literary circles by the time Hardy's writing career is underway¹⁷. In 1902 Hardy includes Feuerbach in an extract in which the antithesis between Hegel, for whom 'Man is the product of God', is opposed by the anti-Hegelian materialism of Feuerbach's 'God is the product of Man' (*LN* v2. e2274, 166), and there are numerous entries which engage with Feuerbachian issues. These include the recognition (and often lament with Hardy) of a 'hollowness' in the Church which 'is in no true sense a real part of ourselves', having distanced itself from 'all that seething multitude of men & women' so that no 'thought or feeling... habit or ceremony' was left untouched, leaving us 'worship[ping]' only 'the immediate' (*LN* v1. e1316, 156-7). Hardy also makes a number of references in his *Literary Notebooks* to other thinkers who engage with Feuerbachian issues to a greater or lesser extent, including William Clifford, thus the specific sources of Feuerbachian influences are quite difficult to determine.

Clifford recognises society in exalted but also political Feuerbachian terms, seeing it as 'the highest of all organisms' where "'actions which, as individual, are insignificant, are massed together into... important movements. Co-operation... is the life of [society]'" (quoted Mallock *Living* 37). Further, it is co-operation (or 'band-work') that has created 'two specially human faculties, the conscience and the intellect', the former of which 'gives us the desire for the

¹⁷ See Chapter 3 above.

good, and the latter instructs us how to attain this desire by action' (ibid). Whilst Clifford views 'Belief' as a 'Sacred faculty' which 'is ours not for ourselves but for humanity' (*Ethics* 3), his emphasis is on its social applications. Hardy's references to Clifford in the *Notebooks* are often concerned with Clifford's arguments about consciousness in Nature, which Hardy has noted close to references to von Hartmann and Hegel as well as Feuerbach. Hardy's own response in 1892 to the view 'that... a man's consciousness may be said to pervade the world' is that 'nothing is gained' as '[e]ach is, to all knowledge, limited to his own frame', Hardy unable to 'find the link... of one form of consciousness with another' (*LN* v1. n1215, 371). At this point in time, then, Hardy's concern is with the practical, the achievable, rather than the transcendent evolutionary consciousness he later becomes interested in for *The Dynasts*. Hardy's reading is equally eclectic even within similar theoretical areas, including a number of broadly Positivist thinkers who themselves had differences of opinion and emphasis, including James Cotter Morison and Frederic Harrison who both make appearances in Hardy's *Literary Notebooks*, although Morison less frequently¹⁸. Morison identifies the focus of Christianity as 'an anthropomorphic deity' which is 'an infinitely glorified and exalted man' (43), recognising on a political level the damage that Christianity has caused to human aims (241). Morison is far more concerned with issues of social rather than personal transformation, and in more scientific terms, although he does tend towards a more negative view of human nature than Feuerbach. Harrison also appreciates that Christianity engendered a "*pessimism as to the essential dignity of man*"¹⁹, and urges a Positivist vision that recognises the necessity for practical and effective improvements to human well-being. Harrison terms 'Religion... the combination of beliefs & emotions which train [man] to live the best life in the completest way' (quoted Hardy *LN* v2, e1650, 4). Björk notes Hardy's long-lasting and close friendship with Harrison, their letters 'suggesting a harmony of attitudes and taste in various areas' including 'political and social events' and 'the Positive view of the Universe', but also notes their friendship ended in 1919 'when Harrison criticised the pessimism of Hardy's *Moments of Vision*' (*Oxford*

¹⁸ See Chapter 3 above for discussion of J. S. Mill, Clifford and Morison, amongst others.

¹⁹ Harrison quoted Mallock (*Living* 17, original emphasis).

183). To the last then, Hardy's 'every man... philosophy' (*Life* 310) may be exposed to a broad range of potential influences but nonetheless pursues its own direction.

Few critics recognise a direct relationship between Hardy and Feuerbach, but Schweik is one of those exceptions²⁰. Schweik notes eight of what he terms Hardy's most predominantly influential philosophical thinkers, four generally influential and four where it is 'possible to identify [the effects] with somewhat greater specificity' (66), these latter four including both Schopenhauer (68-70) and Feuerbach (66-8). Schweik notes that 'Feuerbach's idea that the Christian god is the product of man's need to imagine perfection was twice summarized by Hardy in the phrase "God is the product of man": once in a notebook and again in a letter to Edward Clodd' (Schweik 66)²¹. Schweik mentions Feuerbach's potential influence in *The Return of the Native*²², and that there are indications in some of Hardy's poetry in the human creation of god (66). Schweik does not discuss the potential influence of Feuerbach on Hardy beyond the general terms of "Man maketh God", however, nor unpack Feuerbachian issues in relation to Hardy's work in specific terms. Schweik discusses Comte and Positivism in much more depth than Feuerbach, including Hardy's own exposure to Comte, although does not examine the overlap between the Comtean ideas he discusses here and Feuerbach's own philosophy (such as altruism and the humanist adoption of the Christian love-thy-neighbour ethic). Schweik does point out that Hardy's response to Comte is 'qualified', and recognises that he particularly criticises 'the Positivists' optimistic view of human progress' (67)²³. The relationship between optimism and pessimism in Hardy's work is little-explored, most critics concerned only with pessimism on the whole, and frequently in "essentialist" terms, whether relating to the external order of nature or an internal failure of character. There is little assessment of the potential Feuerbachian influences on *Jude* on any level, let alone how the 'tragic machinery of the tale' (Hardy *Jude* Postscript viii) might be delineated in Feuerbachian terms. Whilst

²⁰ See also Deborah Collins (24), and discussion of Collins and potential optimism in Hardy below.

²¹ See Hardy *Literary Notebooks* (v2 e2274, 166), and Hardy *Letters* (v3, 244).

²² - in the narrator's comment 'that humans always make a "generous endeavour to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a first cause" (*Return* VI.i, 387 cited Schweik 66).

²³ See also Hardy *Personal* (126-7).

Collins predominantly focuses on Schopenhauer, she does ‘perfunctorily acknowledge’ that the ‘pessimism’ in Schopenhauer’s ‘philosophy of the evil and essentially worthless nature of life... was only one aspect of his complex theory’ (62), although does not go on to examine the other aspects herself. Collins mentions but does not elucidate ‘Schopenhauer’s reserved optimism’, mentioned rather intriguingly in terms of it *not being that* ‘which attracted Hardy to [Schopenhauer’s] ideas’ (62). How Collins can know that Hardy was *not* influenced by ‘Schopenhauer’s reserved optimism’ is not clarified, however, any more than what this reserved optimism might be. Whilst Collins does occasionally mention Feuerbach, arguing in similar terms to Schweik that Hardy ‘agreed in principle’ with ‘Feuerbach’s message that “Man has his highest being, his God, in himself”²⁴, she believes Hardy ‘approached it more cautiously’ than George Eliot ‘in practice’ (24). Chapter 7 will argue that, in Hardy’s ethical delineations in particular, *Jude* engages with both Schopenhauer and Feuerbach to create a specific framework in the novel which evidences what might be termed Hardy’s own contingent pessimism rather than ‘reserved optimism’ (Collins 62) as such.

Collins makes the arguable claim that ‘Hardy recognised more astutely than any other Victorian novelist that all endings are fictions because however alluring resolution may seem, the “spinner’s wheel onfleeing” continually unravels change upon change in pursuit of variation and impermanence’ (147). That Hardy can be seen to be more astute than others here is clearly questionable in terms of a number of other authors, not least George Eliot as this thesis shows, Eliot engaging with the impermanence and fictitious nature of endings in the final stages of *Middlemarch*. This way of thinking about Hardy does, however, relate well to his refusal to adopt a single unifying theory or philosophical approach. Hardy’s final book of poems, *Winter Words*, has in its introductory remarks the statement that ‘no harmonious philosophy is attempted in these pages – or in any bygone pages of mine, for that matter’ (Hardy *Winter* vi). Despite this, Collins argues that the final poem in the collection, “He Resolves to Say No More”, itself represents a form of unification in denoting ‘Hardy’s final

²⁴ Collins quoting Feuerbach *Essence* (App. §I, 281).

articulation', a final and *deliberate* 'silence' (Collins 154) which shows that Hardy is finally 'ready to "hush this dinning gear" and to escape the polyphonic clattering of voices he has sent into articulation over the past sixty years' (152). Here Collins ignores her own points which show that Hardy *frequently* engages with the idea of "the final end" in his poetry, and wonders whether some of his later works might be his last (147). Whilst Collins makes some interesting points regarding the relationship between Hardy and Schopenhauerian thinking in particular, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, here she denies Hardy's poetic voice its artistic integrity. In showing a Hardy figure resigned to death, Collins ignores the possibility that he may well have continued to write after completing this particular poem. Florence Hardy 'denied that the poem should be regarded as [Hardy's] final statement' and 'insisted that he had in fact experienced a great outburst of creativity late in 1927 and felt that he could almost have gone on writing indefinitely' (Millgate *Biography* 528). Norman Page warns against reading Hardy's works beyond the 'poetic deception' of the 'pseudo-autobiographical fragment', the 'mendacious "I"', as 'we ought always to bear in mind that the impulse of self-expression and self-revelation is constantly overlaid by the urge to make a formally satisfying "contraption"' (*Thomas Hardy* 182-3). As such, even if Hardy specifically intended this poem to be his last *published*, and therefore to be read as though his final word - from his deathbed so to speak - it is a particularly Hardyean aesthetic, providing a closing chapter which explicitly refuses to allow any critical attempts to 'gather what I hide!' (Hardy "Resolves" 184).

Laurence Lerner argues that the little objective "evidence" that remains after Hardy's meticulous preservation of his privacy gives us little insight into Hardy's 'process of composition', and even 'less about Hardy's philosophy of life than the "official" [Hardy ghost-written] biography already has' (80). This is an important point when considering the influences of philosophical and other contemporary thought on Hardy's writing. At the same time, Lerner critiques attempts which end in 'arbitrariness as an aesthetic criterion' (83), and this is equally pertinent. Schweik points out that, as many of Hardy's potential influences often overlap with one another, 'identification of how they affected Hardy's work must sometimes be no more than a tentative pointing to diverse

and complex sets of possible sources whose precise influence cannot be determined' (54). Hardy's scepticism and hesitancy 'to embrace wholeheartedly any of the various systems of ideas current in his day', and the use of such tending to be 'unsystematic and inconsistent "impressions"', also ensures that 'elements of contemporary thought in Hardy's works tend to be embedded in a densely intricate web of imaginative connections and qualifications' (Schweik 54). At the same time, it is of course possible to analyse Hardy's literary writings and ascertain which issues are of concern to him in particular works, and how he engages with them. It is clear that Hardy's influences are diverse and eclectic, as indeed are Eliot's, but where Eliot increasingly recognises the tenuousness and failings of any holistic view of the future (hence the tremulousness of the optimism in the ethical salvation in *Middlemarch*), Hardy deliberately avoids an holistic view, weaving a complex and fluctuating series of world-views within an over-arching cynicism in *Jude the Obscure* through which the central protagonists Jude and Sue try to negotiate their way. Nonetheless, as Chapter 7 will argue, *Jude* does evidence a dynamic yet consistent framework in which both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian perspectives play a central role. It is clear that Hardy certainly read Schopenhauer and is familiar with Feuerbachian thinking, leaving written evidence in quotations, allusions, and even denials which confirm he actively engaged with a broad range of pessimistic and optimistic thinking during his career. Even had Hardy declared that his novels had been directly influenced by either Schopenhauer or Feuerbach, however, it would still remain for the forms of that influence to be ascertained, whether positive or negative in form and whether minutely or only generally evident.

Collins recognises that Hardy expresses both optimistic and pessimistic "voices", but returns to *The Dynasts* as somehow encompassing Hardy's complete philosophy, arguing that Hardy's 'silence' in "He Resolves" and the ethos of *The Dynasts* leaves Hardy resolved 'to say no more', yet 'informing God's emerging percipience' by '*silently reiterating... his faith in immanent goodness*' (166, my emphasis). There are obvious flaws in an argument which conflates all of Hardy's literary works into one holistic philosophy with an impossible presumption of meaning from Hardy's *silence*. Collins enigmatises

Hardy's finally unavoidable silence to present us with 'a silence which comprises his entire canon', leaving 'his last line' as 'his avenging shade, to resonate with possibilities hopeful and gloomy' and bequeathing his readers 'a round collective [of work] which we can finally possess and understand' (169). It is the case that 'possibilities' both 'hopeful and gloomy' (Collins 169) are evident in *Jude*, but it is important to identify what these are and how they operate, and what insight and perspective they provide for Hardy's work without attempting to identify an holistic philosophical approach which somehow encompasses all of Hardy's canon onto one text. Andrew Radford argues that Hardy 'moves promiscuously' between 'styles which best appeal to his own idiosyncratic temperament' (101) and, in some of his works, 'undercuts the ideologically limiting construction' of him 'as a pessimistic author' (111)²⁵. Roger Robinson makes an equally pertinent point in seeing it as 'a mistake... to cite any one version' of Hardy's "Life Force" as his 'ultimate theological conclusion, as so many interpreters have jostled to do' because 'each version is so imaginatively appropriate to the mood of its context' (135). For Robinson, Hardy seems 'to have operated always at a personal rather than philosophical level... inventing such variations of the Life Force as he needed them, to explain humanity's plight, to blame for it, or to make it bearable' (135). This is why Hardy does not evidence a 'final answer' about his "philosophy"... and it is a mistake to read him as if he tries to do so' (Robinson 147).

Hardy is frequently ambivalent, his comments often contradictory or evasive depending on where and to whom he is speaking. In the 1895 Preface to the first volume edition of *Jude*, Hardy places the novel as an 'endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanence or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment' (Preface, vi). Yet these 'seemings' are equally given a more concrete form in his claim that the novel:

...attempts to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity; to tell, without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged

²⁵ - albeit Radford not including *Jude* in these less pessimistic works.

between flesh and spirit; and to point [to] the tragedy of unfilled aims, [and] I am not aware that there is anything in the handling to which exception can be taken. (vi)

That exception was indeed vociferously taken in a number of quarters apparently led Hardy to give up writing novels, a similar uproar with both *Tess* and the volume publication of *The Well-Beloved* leading Hardy to declare an 'end[]' to 'his prose contributions to literature, his experiences of the few preceding years having killed all his interest in this form of imaginative work' (*Life* 286). In a letter written in 1895, Hardy claimed that the "'grimy" features' of *Jude* 'go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead' (*Collected* v2, 93)²⁶. The question of what Hardy sees as perverting Jude's aspirations is suggested in that *Jude* 'is really... about two persons who, by a hereditary curse of temperament, peculiar to their family, are rendered unfit for marriage, or think they are' rather than 'a sort of manifesto on the marriage question' (93). Whilst this 'hereditary curse or temperament' and Hardy's first preface regarding the purpose of *Jude* appear to suggest a somewhat "essentialist" perspective in the novel, Chapter 7 examines the relationship between issues of determinism and what Hardy himself later terms 'the tragic machinery of the tale' (*Jude* Postscript, viii) in the postscript added to the 1912 edition. This later Postscript denotes a change of emphasis regarding the frames of reference for *Jude*, avoiding much of the ambivalence of the first Preface and his earlier letters and identifying the key concerns of the novel in more explicit – and less essentialist – terms. Here Hardy recognises the prominent and iniquitous role that 'the civil law' plays in the tale, as this 'should be only the enunciation of the law of nature' (viii). Hardy argues that 'a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties – being then essentially and morally no marriage' (viii) but instead, we have 'the forced adaptation of human instincts to rusty and irksome moulds that do not fit them' (ix). Chapter 7 will analyse the role of essentialism in the novel, and the significance of its relationship with 'the civil law' (viii) on a number of levels. John Paterson points out that the manuscript of *Jude* shows 'what was undertaken as a critical examination of the educational system in Hardy's time came... in its

²⁶ See also Hardy *Selected* (101); and *Life* (271).

working out, to take in an equally critical examination of the sacrament and institution of marriage' (328), the extent and the philosophical context of which will be examined.

Hardy's novel finds 'its tragedies in the forced adaptation of human instincts to rusty and irksome moulds which do not fit them', and thus not only delineates a clear indictment of contemporary 'marriage laws' and other 'venerable institutions' (Hardy *Jude* Postscript ix) such as the educational colleges in the novel, but marks the relationship between human nature and social institutions as very significant indeed. Chapter 7 will examine how *Jude the Obscure* engages with both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian delineations of determinism, human nature, ethics and social mores in relation to the quest for salvation – for the fulfilment of Jude's aspirations and personal happiness in life. In this analysis, Hardy's novel will be shown to evidence a dynamic framework which incorporates two co-existing but not mutually exclusive worlds within which Jude and Sue are subject to conflicting forces. In examining how a sense of pessimistic fatalism operates alongside the obstacles to Jude's salvation, in the plot, narrative, and denouement, Chapter 7 will show how Jude's footsteps are constantly haunted by other, less pessimistic, possibilities which shadow his and Sue's journey. In *Jude*, Hardy signposts those elements which act as the triggers to disaster whilst also showing how these same elements offer the means to an alternative ending, one in which individual realisation and a more sympathetic social dynamic might have been possible. As such, *Jude the Obscure* is haunted by the possibility of salvation.

Chapter 7

Jude the Obscure, 1896.

'Nature's Logic' and the Crippling 'Gin Trap': Overlapping Circles of Tragedy and Salvation.

'Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony. As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it'.

'the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns'.

Thomas Hardy *Jude the Obscure* 1896¹

I. Schopenhauerian consciousness and Jude's haunted landscape: 'ghostly presences' and 'the defective real'.

In *Jude the Obscure*, Thomas Hardy uses light as a key element to express a yearning towards something beyond the world in which the central character finds himself, in some respects echoing George Eliot's use of light in *Middlemarch*. In Eliot's novel, Dorothea's yearning towards light represents her desire for self-transcendence, but this is necessarily grounded in the practical, corporeal world. Light also exists in essentialist terms in *Middlemarch*, part of an elemental relationship between the different qualities inherent in individual character (albeit in imbalanced form and remaining essentially and pessimistically inaccessible for some characters). In *Jude*, however, light is in key respects representative of aspiration in a more traditional sense whilst

¹ *Jude the Obscure*. 1896. London: Penguin Books, 1994, (Part I. Chapter ii, 15; & Part IV.i, 245).

simultaneously undermining the accessibility of that dream. Jude's 'yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to – for some place which he could call admirable' leads him to see Christminster as the vision of a better future for himself, hoping to achieve an education and a learned career in the 'city of light' (Hardy *Jude* Part I. Chapter iii, 24), but his quest is revealed to be a false vision from the beginning of the novel. Jude must learn to see through his false perceptions of the world as his 'happy temporal life... amid the sufferings of countless other people... is only... a dream from which he must awake in order to find out that only a fleeting illusion had separated him from the suffering of his life' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §63, 218). That Jude is not alone in aspiring for something beyond his narrow circumstances not only brings significant parallels to his own journey in the experiences of both Sue and Phillotson, but their shared means of defeat is of as much significance as their shared aspirations. It is no small irony that it is his effective predecessor Phillotson who Jude mistakenly imagines 'promenading at ease' in 'the glow' (*Jude* I.iii, 21) of Christminster when in fact Phillotson's dream has already failed². Whilst Jude's landscape is 'haunted' by 'ghostly presences' (II.i, 94) who are on a key level the figurative spectres of Jude's genealogical and aspirational ancestors, they also appear to be pre-empting his own failure which is seen as somehow an inevitability, a 'predestinate' (I.vii, 49) fate. This chapter will examine the novel's apparently ambiguous relationship between an essentialist, deterministic universe and the social world of human agency. In analysing how Jude appears to be inescapably trapped within the cyclical rhythms of a Schopenhauerian vision of existence, this chapter will discuss the extent to which he is subject to the same 'restless strain and stress... passing continuously from wish to fear... joy to sorrow' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV, §71, 261) that all manifestations of the will-to-life are 'involved in' - a 'constant suffering... without any lasting happiness' (IV §56, 195). In Jude's own position as 'seeming... almost his own ghost' (*Jude* II.i, 94), however, there is a subtle but crucial shift in emphasis. Whilst on one level this reflects the apparently pre-determined Schopenhauerian landscape of repetitive failure, it simultaneously reveals his own role as the latest

² When Jude discovers Phillotson's failure, it 'destroy[s] at one stroke the halo which had surrounded the schoolmaster's figure in Jude's imagination ever since their parting' (*Jude* II.iv, 120).

in a progression of failed dreamers on an entirely different level. Jude's own 'ghostly presence[]' (94) leads Hardy's novel into specifically Feuerbachian territory, occupying a key link between two distinct philosophical and corporeal - but not mutually exclusive - levels of existence.

In *Jude* the aspirational future which 'the city of light' (I.iii, 24) represents is revealed as a mirage from the beginning, as Jude's visionary light is always juxtaposed with oppositional or negative imagery. Jude's first sight of Christminster is infused with what he has already created in his imagination as his earthly and spiritual salvation, the sunlight glinting upon '[t]he heavenly Jerusalem' (18) reveals a vision shining like a jewel. This vision is immediately exposed as a mirage, and particularly as a fatal end to his aspirations (and even his life) as the 'shine' goes out 'almost suddenly like extinguished candles' (19). Jude's shimmering vision of hope is revealed to be a 'funereally dark... chimæra[]' (24), yet in his hopes and dreams it continues to shine as a vision of possibility. The light of Christminster represents a false hope for Jude, being 'only a fleeting illusion' which 'separate[s] him from the suffering of his life' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §63, 218), as the pessimistic reality beneath his dreams will gradually reveal to him. Constantly juxtaposed with his vision of light is the overt negativity of Jude's landscape, a dark and brooding world to which Jude is fundamentally connected, traversed as it is by 'the too familiar road towards the upland whereon had been experienced the chief emotions of his life' (*Jude* I.xi, 86). Jude is situated in a 'bleak open down' (I.ii, 16) from the beginning, a landscape in which his parents separated and his mother later drowned herself (I.xi, 82; 86), where he first sees Christminster lit up in its false glory (I.iii, 19-20) and begins his disastrous relationship with Arabella (I.vii, 50-1). This same landscape is where he is beaten by Farmer Troutham (I.ii, 15), and later attempts his own suicide-by-drowning (I.xi, 83) once he realises he and Arabella are trapped in their marriage, and it is where his ancestry has associations with the gibbet which used to stand here (I.xi, 82-3). His final visit to that landscape is his "suicidal" last visit to Sue, an 'uphill walk' (VI.viii, 464) undertaken in ill health, where Jude courts his final destruction 'in the teeth of the north-east wind and rain' through which he 'pursued his way' (468).

William Siebenschuh argues that 'Hardy's symbolic use of a highly personal sense of the relations between identity, community and place' delineates a landscape which is a 'rich new language for revealing aspects of character and registering... social, class, and moral distinctions' (774). Siebenschuh's concern is not with the 'general rubric of the concept of place' (the focus of much Hardy criticism), but 'a metaphor' for what Hardy perceives in 'the psychologically "dislocated" condition of modern men and women' (775-6), Jude dissociated from his landscape through migration³. For Siebenschuh, landscape is psychologically representative of 'both the causes and the effects of the emptiness, disconnection, and sense of exclusion that will characterize Jude... and be echoed symbolically again and again' (777) in the novel. Landscape becomes a 'symbolic... medium rather than the primary object of perception' (778), carrying:

the connections between physical places and the larger issues of identity and belonging... in part because of [Hardy's] keen sense of the literal presence of the past in physical objects and spaces and in part because of his certain knowledge that the old physical ties between people and places were being destroyed by the changing modern world. (780)

For Siebenschuh, if Jude could recover a sense of connection with his community-landscape, this would provide a positive and sustaining sense of 'continuity' (775)⁴. Whilst Jude is situated within this framework of dislocation from tradition and community, and an historic landscape which reflects this on one level, this chapter will show that these 'larger issues of identity and belonging' and those 'old physical ties' are registered in largely negative terms, a negativity fundamentally connected to Jude's alienation and his tragedy.

Jude's landscape has 'attached associations enough and to spare' for him in a rich 'history' (*Jude* I.ii, 10) of aspiration, work, and love, but these are the negative associations of inevitable failure. It is in Jude's landscape that 'songs'

³ Siebenschuh is explicitly developing Michael Millgate's recognition of Hardy's use of landscape in his final novel as one which (*contra* his previous novels) 'is singularly devoid of individuality and association' (Millgate *Biography*, 332 quoted Siebenschuh 776). Patricia Ingham discusses Hardy's use of landscape as one which marks passing generations of 'past and present human beings who share reciprocal relationship with it', albeit where 'nothing is static or certain' (8).

⁴ Siebenschuh's argument takes an assertion Hardy makes in the Preface to *Far from the Madding Crowd* forwards to *Jude*: that the 'supplanting of the class of stationary cottagers, who carried on the local traditions and humours, by a population of more or less migratory labourers... has led to a [fatal] break of continuity in local history... [and thus] close intersocial relations' (Hardy *Madding* Preface, quoted Siebenschuh 782).

of 'harvest', 'spoken words' and 'sturdy deeds', 'energy, gaiety' and 'love promises' have become 'bickerings, weariness', rejection and the 'trembl[ings]' (10) of love turned sour. These 'echoes' (10) of the past represent Jude's community history, and also symbolise the transient nature of life and happiness. Both of these are placed on a Schopenhauerian philosophical level as here it is the ephemeral nature of individual aspirations and existence which predominates. Jude's landscape is where:

Every individual, every human being and his life-span is only one more short dream in the mind of the endless spirit of nature, of the persistent will to life; is only another fleeting form which it playfully sketches on its infinite page – space and time – allows to remain for a moment so brief that it is infinitesimal by comparison, and then rubs out to make room again... every one of these fleeting forms, these shallow notions, must be paid for by the whole will to life, in all its passion, with much profound pain, and finally with a bitter death. (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §58, 204).

In *Jude* 'everyone' is the Schopenhauerian will-to-life 'whose manifestation is an ephemeral existence, an always vain, constantly frustrated endeavour' (IV §68, 250), both the 'energy' and 'gaiety' becoming 'weariness' (*Jude* I.ii, 10). Jude's landscape is one haunted by perpetual failure, a place where 'all endeavour springs from... discontent with one's condition' but 'no satisfaction is lasting, rather it is always merely the starting-point of a new striving' which is in turn 'frustrated', thus engendering more 'suffering' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §56, 195). Jude is conscious of his subjection to the external forces of nature, and is simultaneously conscious that this jars against his sense of justice, as:

Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony. As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it. (*Jude* I.ii, 15)

Schopenhauer's blind, non-moral and all-consuming will-to-life creates Jude's world, each manifestation of the will oppressing another as 'everywhere in nature we see strife, conflict, and the fickleness of victory, and... the discord which is essential to the will... compet[ing] with the others for matter, space, and time' (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §27, 73-4). This simultaneously sets itself against his

sense of ethical justice as a consciously aware and suffering being, and resonates within the Schopenhauerian vision of the external world which operates here.

Helen Garwood notes that a 'feeling of gloom in nature analogous to the gloom of man' in Hardy's works is 'of trivial importance beside the sense of a lack of order in the outside world' (28). Like Siebenschuh, U. C. Knoepflmacher recognises the link between Jude and his landscape, albeit in more negative terms as Jude's choices in life are represented by the roads and places he chooses, but these choices/places fail for both Jude and Sue because their 'wanderings have been circular, overlapping, objectless' (*Laughter* 210). Jude's return to Christminster is to 'a necropolis, the burial ground of dead illusions' and 'the only road left for Jude to travel leads to the obscurity of the grave' (210). Whilst Knoepflmacher does not move beyond this immediate connection, nor explicitly align Jude's world with the Schopenhauerian will-to-life here, the link between Jude and landscape and in particular his fellow creatures appears on this level to emphasise that all corporeal phenomena, including the human, are merely manifestations of the Schopenhauerian will and subject to all of its forces, both on the micro and the macro-cosmic scale.

The juxtaposition of Jude's negative landscape with his false vision of Christminster and his sense of intimate connection with his fellow creatures frames Jude within a pessimistic world where he appears doomed to failure from the start. Jude's misconceptions of his world are Schopenhauerian in his dream-like idealism which ignores the reality of his existence, focussing on 'the future' which 'contain[s] only concepts and fancies' whereas 'the present is the essential form of the phenomenon of the will, and inseparable from it' (*WWI* IV §54, 181). Where the 'halo' of light over Christminster 'had been to his eyes when gazing at it a quarter of an hour earlier, so was the spot mentally to him as he pursued his dark way' (*Jude* I.iii, 24) – ostensibly home, but also framing his journey through life as an equally dark way across that 'bleak open down' (I.ii, 16). The Schopenhauerian reality beneath Jude's visions is revealed, as the 'happy temporal life... amid the sufferings of countless other people... is only... a dream from which he must awake in order to find out that only a fleeting illusion had separated him from the suffering of his life' (*WWI* IV §63, 218). Jude's apparently fatally pre-determined landscape is the world of external Nature, the First Cause or will-to-life. Within this existential world Jude seems to be no

more than a puppet in a repetitive cycle of human suffering – of hope and inevitable failure – suggesting that his own failure is pre-told, ‘predestinate’ (*Jude* I.vii, 49). On a key level there is a profound sense of negativity and loss inhabiting Jude’s landscape, visible in the ‘ghostly presences’ (II.i, 94) of his forebears. Jude is ‘haunted’ yet fundamentally alone in ‘a wide and lonely depression’ (I.ii, 9) of the land which is ‘the scene of his labours’ and of ‘accentuated... solitude’, and into ‘the midst’ of which he ‘descend[s]’ (10). Jude’s descent into the landscape suggests a negative entrance into his own life and circumstances from the start, and is evocative of what is on one level a “universal” human condition within a landscape where the failed aspirations of endless generations invisibly linger, their perpetual life-cycle of hope and failure echoing around him. Jude’s final ‘uphill walk’ (VI.viii, 464) towards the end of the novel reflects the grindingly hard task that his existence has involved, its metaphorical familiarity again echoing a common “universal” human condition within a Schopenhauerian pessimistic framework. This cycle of perpetual disappointment is not just the transient nature of contemporary life for agricultural and village labourers and artisans, or the rapidly changing agricultural climate which has wrought such dramatic changes to a long history of relative stability, but represents the necessarily transient nature of hope and happiness in human existence. At the same time, however, Jude does experience moments of rare but ‘true illumination’ (II.ii, 100, my emphasis), not only recognising the reality of his situation outside of his visionary dreamscape at times but also that there are alternative routes to satisfaction. His recognition that his skill as a stonemason ‘was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study’ (100) is one of those moments. Jude initially loses sight of these brief glimpses of reality ‘under stress of his old idea’, however, the novel positioning Jude and his false vision within the ‘modern vice of unrest’ (100). This is a vision of modernity within which Jude’s “fatal flaw” appears to be his inability to fully recognise the ‘deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence’ (101). This sets up a clash not only within modernity itself, and particularly the displacement of Jude’s historic community by the pressures and changes of modern life, but taps into a deeper philosophical relationship between Jude and the world he inhabits on two fundamental levels. Jude’s landscape shows that he inhabits a Schopenhauerian

world, but also identifies another key level of existence which has a more significant role to play in the tragedy. That Jude is 'almost his own ghost' (II.i, 94) there places his landscape into a different framework altogether. Whilst Jude inhabits an unconscious Schopenhauerian universe, another world is operating on a more conscious level, and gradually reveals itself to him.

In this first Schopenhauerian world, Jude is caught within an apparently pre-determined pessimistic landscape which is as relevant to his own character and motives as it is to the unconscious world around him. For Knoepflmacher *Jude* 'take[s] up the dilemma of characters who discover that their identities are predetermined', and '[f]or Jude and Sue, this discovery only accentuates their helplessness' as 'a man's capacity for change does not match the motions of the fluctuating world into which he is placed' (*Laughter* 212). Yet this idea of helplessness in the face of predetermined nature is only half the story. The will-to-life:

...is the inmost nature, the kernel, of every individual thing, and also of the whole. It is manifest in every force of nature that operates blindly, and it is manifest, too, in the deliberate action of man; and the great difference between these two is a matter only of degree in its manifestation, not in the nature of what is made manifest. (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §21, 42)

Whilst this has implications for the relationships between characters in the novel, as will be discussed shortly, Jude's landscape is also one in which '[n]ot a soul was visible' (*Jude* I.iii, 17), a landscape of 'accentuated... solitude' (I.ii, 10) both spatially and temporally, thus it remains a fundamentally alienating place for Jude - albeit on more complex levels than may at first appear. Jude's fellow travellers along the implicitly negative 'path athwart the fallow by which he had come' (10) are Jude's contemporary dreamers Sue and Phillotson. Phillotson's own failure not only foreshadows Jude's subsequent failure but will be seen to impact on the schoolmaster's own relationships with both Jude and Sue. Arabella also plays a significant role in Jude's journey and its culmination in despair, a despair Sue not only also reaps but marks in both corporeal and philosophical terms, as will become clear, leaving Arabella the only real survivor among them as Phillotson's own victory is a hollow one. Siebenschuh argues that as Jude cannot read the history of the landscape around him, he therefore has 'no access to' and 'cannot be sustained by a sense of continuity within a particular community' (775). Yet whilst Jude's first real experience of failure

leaves him wishing 'that he had never been born' (*Jude* I.iv, 31), it is crucially that 'nobody' came – '*because nobody does*' – which ensures Jude is left perpetually isolated, even within his society, and thus 'continue[s] to wish himself out of the world' (32, my emphasis). Whilst a predestined sense of failure haunts Jude throughout the novel, it is his relationships with other people which are fundamental in engendering his hope in life, and his despair. In a key sense, for Jude the death of his hopes and dreams *is* the death of himself, and that the novel places Jude as somehow already a ghost within his negative landscape is intrinsically connected to his sense of alienation and the role that his society plays in the tragedy. In considering the relationship between the idea of determinism and character here, Jude's most prominent characteristic after that of his dreams (his aspirations, *and* his imaginative constructions overlying reality) is his sense of sympathy with others who, like the birds in Troutham's field 'seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them' (I.ii, 11). Jude feels himself to be in the same position as they, 'for his aunt had often told him that she was not [interested in him]' (11). One issue here is the relationship between character and the question of 'what' a character 'was born to be' (IV.iii, 266); and another is the relationship between human sympathy and the nature of the external forces to which Jude and Sue (and for that matter, the birds in Troutham's field) are subject. In continuing with the link between Jude and Nature as a blind and pervasive force, and which apparently predetermines Jude's character, there is a particularly strong element of Nature that is as much a part of Jude as it is part of the Schopenhauerian will-to-life, and which appears to compel Jude against his own volition.

Arabella's role in Jude's tragedy illustrates a central ambiguous issue, Arabella appearing most clearly in the role of sexual determinism in some form. Yet she is also a key element in understanding the relationship between the idea of predestinate fate and human agency in the novel. Arabella's intervention thwarts Jude's plans, not just in the beginning but throughout the novel, and proves to be a determining factor in Jude's tragedy, thus it is important to examine how this operates. The question here is whether and how she represents an element of Jude's predestined failure on the level of a Schopenhauerian blind universe. Jude is day-dreaming when he first meets Arabella, the paradox between the chimerical nature of Jude's dreams and Arabella as the first major

stumbling block to realising them is illustrated by Jude staring at the ground ‘as though the future were thrown thereon by a magic lantern’ (I.vi, 41) when he is disturbed from this vision by Arabella throwing the pig’s penis at him. Arabella’s missile spells out her objective in explicitly carnal rather than sensual terms, but more fundamentally, in terms of a *predestinate* (I.vii, 49) moment where that ‘unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella’s personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention – almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience’ (I.vi, 44). It also links Jude’s own life with that of the pig he is later forced to slaughter, with whom Jude empathises. Jude momentarily recognises the pertinence of Arabella’s missile ‘with his intellectual eye, just for a short fleeting while, as by the light of a falling lamp’ before he is ‘enshrouded in darkness... and Jude was lost to all conditions of things in the advent of a fresh and wild pleasure... hitherto unsuspected’ (46). When first in Arabella’s presence Jude ‘felt himself drifting strangely, but could not help it’ (45), therefore sexual attraction is an irresistible force which appears to override individual intent, operating:

as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him – something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto... [which] seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along... in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality... and the predestinate Jude sprang up and across the room. (I.vii, 49)

For Schopenhauer the sexual impulse is intrinsic to human nature being, ‘[n]ext to the love of life... the strongest and most active of all motives’ (*WWR* “Metaphysics” 533) as it is the clearest manifestation of the will-to-life. The sexual impulse causes Jude to ‘strive[] after’ Arabella ‘in defiance of all reason’ (539), and ‘in spite of difference of disposition, character, and mental tendency’ (538). The sexual urge not only overcomes Jude’s ‘misgivings’ (*Jude* I.vii, 50), but actually causes him to forget about Christminster and his aspirations that the landscape around him previously harboured for his imagination, associating his landscape now with the scenes of his courtship with Arabella. Jude’s new associations with landscape here are explicitly created by ‘the embroidery of imagination upon the stuff of nature’ (55) as Arabella clearly has nothing in common with Jude other than proximity, being ‘a woman for whom he had no

respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality' (49). Arabella passes across the same spot 'unheedingly' (55), echoing the earlier sense of a landscape upon which such scenes of hope turning to despair are endlessly played out across time. The immediate and apparently uncontrollable physical response in Jude points to sexuality as part of the predestinate fatal trajectory which binds him to an animalistic universe despite his 'elevated' (49) intellect and aspirations. Jude's response to an awakening sexuality appears to be an uncontrollable and inevitable – and *inevitably fatal* – reaction. Jude falls into the 'delusion' (Schopenhauer *WWR* "Metaphysics" 538) that the sexual instinct creates, his ephemeral person and individual volition effectively possessed by a 'malevolent demon, striving to... overthrow everything' (534), the will-to-life pursuing its aims regardless of individual aspirations in its 'mandate of... objectifying itself in the species' (554).

Mary Ann Kelly argues that it is Jude himself who is a destructive force, his apparent inability to resist either his sexual impulses or his idealising of both Arabella and Sue leading him to self-destruct (240). Kelly links this to extracts from Schopenhauer that Hardy copied into his *Notebooks*, including that 'women are, + remain, thoroughgoing philistines... Hence ... are a constant stimulus to ignoble ambitions', this leading to Jude's 'distraction from noble ambitions' by 'the sexual urge'; and '*Schopenhauer*. – No man loves the woman – only his dream' (quoted Kelly 239)⁵. Whilst both of these quotations resonate in Jude's relationship with Arabella, and to some extent Sue, Kelly argues that Hardy's novel is not sympathetic to Sue as it does not recognise gendered relations in anything other than misogynistic terms. It is the case that aspects of gendered relations in *Jude* are questionable in key respects, not least Arabella's representation as both calculating and "wanton" as well as quasi-bestial in being seen as 'a complete and substantial female animal – no more, no less' (*Jude* I.vi, 42) (albeit also emphasising Jude's subjection to the animalistic universe here). The idea that the male sexual impulse is on the one hand virtually uncontrollable (I.vii, 49) contrasts with Sue's equally questionable suggestion that 'no man short of a sensual savage – will molest a woman... unless she invites him' (III.iv, 177).

⁵ Hardy *LN* v2 (e1800, 31) from Schopenhauer "On Women" (86); second quotation Hardy *LN* v2 (e2230, 143), noted by Hardy from R. V. Risley "Schopenhauer" [*New York*] *Reader* I (Jan 1903) (273-5): see also Björk *LN* v2 (note 2230, 526).

Another contentious issue is Jude's own coercion of a reluctant Sue into sexual relations by using Arabella to trigger Sue's jealousy and override her reluctance (V.ii, 316-7). Yet the issues of both sex and gender are far more complex – and far more progressive – in *Jude*, despite these more questionable issues. Kelly argues that Jude's 'appetites' are self-destructive, finding 'Hardy's preoccupation with the blind and irrational tendencies which cause his main characters to behave in a destructive manner' (240) to be the key to the novel. Whilst Jude's sexual impulse is an internal, choice-less compulsion, driven by the will-to-life, this is equally related to Schopenhauerian character which is in a key sense determined or fixed by and within the will. As each individual is a manifestation of the will, each character 'is not free, but subject to necessity' thus, 'in spite of all his resolutions and reflections he does not alter his conduct' (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §23, 46). Jude reflects just such a 'weakness' (*Jude* I.ii, 13) for Arabella on more than one occasion, despite his own reason and volition, and his sexual pressurising of Sue can be seen in similar terms. Yet sexual desire is not the only element in Jude's character, and he is neither bound wholly to the sexual impulse nor inherently self-destructive in his character or his behaviour. The manifestation of the will-to-life in each individual shows itself in 'the ambition of [each] inmost nature, and the aim [each] pursues accordingly', and is something 'we can never change by outside influence' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §55, 193). Whilst each individual's 'actions follow with absolute necessity from the coincidence of character with motives' (IV §55, 190), it is clear that Jude has aspirations and sympathies beyond sex, 'individuality' also being 'a dominant feature of mankind' as each 'person has a character of his own; hence the same motive has not the same influence on everyone' (§23, 51).

Whilst Jude's relationship with Arabella incorporates the predetermined role of sex and character as a result of the will-to-life manifest in everything, the question of ethical choice is equally pertinent. One of Jude's key character traits is his ethical sympathy. For Schopenhauer ethical "choice" is only available to those who have the required character and motive, have perceived the true nature of the world, and thus use their knowledge to override their own will⁶. Jude's sympathy with the birds who 'seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which

⁶ See Schopenhauer *WWI* (IV §55-56, 187-195)

did not want them' (*Jude* I.ii, 11) makes him aware of the shared nature of subjection to the blind and non-moral universe. Jude becomes consciously aware that both he and they are equally subject to the 'conflict... essential to the will', every manifestation of which 'competes with the others for matter, space, and time' (Schopenhauer *WWI* II §27, 73-4). Jude thus perceives the 'flaw in the terrestrial scheme, by which what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener' (*Jude* I.ii, 12-13). Schopenhauer's ethics are clearly visible in Jude's 'magic thread of fellow-feeling' (11) as Jude instinctively understands that the 'misery both experienced by oneself and inflicted upon others... always affect the one and the same inner being' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §63, 219), his knowledge of suffering and shared existence allowing him to recognise that 'this thou art' (220). That Jude's ethics are specifically Schopenhauerian is evident in the inclusive scope of his ethical realisation:

The suffering which he sees in others touches him almost as closely as his own... He becomes aware that the distinction between himself and others, which to the wicked person is so great a gulf, belongs only to a fleeting, deceptive phenomenon... recognis[ing] directly and without argument that the in-itself of his own manifestation is also that of others, namely the will to life, which constitutes the inner nature of each and everything... indeed, that this applies also to the animals and the whole of nature, and hence he will not cause suffering even to an animal. (§66, 235)

Whilst Jude 'was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the final fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life should signify that all was well with him again', he feels sheer 'misery' at being responsible for or witnessing 'hurt' and thus deliberately treads carefully among the coupling earthworms to avoid 'killing a single one' (*Jude* I.ii, 13). There are strong echoes of Schopenhauer in both respects here. The first is the idea that life is a temporary departure from the more permanent state of nothingness beyond life, the individual being 'only phenomenal' and a temporary manifestation of the will-to-life, thus 'receives his life as a gift, rises out of nothing, then suffers the loss of that gift through death, and returns again to nothing' (*WWI* IV §54, 177). The second is of course the consciousness that suffering is the basis of all life, not just the human, and that each individual is an equal part of life. This leads to deliberately ethical behaviour as 'virtue must spring from that intuitive knowledge which recognises in the individuality of others the same essence as in our own' (IV §66, 230), finding its 'expression not in words, but only in deeds, in

action' (232). Jude exhibits a Schopenhauerian 'double-knowledge' in recognising his innermost links with other manifestations of life as well as what each 'suffers as a result of outside intervention' (II §19, 36). There is a recognition of the inevitability of suffering in life here, before the release that only death can bring. At the same time this consciousness of suffering is equally clearly something which does enable ethical choice, of *choosing* not to take a nest of birds, lop trees out of season, or walk blindly ahead and thus crush other lives beneath 'regular steps' (*Jude* I.ii, 13). Jude's 'weakness of character' is something which '*may be* [so] called' (13, my emphasis), thus the idea of it *as* a weakness is questioned on one level at the same time as his sensitivities are suggested as ethically *right* whilst socially weak. Kelly recognises the significance of Schopenhauer's human ethics in that 'magic thread of fellow-feeling' which Jude feels unites 'his own life with theirs', arguing that Jude's own suffering is exacerbated by his knowledge of the *principium individuationis* (that each individual is merely a part of the whole). Yet Kelly focuses on death as the ultimate goal, as 'the correction of a "mistake"' (244), seeing this as the central ethos of the novel. For Schopenhauer death is not the purpose of life but merely the inevitable endpoint of individual existence, the return of each existential manifestation back to the unconscious whole⁷. It is clear that *in the meantime*, compassionate behaviour towards one's fellow sufferers is the ethical object of life as 'virtue must spring from that intuitive knowledge which recognises in the individuality of others the same essence as in our own', individual 'ethical value' being 'the chief business in human life' (*WWI* IV §66, 230) which finds its 'expression not in words, but only in deeds, in action, in the course of a human life' (232).

Whilst Jude's character is fixed and determined, and potentially unchanging then, his conscious actions are as often prompted by his ethical sympathy for other manifestations of life. Arabella on the other hand is only ever prompted by her own egoistic ends, as she herself recognises: despite knowing 'what I should do... I don't do it' (*Jude* V.viii, 375). It is clear that Arabella acts in a deliberate manner with respect to Jude from their first meeting, choosing him as her targeted partner (I.vi, 42-7) and setting out to marry him by whatever

⁷ See *WWI* IV (§54, pp177-9), and Chapter 1 (20) above.

means (I.vii, 52-7). It is Arabella who sees their relations progressing in her chosen direction when they are 'as she had desired, clasped together' (53). Jude, on the other hand, feels their embrace does not matter 'since it was dark' (53), and is relieved once he escapes from her presence. Yet sex in the form of 'Arabella soon reasserted her sway in his soul' (54) as Jude's apparent inability to resist the sexual urge blinds him to her true character. Any compunction she feels for Jude is *consciously* discarded in favour of her own ends (V.viii, 375), and she even leaves him alone when he is dying, well aware that he could therefore die alone (VI.xi, 482-3). The depressing bar in which Jude sits with Arabella during their first date, with its portentous picture of a Samson undone by Delilah's deliberate scheming (I.vii, 52), lends weight to the appearance of tragic predestination suggested earlier whilst clearly recognising Arabella's *deliberately* unethical actions. Indeed, years later, when Arabella is keeping Jude drunk long enough to trick him into marrying her for the second time, he is 'her shorn Samson' (VI.vii, 453). Whilst her character is explicitly unsuited to Jude, Arabella's contribution to Jude's failure in life is equally explicitly linked to her deliberate actions in how she sets *herself* 'against his intention – almost against his will' (I.vi, 44), determined to 'have him' (I.vii, 56) at whatever the cost to himself or others, her 'triumphant laugh' that 'of a careless woman who sees she is winning her game' (52). Jude is consciously sympathetic to his fellow creatures, whereas Arabella is consciously egoistic.

Jude's characters appear to be *able to choose* whether to act out of compassion for others. The death of the pig emphasises a direct relationship between Jude and his fellow sufferers, and points to the role of others in this relationship. Jude is horrified that the pig - bound to the stool and crying a 'long-drawn, slow and hopeless' note of 'despair' (I.x, 75) – will suffer a slow death to ensure the meat is well bled. He refuses to torture the animal in this way and kills him 'mercifully' (75), yet even this "merciful" death is tortuous, the cuts explicitly detailed along with the stages of the animal's suffering. The pig's voice begins with 'despair', moves into a continuous 'shriek of agony', then becomes its dying breath 'coming through the hole' (75) Arabella slashes in its windpipe to silence it. At this moment, the pig's 'glazing eyes rivet[] themselves on Arabella with the eloquently keen reproach of a creature recognizing at last the treachery of those who had seemed his only friends' (75-6). That it is

Arabella on whom the pig fixes its reproachful gaze emphasises its alignment with Jude as Arabella is indeed a “friend” who betrays Jude throughout the course of his life, and even contributes to some extent to the tortuous nature of his death. Knoepflmacher recognises that the ‘pig-sticking... scene is crucial to Hardy’s purpose’ and, whilst seeing this as ‘Darwinian’ because ‘men, like animals, must kill to live’ (*Laughter* 228-9), argues that the pig also represents Jude, equally ‘betrayed by’ (229) Arabella. This is not to suggest that Arabella is in any ethical sense culpable in Jude’s tragedy for Knoepflmacher, however, as she represents a universal ‘Darwinian world of struggles’ into which Jude ‘cannot fit’ (229). The role of Arabella as Delilah, deliberately trapping Jude, lifts her relationship with him out of predetermined fatalism, however, as it reveals the role of human agency and particularly of ethical choice operating here. Jude recognises that Arabella is not suited to him, that it is his ‘idea of her’ which is ‘the thing of most consequence’ (*Jude* I.ix, 66) to him rather than her person, as she is ‘quite antipathetic to that side of him which had been occupied with literary study and the magnificent Christminster dream’ (I.vi, 46). Sue, on the other hand, is identified by the narrative as Jude’s natural partner, there being an ‘extraordinary sympathy, or similarity, between’ them, so closely matched that they seem to be ‘one person split in two!’ (IV.iv, 274). The idea of essentialism of character and nature is strongly evident in Jude and Sue’s relationship, yet is framed in terms that lift the novel out of a Schopenhauerian world and into another framework altogether. The character of Phillotson also illustrates this shift, being strongly ethical in the first instance and explicitly sympathetic to Sue in particular (274-5). Towards the end of the novel, Phillotson changes his mind and puts his own egoistic needs over Sue’s (VI.v, 438), and in so doing demonstrates the limited extent to which character is *trapped* by determinism *as such* as each character also demonstrates ethical awareness and choice. Phillotson’s choices are deliberate and reasoned on every level, thus ethical actions are recognised as a choice with him as much as they are with Arabella. Yet the reason for Phillotson’s later decision to act against his ethical instincts has even more pertinent implications for questions of ethics and culpability, whilst also recognising the significance of Jude’s and Sue’s relationship in key terms.

Sue's character traits and often ambiguous feelings conflict with one another on a number of levels, and her changeability appears to drive Jude and the novel's critics to distraction in equal measure on occasion. Despite this, she and Jude are intimately connected from the first, appearing to be 'just the same' (I.ii, 9), a connection which extends into a shared – and apparently “doomed” – trajectory. They are connected to the same gloomy landscape in aspiration and place, in tragic early circumstances, and an apparently predetermined history of failure because of their shared genealogy. They also share a fragility which renders them apparently ill-equipped for the world they inhabit: Jude has a 'Slender... frame' (8), and Sue is 'a little maid' forced to 'know such changes' (9) brought about by the tragedy of her parents' lives. This fragility suggests that both of their characters have an “essential” inability to overcome the strength of opposition they are likely to meet in the world, reinforcing the idea that they are mere puppets in a predetermined universe. As both are members of a family whom above all should not 'ever marry' as “'Tisn't for the Fawleys to take that step any more' (9), their genealogy appears to determine that their intimate relationships will inevitably fail - particularly their own - a fear intensified by the failures of their respective parents' marriages (II.ii, 107). Sue is often termed the destructive element in *Jude*, Robert Langbaum suggesting that Arabella 'did less harm' to Jude 'than... Sue', and that the 'contrast between Sue and Arabella is the contrast between attractive idealism and unattractive reality, and reality in Hardy is always respected' (223). Knoepflmacher argues that Jude, 'torn between the dualities represented by Arabella and Sue, becomes the victim of an idealism that proves futile and debilitating', Hardy refusing 'to endow Jude's alienation and death with any kind of hopeful overtones or redemptive touches' (*Laughter* 205). There is an obvious sense in which Sue and Arabella are opposites, each matching a need in Jude which simultaneously leaves the other corresponding space depleted, but this is not a simplistic sexual vs. non-sexual dichotomy, as Penny Boumelha recognises (443)⁸. With Arabella, Jude knows from early in their relationship that she is not his equal in intellect or aspiration – in “soul”, perhaps; and with Sue his intellectual, spiritual and companionable

⁸ Penny Boumelha argues that reducing the contrast between Arabella and Sue to sexuality vs. the mind 'is too simple an account of the self-evident contrast' (443) between them as, for Sue, 'mind and body, intellect and sexuality, are in a complex and disturbing interdependence' (444).

needs are fulfilled in his relationship with her but initially without the physicality of sex, Sue's minimal sexual inclination frequently as troubling to critics as it is to Jude. The most significant aspect of Sue, however, is pinpointed in her relationship with Jude, a relationship which reveals itself to be fundamental within the framework of the novel on a number of levels. The key to this relationship is her desire for *comradeship* – for an *equality* of discourse and feeling and intimacy (*Jude* III.iv, 183), albeit an intimacy which is predominantly non-sexual for Sue (V.i, 308-9). Jude recognises that '[i]f he could only get over the sense of her sex, as she seemed to be able to do so easily of his, what a comrade she would make; for their difference of opinion on conjectural subjects only drew them closer together on matters of daily human experience' (III.iv, 184). Jude recognises that Sue's attitude betrays a 'curious unconsciousness of gender' (179) yet, despite her wish to live as a comrade among men and not a sexual partner, Jude has trouble accepting this, feeling 'that she was treating him cruelly' by not caring for him '*more*' (179, original emphasis) than anyone she has ever met. By this he means that she does not reciprocate the sexual side of his feelings, but Sue is caught between other's expectations of her and her own desire for Jude's comradeship. Boumelha suggests that, in *Jude*, Hardy:

gives for the first time an intellectual component to the tragedy of the woman – Sue's breakdown from an original, incisive intellect to the compulsive reiteration of the principles of conduct of a mid-Victorian marriage manual – and, to the man's, a sexual component which resides not in simple mismatching, but in the very fact of his sexuality. (Boumelha 438)

Whilst Boumelha raises pertinent issues here, she not only echoes the idea that Jude is condemned to tragedy by the 'disruptive force' of his 'sexuality' (443), but argues that Sue is 'the instrument of Jude's tragedy, rather than the subject of her own' (445)⁹. Despite recognising the failings in critical attempts to interpret Sue in terms of whether she is a 'pathological' or 'representative woman' (439), or even 'frigid[]' (440), Boumelha argues that Sue is 'representative of her sex' after all as 'her sexuality is the decisive element in her collapse' (440). Here Sue is condemned by 'the "inexorable laws of nature" and the "penalty of the sex"' to 'injustice, loneliness, child-bearing, and bereavement' (441). Sue 'must learn

⁹ Kelly (240-4), Knoepflmacher *Laughter* (117-221; and 229), and Collins (98; 142) recognise Jude as self-destructive in similar terms, whilst Langbaum (223) blames Sue for the tragedy.

that sexuality lies to a large degree outside the control of rationality, will, choice', thus she occupies an essentialist world where she must relinquish her 'fantasy of freedom and control' - albeit a 'fantasy' she does not 'willingly surrender' (441). Boumelha sees Sue as trapped by her gender in essentialist terms, yet does recognise that Hardy himself argues that Sue wishes 'to retain control of her sexuality' (442). This is because whilst 'uncontracted she feels at liberty to yield herself as seldom as she chooses' (Hardy *Life* 272)¹⁰. In this, Boumelha pertinently recognises Sue's 'identification of the three commandments' as "'something external'" which ironically mock the Hebraic Ten Commandments', but only sees this in terms of 'preserving the polar opposition of marriage and non-marriage', and thus Sue finally 'subjects herself fully to the legalistic and Hebraic codes of the ideology of marriage' (442). Boumelha points towards conflicting aspects of nature vs nurture in Sue's role in the novel here, particularly in terms of Sue 'as victim of her sexuality and... of religious ideology' (444), although does not see beyond the marriage/non-marriage dichotomy - and above all Sue's 'physiological' gender - in the quest for 'a sufficient programme for liberation' (442). Adrienne Rich suggests that patriarchal society perpetuates a 'cluster of forces within which women have been convinced that marriage, and sexual orientation toward men, are inevitable, even if unsatisfying or oppressive components of their lives' ("Heterosexuality" 148) and *Jude* appears to recognise this on a key level. What Rich terms 'the socialization of women to feel that male sexual "drive" amounts to a right' (146) does impact on Jude's perception of his relationship with Sue as much as on Sue's perceptions of her relationships with both Jude and Phillotson. Sue's relationships with Jude and the socialization to which she is subject have more significant implications, however, which will be shown to directly relate to the irony of Sue's final subjection.

It is clear that landscape is more than a backdrop to Jude's journey, and more than a metaphorical representation of the displaced agricultural community. Jude's landscape represents a philosophical and corporeal position in its haunted

¹⁰ *Jude/Jude* also recognises that Sue's 'natural instincts are perfectly healthy; not quite so impassioned, perhaps, as I could wish; but... the most ethereal, least sensual woman I ever knew to exist without inhuman sexlessness' (*Jude* VI.iii, 412).

ghostly presences of hope and failure, Jude here consciously subject to the external and internal non-moral forces of a pessimistic Schopenhauerian universe. The role of essential character in *Jude* simultaneously shows that ‘the deliberate action of man’ (Schopenhauer *WWI* II 21, 42) also identifies that each character is consciously aware to a significant level of their responses to ethical motive in particular. At the same time, Jude’s relationship with ghosts in his landscape has implications which lift him into a completely new philosophical level, albeit one which has equally corporeal implications. Whilst *Jude*’s external forces suggest that Jude’s failure is inevitable and predetermined, his tragedy is of course bound up with his apparently unrealistic ideals. It is here that Jude’s haunted landscape also identifies how and why all of his potential routes to salvation are closed off, one by one, by circumstances which are explicitly placed in the world of human agency, as will be discussed shortly, and the issue of ethical choice has already shown itself to be significant here. Deborah Collins argues that there are ‘two levels of tragedy operating’ (142) in *Jude*, but relates these to the external world on one level and Jude’s individual failure on another. For Collins, echoing the idea that Jude is self-destructive (98), the novel is about ‘the disillusionment of the idealistic, intelligent young man by circumstances outside his control, and – by far the greater calamity – his failure to employ intellect and heart in defiance of those circumscribing forces’ (142), finding Jude exhibits only ‘meek, disinterested resignation’ and ‘self-willed defeat’ (142). Whilst there are indeed ‘two levels of tragedy’ (142) operating in *Jude*, the first of these is the Schopenhauerian external world but the other is not Jude’s individual self-destructive failure, but is a world identified by Jude’s own role as a ghost in his landscape. Hardy’s novel appears to establish a relationship between the non-moral Schopenhauerian universe and the consciously suffering human world, and it is in Jude’s own position, ‘impressed with the isolation of his own personality, as...[though] a self-spectre’ (*Jude* II.i, 94), that this relationship is most intriguingly developed. Despite seeing Sue as the main culprit in facilitating Jude’s tragedy, Langbaum recognises that *Jude* ‘is a bitter protest against everything: against the injustice of nature, society, and God’ (223), although he does not examine how this operates. Sue’s disregard for the confines of social constraints show how Sue recognises rather than facilitates

Jude's tragedy, however, and this relates to issues of religion, education, gender and marriage, as well as to human relations themselves.

Jude's initial misinterpretations of both Sue and his surroundings is due to 'the superstitions of his beliefs', Jude seeing the world as one dictated by the 'exercise of forethought on the part of a ruling Power' (*Jude* III.i, 156). This has resonant implications for both Jude's and Sue's journey but also for the philosophical framework of the novel. Jude's sympathy is a 'magic thread of fellow-feeling' which 'united his own life with [others]' (I.ii, 11) and it is this key ethical recognition which marks the place where the two levels overlap, Jude 'seeming almost his own ghost' (II.i, 94) forming that link. Jude's landscape is one of 'accentuated... solitude' (I.ii, 10) in which '[n]ot a soul was visible' (I.iii, 17), and his isolation is central to the novel, marking the world of human souls that invisibly linger, a series of 'ghostly presences' (II.i, 94) haunting Jude's landscape and his journey but as yet unperceived by him, whilst the narrative suggests the key elements of his tragedy lie very much within the remit of the human world. For Jude his position in the landscape is not just a metaphor for his tragedy but is key to understanding his alienation in both corporeal and philosophical terms.

II. *Jude's 'ghost' and 'the isolation of his own personality': Hardy's Feuerbachian consciousness.*

Jude is established as an isolated figure in a landscape populated by ghosts from the beginning of the novel, and when he approaches Christminster at last he is placed as a ghostly figure himself, 'appear[ing] gliding steadily onward through a dusky landscape' (*Jude* II.i, 91). This uncanny tableau divorces Jude from a sense of warm-blooded physicality and he becomes the image of a ghost, an alien figure propelled across a grey and fading landscape. The images of spectrality continue, along with further negative associations, as Jude enters Christminster 'between pollard willows growing indistinct in the twilight' (93), trees whose natural growth is deliberately stunted herald his entrance and their spectrality forms direct associations with Jude, suggesting his own aspirations will be likewise curtailed and fade into darkness. The pollarded trees further recall Jude's early empathy with the sufferings of others including the deliberate lopping of trees' limbs, thus suggesting his own aspirations will also be stunted by the actions of others rather than an external or "natural" course of events.

Jude's first wanderings through Christminster are through a city haunted by a sense of isolation and negativity, and more 'ghostly presences' (94). As he walks 'fewer and fewer people were visible' in the 'obscure alleys, apparently never trodden now by the foot of man, and whose very existence seemed to be forgotten', and Jude ignores these absent-presences as he still ignores any 'objects out of harmony' with his own vision 'as if he did not see them' (93). Christminster is a crumbling, mouldering relic of unenlightened sympathies, the chimerical nature of its role as the 'city of light' (I.iii, 24) revealed as he walks through streets full of 'dark corners which no lamplight reached', illuminated instead by Jude's imagination, led by his 'spirit [which] was touched to finer issues than a mere material gain' (II.i, 93) - or indeed, to material reality itself. As he walks around Christminster:

Knowing not a human being here, Jude began to be impressed with the isolation of his own personality, as with a self-spectre, the sensation being that of one who walked but could not make himself seen or heard... seeming thus almost his own ghost. (II.i, 94)

Jude's recognition of himself as a ghost is key here, despite his imagination still deliberately maintaining its hopeful vision in converting this sense of self-ghostliness into a positive image of comfort - thinking instead about 'the *other* ghostly presences with which the nooks were haunted' (94, my emphasis). These are his aspirational forebears, 'the worthies' he has read about 'who spent their youth within these reverend walls, and whose souls had haunted them in their maturer age' (94). Yet even here Jude is still surrounded by negativity, the double-meaning of *spent* youth echoing the idea of lost youth and exhausted aspirations, leaving haunted souls in their wake, and suggesting a relationship with Jude who also perceives these ghosts correctly as 'the mutterings of... mournful souls... making him comrades in his solitude' (95). The aspirational 'worthies' (94) Jude deliberately imposes onto his haunted solitude are countered with 'gloom', 'deserted' streets, 'wrinkled foreheads' and the shade of death in the shroud-suggesting 'sheeted' 'divines' (95). Whilst the ghosts co-inhabiting *Jude's* landscape echo Schopenhauer's cyclical vision of the ephemeral human, emphasising how Jude's 'human aspirations are dwarfed in the vast dimensions of archaeological time' (Schweik 61-2), this is only half the story. *Jude's* ghosts show that landscape is the site rather than the cause of the note of pessimistic "fatalism" in the novel and, crucially, Jude's own role as a 'ghost' - not only to himself but also to others - places culpability for his unfolding tragedy not at the feet of a blind universal will-to-life but elsewhere.

Jude's own ghostly presence is effected as a direct result of his human world as what is emerging here is a recognition of two levels of existence in *Jude*, the second level being the consciously human world which overlaps that vast and "universal" Schopenhauerian landscape in both spatial and temporal terms. Kelly recognises that Hardy's use of ghosts is significant in *Jude*, seeing a relationship between these and Schopenhauerian aspects of human existence wherein Jude's imagination shows 'the human mind creating "for itself an imaginary world" and wasting "time and strength upon it"' in 'a "dreamlike staggering through the four ages of life and death"' (Kelly 237, citing Schopenhauer)¹¹. Kelly argues that '[w]hat Hardy believed and found reinforced

¹¹ Andrew Radford's argument shares similarities with Schweik and Kelly here, and the Schopenhauerian perspective of my own argument, in suggesting that 'the brutal therapy of

in Schopenhauer was the conviction that all individuals suffer from such illusive dreams because of their unquestioned, faulty perceptions about the nature of reality' (Kelly 237). Whilst Jude's relationship with the 'ghostly presences' (*Jude* II.i, 94) in his landscape do reflect these aspects of Schopenhauerian existence in terms of the blind forces of the universe and in Jude's imaginary constructions of reality, it is in Jude's own ghostly manifestation where the relationship between his aspirations and their failure is more clearly marked. This relates on one level to Schopenhauer's critique of the individual egoist who 'regards and treats only his own person as a real person, and all others as mere phantoms' (*WWI* II §19, 37) rather than material reality, affirming her or his own will to the extent that 'the same will manifest in another individual' (IV §62, 212) is denied. But on another level this also relates to Schopenhauer's critique of '*theoretical egoism*, which... holds all phenomena, excepting its own individual self to be phantoms' (II §19, 37, original emphasis). For Knoepfelmacher, Jude's occupation as a stonemason echoes his *own* 'obsolescence', evidenced in the inability to 'repair the ruins of an irretrievable past' (*Laughter* 215). Knoepfelmacher blames Jude for his 'stupid fancies' at 'see[ing], in a way, those spirits of the dead again', these being the recognition 'of the futility of all ideals' (215) after earlier being 'seduced by those bodiless voices that emanate from the walls of Christminster' (216). It is, however, Christminster's inability rather than Jude's, its 'extinct air' and 'rotten[.]... stones' are unable to measure up to 'modern thought' which it 'seemed impossible' to 'house... in such decrepit and superseded chambers' (*Jude* II.i, 94). This reality is of course ignored by Jude at this stage as it counteracts his imaginary ideal, but the key lies in the unenlightened and outmoded nature of the colleges showing that this ignorance is *mutual*, and it is here that Jude's own role as always already a ghost is most clearly signalled in Christminster. Jude is explicitly treated by the colleges and their inhabitants *as though he is a ghost* as they 'did not even see him, or hear him, rather saw through him as through a pane of glass at their familiars beyond' (II.ii, 102). This human blindness extends into their rejection of Jude from study by virtue of his class, advising him that 'as a working-man... you will have a much better chance of success in life

Time... fully awakens [Jude] from his enthrallment to dreams of "high" Christminster culture into prosaic concrete history... stripped of ameliorating vision' (203).

by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course' (II.vi, 140). Yet the novel explicitly recognises that Christminster relies on the labours of such as Jude to literally prop up its crumbling façade, Jude understanding his 'destiny' lay not within the colleges 'but among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied, *unrecognized as part of the city at all by its visitors and panegyrists*, yet without whose denizens the hard readers could not read nor the high thinkers live' (139, my emphasis). This recognises the one-way relationship the colleges impose, allowing Jude's skills to literally maintain the colleges' position whilst their exclusion of him as a prospective student maintains Jude's alienation from his aspirations to self-realisation, denying Jude as a working-class man his opportunity to study¹². At the same time the novel recognises that the colleges are redundant, alienating themselves from the real Christminster life with out-moded thinking which bears no relationship to the real people of the town (II.i, 94; II.vi, 141). Merryn and Raymond Williams term *Jude* 'perhaps Hardy's most devastating attack on established religion and the class system of his day', and points out the 'terrible indictment of the university' in the novel 'that it should ignore those who keep it going' (*Oxford* 58)¹³. Interestingly, Williams also notes the presence of sparse 'optimistic notes' in the novel, these being that in 'the future' working men may achieve their dream of education, arguing that 'Hardy feels keenly how much has been lost' (58) through Jude at the end of the novel, although he does not extend his discussion of these 'optimistic notes' further.

For Feuerbach, religion is a human construct which objectifies 'the *immediate object*, the *immediate nature*, of man' (*Essence* xxii, original emphasis) by converting human nature into the reified God-head as the salvatory aim, yet all along human nature is the true object of religion in disguised form, and human nature itself is therefore *divine* to the human (I, 30). Through religious dogma the human is alienated from realising its own "divine"

¹² Jude's social alienation begins much earlier than this, of course, from the beginning of the novel where his aunt is perpetually '[m]ore angry with Jude for demeaning her by coming there than for dereliction of duty' (*Jude* I.ii, 14), and she sees Christminster as 'much too good for you ever to have much to do with' (14), which leaves Jude 'feeling more than ever his existence to be an undemanded one' (15), and his devastation once he realises 'what shoddy humanity [Vilbert]... was made of' (I.iv, 29) shows Jude's sense of alienation even amongst his community, but the significance of this alienation extends into a wider social context as the novel progresses.

¹³ Geoffrey Harvey recognises 'the brutality of the social order', but argues that Jude merely demonstrates 'a naïve self-indulgen[ce]' which stems from his 'disillusion' (90).

essence, its “goodness”, its perfect self as, in the religious pursuit of salvation, the human is seeking to unify itself with God or Christ (reified and deified human nature) as unifying object *in place of* its own nature. By consciously recognising the true aim of the human as its own “divine” human nature instead of “God” then, the human can finally overcome this alienation and attain salvation (App. §3, 284). This occurs through a conscious “unification” of each individual with a sense of a shared goal of unity of human nature in the time and space of the species, a unification effected through the essential elements of human nature themselves, which are limited and imperfect in each individual but unlimited and perfect in the ‘infinite plenitude or multitude of different beings or individuals’ (I, 23) across the space and time of the species¹⁴. Feuerbachian species-consciousness offers salvation from human disunity or alienation in a teleological and spatial process of realisation wherein the universal human condition can be improved. This is a key distinction between Feuerbach and Schopenhauer, whose salvation is a temporary transcendence from a non-evolving but perpetually revolving cycle of misery from which individual suffering may be immediately relieved through ethical behaviour but the human condition itself cannot be changed on any level. Feuerbach also notes that not just religious but philosophical constructions of the human likewise alienate the individual human from its true nature, by obscuring its relationship with its true aim, and it is in his recognition of the form of human social constructs themselves which alienate the individual from their true nature and realisation that Feuerbach has pertinent implications for *Jude* on a number of levels, not just the religious.

Whilst Collins recognises that Jude is alienated in the novel, she argues that Jude deludes himself into believing that ‘self-expression is the only rhetoric worth listening to’, and this leads to a form of alienation through ‘self-absorption’, an ‘anti-social crime... committed by Jude... in his neurotic preoccupation with Christminster’ (11). Collins’ argument sets up a sense of friction between Jude and his community which blames his alienation on his own self-absorbed egoism, thus Jude is condemned by his own ‘anti-social’ (11) ego.

¹⁴ These human essences are: Reason, which is ‘the self-consciousness of the species’ (*Essence* App. §4, 285) and therefore relates to existences as parts of the whole, subsuming individual personality into species-consciousness; Affection, which is ‘the self-consciousness of individuality’ and therefore ‘has relation to existences... as persons’ (App. §4, 285); and Will, which for Feuerbach, is the ‘energy of character’ (I, 3) and is that through which we exert our human and individual character-as-object as well as moral influence: see Chapter 2 (50-52) above.

This argument misses both the ground and the significance of Jude's alienation, however, and blames Jude for his own failure¹⁵. With Jude's first recognition of the true extent of the external forces to which he is subject, he 'awoke from his dream' (*Jude* II.vi, 139), and it is an awakening which reflects a Feuerbachian consciousness of the alienation of the individual by the artificial constructs of social form. Here the divinity of God is the college system, placing itself as antithetical to Jude as a working-class man and positioning him as antithetical to realising a more educated self, whereas 'the antithesis of divine and human is... illusory' (Feuerbach *Essence* I, 13-14). As such, Jude's elevation of Christminster as the divine sum of his aspirations to a college education in '[t]he heavenly Jerusalem' (*Jude* I.iii, 18) falls into place, and reveals that it is the artificial system which alienates Jude from realising his potential. Jude's elevated aspirations show his natural human instinct for self-realisation, that 'yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to – for some place which he could call admirable' (24), reflecting Feuerbach's human whose aim is 'the conscious, voluntary, essential impulse of life' and which *itself* acts to effect 'the unity of the material and spiritual in the individual' (*Essence* V, 64). Jude is precluded from realising a more perfect Feuerbachian self in that consciousness of 'self-verification, self-affirmation, self-love, joy in one's own perfection' which 'is the characteristic mark of a perfect nature... exist[ing] only in a self-sufficing, complete being' (I, 6). It is not Jude's personal failing which is to blame, only belatedly recognising the reality of his situation in his subjection as alienated individual in this process, but the process itself, which operates whether or not Jude is conscious of its corporeal, psychological or philosophical significance. Jude's own aim follows social form on a number of levels, not just in echoing Phillotson's route but in his acceptance of the social beatification of Christminster as 'noble-minded' (*Jude* I.iii, 23), and in his wish to be 'a scholar' or 'a Christian divine' (I.v, 36). Christminster is unable to measure up to 'modern thought' (II.i, 94) because the colleges have not attained a contemporary Feuerbachian recognition of their culpability in this alienation process. As a result of his alienation, in respect of both his Christminster aspirations and his

¹⁵ Collins (98), Kelly (240-1) and Knoepfmacher *Laughter* (117-221, and 229) also blame Jude for his own failure. Garwood, on the other hand, argues that Jude is an individual who 'has reached the limit of his power of resistance to evil, and is blameless' (41) thus 'our protest' is aimed at 'the universal' (42) on a cosmic rather than individual or social scale.

relationship with Sue, Jude feels himself '[d]eprived of the objects of both intellect and emotion' in clearly Feuerbachian terms, and 'could not proceed to his work' (II.vii, 143).

Jude's self-recognition at Christminster is compounded by an encounter with other ghostly 'shades' (II.vi, 141) on the streets of the city. Gone are his imaginary ghosts of scholars and poets in the streets around the colleges, replaced by the ghostly 'shades' of real people like Jude, the landscape around him now 'literally teeming, stratified, with the shades of human groups, who had met there for tragedy, comedy, farce... for loving, hating, coupling, parting; had waited, had suffered, for each other' (141). These 'shades' echo those inhabiting Jude's early Schopenhauerian landscape in resonant terms, whilst also showing Jude's Feuerbachian alienation in accompanying his own spectral form and its subjection to the alienation of collegial Christminster. In his preclusion from realising his more perfect sense of self, his exalted aspirations being that 'conscious, voluntary, essential impulse of life' which acts to effect 'the unity of the material and spiritual in the individual' (Feuerbach *Essence* V, 64), Jude is precluded from full participation in real human existence, the colleges seeing 'through him as through a pane of glass at their familiars beyond' (*Jude* II.ii, 102). Jude's landscape is now haunted by the 'shades' of real people, the 'struggling men and women' who form 'the reality of Christminster' (II.vi, 141). The irony in *Jude* is clear: 'That was one of the humours of things. The floating population of students and teachers... were not Christminster in a local sense at all' (141), the colleges also alienating the ordinary inhabitants of the town. Later, however, the real inhabitants of the community will in turn alienate Jude from achieving his alternative aims in life, precluding that apotheosis of realisation which 'arises only in the love of man to man', therefore 'only in community' where 'man is related to his fellow-man as to himself... alive to the sorrows, the joys of another as his own' (Feuerbach *Essence* App. §2, 283) in significant terms. In the meantime, Jude's realisation shines 'a cold northern light' (*Jude* II.vi, 136) of reality onto his vision as he understands that he is as far away from being a part of 'the intellectual and spiritual granary of this country' (135) as ever. The message he writes beside the closed gates of the college resonates with bitter irony, epitomising the collegial alienation of him, both personally and as one of those working men without whom the colleges could not function. It also

recognises their ignorance as much as his emerging Feuerbachian consciousness: 'I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?' (142). Whilst the 'magic thread of fellow-feeling' (I.ii, 11) in *Jude* appears to be a Schopenhauerian ethic on one level, particularly in its all-encompassing scope and Jude's ethical recognition of his fellow-*sufferers*, its apparent invisibility to many of Jude's fellow-humans links directly to his role as a 'ghost' (II.i, 94) and leads Hardy's novel into Feuerbachian delineations of ethical salvation. The question is whether there is a sense in the novel in which a Feuerbachian social realisation is either imminent or possible. The question also extends into whether *Jude* urges that such a realisation is *desirable*, and it is in its delineations of the social form of marriage that this receives its most significant expression.

In Jude's marriage to Arabella, the novel lays the blame for Jude's 'entrap[ment]' (I.x, 79) on the socially-imposed criteria of their situation rather than Arabella's intent or actions. In this case, quasi-religious social morality is seen to determine that what is no more than a transient sexual desire should incur a life-sentence with one another regardless of whether those involved are suited to one another as companions. Jude terms the sexual urge a 'transitory instinct which had nothing in it of the nature of vice, and could only at the most be called weakness' (I.ix, 72), yet it reaps a 'life-long penalty' (I.x, 79) in 'a gin [trap] which would cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of a lifetime' (I.ix, 72). *Jude* indicts Jude's and Arabella's marriage as a life-sentence of suffering, the wedding ceremony itself is both undermined and culpable, being the place where these two young people 'swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks' (I.ix, 66) - an oath which is as 'remarkable' in its 'undertaking' as 'the fact that nobody seemed at all surprised at what they swore' (67). This undertaking explicitly entraps both Jude and Arabella into a permanent but grossly incompatible relationship which is effected and sanctioned by social form. Boumelha finds it a 'curious' anomaly that Jude's and Sue's 'exceptional relationship' should become the 'replica' of marriage as this shows that 'it is in the lived texture of the relationship that the oppression resides, and not in the small print of the contract' (447). Considered in a Feuerbachian philosophical framework, however, marriage is a religious-

sociological construct which posits marriage itself as the aim rather than a truly compatible relationship. Jude's relationship with Sue signals this recognition, and emphasises that their relationship *is* compatible, is not in itself oppressive, whilst also taking the Feuerbachian level much further.

Feuerbach's highest ideal of human society is where two persons (*I* and *thou*) provide 'the principle of multiplicity and all its essential results', the second person being 'the self-assertion of the human heart as the principle of duality, of participated life' (*Essence* VI, 68). Feuerbach's *I-thou* relationship affirms a positive sense of self and world as it confers meaning onto existence as, without the fellow human through whom one recognises that which is essentially the same and thus that which is essentially different, the world is meaningless (VIII, 82). This is because *reality, existence*, occurs only in the participation that is found in community (§25, 39), thus Jude's ghostly existence represents his alienation by social form on a number of levels. Feuerbachian *I-thou* participation is particularly exalted in terms of intimate male-female relations these are far more profound than 'the monotonous *thou* between friends' (IX, 92). In being self-consciously 'at once I and thou' (I, 2), love - the *essential* human element of Feeling - occupies the unifying aspect, which in Christianity is the position of the Holy Spirit in the Father-Son-Holy Ghost trinity¹⁶. Thus for Feuerbach *I-thou-love* (VI, 67) is the most perfect form of self-realisation. Yet in *Jude* this Feuerbachian ideal of *I-thou* participation is perverted in two respects. The first is the conflation of this *I-thou* ideal with the object of marriage, explicitly condemned for its lack of concern regarding the actual nature of the relationship being cemented (*Jude* I.xi, 81), its only concern being the upkeep of the narrow-minded constraints of social morality (IV.iv, 275-7). This is epitomised in the heavy irony of the marriage oath Jude and Arabella 'swore' (I.ix, 66) despite Arabella clearly having 'nothing in common' with Jude other than 'locality' (I.vii, 49), and despite that she is (like the colleges) 'quite antipathetic to' his character and aspirations, including his 'magnificent Christminster dream' (I.vi, 46). The second is the related issue of Sue as she forms Jude's perfect *thou*, there being an 'extraordinary sympathy, or similarity, between' them, so closely matched in character and temperament that they seem

¹⁶ Feeling or Affection is 'the self-consciousness of individuality' and therefore 'has relation to existences... as persons' (Feuerbach *Essence* App. §4, 285).

to be 'one person split in two!' (IV.iv, 274). Further, Sue also effects the novel's Feuerbachian consciousness on two fundamental levels, and the significance of Sue as Jude's 'social salvation' (VI.iii, 423) encompasses both of these aspects, as will become clear.

The necessary role that hope plays in Jude's ability to carry on functioning in life is crucial as, without having the hope of his relationship with Sue to sustain him, Jude's aspirations shift from the failed hope of academia in the 'city of light' (I.iii, 24) towards the equally false light of the Church, in desperate need for 'any kind of hope to support me!' (II.vii, 150) to prevent himself sliding into despair. Jude is a 'shabby and *lonely*' figure, alienated within and by his own society but 'cheered' (III.i, 154, my emphasis) once more by a new vision: that the life of a 'humble curate... might have a touch of goodness and greatness in it', that it 'might be true religion, and a purgatorial course worthy of being followed by a remorseful man' (153) (a 'purgatorial course' which also alienates human nature of course). Yet it is the intervention of 'human interest', in the form of Sue once more, which acts as the motive for Jude to leave a 'stagnant time' of odd-job employment back at Marygreen (and his position 'as a social failure' to its inhabitants) and pursue 'the most spiritual and self-sacrificing' course of 'reading up Divinity' (154) in Melchester - where Sue is now studying for her teaching qualifications. It is another significant process which sees Jude's new ideal of religion dissipate into what the narrative already recognises as a false consciousness, however, religious constructs being nothing but 'a dim light and [a] baffling glare' (II.iii, 198) and a 'distraction' (II.vii, 143) in explicitly Feuerbachian terms. Jude is constantly left alienated with all the 'painful details' of 'his awakening to a sense of his limitations' (II.vi, 139), 'convinced' of his own worthlessness and 'that he was at bottom a vicious character, of whom it was hopeless to expect anything' (II.vii, 143) just as '[t]he holy is a reproach to my sinfulness' (Feuerbach *Essence* I, 28). For Feuerbach, in the holy:

I recognise myself as a sinner; but in so doing, while I blame myself, I acknowledge what I am not, but ought to be... I can perceive sin as sin, only when I perceive it to be a contradiction of myself with myself - that is, of my personality with my fundamental nature. (28)

Already left feeling 'as if he had awakened in hell... "the hell of conscious failure", both in ambition and in love' once he has lost both Sue and his

Christminster dream, Jude is left 'in misery' and isolation as a 'mournful wind blew through the trees' (*Jude* II.vii, 149). His subsequent loss of religious faith is a direct result of his love for Sue as his feelings for her cannot be suppressed. Whilst his love for Sue is 'the purest thing in his life', it is an 'unlicensed tenderness' which automatically leaves Jude 'condemned *ipso facto*' by his religion and, most significantly 'as unfit... by nature, as he had been by social position, to fill the part of a propounder of accredited dogma' (IV.iii, 259). With Sue, Jude finds 'the human [is] more powerful in him than the Divine' (IV.i, 246), and realises at last that his 'point of bliss is not upward, but here' (IV.v, 283).

Whilst both Feuerbach and Schopenhauer see sexual love as an essential object of life, for Feuerbach the male-female relationship affirms the "essence" which is 'thy whole principle' (*Essence* IX, 92) in overtly positive terms, engendering the most perfect form of *I-thou* realisation¹⁷. In this respect Jude's relationships with Arabella and Sue, rather than simply representing polarised stereotypical representations of femininity (base sexuality vs. idealised angel), appear to delineate Schopenhauerian sexuality and Feuerbachian *I-thou* salvation respectively in resonant terms, even down to the emergence of Little Father Time as the perpetuity of suffering that Schopenhauerian sexuality engenders on the one hand, and Jude's recognition of Sue as 'almost a divinity' (*Jude* III.iii, 174) and as his 'social salvation' (VI.iii, 423) on the other. Schopenhauerian will-to-life has a significant bearing on Arabella's and Jude's relationship, in terms of Schopenhauerian sexuality as well as Schopenhauerian unethical egoism. Yet Arabella's artificiality (I.ix, 68), emphasised from the moment she first enters Jude's life when she creates artificial dimples in her cheeks (I.vi, 43) to the end of his life when she tricks him into a second marriage (VI.vii, 452-7), sets up a

¹⁷ For Schopenhauer, the sexual impulse of the will-to-life also affirms and perpetuates the *essence*, the will, but in also perpetuating the existence of suffering, it is not therefore to be welcomed philosophically-speaking (although he does concede the possibility of a positive, even *happy*, male-female relationship: the will-to-life fools individuals into believing they will be happy together, thus, once the 'genius of the species achieves its object' (*WWR* "Metaphysics" 553) and the sexual urge has been fulfilled, 'everyone who is in love finds himself duped' (540) as the reality of their incompatibility becomes apparent. Although 'happy marriages are rare', it is the case that 'passionate sexual love is sometimes associated with... real friendship based on harmony of disposition, which nevertheless often appears only when sexual love proper is extinguished in its satisfaction. That friendship will then often spring from the fact that the... physical, moral, and intellectual qualities of the two individuals, from which arose the sexual love... [for a child to be produced] are also related to one another with reference to the individuals themselves... and thereby form the basis of a harmony of dispositions' (558).

dynamic between nature and social form which shows another significant Feuerbachian relationship, and which cements Sue's role as Jude's perfect *thou*.

Jude only discovers Arabella's counterfeit "nature" in gradual stages, beginning on their wedding night and the revelation that some of her hair is a wig, Jude's 'distaste for her' (I.ix, 68) starting at this point. Arabella is somehow both Schopenhauerian sexuality but also in a key sense counterfeit, her 'unvoiced call' (I.vi, 44) of sexuality is juxtaposed with her scheming, trickery and subterfuge to lure Jude into marriage, and it is evident that this is a practised norm amongst her social circle (I.vii, 56-7). Arabella admits her 'mistake[]' (I.ix, 69) about the pregnancy to her friend but not to Jude, even though she claims he would not care - although the crucial factor here is that Arabella recognises that even if Jude did care he is trapped by social form because 'Married is married' (69). Once Arabella has admitted the truth of the matter to Jude (at the same time he realises even the dimples in her cheeks are counterfeit), he recognises the cause and extent of his entrapment in the same terms. Jude does not blame Arabella for the 'gin' trap which would 'cripple' them 'for the rest of a lifetime' (I.ix, 72), but the consciousness of an iniquitous and binding social contract which is itself counterfeit to both common sense *and nature*:

Illuminated with the sense that it was all over between them... [Jude] stood still, regarding her. Their lives were ruined, he thought; ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable. (I.xi, 81)

His fleeting sexual attraction for Arabella is no basis for a lasting relationship, separated from any connection between their individual characters and aspirations, and from their essential *natures*. The recognition of marriage as a construct *contra* human nature is clear and, as Lennart Björk recognises, Hardy articulates similar views to Shelley on love and marriage in *Jude*, suggesting that "Love withers under constraint; its very essence is liberty... A husband and wife ought to continue united only so long as they love each other" (Shelley quoted Björk "Reading" 105¹⁸). Jude's aunt echoes Shelley's emphasis whilst also suggesting that genealogy and nature are equally "to blame": another potentially ambiguous conflict between causes but with a key emphasis. She recognises the

¹⁸ Percy Shelley Note V.189 from 'Notes on *Queen Mab*'.

institution of marriage itself as at least part of the problem, but combined with a fundamental incompatibility in the Fawleys' who are unable to 'take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound' (*Jude* I.xi, 82). Both Jude and Sue are less likely *by their very natures* to fit easily into the social mould of marriage, yet clearly the 'extraordinary sympathy' (IV.iv, 274) between them is seen as both natural and moral by the narrative, including Phillotson's instinctive 'convictions on the rightness of his course' (IV.iii, 428) in releasing Sue. This is in direct contradiction with social morality, a 'logically' and 'religiously' termed 'received opinion' which fears 'general domestic disintegration' (IV.iv, 275-7) if the prescribed and proscribing rules are not adhered to. Jude's consciousness of his and Arabella's plight simultaneously reflects the genuine compatibility of his relationship with Sue, identifying those very 'affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable' (I.xi, 81) that he shares with 'the one affined soul he had ever met' (II.vii, 143), he and Sue 'almost the two parts of a single whole' (V.v, 347). Jude is prevented from making his feelings clear to Sue during their early relationship because he initially sees himself as still married to Arabella (despite their separation), and this is Jude's 'hopeless, handicapped love' (II.v, 130), 'tied and bound' (II.vi, 133) to Arabella even though their incompatibility is obvious and essentially unchanging. In the conflict between forces in *Jude* there is a dynamic between nature and other forces which recognises nature in both Schopenhauerian negative *and* Feuerbachian positive terms. Kelly recognises "natural law" in *Jude* as Schopenhauerian on the whole, seeing it to be as much Jude's enemy as social forces because 'Nature's logic' is that which becomes 'the scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions' (*Jude* 15 and 249, cited Kelly 240). Kelly recognises that social 'mores and superstitions' also have an influence on Jude and Sue, however, in 'adding to their difficulties, hindering their struggle, *fighting natural law*' (241, my emphasis). Kelly does not follow this point further, yet it is clear that the role of Nature is dual in *Jude*, having the negative elements of a 'Nature's law' which is 'mutual butchery' (*Jude* V.vi, 366) and positive elements in Jude and Sue's natural suitedness to one another (V.v, 347). Significantly, these positive elements in nature are crucial to Phillotson's recognition of a *natural law* which is 'right, and just, and moral' (V.viii, 377), *this* being his motive in freeing Sue from their first marriage. The social opposition to 'natural

law' is the most significantly damaging force to which Jude and Sue are subject, indeed, society actually creates Jude and Sue's struggle and final tragedy. Hardy's emphasis on the idea of a natural 'moral' law which is inherently 'right, and just' (377) is a natural "truth" which is set against social and religious dogma¹⁹. As such, natural impulses are rendered negative in the consequences society imposes upon them, which includes sexuality. *Jude's* recognition of Nature is Schopenhauerian in the destruction of the ephemeral individual wrought by the will-to-life in time, but is taken into Feuerbachian territory in significant terms in the alienation of nature and the individual effected by the artificial constructs of social form. It is in Sue that the positive of Nature is most significant.

A trick of the light in Sue's photograph suggests to Jude that she is 'radiating... the rays of a halo' (II.i, 92), and when he first sees her she appears to him as a 'light... slight... half-visionary form' (II.ii, 106-7). Sue is someone 'for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness' (II.iii, 109) before they even meet, Jude's imagination again leading to a false perception but crucially, this is of Sue's opinions rather than of her *essential* character. Jude comes to idealise Sue in the same way he does Christminster, and she echoes his vision of that city in also being associated with 'light' (II.ii, 106) and ethereal insubstantiality. Yet Sue also echoes Will Ladislaw in *Middlemarch* in one key respect here as Sue's light is an *essential* part of her nature, unlike other visions of light for Jude which are always chimerical. Jude's central misconceptions of Sue are related to her beliefs, and it is these which not only reveal to Jude Sue's true nature outside of his preconceptions of her but, significantly, reveal to Jude 'the defective real' (99) of his existence. Despite the loss of Jude's ambitions in respect of both Christminster and the Church, the biggest blow of all is still the loss of Sue as with her 'as companion he could have renounced his ambitions with a smile' (II.vi, 139). It is the nature of his relationships with others which is most important, but with Sue in particular, she being his 'one affined soul' (II.vii, 143), their role as 'almost the two parts of a single whole' (V.v, 347) reflecting

¹⁹ Phillotson argues: 'I know I can't logically, or religiously, defend my concession to such a wish as hers; or harmonize it with the doctrines I was brought up in... I know one thing: something within me tells me I am doing wrong in refusing her' (*Jude* IV.v, 275). Interestingly, this implicitly Feuerbachian consciousness is also given a Schopenhauerian ethic in Phillotson's recognition that 'it is wrong to so torture a fellow-creature... and I won't be the inhuman wretch to do it, cost what it may' (ibid.).

the perfect Feuerbachian *I-thou* relationship, Jude seeing ‘in her almost a divinity’ (III.iii, 174). The two as individuals are incomplete, alienated, and are only unified in their mutual relationship as equals, as comrades (III.iv, 183), their unity-through-Feeling is clear as ‘there was ever a second silent conversation passing between their emotions, so perfect was the reciprocity between them’ (IV.i, 242) representing their *I-thou-love* (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 67). Their emotions and natures are *essentially* compatible, emphasising a positive truth in nature and their relationship, having ‘an unpremeditated instinct’ for one another and being alike in ‘heart’ and ‘feelings’ *but not* in ‘head’ and ‘thoughts’ (*Jude* IV.i, 240-1). In this the significance of Sue being less like Jude in ‘thoughts’ (241) shows the extent to which their relationship is Feuerbachian. Sue’s ‘intellect’ is to Jude’s ‘like a star to a benzoline lamp’, seeing ‘all *my* superstitions as cobwebs that she could brush away with a word’ (VI.x, 480, original emphasis). Sue’s radical religious and social beliefs reveal to Jude the full extent of ‘the defective real’ (II.ii, 99) of his existence. It is Sue who ‘haunt[s]’ Jude, finally prompting ‘his latent intent’ (II.i, 92) to go to Christminster at last, and there Jude finds ‘the spirit of Sue’ seems ‘to hover round him’, preventing him from seeking solace with the local women ‘who made advances’ (II.vi, 142) to him, emphasising her role as his “spiritual” soul-mate in contrast with the Arabellas of the purely sexual world. Sue’s ethereal nature in her role as ‘spirit’ (142) also signifies her role as Jude’s ‘social salvation’ (VI.iii, 423) and places her emphatically in the role of Feuerbachian species-consciousness. This is the key significance of Sue’s *spectral* quality, presented as an essential element in her nature alongside her intense sensitivity and animated *feeling*.

Sue is ethereal, light, spirit, insubstantiality, ‘a phantasmal, bodiless creature’ with ‘little animal passion’ thus able to ‘act upon reason’ (V.i, 308-9). Yet she has a sensitive nature (II.v, 127-8) and ‘nervous temperament’ (II.iii, 111) but, most crucially, she is dominated by her strength of feeling as she is ‘so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling’ (II.iv, 122). Feeling is the unifying human essence through which *I-thou-love* salvation is attained (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 67) as feeling ‘is the essential organ of religion, the nature of God is nothing else than an expression of the nature of feeling’ (1, 9), and Jude finds his ‘bliss’ in ‘her company’ (*Jude* III.i, 157). At the same

time, Sue's *already*-Feuerbachian consciousness effects his own awakening. Sue is a 'negation' of 'civilization' (III.iv, 176) in her recognition of the artificial social constructs of 'gender' (179); the obliteration of 'ecstatic, natural, human love' by the 'ecclesiastical abstractions' of religion (182); the bifurcation of natural ethics and social morality (IV.ii, 256; v, 286); and the intellectual and educational ignorance of Christminster. It is Sue who recognises that Jude is 'one of the very men... intended for... college[]' with his 'passion for learning', yet she sees him 'elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons' (III.iv, 181). Jude's and Sue's relationship offers the possibility, the desirability, of attaining self-realisation through the unified consciousness of 'self-verification, self-affirmation, self-love' which 'is the characteristic mark of a perfect nature... exist[ing] only in a self-sufficing, complete being' (*Essence* I, 6). Sue is Feuerbachian species-essence, the spirit of humanity, shown by her natural and perfect compliment to Jude, her nature as sensitivity and feeling epitomising Feuerbach's most perfect *I-thou* relationship. Sue is the genuine light of unfettered human nature whose 'soul' (*Jude* VI.iii, 419) and 'intellect' both 'sparkle[] like diamonds' (IV.iv, 274), representing Jude's 'social salvation' (VI.iii, 423) as he represents her own, and effecting his – and the novel's – emerging Feuerbachian consciousness.

Sue's role as the Feuerbachian consciousness of the novel extends from Jude's potential self-realisation in *I-thou-love* into his intellectual awakening, and beyond this in Sue's own physical and psychological illustration of the damage artificial social constructs effect on the alienated individual. This first makes an appearance when Sue has been living and studying at the women's teaching college where Jude finds her 'subdued', with a change in 'her curves of motion' which have become 'clipped and pruned by severe discipline' (III.i, 157)²⁰. This denotes the impacts that social constraints are already having on Sue which gradually crush her vital human nature, although as yet her association with light remains, its 'under-brightness shining through from the depths which that discipline had not yet been able to reach' (157), emphasising it as an essential and positive part of her nature. This is why of all forms of light in the novel

²⁰ See also J. S. Mill regarding the coercion of woman's nature by social forces in *Subjection*, 21. Hardy says in a letter to Florence Henniker in September 1895 that he intends to 'get Mill's *Subjection of Women* – which I do not remember ever reading' (Hardy *Selected* 98).

Sue's is natural and genuine rather than false, and directly relates to her as 'spirit' (II.vi, 142), the 'divinity' (III.iii, 174) of *I-thou-love* (Feuerbach *Essence* VI, 67) effected through 'feeling' (*Jude* II.iv, 122). Sue encompasses Jude's compliment of human nature, the essence of the species before the alienation of this in the individual by the artificial constraints of social and religious forces. This is emphasised most clearly in her gradual subjection to those very forces explicitly showing the destruction these effect on human nature, as 'the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns' (IV.i, 245).

It is social form that effects Jude's and Sue's tragedy. Whilst Jude's desire for his relationship with Sue to be fully intimate - despite Sue's reluctance - leads Jude to coerce Sue through her jealousy of Arabella (V.ii, 314), he eventually realises that they 'ought to have lived in mental communion, and no more' (VI.iii, 422), emphasising their relationship as more profound than "merely" sexual²¹. Yet even had he recognised it earlier and they had remained celibate, it would have made *no difference* to their treatment at the hands of the wider community. Social form only recognises their relationship in sexual terms, thus society already condemns their co-habitation even despite their initial celibacy. Sue's recognition that social morality has 'limited' 'views of the relations of man and woman' as '[t]heir philosophy only recognises relations based on animal desire' (III.vi, 200-1) is significant here on two levels. Social determinism impacts on Sue both physically and psychologically, as on one level she could be seen to end the novel 'psychologically trapped, trying to fit mind, spirit, and sexuality into a prescribed script' because neither she nor they can 'look beyond the parameters of the acceptable' (Rich, "Heterosexuality" 165). The more crucial issue here, however, is that Sue's final collapse and return to Phillotson after the deaths of the children denotes her inability to battle against a hostile society any longer in both individual and *philosophical* terms. In Sue's *volte-face* 'her bereavement seemed to have destroyed her reasoning faculty' (*Jude* VI.iv, 432), and her repentance takes on the full force of religious and moral

²¹Jude understands that Sue's 'natural instincts' are 'perfectly healthy; not quite so impassioned, perhaps, as I could wish; but... the most ethereal, least sensual woman I ever knew to exist without inhuman sexlessness' (*Jude* VI.iii, 412).

constructions – and thus alienation of – the human. Echoing Jude's own psychological alienation earlier, Sue feels herself to be 'wicked' (431), the deaths of her 'sin-begotten' children forming 'the first stage of my purification' (435), and she progresses into an appalling capitulation to the 'fanatic prostitution' (432) of marriage (an explicitly coercive expectation regardless of the desires of the parties involved, *Jude* taking a clearly radical position in respect of the institution of marriage)²². Radford argues that 'the stark irony of a once "freethinking" New Woman wearily capitulating to the ceaseless excoriation of a religious mania' suggests that the 'approved acts of penance, far from being hallmarks of a proud "Christian" community, are an atavistic throwback to a superstitious and barbaric past' (205). Robert Schweik argues, however, that in both *Tess* and *Jude* Hardy is 'particularly concerned with the inimical relationship of religious mores to human lives... in contexts which suggest that Christianity is a pervasive hindrance to the fulfilment of human aspiration' (56), although Schweik does not pursue this further. In *Jude*, whilst the issue of Christian teachings having a malign influence is a Feuerbachian position, this clearly extends beyond the terms of religion into all other artificial social constructs, and explicitly terms Christian and social morality barbarous. This culminates in Sue's adoption of the Christian moral code of self-punishment after the children have died, but also her capitulation to the iniquitous imprisonment of marriage where Sue's all-embracing and appalling submission has corporeal, psychological and philosophical implications for the alienating constructions of social form which resonate throughout the novel.

Jude understands that marriage has the capacity to render a person 'squashed up and digested... in its vast maw as an atom which has no further individuality' (*Jude* III.ix, 226), and only later recognises how social determination against individuality has the capacity to reduce both himself and Sue in those same terms, whether inside or outside marriage and whether

²² Hardy's stance regarding marriage in *Jude* extends to a number of radical levels: Sue terms her marital predicament regarding her physical aversion to Phillotson something that 'I daresay... happens to lots of women; only they submit, and I kick... When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what *will* they say!' (*Jude* IV.ii, 256, original emphasis); Sue also argues that 'in a proper state of society, the father of a woman's child will be as much a private matter of hers as the cut of her under-linen, on whom nobody will have any right to question her' (IV.v, 286). Ingham recognises that Hardy 'held advanced views on the role of women in society' which 'were such that they shocked even those arguing for allowing women to vote' (23).

concerning education, aspirations, religion or relationships. Whilst it is Sue who now argues that 'the Power above us has been vented upon us... and we must submit' (VI.iii, 409), the irony here is on a number of levels. Sue and Jude have now 'mentally travelled in opposite directions' (411) since the deaths of the children. Jude is no longer 'full of the superstitions of his beliefs' and now understands that the 'exercise of forethought on the part of a ruling Power' (III.i, 156) is on social terms, their fate determined by the power of a society hostile to their 'actual shapes' (IV.i, 245) on every level. Sue's complete reversal now accepts that higher external Power she earlier condemns as a social construct, *contra* Jude who now understands it is 'only... men and senseless circumstance' (VI.iii, 410). The oscillation between social and essential forces in Sue's breakdown nonetheless emphasises the senselessness apparent in the dictates of social form throughout, as 'Nature's law and *raison d'être* that we should be joyful in what instincts she has afforded us... civilization had taken upon itself to thwart' (VI.ii, 405). Sue's 'self-sacrifice' (VI.i, 441) emphasises the damage the social moral order inflicts on the individual, the details of her subjection demonstrating the appalling impact of those artificial constructs as much as Jude's refusal to submit, raging 'in his mental agony... [with] terribly profane language about social conventions' (VI.x, 480) which he now recognises have destroyed them both. All along Sue has presented a Feuerbachian consciousness in the novel, most emphatically in her intellectual recognition of the false but coercive constructs of social form, in her positive human nature and *I-thou-love* unity in her relationship with Jude, and finally in showing the terrible devastation the crushing of the individual's 'actual shape' (IV.i, 245) effects in material, psychological and social terms. On one level 'neither the woman praised for reducing herself to a brood animal nor the woman scorned and penalized as an "old maid"... has had any real autonomy or selfhood to gain from this subversion of the female body (and hence the female mind)' (Rich, *Woman* 35). But on another level this ought to recognise that 'the man [is] the other victim... the helpless transmitter of the pressure put upon him' (*Jude* V.iv, 342), and further, that the destruction of them both has been effected by the 'oppressive atmosphere' which 'encircle[s] their souls' (V.vi, 355) - an oppression wrought by 'the virtuous' (VI.iv, 428) in their community all along.

Throughout the novel, Jude and Sue are subject to the contemporaneous forces of essential determinism and social form, but the narrative recognition of where the culpability for the tragedy lies and how this is effected remains the only means of redress: salvation from this tragedy can only be realised through consciousness of the true cause and effect. Jude implores Sue not to 'do an immoral thing for moral reasons! You have been my social salvation. Stay with me for humanity's sake!' (VI.iii, 423), their relationship with one another the key to their salvation and escape from despair, but clearly having implications beyond their own individual lives. That Jude's and Sue's Feuerbachian *I-thou* consciousness represents their means to salvation is exemplified at the end of the novel. Here even Arabella understands the significance of their relationship, knowing that Sue 'may swear on her knees to the holy cross... till she's hoarse, but... [s]he's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's [as dead] as he is now!' (VI.xi, 490).

Social dogma and the social alienation of human nature not only play a significant role in the destruction of Sue and Jude at the end of the novel, but in the deaths of the children as will be discussed further shortly, effecting the subsequent disintegration of Sue and her relationship with Jude. In their subjection to the Schopenhauerian will-to-life in Nature *and* the dictates of society, it is human agency and social form which refuses all of them their due portion. Jude believes '[t]here is enough for us all' (I.ii, 11), reflecting a consciously human ethic which other individuals choose to ignore. Troutham is just one character in the novel who does not consider other manifestations of the will-to-life (whether human or animal) in even remotely compassionate terms, his sympathy extending only as far as his wallet and his own prestige, beating Jude for his "dissent" whilst himself being responsible for subscribing to 'the brand new church tower' which echoes back the blows Jude receives from him 'to testify [Troutham's] love for God and man' (12)²³. Jude's sympathy extends itself to all manifestations of life as 'the suffering which he sees in others touches him almost as closely as his own', including 'the whole of nature, and hence he will not cause suffering even to an animal' (Schopenhauer *WWI* IV §66, 235).

²³ Siebenschuh discounts critical readings of Jude in Troutham's field from both the perspectives of a critique of 'human life wholly subject to the control of nature', *and* as the 'painful lesson... of the way his instincts will be in conflict with society's customs and rules' (778), here discussing Peter Casagrande, *Unity in Hardy: "Repetitive Symmetries"* in particular.

Arabella recognises what she ought to do regarding Jude but chooses her own selfish ends over others' needs in every respect, even despite her later 'spiritual' and 'social superiority' (*Jude* V.vii, 372). Phillotson is ethically aware but gradually closes his mind to this 'magic thread of fellow-feeling' (I.ii, 11), showing it is a choice in *Jude*. Yet crucially, Phillotson's own *volte-face* has, like Sue's, come about as a direct result of social form, his own suffering 'at the hands of the virtuous' has been 'almost beyond endurance', including that he has 'nearly starved' (VI.iv, 428) because of it. Social coercion is the driving force behind his change of mind, Phillotson recognising in the end that 'artifice was necessary... for stemming the cold and inhumane blast of the world's contempt' (428). By 'getting Sue back and re-marrying her on the respectable plea of having entertained erroneous views of her... he might acquire some comfort, resume his old courses, perhaps return to the Shaston school, if not even to the Church as a licentiate' (428). The episode in Troutham's field in a sense pre-empted the later exclusion of Jude and Sue and their children from their due portion by society's condemnatory "morality". It is clear that Jude and Sue are not inherently destructive as it is the social determination of sexuality/morality which destroys their relationship, their children, and their lives. Jude's finally self-destructive behaviour only becomes his predominant impulse once he has lost Sue as she is his only true hope, his genuine 'light' (II.ii, 106) of 'salvation' (VI.iii, 423). This also has repercussions '[f]or humanity's sake' (423) as impulses in *Jude* only *become* destructive when they are explicitly acting against social and religious dogma, rather than being inherently destructive in themselves. The issue of Jude's sexual desire for Arabella is a case in point as it is the institution of marriage which carries the penalty rather than sexual desire itself or the consummation of that desire. Whilst it is clear that many of Jude's and Sue's impulsive actions ultimately prove to be destructive, the recognition that it is social and religious dogma that renders them destructive is a crucial distinction, and this has significant implications for all of those 'actual shapes' of individual humanity 'civilization' is trying to fit into its 'social moulds' (IV.i, 245).

Jude's perpetual return to his "fatal" landscape emphasises it as the ground upon which his life's labours are enacted, the beginning and end of his hopes and dreams, from his early role as a scarecrow to his central role as his 'own ghost'

(II.i, 94) alienated from self-realisation, to his final, “suicidal” journey. Jude’s destruction is effected by human actions upon his aspirations in all instances, *contra* readings that the tragedy is driven by blind fate or Jude’s ‘self-destructive’ impulses (Collins 168). Whilst Jude’s own journey closely echoes the other ‘ghostly presences’ haunting his early landscape - the historically and spatially transient Schopenhauerian life-cycle of his forebears and his fellow human creatures - his own presence as ‘almost his own ghost’ (*Jude* II.i, 94) represents his alienation on a key Feuerbachian level, human agency and social rather than essential determinism effecting his and Sue’s destruction. That Jude does not die out in that desolate Marygreen landscape, returning from his final meeting with Sue, prevents his death from attaining any sense of heroic or transcendent meaning²⁴. This highlights it as an unnecessary and pointless tragedy whilst his lonely death, abandoned by Arabella and raging against social conventions’ (VI.x, 480), ensures that the cause and thus the only redress for his alienation is emphasised. Significantly, Sue and Phillotson echo Jude’s spectral form towards the end of the novel. Sue’s alienation is complete: she is reduced to ‘a figure mov[ing] through the white fog’ (IV.iii, 430) in a haunting echo of Jude’s recognition of himself as ‘his own ghost’ earlier (II.i, 94), and her remarriage to Phillotson ‘was like a re-enactment by the ghosts of their former selves’ (VI.v, 442), Phillotson’s own victory a hollow one. The destruction of their lives, their natural humanity, is complete: ‘the self-assertion of the human heart’ that is ‘the principle of duality, of participated life’ (*Essence* VI, 68) and their ‘whole principle’ (IX, 92) has been destroyed.

Hardy’s novel clearly has a close relationship with Schopenhauerian delineations of existence in the non-moral universe of blind forces and of essential character, but also in the ethics of Jude’s all-inclusive *I-thou* sympathy triggered by the consciousness of a shared existence in a suffering world. Equally, *Jude* also recognises that this ethical recognition is not enough in the broader framework where social form is effecting its own coercive pressures to uphold the social moral order. Even here, however, Feuerbachian *I-thou*

²⁴ Radford also recognises that Hardy refuses to elevate Jude’s death to ‘heroic’ (204) status here (*contra* Bates (469) see Chapter 6 (190-1) above), although Radford’s own focus is largely on the role of Time as that which awakens Jude ‘from his enthrallment to dreams... into prosaic concrete reality... stripped of ameliorating vision’ (204).

sympathy is pretty much a pointless framework in personal and individual terms if *thou* is not playing ball. The ineffectiveness of Jude's own anti-egoism recognises the severe limitations of this as a means to salvation when the ethical individual remains subject to the restrictive practices of social form, as Phillotson epitomises. Jude's ethical sympathy is thus prevented from contributing anything to his or anyone else's salvation. Hardy's novel recognises that something more than individual consciousness and individual acts of justice and compassion are needed, and it is the narrative engagement with a Feuerbachian recognition of social form which is the key.

III. *Overlapping circles: 'Nature's logic' and the crippling 'gin trap'.*

Jude engages with a complex series of philosophical positions throughout the novel, raising questions of human place and destiny, of human consciousness and human relations, individual and society, existential time and place, and of progressive evolution and stagnation. Jude's decision to 'battle with his evil star' and follow his dream of going to Christminster is seen in conjunction with a 'faint halo' on the horizon, which is of such a 'small dim nebulousness' it is 'hardly recognizable save by the eye of faith' (*Jude* I.xi, 87). Yet the question of faith in the future is still a possibility which is identifiable within the framework of the novel, albeit one which can only be effected outside of the novel itself. Jude's aspirations appear doomed to failure from the start, the conditions of his existence subject to an omniscient predestiny outside of human intervention on one level yet revealed to be not only within the remit of, but directly affected by, human agency and the restrictions of social form on another. Jude's questioning of himself – that 'surely his plan should be to move onward through good and ill – to avoid morbid sorrow even though he did see ugliness in the world?' (I.xi, 87) engages with a teleological progressivism at the same time it undermines this by foregrounding a pessimistic world-view, the emphasis on the pessimistic 'ill', 'morbid sorrow', and 'ugliness in the world' far outweighing the more optimistic 'onward' and 'good'. At the same time his decision is given an ethical framework in a Spinozan intention 'to do good cheerfully' (87), albeit this cheerfulness seems ironically – even farcically - out of place in this context. Jude's decision here appears to be a choice between the pessimism of morbidity and an explicitly optimistic philosophy, and he makes decisions fed by his 'eye of faith' (87) until he loses all hope with Sue's final return to Phillotson – a return effected by Sue's internalisation of the condemnation of religious and social strictures regarding the rules of engagement in human relations.

Roger Robinson argues that Hardy tended towards 'depressive revelations such as Darwin's' (130), and that he is nowhere more Darwinian than in the chronological and physical landscape which diminish his characters (131). It is here where Darwinian evolution extends into the evolution of our emotions and sensitivity particularly which provides the 'tragic dimension in all this' (Robinson 132). Arabella has an 'unreflecting acceptance of life and her own

place in it' and she is '[l]iving entirely for the present... without compunction', and thus she 'accepts the reality of the struggle for survival with matter-of-fact self-interest' (134). In *Jude and Sue*, however, Robinson argues that 'Hardy takes... his concept of the over-evolution of sensitivity' (134) further as the 'especial pathos of their situation is that they not only suffer themselves, but suffer with others' sufferings' (134). Robinson recognises that Jude's sympathetic nature 'is helpless against Arabella's self-interest', seeing Jude and Sue's 'sensitivity part of a still-continuing evolution towards yet greater pain' (134). Robinson relates this idea of evolution to Sue's reflections on why she and Jude should not marry, Sue claiming that '[e]verybody is getting to feel as we do. We are a little beforehand, that's all' (*Jude* V.iv, 341). Knoepflmacher also notes this issue although finds that Sue's suggestion that 'she and Jude are "beforehand"' is an 'inability to adapt', and this leads to 'Jude [dying] from the burden of an excessive self-consciousness' (*Laughter* 212-13)²⁵. Whilst these examinations are from a Darwinian perspective and elucidate a number of pertinent arguments, there are a number of issues here which are at least as relevant to Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian positions, including ethical sympathy. The key issue, however, is that the novel is concerned here with the lack of "evolution" *in social form* in respect of public morals regarding male-female relationships and marriage, quite apart from the evolutionary development of other social forms such as the education and religious systems. In respect of other evolutionary ideas, Eduard von Hartmann's philosophical development of Schopenhauerian thinking is a pertinent consideration in respect of the figure of Little Father Time. Robinson takes his own point on to include Little Time as an 'even more abnormal' evolution of the 'sensitivity which torments and finally destroys Jude and Sue' (134), embodying a Darwinian 'extreme of evolutionary pessimism' (135) which represents 'the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live' (*Jude* VI.ii, 402 cited Robinson 135). Knoepflmacher largely echoes this critique, seeing Jude as 'a victim', not of 'the incomprehension of society or

²⁵ Gillian Beer, on the other hand, sees Hardy's relationship with Darwin as more complex, finding that he 'shared with Darwin that delight in material life in its widest diversity, the passion for particularity, and for individuality and plenitude which is the counter-element in Darwin's narrative and theory' (240). Yet Beer goes on to argue that '[t]he death of the children... leaves Jude and Sue as aberrant, without succession, and therefore "monstrous" in the sense that they can carry no cultural or physical mutations into the future and must live out their lives merely at odds with the present' (240).

of obsolete marriage laws, but of his creator's dim view of an existence drained of all hope, an existence governed by natural forces that "obscure" all noble action and devastate men like pigs' (*Laughter* 221). Knoepfmacher argues that the pessimistic unconscious universe is the sole driving force in *Jude* (226)²⁶. Collins also sees Little Time as less evolutionary and more a 'resurrected... grotesque caricature' of Tess's earlier position as 'unwanted chaff in the scheme of things', an implicitly Schopenhauerian construct who 'discharges his family obligations by hanging all the children "because we are too menny"' (128). In Sue and Arabella reflecting philosophical aspects of nature vs. artifice (*Jude* I.vi, 43), it is interesting that Arabella's purely sexual union with Jude should produce an "unnatural" child in Little Time, who murders the other children and himself. The obvious recognition here is the extension of Arabella's relationship with the Schopenhauerian universe into the point that Time kills all, dreams and individuals, perpetually consuming phenomenal manifestations of itself, thus the murder-suicide merely illustrates the inevitable - and particularly the suffering that comes along with it. Little Time is a complicated - and particularly ambiguous - figure in the novel. On one level his framework stems from this Schopenhauerian ground, but is also given the role of an evolutionary pessimistic Consciousness which Schopenhauer refuses in the Doctor's comment to Jude that:

there are such boys springing up amongst us - boys of an unknown sort in the last generation - the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the universal wish not to live. (*Jude* VI.ii, 402)

This echoes significant aspects of von Hartmann's philosophy, a melding of Schopenhauerian pessimism with a transcendent evolutionary Consciousness which leads to a form of voluntary species-suicide²⁷. Yet on another level the question of *why* he acts as he does is crucial. David DeLaura argues that "the

²⁶ For Knoepfmacher, Little Time becomes 'a symbolic representation of a universal sadness that Hardy cannot really fit into the intellectual schemes or psychological explanations to which he resorts throughout the book... the conflict between the claims of religion and intellect, the opposition between society and the individual' (*Laughter* 221-2), becoming 'an allegorical representation of the terrors of a nihilistic view of existence' (223). It is 'the cosmic cruelty' that is to blame, and which 'permeates the novel from beginning to end', the 'brutality' of life itself, which Jude and Sue as "horribly sensitive" individuals 'cannot bear' (226).

²⁷ See Chapter 3 (76) above for discussion of von Hartmann.

decline of belief in a beneficent Power” (*Tess* XVIII) in *Tess* has become ‘the more fragmentary but fascinating theme of “the coming universal wish not to live”’ (*Jude* VI, ii) in *Jude*. Yet DeLaura does recognise that the key to ‘Hardy’s major ethical contrast’ is ‘between an unspecified “Nature”, evidently as the norm of some more genuine and personal ethical mode, and “Civilization”, identified with social law, convention, and... the moral and intellectual constraints of Christianity’ (397). This merely leaves Hardy ‘telling his contemporaries that they had not yet imagined the human consequences of honestly living out the modernist premise’, however, and with ‘no alternative’ to offer ‘for Arnold’s and Mill’s formulations of what the perfected life might be’, leaving Hardy with ‘a certain contempt for, and distrust of, the optimistic ideal of a modern secular and rational culture’ (DeLaura 399). It is clear, however, that the focus of that contempt and distrust is quite specific in *Jude* as the triggers of the tragedy are down to social form every time, Little Time’s *actions* stem directly from the pressures to which the family are subject by the coercive and destructive forces of social morality, just as Phillotson’s *volte face* is equally a response to those same pressures. Geoffrey Harvey, on the other hand, finds ‘society’s implication in the tragedy... qualified by Hardy’s emphasis on psychological determinism in his allusions to the Fawley curse of proneness to insanity and suicide’ (91-2). Whilst arguing that Little Time is ‘an agent of dislocation and erasure’, expressing ‘Hardy’s pervasive sense of things falling apart’ (Radford 201), Radford does recognise that the child is ‘a product of his circumstances rather than an inert highly stylized figure’ (202). Yet Radford finally blames Sue for Little Time’s actions as her ‘rejection’ of him, alongside her ‘self-pitying statements... drive the already morbid child to despair’ (202). *Jude* points towards the family’s socially-alienated circumstances as the motivational forces which trigger Little Time’s actions, however, as a direct consequence of the family’s alienation from community – an alienation effected by deliberate actions fed by the artificial constraints of social morality. Throughout their relationship Jude and Sue are ‘observed and discussed by other persons than Arabella’, and their circumstances ‘bore only one translation to plain minds’ (*Jude* V.vi, 354). This interference gradually leads to ‘an oppressive atmosphere’ created by their community which ‘began to encircle their souls’ (355). Even Little Time is personally subject to social condemnation,

'taunted' (358) at school before the whole family are finally starved out of their home and forced to auction their belongings as Jude's commissions are withdrawn (362). Despite the ambiguous nature of Little Father Time, the family's oppressive treatment at the hands of their community directly causes their poverty and homelessness, and it is this which provides the motive for Little Time's murder-suicide as the child declares that if there had 'been room' for Jude in their lodgings '[t]hen it wouldn't matter so much!' (VI.ii, 397, my emphasis).

In his discussion of the nature of tragedy, Richard Eldridge asks '[h]ow and why can we care about the tragic, other than through accidental sympathy with the frustration of another's will?' (287). Eldridge sets up an interesting relationship between 'Nature and culture' here, as both 'set constraints on what we can make ourselves to be' (294). As such 'we experience the changing givens of culture and nature *not* as simple measurable worldly phenomena that resists our wills, but rather as *something to come to terms with*' (294, original emphasis). This coming to terms is 'not so much a matter of... overcoming sheer obstacles to will' as a 'matter of envisioning how to blend personality with possibilities, cultural and natural' (Eldridge 294). This is exemplified in *Jude* for Eldridge as 'even in this most relentless novel of the defeat of humanity by its present cultural forms, we find... the survival of a human aspiration to expressive power' (294)²⁸. Whilst Eldridge's main concern here is the conflict between Hardy's own subjectivity and the constraints of cultural expression and form allowable in the Victorian novel (294), Eldridge's recognition is pertinent within the novel itself. Here 'free human personality or subjectivity with aspirations to expressive power find[s] itself encountering cultural forms that simultaneously enable and inhibit these very aspirations' (295). Thus in seeking 'to reach some understanding of the mind and its places in culture and nature[,]... tragic representations have some claim to being regarded as the most illusion-free representations of reality' (297). Eldridge's argument points towards a consideration of the friction between nature and culture in the novel itself which

²⁸ - and 'a housing of the author's, Hardy's subjectivity' (294). For Eldridge, Hardy's own subjectivity as reflected in the available cultural expressions, constraints, and form of the novel allows a 'blending of individuality with [Hardy's] cultural possibility' (294). In Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, Eldridge finds 'virtuous activity in the world that is the realization of one's natural purpose as a human being [which] is here [in modernity] supplanted by a vision of working on nature to make it accord with one's desires and will', leaving '[c]hoice, rather than the laws of either God or human nature' as 'the central source of value in modern life' (292).

recognises a struggle between Jude's (and Sue's) personality and aspirations and the cultural as well as natural opportunities and restraints upon them both. These leave '[c]hoice, rather than the laws of either God or human nature' as 'the central source of value in modern life' (292). The key to understanding the genuinely tragic element in *Jude* is marked by the relationship between the cultural and natural landscapes in which Jude and Sue move. These are the means by which the novel foregrounds the immediate understanding that their tragic experiences are caused by the cultural rather than natural landscape, thus the tragic events were not how it should or could have been. For Schopenhauer tragedy is 'the high-point of literature' as it reveals 'the internal conflict of the will... at the highest grade of its objectivity, and shows itself as something to be dreaded' (*WWI* III §51, 159-60). Whilst this is primarily concerned with the 'suffering' caused by the will-to-life in all of nature, it is significant that this also 'proceeds... through the conflicting desires of individuals' and 'through the malice and perversity of the majority' (159-60). It is in the 'kind of tragedy' caused 'by human action and character' which 'shows us that those powers which destroy happiness and life are such that their path to us... is always open' (161-2), as both victim and perpetrator. Whilst Schopenhauer is not directly concerned here with social form *per se*, his point that tragedy caused through deliberate human actions and 'the malice and perversity of the majority' (159-60) is the most deplorable is clear, as this is effected through *choice* rather than the unchangeable 'tyranny of mere chance' (159). For Feuerbach, in aesthetics the human form is 'the highest form of self-assertion' because it is 'the form which is itself a superiority, a perfection, a bliss, a good' and particularly because it has 'consciousness' (*Essence*, I, 7). This representation can only be perfect, however, if it represents the ideal, the species (7). As such a Feuerbachian aesthetic points towards the possibility and desirability that, through art, human consciousness can be directed towards its true object, aspiring for the genuine realisation of human nature by representing that ideal form. In *Jude* this is evidenced in Jude's aspirations for a divine self-realisation, in the revelations of Sue's Feuerbachian consciousness and her relationship with Jude, and destroyed for both Jude and Sue within a recognisably Feuerbachian framework. Jude and Sue identify the ideal of self-realisation whilst embodying the impacts of its

destruction, effecting the novel's Feuerbachian consciousness and identifying the causes of the tragedy and thus their preclusion from salvation.

Radford recognises that in *Jude Hardy* 'can no longer defuse the fact that... a pioneering modernity of outlook and sincere human feeling are continually subject to crushing extinction on the part of social custom' (206). Yet this recognition ends 'with the portrayal of a deadening "survival" that cannot be ousted by a more humane and charitable social order' (205). Collins recognises that Hardy's position is one in which only the possibilities that the present offers are of value, however, as 'today is the only life mankind is assured of experiencing, now is the moment for intelligent, human action and articulation' (167). Whilst Collins disperses this useful point into an argument that 'humanity is consumed by Jude's self-destructiveness', she does acknowledge that Hardy defines a need to 'gather intellect, heart, and will into a realistically sanguine voice which endorses Feuerbach's reassurance' of the continued existence of 'goodness, justice, wisdom' (*Essence* 21, quoted Collins 168). Quite how or why Collins finds that 'humanity is consumed by Jude's self-destructiveness' is not made clear, nor is Feuerbach's 'reassurance' analysed beyond this generally Feuerbachian phrase, although Collins makes interesting references to Darwinism as enabling 'the social instincts' and the ability to act 'for the good of others' (Darwin quoted Collins 168), but this is confined to individual ethical behaviour. For Collins, Hardy's views on human development appear to incorporate only Schopenhauerian terms in the end, his characters 'consistently misapprehend their human condition' only in "universal" and never social terms, achieving only the realisation that '[w]hat happiness [each] might achieve will be shadowed always by a certainty that the greater configuration of... life will unfold as a series of mishaps until death arrives at the reigns of a sleeping driver' (46). Yet Collins does find that Hardy still posits something positive in that '[e]ven the most oppressed' will find 'a sun of some sort for his soul' (*Hardy Life* 218, quoted Collins 53). Collins does not discuss how this might operate in his novels, yet it has pertinent echoes in *Jude*. Here Jude has attained a true consciousness of his subjectivity to both the external non-moral universe and the human world, the "sun" of his "soul" being Sue, his 'social salvation' (*Jude* VI.iii, 423) in her role as his (and the novel's) Feuerbachian consciousness on an intellectual, corporeal and philosophical level. This of course needs to be a

social-wide recognition to effect real changes in social form, from access to education, gendered relations and marriage issues, to religious constructs and social morality. The question of whether this is possible in Jude's world appears to have been answered by the pessimism of Jude's despair and isolation at the end of the novel, and in Sue's living purgatory with Phillotson. As such, the only avenue for more optimistic possibilities appears to lie outside the novel itself, which rages against (VI.x, 480) 'the tragic machinery' (Postscript viii) of 'civilization', and in so doing indicates where changes need to be wrought to effect a more flexible shape in those 'social moulds' to accommodate the 'actual shapes' (IV.i, 245) of the limited, imperfect, and finite individual manifestations of the species (Feuerbach *Essence* App. §1, 281) – the Jude's and Sue's of this world - more comfortably. Barbara DeMille sees the collapse of belief in religion or any enlightened social alternative in *Jude* to be a Victorian recognition that everything which might impart order is nothing but 'fluctuating chaos' (710), but does not suggest any positive qualifications²⁹. As such, 'serious thinkers, Hardy... among them, questioned whether it were better to grant man the illusion of his illusions, be they the most rigid convictions, for fear of an opposite of "anarchy... loosed upon the world"' (DeMille 710³⁰). DeMille's argument creates a paradox – even an *impasse* - with *Jude* showing that 'the mass of mankind will continue to need unquestioned conviction' whilst remaining 'ignorant of the intellectual and artificial quality of the ideal' (711). Thus to 'naively follow the dream... is to court death', yet 'the reverse of the dream, the denial of social and moral codes, the admission of all concepts of conduct as shadowy artifice, is psychic and political disaster' (DeMille 711). For DeMille, Jude represents the "enslavement to forms" and the consequent "pitiless wedding to a shadowy ideal of conduct" that neither comforts nor rewards but... succeed[s] in occluding man's essential growth and has led him...

²⁹ DeMille argues that Hardy's world is Nietzschean in *Jude's* identification of 'man's struggle between "instinctive truths and cultivated lies"' (699), where 'categorical "common nouns" come to tyrannize and betray their adherents' (700). For DeMille, such 'metaphorical bindings preclude growth, prevent change, and impede an evolution to Nietzsche's higher man, the *ubermensch*' (700). DeMille is right in arguing that Jude and Sue finally recognise they have been "enslave[d] by forms" as they 'have been acting by the "letter" and "the letter killeth"' (709, citing *Jude* 394, 383), but does not recognise that Jude's aspirations to higher things are not aspiring to be *above* the human, but aspiring to self-realisation on a more democratic level, seeking only the freedom to pursue his chosen path in life and love

³⁰ DeMille citing W. B. Yeats "The Second Coming" (line 4).

to his wasteful death' (712). Whilst in significant respects this is the case for Jude and Sue, pursuing vain ideals but destroyed by the trap that social form (and their own beliefs in this at certain stages) constructs, for Jude it is his recognition of what those forms have cost him which destroys him. Further, for *Jude* the recognition of why their ideals *are* vain simultaneously posits the terms of change.

For Collins, Hardy creates a 'chronological split-second between two worlds' in *Jude* in which he 'isolates the essence of individual personalities... as they attempt to conciliate Nature with law, experience isolation, confront absurdity in the form of coincidence, search for a reclusive God, destroy or cultivate human bonds, and prepare to encounter death' (143). In this Collins recognises the relevance of nature and law, isolation, and human bonds, and particularly 'that labour and love are the vital means whereby man can attain a modicum of happiness in life' (143). Collins does not examine the relationships between them, however, or the means whereby Jude and Sue are alienated from nature, human bonds, labour, and love - nor indeed the Feuerbachian nature of such realisation. Rather than marking a 'chronological split-second between two worlds' (Collins 143), however, *Jude* marks the contemporaneous existence of two worlds, in time and space, within which the individual human exists and is subject to the external forces of both. Whilst Patricia Ingham argues that Schopenhauerian ideas in *Jude* are 'black in the extreme', finding Schopenhauer 'a nihilist' (211), interestingly Ingham also finds that these ideas 'co-exist with the idea of humanity as sometimes profoundly significant' (212) in *Jude*, although she does not discuss this point further. Collins argues that Hardy's epic poem *The Dynasts* presents his melioristic hope that the evolutionary Consciousness informs the Will 'till It fashion all things fair!'³¹, finding that Hardy exhibits an 'inverted Feuerbachian philosophy' as the awakening Will 'defines its [own] character according to the morality it perceives in its creatures' (92) thus God creates himself in man's moral image. This becomes 'man's sole hope for freedom from Necessity', applying 'his intelligence toward making visioned choices about those things which he allows to happen and prudent responses to those coincidental haps which threaten his endurance' (87). As far

³¹ Hardy *Dynasts* (525) quoted Collins (92), original emphasis.

as *Jude* is concerned, however, the issue of choice and response to coincidence here does not necessitate the unconscious universe evolving into consciousness as choice and responsibility are already situated in the individuals who make up the forms of Jude's society. *Jude* recognises that the pessimism of human constructs is a changeable agency, marking a clear distinction between the unchangeable external forces of nature and the culpability of the social moral code. Jude's is a world in which human aims, love and social relations offer the only form of salvation that life can offer, as even Arabella realises in the end (*Jude* VI.xi, 490).

Whilst acknowledging 'the arraignment of man-made conventions in *Tess* and *Jude*', all Garwood 'can discover' in *Jude* 'is that some power which is either blind, or automatic, or both, has set in motion a world whose basic note is pain', and it is here that Schopenhauer and Hardy 'are alike in starting from the same basis... of utter purposelessness' (39-40). Further, Garwood argues that 'a point unrecognized or unemphasized by both Schopenhauer and Hardy' is the question of 'growth' as the aim in life, rather than happiness or 'the avoidance of pain', as the issues of pain and tragedy *do not need to matter* 'so long as we may be sure that we are all advancing and expanding' (62). Whilst Schopenhauer's entire philosophy fundamentally argues against Garwood's notion that pain is in some sense acceptable here, as suffering can never be justified let alone be acceptable, Schopenhauer also objects to the idea that the question of suffering can be considered less important than anything else. Further, Schopenhauer argues that there is no growth or advancement in any form (other than ethical realisation on an individual rather than species-developmental basis), rather what might be termed a misery-go-round. These issues are evidently foregrounded by Hardy in the emphasis placed on Jude's own suffering as the central and lamented concern of the narrative. At the same time, the novel's Feuerbachian consciousness identifies the 'tragic machinery of the tale' (*Jude* Postscript, viii) whilst simultaneously pointing to the very places where growth and advancement *would be possible, if only* individual behaviour and social form will allow it to occur. This is not as an acceptable counterbalance to suffering but specifically in order to relieve the *avoidable* suffering caused by human behaviour and social form. Collins argues that Schopenhauer's individual has no value for Nature (65), yet acknowledges that Schopenhauer's 'pessimism... was only one aspect

of his complex theory' albeit not discussing what she rather enigmatically terms 'Schopenhauer's reserved optimism' (62). Schopenhauer's refusal to ignore the fundamental value of the individual forms the basis of his ethics and his pessimistic philosophy itself, and is also the key ethical focus in *Jude*. Both Schopenhauer's and Feuerbach's delineations of human existence have pertinent expression in the novel despite - and of course because of - what Schweik sees as Hardy's unequivocal 'conviction... that human aspiration, human feeling, and human hope, however dwarfed in the cosmic scale of things, were nevertheless more important than all the rest' (70). Robinson recognises that Hardy privileges individuality and 'loving-kindness' so highly that '[t]hrough all the negating pressures of the post-Darwinian world[,] Hardy still asserts the value of individual life to the individual who possesses it and the responsibility of others to respect it - that is the one "great thought" he is determined to hold on to' (143). Garwood feels a 'real dissatisfaction with a Hardy interpretation of life... as it is man-centred', however, as '[t]o say that no future justification can recompense us for the pain we are now enduring, seems to make man unduly important' (81). The recognition that the conscious human individual is at the centre of the novel is the key to *Jude's* contradictory forces and the apparent lack of an overarching solution, Jude's position as a 'ghost' (*Jude* II.i, 94) in the novel identifying the place where the two worlds he inhabits overlap one another: in the conscious existential human subject. The question of whether human actions *can* effect change for the better does underlie key aspects of the machinery of the tragedy, *Jude* suggesting that an awakening consciousness to the cause and effect of both human behaviour and social form can at least offer improvements in the life-choices and possibilities for the individuals who make up those societies, whilst still remaining unchangingly subject to the movements of a blind non-moral universe.

This chapter shows that Hardy's work is not only difficult to align to one over-arching philosophical position or another, but that it is unproductive to do so. Not only is Hardy contradictory and ambivalent in laying bare his influences and convictions outside of his fictional writings, but also within them, *Jude* engaging its story, characters, and philosophies within a variety of viewpoints which often chafe against one another and refuse to settle on a definitive standpoint. Nonetheless, this does not posit what Laurence Lerner recognises as

a mistaken critical propensity towards 'arbitrariness as an aesthetic criterion' (83) onto Hardy's eclectic ambiguity, as *Jude* does incorporate a broad but consistent framework within which two levels of existence are operating simultaneously, and these evidence distinctly Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian perspectives in resonant terms. Whilst Hardy also utilises diverse elements from evolutionary, archaeological, aesthetic, scientific and philosophical perspectives within *Jude*'s narrative, the two central co-existential worlds form the key framework within which constraints Jude and Sue are effectively trapped. The non-moral external world of nature is essentially pessimistic and unchangeable at the same time that elements of the natural, suppressed by the human world, are not negative elements in themselves but positive, as it is the friction between these in terms of social form which counteract Jude's and Sue's natural aspirations and relationships. The overlapping world of conscious human agency produces its own pessimism in the restrictive and coercive constructs of social form, yet it is here that the glimmers of potential optimism are also visible. Jude's progress is haunted by the ghost of his human alienation and thus of human possibility, of what might have been, highlighted by the human and social acts which precipitate each stage of his journey into tragedy. In *Jude*, it is clear that the most damaging elements to both Jude and Sue are the artificial constructs of social form, particularly of social morality and religious belief, all playing their part and finally crushing them both in the end. Hardy's novel delineates two overlapping worlds, one of which cannot be changed (but within which ethical necessity must still operate) and the other offering the relief of *avoidable* suffering where individual aims can be realised to a greater extent in life, but the key is that both worlds are inhabited by the conscious and fragile human subject. These two worlds co-exist, philosophically independent to a significant extent but not mutually exclusive. The individual human is at the heart of the novel and the two worlds within it, consciously aware of subjection to suffering in both, but the artificial constructs of 'civilization' stifle the individual phenomenal form of nature with its 'social moulds' which 'have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns' (*Jude* IV.i, 245).

In showing that there are certain areas where life and life-choices could be improved through individual and social actions to some degree, *Jude* merely

highlights the optimistic possibilities which are marked by and through a *contingent* pessimism. This contingency is illustrated in the machinery of the tragedy as these are predominantly human - and particularly social - dictates rather than the blind and random occurrences of a disinterested universe. *Jude* is a pessimistic novel haunted by optimism, haunted by the possibilities of what could have been, if the human and social agency which operates over and above a blind and non-moral universe had dictated otherwise. In 1876, Hardy notes that 'Science tells us... in the struggle for life, the surviving organism is not necessarily that which is absolutely the best in the ideal sense, though it must be that which is most in harmony with surrounding conditions' (LN v1 e392, 40, original emphasis). This evolutionary narrative is, of course, particularly pertinent to Arabella's survival by virtue of her self-serving adaptability, and what the novel identifies as Jude and Sue's particular unsuitedness for the world in which they find themselves. Nonetheless, this is not necessarily in an essentialist sense as *Jude* is at pains to point out the central role that social form plays in the tragedy. For all four main characters in the novel it is whether they fit, choose to fit, or are forced to fit into the artificial constraints of social form which is key. The question *Jude* raises is whether or not social form can evolve to adapt *itself* to those individual organisms better. Björk recognises that Hardy's 'tendency' to relate 'human psychology to the social environment' forms 'a basic element in Hardy's brand of "social" criticism' ("Reading" 114), suggesting that Hardy comes very close to Matthew Arnold's criticism here, in particular that:

Modern times find themselves with an immense system of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules which have come to them from times not modern. In this system their life has to be carried forward; yet they have a sense that this system is not of their own creation, that it by no means corresponds exactly with the wants of their actual life, that, for them it is customary, not rational. The awakening of this sense is the awakening of the modern spirit. (Arnold³² quoted Hardy LN v1 e1017, 105-6, Hardy's emphasis)

Such awakening of consciousness to social and religious dogma is also, of course, Feuerbachian, and in *Jude* Hardy signposts the necessity of just such an awakening whilst simultaneously precluding its 'spirit' from having already

³² See Arnold on "Heinrich Heine" in *Essays in Criticism* (154-86).

awoken: the spirit of Jude's age is the ghost of possibility which haunts his unenlightened society.

The Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian elements in *Jude* form a pattern of two overlapping circles, within which Jude and Sue are subject to the external and internal forces of blind nature - in both negative and positive terms - and to human engendered alienation and social constraints. Both forces jar against Jude's sense of justice and self-realisation, and against his ethical perspective as a consciously aware individual subject in a suffering world. It is significant that his human world is one in which ethical possibility, both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian, can operate. On one level the ghosts haunting Jude's landscape represent the endless cycle of Schopenhauerian recurrence and failure but, more critically, the relationship between ghosts and the non-moral order is mediated through Jude's own role as always already his own ghost. Jude is alienated from achieving his natural potential and realising his true *I-thou* unity in his community, precluded from realising his own individual shape by the artificial constructs of social form. Siebenschuh's argument that 'Hardy's symbolic use of a highly personal sense of the relations between identity, community and place' (774) delineates a landscape which is a 'rich new language for revealing aspects of character and registering... social, class, and moral distinctions' (774) is resonant. This is not because, in Siebenschuh's argument, Jude has only to access the past through its medium of landscape to sustain himself, however, but because landscape marks instead his isolation and alienation on two key levels, one of which is as a direct result of 'social, class, and moral distinctions' (774) but is crucially also the realm in which human agency operates. The key distinction between Feuerbach and Schopenhauer is the accessibility of salvation. For Schopenhauer, salvation is a temporary transcendence from a non-evolving but perpetual cycle of misery wherein individual suffering may be relieved on an immediate level through ethical behaviour, but the human condition itself cannot be changed. Feuerbachian salvation, in its more perfect unity of species-consciousness, is reflected in Jude and Sue's natural, self-affirming unity. But on a more broadly pragmatic level, Feuerbachian consciousness offers a process of realisation wherein the human condition *could* be improved through the conscious development of both human ethics and social form. *Jude's* Feuerbachian consciousness effects a radical humanism in respect of both women

and men, identifying key elements in their relationships between themselves and the 'social moulds' of 'civilization' (*Jude* IV.i, 245) which are iniquitous to a sense of genuine morality. The personal and 'social salvation' (VI.iii, 423) that Jude and Sue are precluded from attaining by the artificial constraints of their contemporary society haunt their footsteps. As such, the overlapping circles in *Jude* are recognisable on another level: throughout the novel the apparently doomed Jude and Sue, heading seemingly inexorably towards their own tragedy in their subjection to the blind forces of nature *and* to the coercive forces of social form, are constantly haunted by the ghostly presence of possibility.

Conclusion

Wandering Between Two Worlds

*'Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.'*

Matthew Arnold¹

If the question all four key players in this thesis are asking is how can we live ethically and attain a form of salvation in a secularising world – a world which feels itself suspended between the loss of religious belief and the realisation of a positive human future - the answer for all four is addressed by grounding the theory in the practice: in that fragile individual human subject who explicitly forms the core value for each of them. In grounding the basis, means and endpoint of their philosophy in the material, existential human subject rather than a transcendent First Cause, Arthur Schopenhauer and Ludwig Feuerbach intend to frame philosophical salvation around the self-realisation of that conscious human subject in the time and space and reality of existence in the world. In taking the philosophical theories and exploring how these operate in the quest for that apotheosis of self-realisation in their fiction, both George Eliot and Thomas Hardy foreground the complexities and ambiguities that the human as an individual and as part of a community framework effects in practice.

Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, Eliot and Hardy examine the object of salvation as a corporeal yet exalted ethic of self-realisation in the existential world. Yet this thesis shows that all four interrogate the question from various perspectives and with different emphases which flag up the tensions between the theory and the practice, and between the questions of pessimism and optimism themselves. For Schopenhauer the question begins in the necessary consciousness of a pessimistic world of unavoidable suffering and ends in the humble but only ever immediate ethical acts which relieve that suffering where they can.

¹ "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" c.1852-5 (lines 85-8).

Schopenhauer's salvation refuses the possibility of broader or pervasive improvements beyond that immediacy, however, even while his ethical framework refuses to lose sight of the value of the existential individual in the world. Yet his most perfect salvatory point effectively negates existence in the world for the ascetic subject. Nonetheless, Schopenhauer offers salvation from real suffering in immediately accessible terms on every level of his ethical framework. Feuerbach begins his question in a deconstruction of the Christian belief system to reveal the divine value of the human at its core, and ends with an apotheosis of positive feeling, but which appears to ignore the reality of human existence on a number of levels. Feuerbach's philosophical optimism effectively negates human reality or individual value in some respect every step of the way, leaving that existential and consciously erring human individual receding ever further from their own positive self-realisation. Yet Feuerbach's revelation that the alienation of human nature - and thus the barrier to individual self-realisation - is effected by the artificial constructs of social form raises the consciousness of how these forms operate, and as such recognises the possibility of and focus for change. Eliot's *Middlemarch* begins with the quest for a corporeal direction of self-realisation which will simultaneously reveal an apotheosis of truth, and ends with the Schopenhauerian knowledge that self-despair is an ever-present and unavoidable reality for everyone. This is identified in terms which trouble any attempt to transcend the real existential human even where the novel suggests a sense of dissipation into the facelessness of community. Dorothea's pessimistic consciousness of reality reconciles the fragile human to an understanding of the shared nature of that very fragility, thus enabling those small but immediate ethical acts of amelioration in the world which may help to improve the lives of others around them to some modest but palpable degree. In the consciousness that suffering is a perpetual presence in the wider world is the equal understanding that this is shared with everyone outside of the self. Transcendence is effectively grounded in a new pessimistic consciousness of reality which recognises the essential interconnectedness of self and world on a fundamental and democratic level. Eliot's earlier hope for a clear vision of future 'eminence whence we may see very bright and blessed things on earth' ("Future" 137) makes way in *Middlemarch* for a more pessimistic recognition of human existence, both in the present and the future. Equally, the understanding that

there is suffering in the world points out the only known quality that the present and the future entail, and thus identifies the necessary – and only - route to salvation. Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* begins and ends in a world of existential anguish, but it also ends in the revelation that the individual is subject to two co-existential forces in the world, one of which is fixed and unchanging while the other is both created and effected by human agency. Whilst revealing the ephemeral nature of human hope and individual existence in the Schopenhauerian non-moral world of essential Nature, *Jude's* Feuerbachian consciousness simultaneously reveals how those forces which operate only in the human world are the cause of *unnecessary* suffering. Hardy's novel shows how the artificial machinery of society alienates and negates the positive human individual, and crushes the lives of those who are unable or unwilling to fit themselves into its artificial course, and as such lays bare the route to a more humane self-realisation. For Hardy's *Jude*, the consciousness that Jude's and Sue's 'predestinate' (*Jude* I.vii, 49) fate is shifted out of the world of a blind universal will and into the world of human agency is a fundamental recognition which posits the simultaneous existence of two philosophical and existential worlds, both of which are inhabited by the human subject.

In notebooks compiled during her work on *Middlemarch*, Eliot notes Arnold's two lines of conscious loss in 'Wandering between two worlds, one dead / The other powerless to be born' (*Notebooks* 78). On a significant level, this consciousness of loss is at the heart of Eliot's novel, no one illustrating it more clearly than Casaubon, 'wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes' (*Middlemarch* 2, 19), but he is 'never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self' (29, 271), remaining essentially and inescapably trapped in despair. This thesis shows that Eliot's use of the alchemic elements in *Middlemarch* illustrates fundamental incompatibilities within and between certain characters which prevent Feuerbachian *I-thou* species-consciousness occurring between them. These essential failings are crucially focused on the critical principle missing from Casaubon's theory and Feuerbachian practice: the realisation of the existential human individual. Despite Dorothea attaining her own self-realisation in the novel, the sense of loss extends into her reduced potential and the dissipation of her existence into the anonymity of mass society. For Eliot,

Arnold's 'two worlds' ("Stanzas" 85) become reconciled in the space between them: in the existential human individual in whom the consciousness of both presences exists, thus this pessimistic but ethical consciousness effectively retains the uncertain present and future that Arnold's poem foregrounds even while escaping from polarised despair. Yet at the same time, there is also a more optimistic place in Eliot's recognition of the equal presence of salvation here, in this space 'between... worlds' in Eliot's reconciliatory position, albeit a salvation not many characters in the novel can realise. Eliot nonetheless creates an essentially positive dynamic in the salvatory potential this dual-presence not only effects but insists upon.

Hardy's novel also identifies 'two worlds', positioning Jude and Sue as effectively caught *within* two worlds rather than between them, however, as they are equally and inescapably subject to them both. At bottom, the unchangeable world to which *Jude's* characters are subject is the external and internal forces of a non-moral macrocosmic Nature. Nature is on one level a pessimistic and predetermined external and internal force which is blind to the aspirations of the individual human, and which is an unchanging and essential force in both macro- and microcosmic terms. Yet it also imparts its own positive forces into their essential character, and these positive aspects of Nature are thwarted by the other world to which each character is equally subject. This thesis shows how Hardy's novel uses Jude's position as a ghost in the landscape and Sue's position as the novel's Feuerbachian consciousness to emphasise how Nature's forces are always juxtaposed with those of human agency, most centrally within the framework of social form, and as such, alienates the individual from their own self-realisation whilst also identifying the *potential* for change. *Jude* places ethical compassion in very similar Schopenhauerian terms as that delineated in *Middlemarch*, yet this is evidenced in more positive and in more negative terms than in Eliot's novel. On the positive side, unlike Casaubon, all four of Hardy's central characters appear to be able to recognise ethical choice. The negative to this is that most of them choose selfish ends (albeit Phillotson shows how some are driven to selfishness by the negative impacts he also experiences at the hands of social form). Hardy echoes the negativity of Eliot in that most characters do not appreciate the ethics of compassion, albeit for Hardy this is largely a choice rather than an essential character-trait, suggesting a more positive potential even

while the choice of selfishness is negative in actual terms in the novel. This negativity is further expressed in the apparent ineffectiveness of Jude's own ethical sympathy as this does not bring salvation in any form, to himself or those around him. Unlike with Dorothea in *Middlemarch*, in Hardy's novel there are no positive effects emanating from Jude's existence, yet the question of whether Jude's tragedy suggests potentially positive effects outside the text is another issue.

Whilst both Schopenhauer and Feuerbach ground philosophy in human experiential and psychological existence, and place *I-thou* consciousness as the basis for ethical behaviour and the route to salvation in the world, the critical differences lie in the placing of the human individual on a number of levels as these affect both the value of the individual and the extent to which individual salvation is genuinely accessible. In Eliot's foregrounding the reconciliation of two conscious presences as the route to salvation in the world, reconciling the perpetual presence of both despair and transcendence, *Middlemarch* reveals the key to salvation to be already in the individual, who can thus understand the intrinsic value of and connection between each individual as an intimately shared and non-hierarchical community. This thesis shows that Eliot's future vision is reduced to a pessimistic but nonetheless redemptive immediacy, but the fixed nature of character remains a stumbling block, effectively precluding some people from attaining salvation on any level as their own nature is essentially unable to develop the necessary consciousness of that suffering, palpitating life beyond their own concerns. As such, whilst the pessimistic route to salvation in *Middlemarch* may be humble, democratic, and accessible on one level, it is a rare position indeed. In both of the novels analysed in this thesis essential character also leaves the Feuerbachian *I-thou* apotheosis an equally rare, finite and momentary realisation. Both novels recognise that the accessibility of Feuerbachian salvation is undermined for those individuals who are alienated from self-realisation, either by their own essential human nature, or by the coercive forces of social form. The Feuerbachian *I-thou* relationship is a rare union of necessarily complementary characters for both authors, thus is reduced from its overtly optimistic vision in key respects. This reduction raises a fundamental negativity in *Middlemarch* as salvation is not the species-wide apotheosis Feuerbach envisages. At the same time, Eliot and Hardy recognise

the personal apotheosis of Feuerbachian *I-thou* union as a positive and necessary key to self-realisation in reduced terms. This is an essential union for Dorothea's personal happiness in *Middlemarch*, albeit the suggested wider positive impacts in their future lives in the community are reduced to a Schopenhauerian immediacy and all its qualifications. Even where that apotheosis is attained, Eliot's novel troubles the simultaneous absorption of the individual that Feuerbachian union also effects. In Jude and Sue's relationship, Hardy echoes Eliot's positive recognition of an essential union as a personal apotheosis. Further, although Hardy also recognises the perfect *I-thou* to be less than perfect, he nonetheless emphasises its presence as a blissful comradeship which is fundamentally necessary to survive in the world, *and* to attain a broader social salvation. This is key to *Jude's* salvation in both personal and social terms for Hardy, who recognises the root of the Feuerbachian consciousness of alienation in more direct and political terms than Eliot. In identifying the specific obstructions to Jude's and Sue's self-realisation as social form, Hardy's novel marks a positive recognition of Feuerbachian salvation which has repercussions both in and beyond the tragedy in the novel. Feuerbach's recognition of the ways and means through which the individual is subject to alienation, prevented from realising her or his "essential" positive self or aspirational future by the artificial constructs of social form, is emphasised by Jude's own key experiences and yet more profoundly focused in and through Sue's role in the novel. In identifying the machinery operating in the world of human agency to be the causal elements of the tragedy rather than the existential non-moral world of Nature, *Jude's* Feuerbachian consciousness offers a valuable starting point in revealing the damaging nature of coercive but fundamentally human constructs, and identifies the potential and focus for positive and *pervasive* change.

Both Eliot's and Hardy's novels analysed in this thesis insist that both the theory and the practice must be grounded in human lives from beginning to end, as to ignore the individual experiential human as basis, means, or as endpoint ignores, absorbs, transcends, or alienates and thus destroys the individual. Whilst Eliot recognises the problematic aspects of Feuerbach's unrealisable deification of human relations, particularly in respect of Casaubon who is perpetually alienated by his own sense of imperfection as well as his essential inability to recognise life beyond his own concerns, Hardy recognises the alienating effects

of social form and echoes Feuerbach's revelatory consciousness. *Jude's* characters are simultaneously identified with a Schopenhauerian pessimism in the inward compulsion towards certain behaviour, whether exhibiting the egoistic will or the ethical recognition of suffering and consequential humane ethics. In *Middlemarch*, whilst social form is marked out as a clearly contributory factor in defining aspects of the characterisations and situations, Nature appears to be more significant than nurture, not least in that nurture or experience will not reveal that which is *essentially* unable to be. *Middlemarch* grounds human existence and salvation in a Schopenhauerian consciousness of the human experience of suffering, and this in ways which expose the pessimistic ramifications of Feuerbach's vision and the more optimistic and pragmatic implications of Schopenhauer's consciousness of a suffering world. The relationship between Feuerbachian and Schopenhauerian positions pervades Eliot's novel on many levels and forms an intricate critique of Feuerbach from a Schopenhauerian perspective. Feuerbachian salvation is replaced by a Schopenhauerian consciousness of the ethical reality of human suffering, individual value, and individual realisation as its necessary ground, means, and endpoint. Eliot places Schopenhauer's pessimistic recognition of the inevitability of human suffering at the heart of *Middlemarch*, which gives rise to a form of transcendent consciousness which always keeps existential reality clearly in view. Indeed, it is the consciousness of despair that itself effects full *I-thou* consciousness and thus ethical human relations, therefore insists on individual realisation as its necessary premise. *Jude's* landscape is also framed within a Schopenhauerian non-moral universe in key terms, yet its characters simultaneously inhabit a consciously human world in which each is aware of ethical choice, and where each is equally subject to the artificial social system rather than purely subject to the chance acts and inner compulsion of blind Nature. Here Hardy's novel evidences a positive Feuerbachian ethic of human self-realisation through individual aim and *I-thou* human relations, which are also an almost-deification of human aim and possibility, thus recognising an exalted sense of human potential. *Jude's* Feuerbachian framework simultaneously reveals the forces which preclude this positive self-realisation on every level, foregrounding the devastating consequences of the alienation of the positive elements of human nature. Hardy's novel identifies nurture to be more damaging

than nature, in the end, in a world where human characters appear to have ethical choice and where the coercive affects of social form are the most damaging elements of all. As such, Hardy's refusal of an holistic system does not point to chaos or self-destruction but, in identifying the external and internal forces of both nature and society, simultaneously identifies the only one which is open to change. Hardy recognises a fundamental pessimistic truth in Schopenhauerian delineations of the world, yet also recognises the positive ramifications of a Feuerbachian consciousness of the alienating constructs of artificial social form – urging alternative possibilities *if only* the world of human agency would open itself to the possibility of changing its own shape to accommodate the ethical and aspirational self-realisation of that unique and fragile individual.

In the same way that stepping back from Schopenhauer's most extreme form of salvation acknowledges his more positive and accessible forms of salvation for most people, taking a step back from Feuerbach's endpoint of transcendent negativity allows the positive recognition of the ground and means and affects of alienation, thus offering potential routes to more accessible and practical forms of salvation. Feuerbachian consciousness awakens the potential for effective change to those artificial social systems which enact and perpetuate human alienation, thereby offering the hope and direction of a more positive future life, whilst a Schopenhauerian consciousness awakens the necessity to act in the here and now in immediate terms to alleviate the suffering in the world. This thesis shows that the questions of pessimism and optimism in philosophical constructions of human place, ethics, and salvation in the world are necessarily balanced against the positive value both of and for the existential individual. The question of value extends into whether the basis of ethics is democratic and accessible to ordinary existential human individuals, and whether self-realisation or salvation is an accessible reality for real people in the world. Eliot's novel rejects the possibility of a pervasive Feuerbachian salvation in *Middlemarch* as here the hopes for social reform have faded, placing salvation in the awakened consciousness of suffering, thus the ethical framework of possibility is only in immediate, Schopenhauerian terms, in both time and space. There is no grand, teleological vision of human progress in Eliot's novel as it foregrounds a more mundane pragmatic of ethical survival rather than an apotheosis of self-realisation in community or over time. Whilst *I-thou* Feuerbachian unity is

foregrounded as necessary to personal happiness even while it is emphasised as a rare complimentary union, the possibility of a Feuerbachian future is replaced by a fundamentally Schopenhauerian vision of immediacy. The ethical key in this novel is the recognition of suffering and self-despair as this is identified as the only route to salvation, and this a salvation which is found in the act of relief from suffering in immediate and local rather than pervasive, progressive, or evolutionary terms. Hardy's novel foregrounds a Feuerbachian consciousness, on both personal and broader social terms, even whilst underpinning this expressly human consciousness with a Schopenhauerian ethic of a suffering and non-moral world to which Jude and Sue are equally subject. Hardy's novel accepts both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian views of human place, ethics, existential reality and destination, forming two co-existential worlds within which his characters are seeking their route to salvation. The most tragic element of Jude's and Sue's story simultaneously raises its most optimistic. The key recognition that the most damaging impacts on their lives are effected by the world of human agency rather than unchanging essential Nature simultaneously shows how such tragedies can therefore be changed, prioritised in the value of and focus on the unique individual and their aspirational and personal self-realisation.

This thesis raises significant questions concerning Eliot's relationship with optimistic and pessimistic philosophical thinking, particularly her acceptance of Feuerbach, showing that her novel *Middlemarch* undermines Feuerbachian salvation in its determination of character, its less-than-divine human relations, and its refusal of teleological meliorism, whilst it posits a radically Schopenhauerian emphasis in its ethical and salvatory framework. Eliot's novel traces the delineation of essential human essences in more Schopenhauerian than Feuerbachian terms, probing the inaccessibility of Feuerbachian salvation for the individual, a salvation only accessible to particular characters and even then realisable only through exceptional human relations, and as such, is essentially denied to all but a few. Even where it is accessible, this is a qualified and tentative form of salvation, albeit placed firmly in the conscious space between self-despair and transcendence. This thesis raises equally significant questions about Hardy's relationship with pessimism, showing that, in *Jude*, Hardy's pessimism is a complex philosophical

examination of the sources and forms and thus the extent of pessimistic views of human place, ethics, and salvation in the world, which simultaneously reveal a potentially optimistic and certainly deeply fundamental relationship with Feuerbachian salvation in both personal and social terms in the novel. For *Jude*, the world of essential, suffering nature and the world of human society are co-existential worlds, one overlapping the other, simultaneously and perpetually in existence and simultaneously inhabited by the ephemeral yet unique human individual to whom they offer both aspiration and obstruction. For *Middlemarch*, the two worlds of self-despair and transcendence are equal partners, effecting the reconciliation of matter and spirit, despair and rapture, pessimism and optimism, in the same place that lies 'between two worlds' (Arnold "Stanzas" line 85): the experiential, living, breathing human individual.

In their non-fiction writings, both Eliot and Hardy have stated their rejection of a single holistic system of philosophy. Eliot has argued that "System is the childhood of philosophy; the manhood of philosophy is investigation" as 'expressions' can only 'have their origin purely in the observations of the senses' ("Future" 133, 135), and Hardy that '*every man*' should '*make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience*' (Hardy *Life* 310, original emphasis) whilst also suggesting that 'Pessimism...is the only view of life in which you can never be disappointed' (311). In the two novels analysed in this thesis the idea of an holistic system of philosophy is also rejected by both Eliot and Hardy, yet two distinct philosophical viewpoints can be seen to form complex yet comprehensive relationships in both novels, and which also belie the compartmentalisation of either novelist as either "optimistic" or "pessimistic". In their explorations of the peculiar, individual human and the external and internal forces to which they are subject and within which they have to operate, both Eliot and Hardy interrogate Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian philosophical delineations of human place, ethics, and destiny in both positive and negative terms. Eliot's novel seeks a reconciliation between two polarised worlds in the immediate existence of the human individual as the only possibility of salvation, and Hardy recognises two co-existential worlds to which the existential human is simultaneously subject, only one of which is a changeable world which yet must be changed, by human agency, for individual salvation to be realised.

It is clear that the positions of “pessimism” and “optimism” are not clear-cut in any of the four texts which form the central analyses in this thesis, nor indeed in the world around them. All four texts reveal dualistic conflicts on both the macro- and microcosmic scale in the many contradictions, slippages, agreements, refusals, and co-existential realities they evidence on a number of levels. The questions of pessimism and optimism, despair and transcendence, determination and choice, negation and salvation underlie the positive and negative aspects of that which cannot be changed and that which can. All four texts find their focus, their site of conflict and their realisation in the ethical value, consciousness and reality of the existential human. This thesis shows that both Eliot and Hardy entered deep and comprehensive engagements with both Schopenhauerian and Feuerbachian delineations of the human and the world, yet from very different perspectives. The findings of this thesis suggest a fascinating re-evaluation of other novels by both writers, and contribute a new dimension to engagements with other nineteenth century writers influenced by the philosophical quest for human place and realisation, both in fiction and non-fiction of the period. These findings open out the possibilities for engaging in detailed analyses of other philosophical constructions of human salvation during the nineteenth century, reassessing the implications for the value and particularly the *accessibility* of ethical salvation for the existential human in the world, and how these implications are negotiated by and played out within fiction of the period.

Eliot and Hardy recognise the reality of both pessimistic and optimistic visions of the world, foregrounding both worlds as the same world, and the individual human as subject to both forces in time and space. A Feuerbachian consciousness can lead to actual, affective change in the world by consciously working to overcome the alienation of the human by placing human self-realisation as object in community relations on every level, including through work and other aims and aspirations. For Schopenhauer, suffering is unending and essentially unchanging, thus only mundane and immediate relief from suffering is the most we have to hope for in the world. As such, both offer pessimistic and optimistic possibilities in ethics, in the world and in literature. In art:

No individual and no action can be without significance; in everyone and through everything the Idea of man unfolds gradually. Therefore no event in human life should be excluded... a scene from ordinary daily life may be of great intrinsic significance if... the inmost recesses of human action and will, appear in it in a bright, clear light [...] the very transitoriness of the moment which art has fixed... yet represents the whole... [and] seems to bring time itself to a standstill. (Schopenhauer *WWI* III §48, 144-5-6)

For Feuerbach, the human form in art is 'the highest form of self-assertion' because it is 'the form which is itself a superiority, a perfection, a bliss, a good' and particularly because it has 'consciousness' (*Essence*, I, 7). This representation can only be perfect, however, if it represents the ideal, the species (7). As such a Feuerbachian aesthetic also identifies the possibility and desirability that, through art, human consciousness can be directed towards its true object, aspiring for the genuine realisation of human nature by also representing that ideal form. Eliot's and Hardy's novels are, in a sense, also caught between two worlds, between the philosophical theory and the practical affects in the real world of the existential human.

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