

THE MILL NEWS LETTER

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Published by University of Toronto Press
in association with Victoria College



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Volume IX, Number 1

Fall, 1973

This issue's Milliana, sent to us by C.A. Silber, are taken from Marginalia and Eureka by Edgar Allen Poe. The Eureka passage purports to be an "extract" from "a somewhat remarkable letter, which appears to have been found corked in a bottle and floating on the Mare Tenebrarum--an ocean well described by the Nubian geographer, Ptolemy Hephestion, but little frequented in modern days unless by the Transcendentalists and some other divers for crochets.... [It] seems to have been written in the year two thousand eight hundred and forty-eight":

"I have now lying before me"--it will be observed that we still proceed with the letter--"I have now lying before me a book printed about a thousand years ago. Pundit assures me that it is decidedly the cleverest ancient work on its topic, which is "Logic." The author, who was much esteemed in his day, was one Miller or Mill; and we find it recorded of him as a point of some importance, that he rode a mill-horse whom he called Jeremy Bentham...."

(Eureka in The Complete Works of Edgar Allen Poe, ed. James A. Harrison New York: Crowell, 1902, XVI, 192-3.)

"Mill says that he has 'demonstrated' his propositions. Just in the same way Anaxagoras demonstrated snow to be black, (which, perhaps, it is, if we could see the thing in the proper light,) and just in the same way the French advocate, Linguet, with Hippocrates in his hand, demonstrated bread to be a slow poison. The worst of the matter is that propositions such as these seldom stay demonstrated long enough to be thoroughly understood."

(Marginalia, ibid., 70.)

Readers may also wish to refer to Harriet B. Wolman, "What did Mill Mean to Poe?" MIL, VI:2 (Spring, 1971), 20.

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The issue then proceeds with an article by J. Stanley Yake (Department of Philosophy, University of Wisconsin--Green Bay) which suggests that we can expand our view of Mill's mental crisis, as well as increasing our understanding of the Platonic elements in Mill's later thought, by seeing more clearly the role that Socrates and Plato played in the mental crisis. We follow with an article by Nicholas Capaldi (Department of Philosophy, Queen's College, City University of New York) continuing the discussion regarding apparent contradictions in Mill's views on the conditions required for a stable society. (See G.L. Ten, "Mill's Stable Society," MIL, VII:1 [Fall, 1971], 1-11.) This is followed in turn by a short paper by John Lachs (Department of Philosophy, Vanderbilt University) arguing that as well as holding that happiness is pleasure and the absence of pain, Mill also held that happiness can characterize the lives or parts of the lives of persons if their lives are ordered or meaningful. (This is Professor Lachs' paper, "Mill and the Happy Man," delivered at the Convention of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association in December 1972.) The issue then continues with a thesis abstract, information about recent publications and work in progress, and concludes with a review of Volume II of The Wellesley Index.

We would also like to announce that the System of Logic (Vols. VII and VIII of the Collected Works) will be published by the University of Toronto Press about the end of the year. The editing of Vol. VI, Essays on Politics and Society, is well underway, and the volume should be in press during 1974.

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MILL'S MENTAL CRISIS REVISITED

J. Stanley Yake

The various accounts of John Stuart Mill's so-called "mental crisis" have not been very fruitful in illuminating Mill's post-crisis thought -- certainly not as fruitful as they might be. The reason for that, I think, is that some important emotional, spiritual, and intellectual components of that period of Mill's life have been overlooked. The two most prominent accounts of that crisis, those of J. Durham and A. Levi, exhibit just such an inadequate accounting.¹ While both Durham and Levi deal primarily with the crisis itself, neither mention the role Plato and Socrates played in that crisis. They both recognized that the crisis was in part the result of Mill's education, but Durham explicitly eschews any reference to Plato and Socrates, and Levi claims the crisis to be the result of Mill's latent wish for his father's

death brought to self-consciousness by his reading of Marmontel's Memoires. Levi's account seems too narrow and Durham's account of Mill's education does not seem rich enough to account for the specific activities of Mill's crisis and post-crisis period, nor to account for the Platonic features of Mill's later thought, features which can be delineated and tied to those periods.

In this paper I want to expand our vision of Mill's crisis by attending to the role Socrates and Plato appear to have played in it. Analyzing the contexts of Mill's references to Socrates and Plato in his two essays on Bentham and drawing out some of the implications of those references for the prior period of Mill's intellectual life will enable me to show what connections can be made to sustain the claim that Plato and Socrates were of help to him during the period of his despondency.

The way to illuminate Mill's attitude to Plato/Socrates in the two essays on Bentham is to build the contrast between them and Bentham which seems to have existed in Mill's mind. In the first essay, Mill criticizes Bentham for having an inadequate view of human nature. An ethical philosopher's first task, says Mill, is to give an account of human nature. Mill implies, however, that Bentham's greatest defect, his lack of appreciation of the great philosophers of the past, left him unable to construct an acceptable conception of human nature.

According to Mill, Bentham's theory of human nature took men to be so dominated by "sinister self-interest" that they were incapable of pursuing a course of action contrary to that self-interest. Mill objects, saying that though selfish interests may dominate a person, there is no reason to believe that the actions of all men are always controlled by selfish motives or by the ends of self-interest. But the more crucial part of his criticism of Bentham's theory of human nature and consequently of his ethics is that it is not adequately concerned with character formation. Bentham, when he calculated the morality of an action, was interested in the consequences of a person's act, but he either neglected or severely denigrated the importance of character and character formation in that ethical analysis. His interest was in the external consequences of the action for the agent himself. On the other hand, Mill is acutely aware that actions can become habits and a part of one's character, and he consequently thinks that any adequate ethical analysis will deal with that "inward" flow of consequences. "It is for those in whom the feelings of virtue are weak, that ethical writing is chiefly needful, and its proper office is to strengthen those feelings."² Mill's concern with character formation is important to our argument regarding the role of Plato and Socrates in his mental crisis, for it is in the context of such concern that they are mentioned in the essay of 1833. Later in that essay, Mill says: "I regard any considerable increase of human happiness, through mere changes in outward circumstances, unaccompanied by changes in the state of desires, as hopeless."³ What is hopeless here is the possibility of maximizing one's happiness through the proper use of the motives of "conscience" and "social feeling" in "virtuous exertion." But the fruitful presence of conscience and social feelings in a person is dependent on the development in him of a certain kind of

"faith" regarding the character of others: "the power of anyone to realize in himself the state of mind without which his own enjoyment of life can be but poor and scanty, and on which all our hopes of happiness or moral perfection to the species must rest, depends entirely upon his having faith in the actual existence of such feelings and disposition in others, and in their possibility for himself." Thus, unless one conceives of others as having and employing "conscience" and "social feelings," one will not himself achieve the state necessary for happiness. It is imperative, then, to the moral development of the ethical theorist himself (and consequently to his ethics) that his theory of human nature include those provisions for that "faith."

Here, morality for Mill is very much a matter of uncharacter formation--not simply a matter of the external consequences of an action. The importance Mill attaches to this dimension of moral behaviour can be seen from a letter he wrote to John Sterling in mid-1831, in which he states that the precept "take no thought for to-morrow" ought to be taken as embodying in words "the spirit of all morality, right self-culture, the principles of which cannot change as man's lot or changes not, though the surrounding circumstances do." He goes on to characterize self-culture as "culture of a man's self, of his feelings and will, fitting him to look abroad and see how he is to act, not imposing on him by express definition a prescribed mode of acting." Now it is just the promotion of such self-culture that Mill takes the ethicist's and moralist's task to be. Moreover, the moralist's or ethicist's task is to assist one in the development of that proper "state of mind," to strengthen the "feelings of virtue" with which one is not really disposed or fit to "look abroad" and see how to act. But Bentham's one-sided view of human nature, his inadequate view of the consequences of behaviour, his inability to identify with other thinkers to even the smallest degree--all of these weaknesses make him unable to fulfill that crucial task, according to Mill. It is, however, in the context of such criticism of Bentham that Mill sets up Plato and Socrates as being inspired moralists and as fulfilling in the best fashion the proper task of the ethicist.

This attitude toward Plato and Socrates is also exhibited in Mill's later and more considered essay on Bentham in 1838. He says of Bentham in that essay: "For some of the most illustrious of previous thinkers, his attempt was unmeasured. In almost every passage of the Leontology, which... may be known to be Bentham's, Socrates and Plato are spoken of in terms distressing to his greatest admirers; and the incapacity to appreciate such men, is a defect of the union with the general habits of Bentham's mind." In contrast to Bentham, Mill here identifies himself with the "greatest admirers" of Plato and Socrates, and identifies them as being among the greatest of moral philosophers. The condition he is primarily interested in is the ability to encompass the broadest possible range of insights into the crucial matters of life and morals, of man and their place in the world. Though this could not be a sufficient condition for fulfilling the moralist's task of assisting one in strengthening his "feelings of virtue," it does appear to be a necessary condition for Mill. Mill indicates the importance he attaches to the cultivation of the feelings when he says in a letter to Lytton Bulwer in 1836

that he would hold the "feelings at least as valuable as thought, and Poetry not only on a par with, but the necessary condition of, any true and comprehensive philosophy."⁷ He notes that this is what the orthodox and radical utilitarians (like Bentham) could not grasp.

Elsewhere in the essay of 1838, Mill comments on Bentham's disregard for poetry and his lack of what could be called poetic culture.⁸ He points out that Bentham completely neglected or denigrated the aesthetic point of view.⁹ He took poetry to be, in its essence, exaggeration and misrepresentation. To a man who was interested only in that which was literally true, poetry was not merely useless, it was harmful. "Words, he thought, were perverted from their proper office when they were employed in uttering anything but precise logical truth."¹⁰ But Mill asserts in his essay, "What is Poetry," that poetry is also truth.¹¹ Poetry yields true insight into the "human soul." Mill here takes the aesthetic point of view to be part and parcel of an adequate conception of man as a spiritual creature. In this connection it is fruitful to point out that Mill, earlier in his essay of 1838, asserts that Bentham never recognized "Man...as being capable of spiritual perfection as an end."¹²

Though the references to Plato and Socrates in these two essays are made almost in passing, there is an implied comparison of them and Bentham as moral philosophers. All are weighed in the balance, and it is Bentham who is found wanting, notwithstanding the fact that Mill agrees that according to Bentham's criteria Plato's thought contains "vague generalities" Mill says that, though such is the case, Plato's thought nevertheless embodies and reflects the "unanalyzed experience" and moral insight of the human species at a certain stage in its cultural history,¹³ an important fact which Bentham yet failed to recognize.

The contrast for Mill, between Plato and Bentham, can be put briefly as follows: as a moral philosopher, Bentham was deficient in those basic types of insight that are fundamental to the deriving of valid and penetrating ethical conclusions. Plato, on the other hand, was able both to understand the complexities of human character and to grasp the significance of diverse human behaviour in such a way that he could become not only an able moral philosopher, but one of the greatest. Bentham's deficiencies as a moral philosopher were due essentially to his inadequate conception of human nature. But it was precisely in this area that Plato's genius lay. For not only was he able to lay before us a wide range of moral truths, he was also able to present them to us in such a way that, though disagreement could justifiably arise over their correctness, their plea for the moral point of view could not fail to induce in the inquiring spirit attention to that point of view. It was this latter feature of Plato's thought, in particular, that made him the moral philosopher par excellence for Mill.

Mill was recognizing in his characterization of Plato's genius that the necessary condition for achieving greatness in one's ethical work was a certain sort of poetic insight. In Plato, the features of the philosopher, the moralist, and the poet were combined. Mill seems to sense here, what he at another place quite explicitly recognizes-- that the proper relation of the poetic to the philosophic, moral and

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considerations regarding knowledge. That new insight was no doubt hard to live with, for his propagandistic efforts had been directed toward substantive proposals regarding the current political-social scene and his education had led him to believe that he could assist mankind in humanistic ways--assist them in achieving happiness by helping to change the political and social conditions. To find oneself then, without the motivation to act for those ends is troubling enough. But to discover that even if one had the motivation, he would not be fit to help in the most meaningful and direct ways, surely doubles the attendant difficulties.

Concerning his efforts to restore his own spiritual equilibrium during that period of crisis, he says in the Autobiography, "In vain I sought relief from my favourite books; those memorials of past nobleness and greatness from which I had always drawn strength and animation. I read them now without feeling, or with the accustomed feeling minus all its charm."² Earlier in the Autobiography, in the chapter on "Youthful Propagandism"--dealing with the years from about 1822 to 1831, he tells us that those "memorials" included "Plato's pictures of Socrates and Comenius's Life of Luther." He says he "perpetually recurred to them as others do to a favourite poet, when needing to be carried up into the more elevated regions of feeling and thought."²

From this we can conclude that he resorted to Plato's pictures of Socrates and found no help. What part of Plato might that have been? Mill, as already noted, translated five of the dialogues and never published them; the Charmides, Laches, Lysis, Euthyphro, and Parmenides. In his 1860 review of Grote's Plato, he identifies all but the Parmenides as being dialogues that have for their scene and the search for definitions. When, in 1833, reflecting over his reading of Schlegel, he writes to Carlyle that the picture drawn of Socrates was applicable to him, he gives us reason to suspect that he was able to agree with Schlegel because he had "recurred" in those years of depression to that Socrates, and found only himself.

For a man whose well-springs of feelings had dried up, and who had, in fact, no friends, Plato's treatment of friendship in the Lysis would be of no help. If he did not find the moral end drawing him, Plato's treatment of courage in the Laches would not move him toward it. Plato's paideia would be of little use to one who already was aware that the piety most people exhibited showed little knowledge of its proper end--the well-being of mankind. The discussion of temperance in the Charmides would not restore wholeness to one whose internal state was in disarray. And surely the Parmenides would provide no moral encouragement to him who was despondent because his mind had grown "ir-retrievably analytic."

The Protagoras, the Gorgias, the Phaedrus and the Apology are a different story, however. Mill translated them sometime around the years 1829-1831, and thought they were important enough to publish. These are not dialogues that are primarily concerned with or dominated by methodological and epistemological considerations, but are those that display Plato's passionate interest in the moral life. Thus, while it is implausible to think that the former Plato was instrumental in Mill's spiritual renewal a plausible case can be made for that

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reason to believe in the possibility of the development of such in himself, both of which were necessary, to realizing in himself "the state of mind without which his own enjoyment of life" could "be but poor and scanty." The result, for him, was just that "despondency and gloom" which he so poignantly describes in the Autobiography. The "miserable self-seeking" that he mentioned in the "Remarks" on Bentham was no option for him, because his education had programmed devotion to the common good into his every thought and action. But, as he says, to know that the greatest happiness can result from commitment to the greatest happiness, did not give him the feeling of that happiness, did not give that "pleasure of sympathy" that is the "greatest and surest" source of happiness.

But, as is indicated in the "Remarks on Bentham," if one turned, not to Bentham (or we must surmise to James Mill), but to Plato and Socrates, the Plato and Socrates of the Gorgias, Protagoras and Apology, he could find the kind of theory, and the kind of inspiration with it, that would uphold and strengthen him if his "feelings of virtue" were weak. That is, Mill attributes to Plato and Socrates the power to fulfill just those needs which he himself admitted to having during his mental crisis. And we know that at this time he was preparing the manuscripts of those dialogues for publication.

At a later period in his life, Mill still attributed that same power to Plato. In the Inaugural Address (1867) Mill talks about the cultivation of conscience and the sentiments.

"Nothing hinders us from so training a man that he will not, even for a disinterested purpose, violate the moral law, and also feeding and encouraging those high feelings, on which we mainly rely for lifting men above low and sordid objects, and giving them a higher conception of what constitutes success in life. If we wish men to practice virtue, it is worth while trying to make them love virtue, and feel it an object in itself, and not a tax paid for leave to pursue other objects. It is worth training them to feel, not only actual wrong or actual meanness, but the absence of noble aims and endeavors, as not merely blamable but also degrading; to have a feeling of the miserable smallness of mere self in the face of this great universe, of the collective mass of our fellow-creatures, in the face of past history and to the indefinite future--the poorness and insignificance of human life if it is to be all spent in making things comfortable for ourselves and our kin, and raising ourselves and them a step or two on the social ladder.

Thus feeling, we learn to respect ourselves only so far as we feel capable of nobler objects.... Now, of this elevated tone of mind the great source of inspiration is poetry, and all literature so far as it is poetical and artistic. We may imbibe exalted feelings from Plato, or Demosthenes, or Tacitus, but it is in so far as those great men are not solely philosophers...but poets and artists. Nor is it only loftiness, only the heroic feelings, that are bred by poetic cultivation. Its power is as great in calming the soul as in elevating it--in fostering the milder emotions, as the more exalted. It brings home to us all those aspects of life which take hold of our nature on its unselfish side, and lead us to identify our joy and grief with the good or

ill of the system of which we form a part; and all those solemn or pensive feelings, which, without having any direct application to conduct, incline us to take life seriously, and predispose us to the reception of anything which comes before us in the shape of duty."²⁶

It is interesting to note that in this section of the Inaugural Address, taken from the middle of his considerations on "aesthetic" education and the "education of the feelings," he does not mention Wordsworth until the lines after the last one quoted. The name he mentions first as a source of feelings which unite us with our fellow-men and as a source of the ability to feel both the presence and the absence of "noble aims" is Plato. It is also interesting to note that the point he makes in this passage about pursuing virtue as its own end and not happiness, is parallel to a point made in the Autobiography about what he learned as a result of his mental crisis.²⁷

In this passage, as in the "Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy" in 1833, Mill attributes to Plato the power to make one love virtue, to feel toward the moral end in the fashion that Mill was unable to in 1826. But it is curious that in this context he also admits that Plato could have a "calming" effect on "the soul." In light of the other parallels between this passage and that of the "Remarks" and Autobiography, it seems plausible to think that Plato might have functioned in that capacity for Mill when he was in a "dull state of nerves" in that autumn of 1826, and during the next few years.

What is most clear, however, and what we are warranted more generally in concluding, is that Mill was able to find in Plato the kind of moral theory he could use, both as something of a guide in his own moral theoretical work and as a source of personal spiritual renewal. And it appears that Mill was able to use him as a guide because of Plato's function for him as a source of spiritual renewal. This would seem to be consistent with the position Mill takes regarding the nature of moral theory in the two essays on Bentham: that its value is to be judged, in part, according to its internal effects on him who adopts it. Plato's moral theory had the power not only to move one to adopt the moral point of view, but to sustain one in his subsequent devotion to it.

In conclusion, some considerations ought to be put forth regarding Mill's failure to cite Plato's importance to him at the time of his crisis. Mill admits that he does not list all of the activities and people who were important to him at that time. He says: "In giving an account of this period of my life, I have only specified such of my new impressions as appeared to me, both at the time and since, to be a kind of turning point, marking a definite progress in my mode of thought."²⁸ It is not surprising that Plato would not qualify in his mind under such a criterion, for he had grown up with Plato. Wordsworth was new to him!²⁹ Further, Mill may have been inhibited from giving acknowledgement to the complex role Plato had played for him. For implicit in an acknowledgement of that role is a criticism of his father's educational program that over-emphasized the logical and methodological sides of Plato while not adequately appreciating Plato's capacities to induce in one the moral point of view. And we know that Mill was very self-conscious and cautious about criticizing his father.

Finally, it is possible, though not probable, that Mill himself was unaware of the influence that his involvement with Plato had on his person and thought at this time. It is possible that Plato's influence was more surreptitious than Mill would have us believe possible of any person or event on him.

Though Mill does not mention Plato in connection with his crisis, we have good reason to think that the Plato of the middle dialogues was influential in Mill's renewal, when we consider the parallels between Mill's needs and Plato's powers, and the fact that Mill was studying Plato very closely at that crucial period in his life when he needed what Plato could give.

NOTES:

¹For a short résumé of the various accounts of Mill's crisis, see F.P. Sharpless, The Literary Criticism of J.S. Mill (The Hague, 1967), p. 67.

²Collected Works, X (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 15. This seems consistent with Mill's new-found insight of 1826 when he self-consciously asked himself whether he was happy, whether his actions for reform, etc., had yielded a state of happiness in his character, and found to his sorrow that there were inward consequences of his behaviour, painful to recognize though they were.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Collected Works, XII, 100-1.

⁶Collected Works, X, 90.

⁷Collected Works, XII, 312.

⁸Collected Works, X, 113-14.

⁹While the aesthetic and the poetic are not the same, and I do not mean to conflate them, in as much as Mill's use of the term "poetic culture" implies something much closer to aesthetic culture than his use of the term "poetry" seems to suggest, we are warranted here in emphasizing that aesthetic side. I use the phrase "aesthetic point of view" because it seems to catch that implication better than, for example, the alternative phrase "poetic point of view" does.

¹⁰Collected Works, X, 113.

¹¹Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, ed. J.B. Schneewind (New York, 1965), p. 106.

¹²Collected Works, X, 95.

¹³Ibid., 113-14.

¹⁴See Mill's translation with commentary of the Gorgias, reprinted in John Stuart Mill, Four Dialogues of Plato, ed. Ruth Berchard (London, 1947), 107, 170-1.

¹⁵Collected Works, XII, 181.

¹⁶The Early Draft of John Stuart Mill's Autobiography, ed. Jack Stillinger (Urbana, 1961), 156-7.

¹⁷Ibid., 115.

¹⁸Collected Works, XII, 113.

¹⁹Ibid., 79. It should also be pointed out that the style and mode of Mill's analysis here is also very Benthamic. But see Early Draft, 48, for Mill's own recognition of his debt to Plato regarding this kind of analysis.

- ²⁰Early Draft, 118.
²¹Ibid., 104.
²²Collected Works, X, 15-16. (My italics, except on "he" in the last sentence of the first paragraph, and on "need" in the next line.)
²³Early Draft, 117-18.
²⁴Ibid., 119.
²⁵Ibid., 120-1.
²⁶Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, 405-6. (Italics mine.) Sharpless also recognizes the continuity between Mill's mental-crisis period and that of the Inaugural Address. (Op. cit., 236-7.)
²⁷Early Draft, 122-3.
²⁸Ibid., 140.
²⁹To focus on Mill's reading of Marmontel to explain Mill's crisis seems to be a mistake. For it appears that Mill, in writing his Autobiography, used him only as the peg on which to hang an event by means of which he could locate when the renewal started. The event he recounts is momentary, and its significance is overshadowed by what he reports as its aftermath: "Relieved from my ever present sense of irremedial wretchedness, I gradually found...[that] the cloud gradually drew off...." (Early Draft, 122.) It is the nature of that "gradual" renewal that is of most interest, for better insight into the nature of that renewal will give us better insight into the meaning of the crisis itself.

CENSORSHIP AND SOCIAL STABILITY IN J.S. MILL

Nicholas Capaldi

It is my contention that Mill is his own best expositor and defender, and that a careful reading of his texts reveals not a set of contradictions but a set of carefully and subtly qualified doctrines. Let us examine one instance.

There is a now notorious passage in the System of Logic which allegedly contains a "telling objection to Mill's recommendations regarding free discussion."¹ If what Mill says in the Logic is an objection to what he says in the Liberty, then he has either (a) vacillated because his analysis has failed to reach the real issues, or (b) changed his mind, or (c) contradicted himself. (a) is usually a prelude to an alternative analysis, whereas (b) may give rise to some historical thesis about the genesis of Mill's thought. I do not think there is an adequate alternative analysis, nor do I think Mill changed his mind. Rather he remains consistent throughout. Thus it is necessary to show that (c) is incorrect, and I believe that this can be done by strict examination of the passages in question. The notorious passage reads as follows:

"The second condition of permanent political society has been found to be, the existence, in some form or other, of the feeling of allegiance or loyalty. This feeling may vary in its objects, and is not confined to

any particular form of government...[there must be] something which is settled, something permanent, and not to be called in question; something which, by general agreement, has a right to be where it is, and to be secure against disturbance, whatever else may change. This feeling may attach itself, as among the Jews, (and in most of the commonwealths of antiquity), to a common God or gods.... Or it may attach itself to certain persons.... Or, finally, (and this is the only shape in which the feeling is likely to exist hereafter), it may attach itself to the principles of individual freedom and political and social equality, as realized in institutions which as yet exist nowhere, or exist only in a rudimentary state. But in all political societies which have had a durable existence, there has been some fixed point: something which people agreed in holding sacred; which, wherever freedom of discussion was a recognized principle, it was of course lawful to contest in theory, but which no one could either fear or hope to see shaken in practice; which, in short (except perhaps during some temporary crisis) was in the common estimation placed beyond discussion.... A state never is, nor until mankind are vastly improved, can hope to be, for any long time exempt from internal dissension; for there neither is nor ever has been any state of society in which collisions did not occur between the immediate interests and passions of powerful sections of the people. What, then, enables nations to weather these storms.... [The] conflict did not affect the fundamental principle of the system of social union which happened to exist.... But when the questioning of these fundamental principles is (not the occasional disease or salutary medicine, but) the habitual condition of the body politic...the state is virtually in a position of civil war, and can never long remain free from it in act and fact."²

In what way is this passage supposed to be an objection to Mill's discussion of censorship or freedom of discussion in the essay On Liberty? Those who make the claim charge that in the essay Mill advocated "the unlimited exercise of unlimited freedom of discussion" with "the only restraint he allows" extending to "barbarians."³ Either we are to have "absolute freedom of discussion" or there must be some things "placed beyond discussion." Mill cannot have it both ways.

What does the notorious passage really say? It says a great many things most of which we cannot even begin to fathom in this paper. But more to the point, it says at least the following relevant things:

(1) A relatively permanent and stable political society requires something which is not questioned. Mill asserts this as a matter of historical and sociological fact.

(2) It is possible that the element which is not called into question is itself a commitment to individual freedom: freedom of discussion included I presume. This statement is a logical elucidation of statement (1), it stands to it as token to type.⁴

(3) In societies which permit freedom of discussion, it is "lawful to contest in theory" but not "in practice" the sacred doctrines. Mill here distinguishes between theoretical or hypothetical challenge to a doctrine and a practical or categorical challenge.

(4) In the next phrase Mill recognizes that during a temporary crisis, sacred doctrines may in fact be challenged. Here Mill contrasts temporary with habitual.

5) Mill further qualifies (4) a few sentences later by referring to an "occasional disease." Here I take it that a temporary crisis may be an occasional disease.

(6) In the same sentence where he makes statement (5) he also says that the questioning of sacred doctrines may be a "salutary medicine." This is the most significant statement Mill makes.⁵ What Mill foresees is a healthy questioning of sacred doctrines, something done "in theory" which he finds perfectly compatible with the stability which does not wish these doctrines to be challenged in practice. There is no contradiction here, only the most carefully qualified insight. Those who accuse Mill of contradicting himself confuse his statements about habitual categorical challenges with his statements about salutary theoretical challenges.

Now we can ask how does the foregoing interpretation of the notorious passage compare with what Mill says in *On Liberty*? In discussing arguments for censorship Mill offers as his third rebuttal consideration of a case where the accepted opinion is true and accepted by such as everyone. This is clearly a settled issue or sacred doctrine. Here if we do not still continue to discuss the opinion at least "in theory" we shall not understand the grounds of the true conclusion. "However true it may be, if it is not fully, frequently, and fearlessly discussed, it will be held as a dead dogma, not a living truth."⁶ To keep the sacred doctrine really alive, we need a kind of institutionalized devil's advocate, a sort of Socratic institution. This is the salutary medicine of which Mill speaks in the *Logic*. Far from advocating that sacred doctrines be uncritically accepted for social stability, Mill advocates an "in theory" but critical reevaluation of such doctrines for educational purposes. Rather than undermining the stability of the society, if the doctrine is really worthy of acceptance such critical reviews will strengthen or contribute to social stability.

Professor Giddin has raised another but related issue. Those who advocate the absolute freedom of discussion are not infallible in claiming that the community will not be harmed. If they are fallible then why should we expose the whole community to possible ruin? I think Mill could answer this question very easily. There are three possibilities. a) Promulgation is not dangerous. If this is factually true then we would all be better off for having established this fact. b) We might not know if promulgation is harmful. In such a case we would have to suspend judgment and consider promulgators innocent until proven guilty. We can hardly base practice on a lack of evidence.⁷ Here the advocates of promulgation do have the advantage. Moreover, freedom of discussion is necessary for future research, especially in determining the answer to the question, Is promulgation harmful? c) The third possibility is that it may be factually established that promulgation is dangerous among adults (children and barbarians were already excluded). This would merely show that the society in which this state of affairs existed was not really composed of people "capable of being improved by free and equal discussion." Thus one of the explicit necessary conditions for Mill's doctrine would be lacking, and hence he himself would not advocate freedom of discussion. Those of us who have carried on the previous discussion can now play

Charlemagne with our lesser citizens. I think this example, rather than creating a difficulty for Mill, exemplifies the subtlety of his argument.

As a further example of the subtlety of Mill's thought we may note the complete coincidence of the good society and the most stable society. If a society is truly free then by definition it has absolute freedom of discussion. To have a rational discussion there must be some one point of a common frame of reference, hopefully the belief in rational discussion.⁹ If rational discussion becomes thus the sacred doctrine of a society then that society can only disintegrate if that doctrine is seriously challenged. In such a society it would be a logical self-contradiction to argue that free discussion would undermine the sacred doctrine. Not only would free discussion be compatible with stability, not only would it be one of the conditions of social stability, it would be coextensive with stability. This in fact is exactly what Mill suggested.¹⁰

NOTES:

¹Hilail Gildin, "Mill's On Liberty" in Ancients & Moderns, ed. Joseph Cropsey (New York, 1964), 297.

²System of Logic, VI, X, 5. See Appendix D, Collected Works, X (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 506-7.

³Gildin, 298.

⁴C.I. Ten's answer to Gildin is discussed below. (See note 7.)

⁵For the variants in the disputed passage the reader can refer to Appendix E, Collected Works, X. That the phrase "salutary medicine" is a later addition does not adversely affect my argument since Gildin himself used an edition of the Logic with the phrase included. Moreover, I would argue that the insertion of the phrase shows that Mill attached great weight to it.

⁶On Liberty, Chapter II.

⁷Gildin, 297.

⁸"There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true, because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action; and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right." On Liberty, (ii).

⁹This point is well worth relating to Mill's contention in Utilitarianism that there must be one ultimate end if conflict is to be resolvable.

¹⁰C.I. Ten, "Mill's Stable Society," The Mill News Letter, VII:1 (Fall, 1971), 1-6. Ten is right in emphasizing the difference between a good society and a stable society: he is also correct in pointing out the presence in the essay on Poieridge of the suggestion of identifying liberty as the sacred doctrine. What dismays me is his too ready acceptance of Gildin's point about the original contradiction. "Gildin may still be right" (p. 5). The kind of thesis developed by Ten is only valuable after we have refuted the original

charge of a contradiction. With all due respect, it is high time that Mill scholars stop taking the claims of contradiction at face value.

* * * * *

TWO VIEWS OF HAPPINESS IN MILL

John Lachs

The enterprise of re-examining John Stuart Mill's view of happiness may appear abortive. What, after all, is there to say? Anyone who numbers an introductory course in ethics among the blessings obtained by four years of tuition can tell you that Mill has an official view of the nature of happiness. It is a view he embraces with a loving pride reminiscent of the way in which old men talk of their diseases. There is simply no mistaking what he thinks. "By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain," he says, and "by unhappiness, pain and privation of pleasure."¹

Happiness is pleasure and pleasure happiness: Mill's commitment to this view is public and undeniable. It would be abortive indeed to try to prove that this theory is not his "real" view. The "official view" will always remain his official view, and that largely because Mill wanted it that way. But it may not be futile to ask if the official view is Mill's only view of happiness. The vigour of public espousals has been known to vary inversely with the depth of private conviction: many a husband makes a great display of his affection to hide the thought of infidelity.

Suspicion of promiscuity raises its head at once upon the application to Mill of a simple principle of historical interpretation. The principle is that on the whole philosophers are less foolish than their interpreters suppose. This is not to say, of course, that there have been no egregious errors in the history of philosophy. There have been many, and should one ever think otherwise, all one need do is remind oneself that our own efforts will before long be a part of history. But we must not believe that we have found such an error each time a passage yields nonsense on the first plausible interpretation. Instead, initially we must think it more probable that we have not understood the intent or presuppositions of the argument than that the philosopher we study is guilty of a blatant fallacy.

This principle was applied with notable success to one of the terrible errors G.E. Moore was supposed to have discovered in Utilitarianism. Everett Hall succeeded in developing an interpretation of Mill's design and promises that made his attempt to connect the desirability of ends with human desire both interesting and plausible. To the best of my knowledge one of the other fatal flaws whose discovery Moore boldly announced has not been similarly treated. I have in mind Mill's defence in Chapter IV of Utilitarianism of happiness as the sole end of human conduct.

On Moore's reading we must hold our head in amazement at Mill's argument. Mill's aim is to show that only happiness is desired as an

end. Honesty and good sense force him to admit that power, money, and even virtue may be desired for their own sake and not for the pleasure they bring. This, of course, is fatal to the view Mill wants to establish. He attempts to save it by claiming that power and virtue are not ends independent of happiness: "in being desired for its own sake" each is "desired as part of happiness."² But the idea that happiness has "very various" ingredients, when combined with Mill's official view of the nature of happiness, yields a staggering absurdity. For happiness is pleasure and pleasure is a relatively simple feeling: what could be sillier than to suggest that virtue, power or actual coins could constitute ingredients of this?

So a suspicion of promiscuity is appropriate. Mill is wedded to the view that happiness is pleasure. If he is faithful to it, this important part of the argument of Chapter IV is blatantly absurd. We cannot of course know that Mill was past committing such a blunder. His intentions and capacities are inaccessible to us: they followed him to the grave, if he was fortunate and they did not precede him. But it would surely be unwise to accept the apparent fallacy without a second look. Sound method demands that we search for some hypothesis that will eliminate such gross absurdities. I shall offer just such a hypothesis. At this stage, I shall claim for it only the modest virtues of being interesting and of making some sense of an otherwise senseless argument. To judge its ultimate plausibility is a complicated affair requiring reference to a substantial part of Mill's literary remains. I shall not have an opportunity to do that now, but I shall begin the task by showing what the hypothesis can do to elucidate a difficult problem in Mill's on liberty.

We are not always privy to our thoughts. In the public embrace of a well-loved wife he may be a dug for someone else. The husband may not know what he thinks: he may be stunned to hear himself call his wife by a name which is hers. My hypothesis is perfectly straightforward. It is that Mill had two views of the nature of happiness. The first is the official view, which he handled out of respect for its lineage and pedigree. The second is a view much closer to the Aristotelian tradition than to the heritage of Bentham and James Mill. It is probable that Mill was at least conscious of holding the second of these views, but we can see a hint of its presence even when he thinks he is speaking officially. For he says not only that happiness is pleasure, but also that happiness is "the balance of pleasure over pain."

We shall be taken at a given instant, and if pleasure is happiness, we shall say that the person pleased is happy. But could one have a balance of pleasure over pain at a given instant? The image this conjures up is artificial: we could think of a moment in which a technique is outwitted by the delight of having one's head caressed while perusing liberty. But surely our internal life is not this artificial. When Mill speaks of the balance of pleasure over pain, it is not very probable that he speaks of their alignment in a single, momentary state of consciousness. It is more likely that he thinks of their balance over a stretch of time. The notion of a stretch of time is crucial for it leads us to the idea that in speaking of happiness we speak not of single feelings and states of mind but of

Let us now suggest the value of my synopsis of the second view of the second Mill paper in Utilitarianism. Suppose that by rigidly enforcing the elimination of liberty we could guarantee every or almost every member of our society an existence rich in pleasures and exempt from pain. This, I believe, is no more of a utopian ideal today than the elimination of gross physical need was in Mill's day. The question Mill has to answer is this: should we sacrifice liberty? It is a hard question, but not an unfair one. My hypothetical formulation is designed simply to sharpen the issue; on a smaller scale similar dilemmas of choice between freedom and pleasure occur daily in the operation of government. It is to Mill's immense credit, his greatness in fact may lie in this, that in such dilemmas he feels the compelling force of both alternatives. But it seems to me clear that in the end he would opt for liberty over satisfaction. I cannot now prove this and perhaps it is something of a truism to say so, but let me just say that I wish I had some better data for the task of showing that the evidence is heavily weighted in favor of this view. I also do it from experience, for I cannot think what reasons Mill has for his choice.

It simply will not do to say that the matter is a matter of preference. Freedom may be preferred, but it is very unlikely that the quantity and quality of pleasures in this outweighs the pleasures that can be guaranteed by the dictatorship. Now Mill may disagree, as he does, but it is not clear how he can justify his preference or senses the need for a justification of liberty on the permanent interests of mankind as a progressive race. It is fairly obvious that this will also not do, if happiness is pleasure and pleasure is the only good, progress is a matter of the prevalence of qualitatively better and more enduring pleasures. If we should freedom and education promote this my mode of thinking and propaganda? That liberty is a condition of the improvement of the procedures appears to me implausible to the point of absurdity.

Does Mill's second view have a more subtle merit? There is an obvious one, and that is the view that happiness is a matter of the life we live, and that the kind of life of Mill's second that with the loss of liberty, pleasure and happiness would cease. For all that I have said, Mill's second, traditional view, a man can be said to be happy only if he lives in a significant segment of it. It is not the pleasure that is the basis of its parts, but the single fact that it is a life. The view that, in fact, is derived from the specific individual's own life, the individual's life beliefs and his decisions. The life is a pattern of life patterns and may be great or small, and it is the pattern of life patterns and personality that is the basis of happiness. The connection, in turn, is the pattern without the life patterns of voluntary self-expression, without the continuing growth and appropriation of its actions and acceptance of its values by the self. Without liberty this process could not exist, and without this process we could be happy. In opting for tyranny we exclude self-origination, self-expressive life patterns and thus destroy the possibility of the happy life.

I see that this is an argument we could give on Mill's behalf, if we took my synopsis of his second view of happiness seriously. But,

strongly on art, this is the way a student of Mill's philosophy might approach the idea of happiness. The discussion there of the relation of individuality, life patterns, and happiness provides exactly the argument I have presented here. The idea of happiness, which he sometimes refers to by the word "happiness" and sometimes by the phrase "well-being", though not happiness in the sense in which it is identical with pleasure, plays a central role in the argument. For this reason, it may not be too exaggerated to claim that Mill's entire discussion of "individuality as one of the elements of well-being" would be unintelligible without my hypothesis that his official view of happiness is not his only one.

NOTES:

¹Utilitarianism, in *Collected Works*, V. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963, 111.

²Ibid., 136.

³See also Mill's comments on happiness as a by-product of the ordered or meaningful life appropriate to his appreciation of Kant's anti-self-consciousness theory. *Autobiography*, ed. J. Sturges (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), 83-6.

⁴*Collected Works*, V, 236.

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Thesis Abstract:

JOHN STUART MILL: HIS CONTRIBUTION TO
VICTORIAN LITERARY THEORY AND PRACTICE
Ph.D. Thesis, University of Hull

Kathryn A. Horne
The City University, London

The general framework of the thesis is the drawing together of two major intellectual traditions in the Victorian period, those of rationalism and romanticism, the schools of Bentham and Coleridge. The conflicts and interactions between these two ideologies are studied specifically through the literary theory of John Stuart Mill.

The first chapter deals with the premises of both Victorian criticism. The adoption of Walter Teague's theory of the utilitarian is chosen as an example of the pre-empting of poets to produce morally and socially relevant work. The other introductory chapters consider those aspects of Mill's mental development which reflect on his aesthetic interests. Wordsworth and Coleridge are suggested as the most important romantic figures to have influenced the evolution and formulation of Mill's ideas on art. The central section outlines these ideas--on the nature of poetic creation, the handling of real life by the novelist, and the contribution of art to the "innermost culture of the individual." Robert Browning's development from lyrical to dramatic forms of poetry is directly related to Mill's critique of the

poet's first appearance with Pauline. Though Mill is often considered antipathetic to the novel form, he did in fact exercise some influence over George Eliot, through his guidance of George Henry Lewes's early literary career. Finally, parallels are drawn between the views of Mill and Matthew Arnold on the function of art and culture in a progressive society.

* * * * *

Recent Publications:

- Britton, Karl. "John Stuart Mill," Wissgerig perspectief op maatschappij en wetenschap, 13e jaargang: no. 5 (1972-3), 219-17.
- Schen, Marshall. The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill. London: Modern Library-Windward House, 1-73.
- Franchini, M. via. "La questione delimitativa del Pensiero di John Stuart Mill. II." Moviment Spirituale Socialista, 18 April-June, 1972, 243-78.
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- , "John Stuart Mill: His Contribution to Literary Theory and Practice." M.A. thesis, University of Hull, 1973. See abstract in this issue.
- Jones, Myra A. "John Ruskin and John Stuart Mill." Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 1972.
- Nachson, Sigmund. "J.S. Mill's Mental Crisis: An Adlerian Interpretation." Journal of Individual Psychology, 29 May, 1973, 76-87.
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- Somerville, Diana. "John Stuart Mill's Principle of Liberty and Legislative Feasibility," Journal of Human Relations, 20, 1972, 147-55.
- van der Meer, J. J. "Eenige opmerkingen over Mill's on Liberty," Wissgerig perspectief op maatschappij en wetenschap, 13e jaargang: no. 5 (1972-3), 213-11.
- , The Idea of Utopia: a Study of John Stuart Mill's Social Thought. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971.
- Alford, W. Paul. "The Religious Views of John Stuart Mill." Ph.D. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1971.

Work in Progress:

Eugene R. August has been awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to write a book on Mill. He plans it to be an introduction for the general educated reader and the college student. Upon completion, sometime in 1974, it will be published by Scribner's.

Dr. W. Lester Kupper, Midland Park High School, Toronto, Ontario.
Editor of Journal of English Studies, Toronto: University of Toronto Press;
London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1971. pp. xvii, 322. \$10.50.
Clap. (for the set of two).

When the Journal of English Studies first appeared in 1966, more than one reviewer suggested that it might inaugurate an exciting new approach to 'list' studies. The fact was that work on these subjects had been going on for some time, and it was not until the mid-1960s that it had become a distinct field of study. The Journal was a pioneer in this field, and its success was due to the assistance of its editor, Dr. W. Lester Kupper, who has since been joined by his wife, Dr. E. M. Kupper. The Journal has since become a leading journal in the field, and its success is due to the assistance of its editor, Dr. W. Lester Kupper, who has since been joined by his wife, Dr. E. M. Kupper. The Journal has since become a leading journal in the field, and its success is due to the assistance of its editor, Dr. W. Lester Kupper, who has since been joined by his wife, Dr. E. M. Kupper.

In the eight years since its first issue, the Journal has published twelve volumes. Each volume contains reviews of English literature, The Foreign Quarterly Review, The International Review, The London Review, The National Review, The New York Review of Books, The Nineteenth Century, The Spectator, and The Times Literary Supplement. Each volume contains reviews of English literature, The Foreign Quarterly Review, The International Review, The London Review, The National Review, The New York Review of Books, The Nineteenth Century, The Spectator, and The Times Literary Supplement. Each volume contains reviews of English literature, The Foreign Quarterly Review, The International Review, The London Review, The National Review, The New York Review of Books, The Nineteenth Century, The Spectator, and The Times Literary Supplement.

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So one must concur with the epigraph taken from an article in one of the periodicals to the appendix of corrections: "It would be a marvel, indeed, if the first voyager in unknown seas should lay down the soundings with such accuracy that the very first chart should require no revision."

I cannot begin to describe the potential uses of the Index, but readers of this News Letter will want, to cite only the most obvious points, to read the introductory essay on Fraser's Magazine for the attack on Francis Place by Maginn there expounded, to note the additions to James Mill's bibliography given in the corrections to Volume I, and also to check the entries under Helen Taylor. There are no new attributions for J.S. Mill, but one is able more easily to place his periodical essays in context by reading the accounts of the periodicals in which they appeared. In this case, Fraser's and the Fortnightly, by glancing at the other essays appearing when he did, and by searching out reviews of his works.

As I've already implied, this is a seminal work, whose children are growing up healthily all round us. Let me suggest just one more promising use: when all four volumes have appeared, a most attractive and valuable little book could be made of the introductory essays to the periodicals.

John W. Robson,
Victoria College,
University of Toronto.

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