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SAMUEL BUTLER AND EDMUND BURKE: A

COMPARATIVE STUDY IN BRITISH CONSERVATISM

It is perhaps a measure of the strength of the conservative tradition in England that, from time to time, thinkers appear whose true significance cannot be realized without viewing them in the context of this tradition. Samuel Butler is, I believe, one such thinker. The days when it was fashionable to lionize him as a rebel and a radical are perhaps over. There is now a greater recognition of the conservative strain in his personality and in his thought, though it is doubtful whether there is any genuine appreciation of its real import.¹ Mostly, reference to it has been used, when not exactly to 'debunk' him, to redress the balance, to temper the enthusiasm of his early admirers who tended to glorify him as an archetypal rebel and iconoclast. No systematic effort has been made to relate him to the British conservative tradition, a vigorous and powerful tradition, which was particularly strong in the nineteenth century and claimed, in varying degrees and forms, the allegiance of men from Burke, Coleridge, Disraeli, Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold to Salisbury and Mallock. I propose to look at Butler in the light of this tradition by comparing him to Burke, the father of British conservatism and its ablest exponent.² A comparison of this sort would, I think, be extremely useful; it would provide us a much better insight into the true character of Butler's general philosophical outlook and his mental make-up. But, since Butler is also typical in many respects of his age and country, a study of his moral and intellectual development would throw an interesting light on the complex forces at work in these spheres during the latter part of the nineteenth century in England.

There are, of course, important differences between the conservatism of Burke and that of Butler, arising from the nature of their concerns, which in

Burke's case are primarily political, in Butler's primarily moral. But politics and morality are not mutually exclusive. Burke, in his bold and imaginative exposition of the nature of civil society, is led to a searching analysis of the nature of man. Butler, in his anxiety to discover the true principles of moral behaviour, is compelled to explore the social foundations of personality. While their overriding concerns might appear to be different on the surface, they are basically the concerns of the humanist, the student of human nature who is interested in discovering the true springs of conduct and who is anxious to secure for the individual the fullest degree of freedom to develop in accordance with the laws of his inner being. Though the habit of their minds is speculative, their temper is eminently practical. It is this basically humanistic nature of their concerns which makes their thought still relevant for us today and will keep it so when Burke's views as a practical politician and Butler's as an evolutionary thinker shall have become long outmoded.

There is an additional interest to their speculations in that both of them were obliged to spell out their positions in response to radical challenges in their own time, whether political, moral or intellectual. I shall begin with a brief formulation of what I consider to be the essential points of Burke's conservatism, then examine the bases of Butler's, after which I shall proceed to make a comparison of the two, trying to emphasize in the process modes of thought and opinion which have become characteristic of the conservative outlook and temper as a whole.³

I

In spite of charges of inconsistency against him,⁴ particularly after his vehement opposition to the French Revolution, there is a remarkable consistency in Burke's thought. It is possible, for instance, to see in his early publication, *A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756), the germs of *The Reflections* (1790). In both cases, Burke perceives the chief danger to civil society as coming from the reason-intoxicated thought of the *philosophes*, represented in England by thinkers like Bolingbroke. In *A Vindication* he endeavours to show that the same arguments which Bolingbroke had employed in favour of natural as opposed to revealed religion could be used in behalf of natural as opposed to artificial society. Burke asserts that the result would be chaos "if the practice of all moral duties, and the foundations of society, rested upon having their reasons made clear and demonstrative to every individual".⁵ The irony of *A Vindication* stems from Burke's firm belief that if the spirit of unrestrained rationalism was allowed free play, without showing any regard for

the beliefs and pieties of men imbibed over a long period of time, no society would be able to escape disintegration. For Burke infidelity in religion and radicalism in politics are closely allied and usually walk hand in hand, sometimes one following the other. And the *Vindication* was published at a time when this very transformation was taking place in France.

"Every great period of civilization", says Jacques Maritain, "is dominated by a certain peculiar idea that man fashions of man. Our behaviour depends on this image as much as on our very nature. . . ."⁶ Burke started his criticism of the thinkers of his time by questioning what had become almost the accepted tenets of eighteenth-century thought, their assumptions regarding the "nature of man", "the state of nature", "natural society", and "natural rights". The natural state of man, Burke said, is not to be conceived of as an isolated or primitive condition of brute impulse, in which he approximates to non-human creatures. Nor is it to be thought of mostly in negative terms as one standing in contrast to a secondary and conventional social state, the product of art, which he takes on in the civil state. What is natural to man is the union potential to his instinctive *and* moral life.⁷ The idea of nature is, therefore, more truly applicable to the social state, to one in which the distinctively human element in man finds expression:

The state of civil society . . . is a state of Nature—and much more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of life. For man is by nature reasonable and he is never perfectly in his natural state but when he is placed where reason may be best cultivated and most predominates. Art is man's nature. We are as much, at least, in a state of Nature in formed manhood as in immature and helpless infancy (*An Appeal*, IV, 175-76).

There is thus no glorification of the state of innocence—the prelapsarian state of man reflected in man's life in his childhood, no Rousseauistic equation of natural society with primitive society.⁸ The 'natural' in man is not his rudimentary, least characteristic quality, but his most distinctive and complete form of expression. "Never, no, never, did Nature say one thing and Wisdom say another. . . . Nature is never more truly herself than in her grandest forms (*Regicide Peace*, V, 407)". Burke thus adopts an Aristotelian position that man is a political animal; that the best chance of his development lies in the most complete union between the spontaneous self-expression of the individual and his moral perception of his place in the community of his fellows. Society is not something which inhibits a man's growth, cabins, cribs or confines him, but a divine invention to afford man the fullest opportunity for his develop-

ment. "He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue willed also the necessary means of its perfection: He willed, therefore, the state: He willed its connection with the source and original archetype of all perfection (*Reflections*, III, 361)".

One of Burke's basic quarrels with radicals is that they take a low view of human nature. All their ingenious schemes of revolution, all their trumpet-calls for liberty, are nothing more than blueprints for political freedom. But politics do not exhaust the whole of human life; political freedom ought only to be a means, not an end. If man's full perfection is desired, it can be brought about only by acquainting him with and making him act in harmony with the entire store of our culture.

Society (as he says) is, indeed, a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure; but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born (*Reflections*, III, 359).

The radicals, in reducing the idea of compact to the bare political level, degrade a noble concept and cut it down to the measure of their own limitations. John Morley, pained by Burke's stand on the French Revolution and trying desperately to find some explanation for it, was led to observe that Burke "judges the Revolution as the solution of a merely political question". Morley's judgment betrays a grave misreading of Burke; for, if anything, Burke's tendency was exactly the opposite; to him the Revolution was much more than merely political as the very terms he used to condemn the Revolutionaries will demonstrate. They were, in his eyes, "refining speculatists", "smugglers of adulterated metaphysics", "atheistical fathers", and thus posed a threat to the entire fabric of European civilization.⁹

Burke's political thinking seems to be based on a distinction between two levels of society—what Northrop Frye calls "real society" and "ordinary society".¹⁰ Ordinary society exists on the level of the work-a-day world, the dreary intercourse of our daily life, our getting and spending, our marrying

and begetting, the social and political arrangements concerned with our ordinary self. Real society is the world revealed to us through the study of the arts and sciences, the total body of human achievement, our intellectual, artistic and religious heritage to which we commonly refer by the name of 'culture'. It is Burke's thesis that in the social and political arrangements of our society, our daily business of life, we ought to draw upon the rich experience which is embodied in our cultural heritage and in the hallowed institutions which enshrine it. Not to do so and to organize instead our political and social institutions on the abstract and untried speculations of revolutionary political theorists would be to cut ourselves off deliberately from the funded experience of the race, the wisdom of nations and ages. By "despising everything that belonged to us", we would be setting up our "trade without a capital" (*Reflections*, III, 278); we would not only be impoverishing ourselves morally and spiritually, but, even at the level of ordinary life, we will be living from hand to mouth, "by the vulgar practice of the hour", improvising solutions for the problems as they will arise from day to day. Nonconformists, according to Burke, whether religious or political, lead what Matthew Arnold called a "hole-and-corner existence"; by refusing to belong to established institutions they isolate themselves from "the main current of national life",¹¹ and thus deliberately turn their face against the most powerful agencies of civilization and culture.

The radicals' reliance on metaphysical speculation, or what we call ideology, rather than on experience and history in devising the political arrangements of society, is seriously misconceived. It is based on a two-fold error—a lack of understanding of the nature of politics and a misreading of human nature. Politics, as Burke never tired of repeating, should be adjusted not to human reasonings, but to human nature, of which reason was but a part and by no means the greatest. Stronger than reason in man are his feelings and instincts, which first create in him an awareness of his duties and obligations: "Dark and inscrutable are ways by which we come into the world. The instincts which give rise to this mysterious process of Nature are not of our making. But out of physical causes, unknown to us, perhaps unknowable, arise moral duties, which, as we are perfectly to comprehend, we are bound indispensably to perform (*An Appeal*, IV, 166)". For the individual, therefore, as Parkin points out in his highly perceptive study of Burke,¹² apprehension of the moral order comes to him through his instinctive nature. The primary sphere within which the individual becomes aware of his moral duties is the small society through which he comes into the order of lives—the family. This is the first natural community, after which comes the small

local society: "To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ, as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind (*Reflections*, III, 292)". The superior and subordinate ties do not flourish at one another's expense; they subsist together in a proportioned whole, so that the charities of the state and the hearth are combined and mutually reflected. It will be the hallmark of the true statesman that he would "preserve the method of Nature in the conduct of the state (*Reflections*, III, 275)", exploit these instinctive attachments of men and forge them into a larger allegiance to the Commonwealth. In doing so, he will respect the principle of inheritance and shun innovation for its own sake; for "a spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors". The idea of inheritance, which means "historic experience", on the other hand, "furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free; but it secures what it acquires". It is through following this wise principle that we, Burke wrote to his French correspondent to whom the *Reflections* are addressed, "have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood: binding up the Constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars". The "rational and manly freedom" Englishmen enjoy has been acquired by them by choosing to rely on their nature rather than their speculations, their breasts rather than their inventions. They have succeeded in evolving stable institutions because they have acted in conformity to Nature "by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful instincts to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of their reason (*Reflections*, III, 274-276)".

In looking for a philosophical basis for his conservatism, Burke gave powerful stimulus to a substantial re-assessment of the current view of human nature. He helped fashion a new image of man, and in doing so, rejected "the man of Cartesian Rationalism . . . a pure mind concerned after an angelic pattern";¹³ the man of Lockean empiricism, free from any innate ideas and capable of infinite growth and even perfection; Rousseau's child of nature corrupted by civilization; or the pleasure-seeking animal of the Benthamites who takes every step after carefully measuring up its consequences by referring to a Felicific Calculus. Burke thus not only exposed the weakness of what

Graham Wallas calls "the 'Intellectualist' assumption that every human action is the result of an intellectual process, by which a man first thinks of some end which he desires, and then calculates the means by which that end can be attained",¹⁴ but also pointed out the shortcomings of the ruling notions of the nature of man. It would not, however, be quite correct to look at Burke's contribution as a 'revolt' against the eighteenth century, for there were traditions of thought in the eighteenth century which bear close resemblance to Burke's thinking and to which he was probably indebted. The most influential group of thinkers in this respect were the members of the moral sense and, even more so, the Scottish common sense school. Both these groups were deeply concerned with the 'active' powers of the mind as distinguished from the 'intellectual' and emphasized the role of the irrational forces like the instincts and affections in human action.¹⁵ But none of these thinkers had Burke's status as a political philosopher, and it is mainly because of his writings and utterances that "a sense of the limits of Intellect"¹⁶ has become an important part of the conservative tradition in thought, so much so that even a thinker like Jacques Barzun, one of the greatest votaries of Intellect in our time, is led to state: "... the greatest danger to a democratic state is probably the contamination of its politics by Intellect". Referring to the Marxist radicals of the 'thirties in America, Barzun says: "What they actually taught the country was that intellectual politics not only follows the common rule of 'Whoever is not with us is against us', but also makes the choice of sides irrevocable. Principle never forgives and its logic is to kill". He goes on to quote with approval Walter Bagehot, author of the nineteenth-century classic, *The English Constitution*.

I fear you will laugh (Bagehot says) when I tell you what I conceive to be about the most essential quality for a free people, whose liberty is to be progressive, permanent, and on a large scale: it is much *stupidity*. . . . I need not say that, that, in real sound stupidity, the English are unrivalled. . . . In fact, what we opprobriously call stupidity, though not an enlivening quality in common society, is nature's favourite resource for preserving steadiness of conduct and consistency of opinion.¹⁷

These comments are likely to give a wrong idea of the main trend of Burke's thought. Though he had criticized French political theorists like Rousseau and Condorcet,¹⁸ it was not because he was uncompromisingly opposed to all speculation but because they deduced their political philosophy from abstract notions of the rights of man and ignored the specific circumstances of a particular society. The tendency of Burke's own mind was highly spec-

ulative, and it is not without reason that he should be described as "the Aquinas of British political thought".¹⁹ Burke was aware of this himself and insists that he does not vilify theory and speculation, because that would be to vilify reason itself (*Works*, VII, 97). He would only suggest that speculation should always be based on a respect for concrete facts: "Plans must be made for men. We cannot think of making men, and binding Nature to our designs (*An Appeal*, IV, 43-44)". Burke's anti-rationalism (if it may be so called) is not a rejection of reason, not a temperamental distrust for reason, but a critique, rather, of the abstract individual reason as applied to political problems, a rejection of the notion that true reason is exercised *more geometrico*. He makes a distinction between "speculative sciences"—such as metaphysics, logic and mathematics, whose excellence consists in reducing multiplicity to unity by abstraction; and the "moral sciences" (in which he includes all study of society), which must endeavour to consider man in a multiplicity of simultaneous relations, and whose excellence is not, therefore, simplification but comprehensiveness. Burke agreed with Aristotle, "the great master of reasoning", who has cautioned us against "delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry (*Conciliatoin*, II, 170)". The true moral philosopher will adapt his speculations not to human reason but to human nature, basing it not on "simple abstraction" but "complex concretion", as Whitehead would say. The good of society could best be determined from a study of the society itself, rather than from the *a priori* speculations of an individual thinker. Moreover, fallible as our critical reason is, we should try to correct its conclusions by those of collective reason, "the general sense of mankind", "the wisdom of the race", for "the individual is foolish . . . but the species is wise".

It is impossible to do full justice to this aspect of Burke's thought unless we realize that he was a man of a deeply religious nature and of profound religious convictions.²⁰ Though he was a genuine humanist and greatly prized the gift of reason which God had conferred on him, he never forgot that, with all his rich endowment, man was a weak, erring creature. In the true tradition of Christian Humanism, the tradition of Erasmus, Hooker, Milton and Dr. Johnson, he considered man in all his natural grandeur and weakness, in the words of Jacques Maritain, "in the entirety of his wounded being inhabited by God, in the full reality of nature, sin and sanctity".²¹ The range of man's reason, he knew, was limited: His wisdom is not our wisdom, and "when ever we examine the result of a reason which is not our own . . . we can never walk surely, but by being sensible of our own blindness (*Vindication*, I, 6)". His differences with the metaphysicians of the French Revolution, the *Philos-*

ophes, are therefore not differences of opinion only, but of outlook, temperament and belief. In preaching the supremacy of reason, the *philosophes* were guilty of a cardinal sin, the sin of pride,—of “personal self-sufficiency and arrogance”—of claiming for man a perfection that belongs to God alone. Burke, therefore, condemns Rousseau as “the insane Socrates of the National Assembly”, “the great professor and founder of the philosophy of vanity (*Letter*, IV, 26)”.²²

Poets and philosophers in different times and ages have been gravely impressed by the mystery of the universe, the starry heavens above, the recurring cycle of seasons and years and have seen in this marvellous handiwork of nature the hidden hand of the Creator. Burke was impressed to the same degree by the astounding fabric of civil society, “wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old or middle-aged or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression (*Reflections*, III, 275)”. This mighty spectacle filled him with mystical awe and reverence, and made him extremely hesitant in tinkering with it unless it was for the explicit purpose of correcting some clearly felt wrong. “He looks at all radical reformers with the indignation of a surgical expert when he sees the knife of the quack menacing the delicate organism of the human body”.²³ Commonwealths, as he constantly emphasized, are not merely physical agglomerations but moral essences, brought into existence by the skill, devotion and dedication of numberless individuals and many generations. He was, therefore, furious at the French Revolutionaries because they were bent upon destroying the whole fabric of European civilization, as he was furious at Warren Hastings and his band of English adventurers because their depredations threatened to destroy the ancient, varied and rich civilization of India, a product of thousands of years.

II

To move from Burke to Butler is to move from a major to a minor figure, from a titan to a mere man. But the mere man, an original thinker in his own right, though falling short of Burke’s moral grandeur and prophetic vision, had considerable wit, a fine sense of humour, and a mind of uncommon complexity and subtlety. He was not content to skim the surface by building on the foundations laid by others but like Burke asked fundamental questions about the nature of man, the origin, nature and significance of institutions, beliefs and morals which had acquired general acceptance over a long period

of time. What gives added interest to his work is that while being original, he is also highly representative and embodies the Victorian consciousness at a period of time when there is a conflict between the older traditions of thought, religion and morals and a whole new body of knowledge which emerges from the discoveries of the physical and biological sciences. Therefore, we find contradictory tendencies struggling in him—a faith in the liberating power of thought ranged against a deep scepticism about the value of thought itself, an anti-intellectualism resulting in a mystical reliance on the instinctual nature, what Stuart Hughes calls “a desperate resolve to ‘think’ with the blood”.²⁴ There is a celebration of rebellion, and it tickles Butler’s ego to think of himself as an Ishmael, “the *enfant terrible* of literature and science”; but at other times, he asks whether all rebellion is not foolish and whether wisdom does not consist in complete conformity. At one moment he preaches the virtues of “kissing the soil” and condemns as decadent and unreal English middle-class education and culture which unfit a man for making any kind of honest living; another moment he strongly urges the need of an independent and settled income as indispensable to the good life, a line of thinking which leads Edmund Wilson to conclude that “for all his satiric insight, he had basically the psychology of the *rentier*”.²⁵ But these waverings of mind—his inability for a long time to take a firm stand in favour of either reason or instinct, freedom or authority, conformity or nonconformity—are themselves of great interest to the student of nineteenth-century thought and culture. They illustrate Croce’s dictum that the historian’s or thinker’s definition of his problem is necessarily and quite properly a reflection of the concerns of his own time. Though the pull of contrary ideals continues to the end of his life, a distinct shift in the direction of traditional ways of thought is noticeable, and it is in a responsive conservatism like Burke’s that Butler finally finds an answer to most of his questions.

These questions may be formulated in three ways, bringing out the main aspects of Butler’s thought—intellectual, moral and spiritual. Intellectually Butler’s career is relevant as it illustrates the development of a man who, coming from the citadel of Victorian orthodoxy, is emancipated through eighteenth-century rationalism and the new science but, finding the heritage of the Enlightenment inadequate,²⁶ is led by his conservative instincts to a renewed faith in the institutions of his country, a faith for which he seeks justification in his own version of the theory of evolution. Morally, it is relevant as it shows the quest of a man who, deeply dissatisfied with Puritan culture, looks for a richer and more satisfying cultural ideal; and spiritually, from the point

of view of what Frye calls the problem of spiritual authority in the nineteenth century.

Butler's conservatism, like Burke's, had a philosophical basis, though it derived from quite a different source, namely, the influential concept of evolution. Against the Darwinian view of evolution through Natural Selection, Butler advanced a teleological view, which corresponded more to the theories of Lamarck and of Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin. He emphasized personal identity between parents and offspring, the offspring being the continuation of the parent in the same sense in which a man of eighty is a continuation of a young babe of as many days. Heredity is only a mode of memory; it enables us to respond to a particular situation in the same way as our parents, confronted with a similar situation, had normally done. Instinct is inherited memory, and is thus a concrete and built-in manifestation of the force of heredity.

The evolutionary process does not consist merely in an accumulation of fortuitous variations: a sense of effort or design is crucial to all evolutionary growth. This design is not external or superimposed—like that of Paley and the theologians—but inward and depending upon the organism's own sense of need. It manifests itself not in the form of results reached *per saltum*, but as an accumulation of small steps in a given direction. The design manifested in an organism is like our own design, which is tentative, and neither very far-seeing nor very retrospective, a little of both, but much of neither. Nevertheless, there is no doubt of its being design.

Butler's instinctive conservatism found powerful intellectual support in these evolutionary views, and the position he finally came to adopt was very much like that of Burke himself. He developed a respect for tradition, for the wisdom of the past, and hated all innovation for its own sake. It is impossible for us, as the influence of heredity amply demonstrates, to break away completely from our past; it is doubtful if it would be wise to do so.²⁷ This consideration, however, did not imply a slavish adherence to the past; a sense of 'pluck' is essential to all progress, and the Butlerian view of organic development laid great stress on effort and design. Butler's biological beliefs thus did not make him a reactionary advocate of the *status quo* like Lord Eldon; like Burke, he wanted change, in fact thought it essential, but wished it to be gradual so that our personalities are not given too sharp a jolt in trying to cope with new situations:

... too sudden a change (he says) in the manner in which our ideas are associated is as cataclysmic and subversive of healthy evolution as are material convulsions,

or too violent revolutions in politics. This must always be the case, for change is essentially miraculous, and the only lawful home of the miracle is in the microscopically small. . . . Creations, then, there must be, but they must be so small that practically they are no creations. We must have a continuity in discontinuity and a discontinuity in continuity. (*Luck or Cunning?* VIII, 21-22).

For the new, if it is to strike deep root and be permanent, must grow out of the old, without too violent a transition. Some violence there will always be, even in the kindest birth; but the less the better. (*Evolution, Old and New*, V, 352-353).

The image of man Butler fashioned had a striking resemblance to that of Burke, though it derived from a different body of thought and was based on Butler's recognition of the tremendous power of the unconscious in a man's life.²⁸ For Burke, apprehension of the moral order first comes to man through his instinctual nature. For Butler too, instincts are the most reliable guide an individual has in the business of life. To him instinct is not reason in its rudimentary form but reason become habitual, reason many times repeated and made perfect so that, far from having come before reason as most psychological and moral thinkers tended to believe, it could have come only long afterwards. It is "the epitome of past experience, revised, corrected, made perfect, and learnt by rote (*Life and Habit*, IV, 171)"; and thus invests our unconsciousness with its great power. Butler is concerned not only with emphasizing the supremacy of instinct over reason but also with abolishing the polarity between them. His instinct is not an inborn tendency or disposition which stands in opposition to reason but is itself a fulfilment, a perfecting of reason, like Burke's nature, which is "wisdom without reflection and above it". A great many of the conflicts with which our personalities are torn are directly or indirectly an outcome of our efforts to suppress the voice of instinct, of our refusal to benefit from the funded experience of the race which is embedded in the unconscious.

A recognition of the essential harmony and unity of the instinctive and moral life of man is thus at the heart of Butler's moral and political thought as it was at that of Burke, though instinct enjoys a higher status in Butler's thought than it does in Burke's. From this recognition stems the moral distinction Butler makes between the conscious and unconscious knowers, those under Law and those under Grace. There is a tendency in all knowledge as it grows and reaches perfection to become unconscious or instinctive. "We know best what we are least conscious of knowing"; for example, our breathing and our digestion, our walking and our talking. The most knowledgeable

persons are, therefore, those in whom knowledge has reached such perfection as to become completely unconscious, in whom right conduct has become an instinct, who have mastered the art of living to a degree that they now practise it with an effortless ease. These are the unconscious knowers, the men under Grace, and they form a natural aristocracy. In the game of life, they are like some fortunate bridge-players who play the right card by instinct, while the professional moralists who are constantly trying to uncover the laws of right action, are, even after much planning and contriving, likely to play the wrong one.

If "a sense of the limits of Intellect" is an important part of the conservative tradition in thought, this sense is quite pronounced in Samuel Butler. Like Matthew Arnold, he expresses the weariness with the moral and intellectual tradition of Europe which, as Lionel Trilling points out in his brilliant study of E. M. Forster, has been in some corner of the European psyche since early in the nineteenth century. It was the perception of the dangers of "a rigid intellectualism, a fierce conscience, the everlasting research of the mind into itself"²⁹ that made the young Arnold keep his distance from his Oxford friends and be aggressively gay, arrogant, frivolous, dandified at the very time he was writing his saddest verse. It was a similar perception which made Butler highly uncomfortable with his contemporaries' great earnestness, led him to proclaim the virtues of the maxim *surtout point de zèle*, and glorify a life of happy, unconscious ease, governed more by man's natural and social instincts than by his reason. Like Thomas Hardy, Butler asks whether thought is not a disease of the flesh; like D. H. Lawrence, he decries the excessive cerebral consciousness of modern man. In a passage which recalls the one in *Culture and Anarchy* where Arnold wonders what Shakespeare or Virgil would have thought of the Pilgrim Fathers, Butler asks his readers to look at "the photographs of eminent men, whether literary, artistic, or scientific, and note the work which the consciousness of knowledge has wrought on nine out of every ten of them; then . . . look at the Venus of Milo, the Discobolus, the St. George of Donatello (*Life and Habit*, IV, 32)".³⁰ Butler's distinction between Law and Grace corresponds to Arnold's between Hebraism and Hellenism, and like Arnold, Butler feels that the earnestness of the Victorians sprang from a too exclusively Hebraic concern with right doing. It was, he knew, but one step from the 'earnest' to the 'intense', which in turn meant a morbid self-consciousness, the dialogue of the mind with itself, a meddling conscience. He therefore, sets out in search of a new principle of spiritual authority, less subjective, less elusive, more objective and more trustworthy than the principle of con-

science. Aware though he was of the greater reliability of instinct, he recognized that it might be difficult at times to know what exactly is the report of the instincts, and to distinguish it from that of reason or conscience. The soundest principle, therefore, is to check the report of our instincts—the accumulated experience of the race in the individual—with the accumulated experience of the race in the community, available to us in the form of custom or tradition, and embodied to some extent in the institutions of a community, but, above all, in those children of Grace, the happy unconscious beings who have come to terms with their senses and appetites and who have been able to effect a conciliation between the conflicting claims of instinct and reason, of pleasure and duty, of common-sense and conscience.³¹

Butler's ethical thought is thus markedly pragmatist and relativistic,³² though it has a healthy idealism which, while drawing upon nature, retains what is valid in tradition. Butler's unconscious knowers, nice persons, or gentlemen are his own version of Burke's "natural" aristocracy of wisdom and virtue and in both cases represent the conservative tendency to give concrete embodiment to abstract ideals. The cultural ideal of the men of grace Butler upholds is not like Rousseau's child of nature; it corresponds more to the Renaissance ideal of the courtier who is the finest product of civilization. His culture-heroes are, therefore, Beaconsfield, the astute politician and man of the world; Buffon, the French aristocrat and naturalist; and the high Ydgrunites in *Erewhon* who are "gentlemen in the full sense of the word", and who "in the matter of human conduct and the affairs of life, have got about as far as it is in the right nature of man to go (*Erewhon*, II, 130)". In the manner of modern sociologists like Durkheim, Butler suggests that morality does not depend upon certain alleged ideal principles. It is the fundamental condition of solidarity in all social life, pervasive, constraining, keeping the individual well in line with the common interest. Individual morality is not apart from this social integrating dynamic; it is in the individual's clear perception of his social solidarity and in his complete rational alliance with the common weal that 'virtue' consists. In the series of letters "A Clergyman's Doubts", after referring to the tribal custom called *couvade*, according to which in old times the husband was put to bed and nursed whenever his wife was confined, while the wife herself did a double share of hard work about the house, and after relating the story of the young man who rebelled against it, the writer asserts that "morality is conversant about the *mos* or custom which is, rather than the *mos* which ought to be; and a *de facto* custom is as authoritative as a *de jure* one, if the allegiance is general, and the right is still impotent (*Collected Essays*,

XVIII, 65-66).” These words reveal Butler’s empirical inclination which led him to attend to the undemonstrated opinions of persons of experience, age and prudence. His temper in this respect is more akin to Aristotle’s than Plato’s. He feels, as Sabine says of Aristotle and as might with almost equal validity be said of other conservative thinkers like Burke, “that too great a departure from common experience probably has a fallacy in it somewhere even though it appears to be irreproachably logical”.³³ This feeling is evident in Burke’s treatment of prejudice and prescription, and in Butler it leads him to exalt “the current conscience of one’s peers” as the court of highest appeal and to be suspicious of any kind of disruptive change. “The habits of men’s thoughts”, as he says, “can no more be changed suddenly without harm than those of their bodies, even though the bodily habits have been bad ones. . . . A change in morals can be no more effected *per saltum* than a change in organism itself—than a poor breed can be suddenly improved by too wide a cross”. And so Butler condemns “the true radical sin of being in too great a hurry (*Alps and Sanctuaries*, VII, 137)”. “Conformity until absolutely intolerable”—the law of Mrs. Grundy—is, therefore, the golden rule of conduct in his satiric utopia *Erewhon*.

Butler had developed his cultural ideal of the man of happy, unconscious ease partly as a reaction against the inward-looking, introspective man of Puritanism, having a fierce conscience and always at war with himself. His projection of this ideal and upholding of “the current conscience of one’s peers” as the proper court of appeal in matters of conduct were substitutes for the Protestant principle of the sanctity of private judgment. These responses had, however, taken into account only the religious and cultural aspects of Puritanism; Puritanism could have another manifestation, equally rigorous and even more uncompromising—an intellectual one, represented in the nineteenth century by the scientists and the free-thinkers. Butler, as we have seen, had started as a free-thinker himself and his earlier writings had made him popular with them. But he began to annoy them when he rejected the Darwinian view of evolution and began forcefully putting forward his own teleological view. The personal quarrel with Charles Darwin made him a literary pariah and henceforth he was systematically ignored. Butler now had some idea of the formidable power there was in the intellectual world; for it was not religion but science and free-thought which were becoming the ruling orthodoxies of the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The champions of religion were generally on the defensive, for they knew that the spirit of the age was not on their side. The scientists and free-thinkers, on the contrary, were

aggressively self-confident and displayed all the dogmatism, fanaticism and crusading zeal of men who are acting in the honest conviction that they alone are fighting for the truth. Huxley's defiance of the clergy at the famous meeting of the British Association in Oxford was, as G. M. Trevelyan points out, "in the spirit of Luther at Worms". And "Leslie Stephen's and John Morley's passionate refusal to compromise with dogmas they had come to disbelieve, breathed the unyielding spirit of Seventeenth Century Puritanism".³⁴ Indeed, like their spiritual progenitors in the eighteenth century—the *philosophes*—they can be described in Cobban's fine phrase as "Puritans of the intellect",³⁵ and we remember how Burke had used the same comparison in referring to the fanatical zeal of the Jacobin philosophers. Butler's anguished cry at science being made a new idol is reminiscent of Goddess Reason being carried in triumph into the National Convention in France:

Science is being daily more and more personified and anthropomorphized into a god. By and by they will say that science took our nature upon him, and sent down his only begotten son Charles Darwin, or Huxley, into the world so that those who believe in him, etc.; and they will burn people for saying that science, after all, is only an expression for our ignorance of our own ignorance (*Note-Books*, XX, 346-47)".

Butler's unhappy experience with the scientists and free-thinkers forced him to a reconsideration of his entire position towards the respective roles of religion and science, the Church and free-thought. The resulting shift is clearly visible in his attitude to the Church. In the first edition of *Erewhon* published in 1872, he had made fun of the Musical Banks, which were an allegorical representation of the Established Church in England. In the revisions he made in the final edition in 1901, he comes forward firmly to defend them, and the passage is worth quoting to give an idea of his own reasons for this startling change of front:

Some Erewhonian opinions concerning the intelligence of the unborn embryo, that I regret my space will not permit me to lay before the reader, have led me to conclude that the Erewhonian Musical Banks, and perhaps the religious systems of all countries are now more or less of an attempt to uphold the unfathomable and unconscious instinctive wisdom of millions of past generations, against the comparatively shallow, consciously reasoning, and ephemeral conclusions drawn from that of the last thirty or forty (*Erewhon*, II, 119).

Butler's respect for the Church is thus based on the vital distinction in his mind between unconscious and conscious knowledge, between what he calls

“grace” and mere “earthly knowledge—knowledge, that is to say, which had not passed through so many people as to have become living and incarnate”. “Knowledge is in an inchoate state as long as it is capable of logical treatment; it must be transmuted into that sense or instinct which rises altogether above the sphere in which words can have being at all, otherwise it is not yet incarnate (*Life and Habit*, IV, 34, 25).” It is only when knowledge has passed beyond the conceptual stage, when it has gone through the mellowing process which transmutes it into Burke’s “Nature, which is wisdom without reflection and above it (*Reflections*, III, 274)” that it becomes deserving of respect. The Church is valuable because, being a repository of this kind of knowledge, it keeps us in touch with the unconscious, instinctive wisdom of the past and saves us from being swept away by the passing winds of doctrine which change daily and hourly.

Thus, though the conservatism of Burke and Butler was to some extent a manifestation of their own instinctive nature, it was not just a conservatism of sentiment and still less of prejudice. It was a conservatism of principle, based on their experience in the world of affairs as well as their contact with the advanced and radical thought of their day. There is an astonishing similarity in their responses to these trends of thought and behaviour, though the reasons which prompted these responses might have been different. Burke’s distrust of private judgment sprang from his recognition of the limits of abstract reason and his deep religious convictions which made him realize that man is, after all, a weak, erring creature; Butler’s from his sceptical nature, his extensive study of evolutionary thought, the light it threw on the composition of man’s nature and his realization of the shortcomings of the Puritan ethic. But the conclusion they reach is the same: to Burke “delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments is the most fallacious of all sophistry”; to Butler, “Logic is like the sword—those who appeal to it shall perish by it (*Note-Books*, XX, 336)”. Faith and not reason, therefore, is the ultimate arbiter. Their sense of the limits of reason arises from their realization that, as John MacCunn remarks of Burke: “man’s habits and sentiments lag far behind his ideas; and that whilst ideas, theories, projects, declarations may capture the imagination at a stroke they can be wrought into the life only under inexorable limits of time”.³⁶ Thus, it is their keen insight into human nature which leads them to their distrust of theory. So also in their reaction to infidelity and free-thought. They are suspicious of these metaphysical innovations because they see in them highly subversive influences prejudicial to all peace and tranquility, destroying as they do man’s faith in the only sources of assurance he has in a

highly intricate and perplexing world—his religious faith, his instincts and affections. Moreover, they demolish old orthodoxies only to set up new ones in their place, more narrow, intolerant and uncompromising than those they seek to replace. Being men with a highly pronounced practical bias, the conservatives reject these abstract systems of thought because they know that their simplicity is deceptive and that life is more complex. What Burke said of political arrangements was in Butler's view true of all others in human life, that these are at best compromises, compromises sometimes between good and evil, sometimes between evil and evil.³⁷ The tendency to look at them in terms of absolute right and wrong is, therefore, generally misconceived; the conservatives are down-to-earth, earthy. To Burke measures are for men, not men for measures. Butler's outlook comes out in a typical sally in which he dismisses the fashionable doctrine of 'art for art's sake': "Who is art, that it should have a sake? (*Alps and Sanctuaries*, VII, 135)". It was this practical and realistic outlook which made them aware of the necessity of faith of some sort. To Burke religion was valuable because, besides being "the source of all good, and all comfort" to man, it was the basis of civil society, an inference drawn again from the facts of human nature; that man is "a religious animal", that he could not long remain without a religion because "the mind will not endure a void", and "some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition" will take its place (*Reflections*, III, 350-51). It might be Reason, Liberty, Humanity, Science or the Proletariat. That is why we find Butler coming round to the defence of the Musical Banks towards the end of his life and writing *Erewhon Revisited*, which may be taken as a practical demonstration of the truth of Burke's comment.

There is a great deal in *Erewhon Revisited* of which Burke would not have approved; in fact, he would have found Butler's scepticism about the historical origins of Christianity and the truth of the Christian creed positively abhorrent. But Burke the conservative philosopher would have rejoiced in the conversion of an erstwhile rebel; to his recognition, howsoever late, of the value of the established institutions of his country, of which the Church could be regarded as the most central and vital.

NOTES

1. Practically all the early critics of Butler emphasized his spirit of rebellion and his iconoclasm. Shaw was the most prominent among them, but as he was mainly responsible for the spreading of Butler's fame in the early years of the twentieth century, other critics too got the cue from him. Among these were the members of the Bloomsbury Group, Gilbert Cannan, J. F. Harris, Desmond

MacCarthy, C. E. M. Joad and R. F. Rattray. Henry Festing Jones presented the same picture in his *Memoir*. Of course, this view did not continue to find easy acceptance. Lytton Strachey discovered "the Victorian taint" on Butler; Edmund Wilson characterized him as having "basically the psychology of the *rentier* (*The Triple Thinkers* (New York, 1938), p. 219, printed earlier in *The New Republic*, LXXV (1933), 35-37); and Malcolm Muggeridge in *The Earnest Atheist* (London, 1936) portrayed him as not an anti-Victorian but an ultimate Victorian. The pity is that, in all these efforts to emphasize Butler's conventionalism, there should be little realization of the fact that this conventionalism, apart from being merely a creature of habit, could be a manifestation of his ingrained as well as conscious conservatism and that conservatism could be a perfectly legitimate philosophical position, as it is taken to be in the case of Burke, Disraeli or Churchill. Among studies which have considered him in this light without necessarily regarding his conservatism as a stigma are Clara Stillman, *Samuel Butler: A Mid-Victorian Modern* (London and New York, 1932); John Douglas Grant, *Samuel Butler as a Critic of Victorian England*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Toronto, 1947); and R. E. Shoenberg, *The Conservatism of Samuel Butler*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Michigan, 1962).

2. As far as I know, the only reference to Burke, in a discussion of Butler, is by Basil Willey in *Darwin and Butler: Two Versions of Evolution* (London, 1960), p. 95. Professor Willey, after quoting from *Erewhon* the well-known passage on Musical Banks in which Butler comes round to their defence, comments: "This passage, in spite of its Burkean tone, is to be thought of in relation not to Burke (whom, it is tolerably certain, Butler had not read) but to Butler's notions about unconscious memory in *Life and Habit*". There is definite proof that Butler had read Burke (See "A Clergyman's Doubts", *Collected Essays*, Shrewsbury Edition London, 1923-26, XVIII, 83. All further references to Butler, which will be incorporated into the text, will be to this edition), though it would be difficult to establish from this the exact extent of Butler's indebtedness to Burke.
3. Conservatives usually shy away from offering a definition of conservatism. "The mere intention to spin out a theory of conservatism", as Clinton Rossiter observes, "is somehow an unconservative impulse. . . ." (See article on "Conservatism" in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*.) Thus Michael Oakeshott says that "conservative conduct does not readily provoke articulation in the idiom of general ideas", and that conservatism is more of a disposition than a creed or a doctrine. See "On Being Conservative" in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (London, 1962), p. 168. Quintin Hogg makes the same plea that "Conservatism is not so much a philosophy as an attitude"; See *The Case for Conservatism* (London, 1947), p. 13; and for

Russell Kirk "Conservatism is a body of convictions but not an ideology". See "Conservatism" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. What these exponents of conservatism perhaps do not realize is that the same could be said of radicalism or leftism, that they are not so much philosophies as attitudes of mind. But these attitudes and convictions, as Kenneth Minogue points out, are merely prescriptive implications of certain structures of thought, the chief formulation of which for the conservatives, according to him, can be found in the "complexity thesis" that human affairs are extremely complicated and that the details of human behaviour are unpredictable. See article on "Conservatism" in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*.

4. The problem of inconsistency has bothered the admirers and readers of Burke ever since his strong condemnation of the French Revolution. Morley tried hard to show that Burke may have changed his front but not his position, and Woodrow Wilson saw "a singular consistency, a very admirable simplicity of standard" in Burke's treatment of political topics. The most thorough and objective recent discussion of this problem is by B. T. Wilkins in *The Problem of Burke's Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 72-89; and Peter J. Stanlis' essay "Edmund Burke in the Twentieth Century" in *The Relevance of Edmund Burke* (New York, 1964) provides an excellent summary of the different approaches to Burke. This type of controversy is unavoidable, as Alfred Cobban suggests, in the case of a man who is a political philosopher as well as a practical politician which makes him "somewhat of an anomaly", apt "to be treated accordingly by other politicians during his life and by philosophers after his death". See *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century* (Second edition; London, 1960), p. 38. The question essentially resolves itself into that of the extent to which Burke relied upon experience and history or upon certain *a priori* assumptions regarding the nature and rights of man. To my mind it is a reflection of the perpetual tension which exists in Burke arising out of his speculative habit of mind and his practical temper. This, however, need not lead to an irreconcilable conflict or glaring inconsistency in his thought. Burke's approach, I think, was eclectic and he drew upon various sources for his ideas but he made them his own by bringing about a coherent combination. What appears to be inconsistency is more often a shift of emphasis necessitated by the nature of the particular problem he was addressing himself to. His reaction to "Jacobinism", for instance, would have been the same at any period of his life. For his definition of 'Jacobinism' see *A Letter of William Smith* (1795), *Works*, VI, 367.
5. Preface to *A Vindication of Natural Society*, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899), I, 6-7. All references to Burke, which will be incorporated into the text, will be to this edition. Burke's attitude to Bolingbroke calls for some comment, particularly

because many conservatives have disagreed with Burke and have given Bolingbroke practically the same status in the conservative pantheon as to Burke himself. As Isaac Kramnick points out in his recent reevaluation of Bolingbroke (*Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* [Cambridge, Mass., 1968], p. 263) the Tory reading of Bolingbroke began with Disraeli and "Disraeli's beatification" of him has been echoed by other Tory writers, including Bolingbroke's biographers Walter Sichel, Sir Charles Petrie and Richard Faber. Keith Feiling (in *What is Conservatism?* [London, 1920], p. 35) describes Bolingbroke's ideas as a source for true Conservatism. F. J. C. Hearnshaw (in *Conservatism in England* [London, 1933], p. 154) wrote that "along with Burke and Disraeli, Bolingbroke was a supreme exponent of Conservatism". According to Maurice Wood, "Bolingbroke stated the Tory case as it had never been stated, and the echoes of that supreme presentation will ring down the centuries" (*A History of the Tory Party* [London, 1924], p. 178). Sir Geoffrey Butler and his nephew, R. A. Butler, place Bolingbroke with Burke, Disraeli, and Salisbury as the cornerstones of the Tory tradition (See Geoffrey Butler, *The Tory Tradition, Bolingbroke, Burke, Disraeli, and Salisbury* [London, 1957.] All these discussions, however, assume that there was a conservative tradition in England since early in the eighteenth century. For writers like Lord Hugh Cecil (*Conservatism* [London, 1937]), who argue that English conservatism was born with the French Revolution when men had to choose to be for or against Jacobinism, the question of including Bolingbroke in the conservative tradition does not arise. Students of political thought, other than conservatives, have generally held a poor opinion of Bolingbroke as a political thinker. This group includes Leslie Stephen, Sir Charles G. Robertson, Carlton Hayes and Harold J. Laski. And G. D. H. Cole, repeating Burke's rhetorical question, "Who now reads Bolingbroke, who ever read him through?" asks even more emphatically, "Who reads, who can endure to read Bolingbroke now?" (See *Politics and Literature* [London, 1929] p. 87).

6. "Christian Humanism" in Donald and Idella Gallagher, ed., *A. Maritain Reader* (New York, 1966), p. 216.
7. See Charles Parkin, *The Moral Basis of Burke's Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 21-22.
8. Despite Lovejoy's plea that "the juristic state of nature—the period prior to the establishment of civil government—was by him divided into four distinct cultural stages" and that in his terminology "the term 'state of nature' usually refers, not to the pre-political state as a whole, but to the first of these cultural stages", the fact remains that Rousseau on the whole preferred the primitive stage to the civilized one. The antithesis between the absolute, primal immediacy and spontaneity of nature and the relative, derived limitation of cul-

- ture is, as has been pointed out by H. Hoffding (*Rousseau und seine Philosophie*, p. 105), basic to Rousseau's thinking. (See Tsanoff, *The Moral Ideals of Our Civilization* [New York, 1942], p. 314). For Lovejoy's view see *Essays in the History of Ideas*, Capricorn Books (New York, 1960), pp. 15-16.
9. The quotation from John Morley is from his *Burke*, E. M. L. (New York, n.d.), p. 156. For further reinforcement of this point note Burke's explanation for having dwelt too long on "the atrocious spectacle of the sixth of October, 1789". He had done so because "the most important of all revolutions . . . may be dated from that day: I mean a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions". *Reflections*, III, 337.
 10. "The Problem of Spiritual Authority in the Nineteenth Century" in Richard A. Levine ed., *Backgrounds to Victorian Literature* (California, 1967, p.) 136.
 11. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 16, 14.
 12. *Moral Basis*, pp. 30-32.
 13. *Maritain Reader*, p. 216.
 14. *Human Nature in Politics* (London, 1948; first pub. 1908), p. 5.
 15. One of the earliest and highly illuminating study of Burke's affinities with the thinkers of these two schools was Mario Einaudi's "The British Background of Burke's Political Philosophy" *Political Science Quarterly*, XLIV (December 1934), 576-98. But I cannot accept Einaudi's dogmatic statement that "It may conclusively be asserted that to the philosophers of common sense he owed not only the best arguments in his devastating criticism of the abstract theory of rights and of social contract, but also . . . the first approach to it". B. T. Wilkins, in drawing attention to Burke's "Scottish connexions", is more moderate in his conclusions. (See *The Problem*, pp. 56, 64 and 68). For a fascinating discussion of the political implications of these theories see C. H. Driver's essay "The Development of a Psychological Approach to Politics in English Speculation Before 1869", in F. J. C. Hearnshaw, ed., *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age* (London, 1933), pp. 251-71.
 16. Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect* (New York, 1959), p. 152.
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-48.
 18. Exception might be taken to the inclusion here of Condorcet's name with that of Rousseau on the ground that he is determinedly historic, not abstract. But as Bury points out, Condorcet too, like all his circle, displayed the same neglect of the preponderant part which institutions have played in social development. So far as he considered them at all, he saw in them obstacles to the free play of human reason; not the spontaneous expression of a society corresponding to its needs or embodying its ideals, but rather machinery contrived for oppressing the masses and keeping them in chains. See *The Idea of Progress* (New York,

- 1932), pp. 205-6.
19. T. E. Utey, *Edmund Burke*, British Council (London, 1957), p. 5.
 20. I should indicate here that I do not entirely agree with critics like John Morley, Henry Buckle, William Lecky, C. E. Vaughan, Elie Halévy and, more recently, Northrop Frye (in his assertion that "Burke's counter-revolutionary argument was based on a completely inductive conception of political action") that Burke was a Utilitarian, Pragmatist, Empirical or Inductive thinker without any coherent political philosophy. Though Burke was not a systematic thinker and though there was a clearly marked empirical tendency in his thought, it was based on definitely and firmly held moral and religious beliefs about the nature of man and his place in the order of creation. "If one were to subtract from Burke's political philosophy his religion and his recognition of the natural law", as Hoffman and Levack observe (*Burke's Politics*, New York, 1959, XXX), "it would indeed degenerate into an expedient-mongering pragmatism". We might also recall in this connection Hazlitt's shrewd comment that Burke was a metaphysician, Mackintosh a mere logician (cited Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind*, Chicago, 1953).
 21. *Maritain Reader*, p. 226.
 22. It might legitimately be claimed that Rousseau is, strictly speaking, not a *Philosophe*. Miss A. M. Osborn in *Rousseau and Burke: A Study of the Idea of Liberty in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (New York, 1964; first pub. 1940) has suggested that ". . . there was no important divergence of opinion on the question of fundamental principles between the two", and Jacques Barzun, in *Classic, Romantic and Modern* (Anchor Books, 1961), pp. 177-78, supports her thesis. However, both these critics consider Burke only as a political philosopher and tend to ignore the deep religious basis of his political thought. When considered in this light, the differences between the outlook of Burke and Rousseau—the Confession of the Savoyard Vicar, notwithstanding—become clear and unmistakable. See also for Rousseau, as for Bolingbroke, Thomas W. Copeland, *Our Eminent Friend, Edmund Burke* (New Haven, 1949), pp. 133-39.
 23. John MacCunn, *The Political Philosophy of Burke* (New York, 1913), p. 71.
 24. H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890-1930*, Vintage Books (New York, 1958), p. 17.
 25. *The Triple Thinkers* (New York, 1938), p. 219.
 26. Butler provides a good illustration for G. M. Young's observation in which he ascribes the religious alienation of Victorians "to the strong surviving vein of Augustan rationalism being reinforced by the conclusions of Victorian science". (*Victorian England* [London, 1959], p. 17). In discarding his ancestral faith Butler had passed from Gibbon to Darwin. Moreover, he was greatly interested in the work of the French *philosophes*: in his manuscript Notebooks

there are several references to Diderot, Maupertuis, Robinet and Bonnet. Butler's interest in them sprang primarily from his desire to find corroboration in their work for his evolutionary theories but there was also a certain intellectual affinity. (See the MSS of Butler's Notebooks available in the Chapin Library, Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.).

27. "We owe past generations not only the master discoveries of music, science, literature, and art—few of which brought profit to those to whom they were revealed—but also for our organism itself which is the inheritance gathered and garnered by those who have gone before us". *Note-Books*, XX, 159-60.
28. Butler was fully aware of von Hartmann's theories of the unconscious as propounded in his *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (London, 1869), and discusses them at length in *Unconscious Memory*. Butler's conception has hardly anything in common with von Hartmann's. To the latter the unconscious represents a dark mysterious region of which we know nothing. Butler's unconscious, on the other hand, is only the repository of memory, the accumulated experience of the race which finds expression in our instinctive action. All these actions were at one time deliberative but have become instinctive now by virtue of their continual repetition. The prophetic strain in instinctive action is thus a result of old experience (See *Unconscious Memory*, VI, 156-57). Butler's conception also differs from Freud's. To Freud the unconscious is that part of the psyche in which the id reigns supreme and which is dominated by the pleasure principle. The discontents of civilization arise from the fact that though these urges of the unconscious are strong and vital, they nonetheless have their origin in the primitive roots of the personality and so may have to be curbed in the interests of civilization (See *Civilization and Its Discontents*, [London, 1957], p. 10). Freud, thus, in spite of his brilliant psychological insight, remains a loyal son of the Enlightenment and is not prepared to go very far in accommodating the urges of our unconscious nature.
29. See *E. M. Forster* (second revised edition, New York, 1965), pp. 148-49.
30. I am indebted to Basil Willey for this analogy. See *Darwin and Butler*, p. 95.
31. I am in broad agreement with Frye's observation that "the more conservative a writer is, the more inclined he is to locate spiritual authority in the middle of actual society, in the place of greatest prestige and prominence. The more radical he is, the more inclined he is to locate it in an opposition, an alien or even excluded group". See Levine, *Backgrounds*, p. 133. Frye, however, seems to ignore that the radical might be inclined not to look up to any group at all but is more likely to locate the centre of authority within himself, his own reason or conscience.
32. In letter ten of "A Clergyman's Doubts" Butler discusses the question of the extent to which it would be moral to sacrifice conviction to expediency and in the next letter explains that "Expediency (in its true sense) involves "considera-

tions of *relative moral value*". This relativism is extended to the definition of truth, and Butler quotes Burke in defence of his assertion that "there was no such thing as truth *apart from the sayer and the sayee*". "I cannot", said Burke, near the beginning of his *Reflections on the French Revolution*, "stand forward and give praise or blame to anything which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the subject, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction". ("A Clergyman's Doubts", *Collected Essays*, XVIII, 83). Butler here (if we can take the views of the letter-writers as representing that of Butler himself) is guilty of confusing two senses of absolute and of misinterpreting Burke. Burke is actually talking of *simple abstraction* as opposed to what Whitehead would call *complex concretion*. This does not mean that truth has no existence apart from opinion or its human utterance. Again, "relative moral value", in the sense of comparative, can exist without denial of "absolute moral value"; there can be, in fact, a scale of absolute values, by which "expediency in its true sense" is determined. The leftist tendency is to isolate a single value, abstract it from the system, and to make it the sole cornerstone of an entire structure of thought.

33. George Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York, 1950), p. 93.
34. *English Social History* (London, 1946), p. 564.
35. *Edmund Burke*, p. 27.
36. *Political Philosophy of Burke*, p. 72.
37. "Political reason is a computing principle. . . ." See *Reflections*, III, 313.