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THE MILL NEWS LETTER

JOHN M. ROBSON and MICHAEL LAINE, editors

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Please address communications to the Editors, Department of English, Victoria College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada M5S 1K7

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This issue's Milliana is taken from Frank Harris, My Life & Loves. He seems to refer to his reading of Principles of Political Economy in the winter of 1871.

"I read from morning till night and not only devoured Mill, but saw through the fallacy of his wage-fund theory. I knew from my own experience that the wages of labor depended primarily on the productivity of labor. I liked Mill for his humanitarian sympathies with the poor; but I realized clearly that he was a second-rate intelligence. . . ."

(New York: Grove [1963], 110 [Vol. I, viii].)

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An article by Wayne Sumner (Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto) analysing Mill's somewhat paradoxical position regarding the death penalty and showing its close relation to the position of Bentham opens the issue proper. Next is an article by Carl Ketcham (Department of English, University of Arizona, Tucson) which corrects the dates for Mill's 1831 meeting with Wordsworth given by Anna J. Mill in a 1949 article. (Anna J. Mill has herself corrected these dates in a private letter in 1966.) We think that the article is valuable and interesting. It is followed by a series of letters sent to us by Anna J. Mill which show a great deal more about the elder Mill's attitude to his son's education. One of these letters is probably the earliest reference that we have to John Stuart Mill: there is also a unique indication that Mrs. Mill had a part in the children's (or just the girls'?) education. The issue continues with Announcements, Recent Publications, and Queries, and closes with two reviews.

MILL AND THE DEATH PENALTY

L.W. Sumner

It is well known that on many issues of practical politics J.S. Mill, in his later life, abandoned positions which had been held by both his father and Bentham--and often, in his younger days, by himself. This heterodoxy included his rejection of annual parliaments and his defence of the open ballot, plural voting, proportional representation, and unequal constituencies. It is perhaps less well known that it also came to include defence of the death penalty.¹

Bentham's views on capital punishment altered only in degree over his lengthy career. His best known treatment of punishment, in the Introduction to Morals and Legislation (1789), contained no explicit position on the question, although it did set out the theoretical framework which Bentham used elsewhere in defending such a position. His first considered evaluation of the death penalty appeared in the Théorie des Peines et des Récompenses (1811; 1st English ed., 1830). There he balanced at some length its advantages and disadvantages and concluded that it should be used, if at all, only for the most shocking crimes. The manuscripts from which Dumont constructed the 1811 French edition were written during the 1770's, as was the Introduction. Thus Bentham, at the very beginning of his career, expressed his doubts about the death penalty. These doubts, considerably strengthened, were stated in an Appendix attached to the 1830 English edition (The Rationale of Punishment) where Bentham supported outright abolition.² I can find no discussion of capital punishment as such by James Mill. However, in his essay "Jurisprudence" (1820) he set out a doctrine of punishment taken over directly from Bentham; there is no indication that he dissented from the conclusion which Bentham had already drawn from this doctrine concerning the death penalty.

The younger Mill himself seems to have begun by supporting the abolitionist side. The earliest mention of the subject which I have located occurs in a letter of 6 May, 1841, to Robert Barclay Fox. After dissociating himself from the Quaker view that society has in no circumstance the right to kill, Mill continues:

"But I would confine the right of inflicting death to cases in which it was certain that no other punishment or means of prevention would have the effect of protecting the innocent against atrocious crimes, & I very much doubt whether any such cases exist. I have therefore always been favorable to the entire abolition of capital punishment though I confess I do not attach much importance to it in the case of the worst criminals of all, towards whom the nature of the punishment hardly ever operates on juries or prosecutors as a motive to forbearance."³

As we shall see shortly, Mill's more mature position was quite different. When and why did he change his mind? Packe lists this as one of the many instances in which Mill was influenced by Harriet to abandon

his earlier views and suggests that the change occurred in the mid-1850's.⁴ But, in this case, it seems unlikely that Harriet was the proximate cause. Packe states, with no supporting evidence, that Mill "had told Caroline Fox that he was opposed to capital punishment." However, in the latter's Journals we find only one notation which is relevant: "He [Mill] is inclined to agree with Wordsworth in the defence of capital punishments, but I am glad to say has not quite made up his mind."⁵ The entry is dated 31 May, 1842, approximately one year after Mill's letter to Caroline's brother Barclay. This sequence suggests that already in the early 1840's Mill was beginning to waver from his abolitionist stand. We cannot rule out the possibility that Harriet played a role in this shift, but there is also no reason of which I am aware for thinking that she did. Furthermore, the transition seems to have occurred a decade before the period of their most intense collaboration.

Mill's only sustained and thoroughly considered treatment of the death penalty occupies a speech which he delivered while Member of Parliament for Westminster.⁶ On 21 April, 1868, a bill was introduced into the House to replace public hangings by hangings within prisons. An amendment was immediately moved by one C. Gilpin to abolish the death penalty entirely. Mill spoke against the amendment (which was eventually lost) on the same day. It is the defence of the death penalty that this speech contains which is of some interest.

Even during the 1830's, when Mill was subjecting his Benthamite heritage to its most searching examination, he never ceased to admire Bentham's legal theories, including the doctrine of punishment.⁷ Bentham established what remains today the model utilitarian framework for matching legal penalties to offences. For a Utilitarian the institution (or preservation) of a particular penalty is an act of the state which must, like every act, be defended on the ground that it will result in a maximum of benefit at a minimum of cost. The benefits of punishment must lie in the prevention of further offences through the confinement and reform of the actual offender and the deterrence of other potential offenders. The costs will vary with the severity of the penalty; they include in the first instance the suffering of the offender but also such collateral items as the financial support of the penal system. At the minimum a penalty must inflict a cost on the offender greater (discounting for the uncertainty of arrest and conviction) than his expected gain from his crime--otherwise it will not deter. But the minimum ought also to be a maximum, for additional punishment will increase costs without returning comparable benefits. Thus, assuming that we can establish the degrees of a given offence: "if the punishment be less than what is suitable to that degree, it will be inefficacious; it will be so much thrown away: if it be more, as far as the difference extends, it will be needless; it will therefore be thrown away also in that case."⁸ The Utilitarian must balance additional gains (in deterrence) against additional losses (chiefly in the suffering of offenders). The ideal penalty is that at which the marginal gains of moving to the next more severe penalty are outweighed by the marginal losses. Bentham went on to enumerate eleven properties of a legal penalty which are pertinent to determining whether

it is well matched with a given offence. It was this framework which led him to doubt the value of the death penalty.

The Benthamite model is clearly at work in Mill's speech, although he does not mechanically recite its elements. Mill is aware that the death penalty has some circumstantial disadvantages: it is irreparable in the case of mistaken conviction, and where it is unpopular, juries will refuse to convict. His tactic is both to minimize the importance of these drawbacks and to emphasize the superiority of capital punishment as a deterrent. It is on this question that Mill's argument is worth consideration. He confines his attention to the case of "aggravated murder," the only offence for which he is willing to defend the death penalty, and to a comparison of capital punishment with life imprisonment at hard labour. His argument is then easily schematized as follows:

1. The death penalty is a more effective deterrent than life imprisonment.
2. The death penalty is less severe than life imprisonment.
3. Therefore, the death penalty produces the greatest benefits at the least costs.

The conclusion certainly follows if the premises are true, and if we presuppose the Benthamite framework: if one penalty deters better than another and is at the same time less severe than, all other factors equal, it is to be preferred. Of course Mill has conceded that not all other factors are equal, but he regards them as insufficiently important to outweigh this singular advantage of capital punishment.

The argument appears paradoxical. How can the death penalty be both less severe and a more effective deterrent? The more common argument from deterrence in favour of capital punishment proceeds by claiming that the death penalty is necessary as a deterrent just because it is more severe than its usual alternatives; the marginal benefits of the greater penalty outweigh its marginal costs. If Mill's argument succeeds, then it stakes out a much stronger case, for we need not balance costs and benefits at all: the death penalty provides more benefit at less cost. It is therefore demanded by simple efficiency; it would be cruel, indeed irrational, not to favour it. While the argument appears paradoxical it contains no outright contradiction, for both of its premises could be true. How then does Mill support them?

The case turns on the claim that there is a discrepancy between the real and the apparent evil of death. In reality it is better to die (quickly and painlessly) than to linger in prison for the remainder of one's life. Someone who takes a clear and considered view of his own interest would therefore, given such a choice, opt for death: it is the lesser evil. For circumstantial reasons, however, the prospect of death excites greater fear than the prospect of life imprisonment; this fact is chiefly due to the contingency that execution occurs at one striking moment while confinement is extended over a long duration, plus the fact that death is an unknown. Because it excites greater fear, death is the more effective deterrent, though it is the lesser penalty.

I do not intend to criticize these claims at length and will confine myself to a few suggestions. It is obvious that Mill's argument

involves the sacrifice of a working assumption that had been prominent in utilitarian political theories, namely, that individuals, at least in their calm and reflective moments, tend to be good judges of their own interests. Mill on the contrary holds that the general public believes death to be worse than life in prison, when in fact it is better. I surmise that he is right in attributing this belief to the man in the street (indeed I share it); moreover, it has been the basis of the scale of sanctions common to most legal systems. On Mill's view all of this has been a mass delusion induced by our inability to compare the two options in a properly rational way. Mill is of course not committed to the strong opinion that an individual is an infallible judge of his own interest.⁹ In comparing the values of different pleasures it is the competent judges which are to be appealed to, namely those with experience of both. It is regrettable that there can be no such judges in the present case.

There is a deeper difficulty here. How can we compare death and a particular course of life on a utilitarian scale?¹⁰ On such a theory an individual's interest is composed of pleasure and the absence of pain. Mill must therefore believe that death is preferable because it maximizes pleasure and/or minimizes pain. Since it cannot maximize pleasure, its superiority must be on the latter count. And this seems to be Mill's position: "The punishment must be mild indeed which does not add more to the sum of human misery than is necessarily or directly added by the execution of a criminal."¹¹ I assume here that the suffering "necessarily or directly added" is that of the criminal himself; presumably this can occur only before the execution. Again: "Is it, indeed, so dreadful a thing to die? Has it not been from old one chief part of a manly education to make us despise death--teaching us to account it, if an evil at all, by no means high in the list of evils. . . ."¹² Now on one matter Mill is undoubtedly correct: death causes the individual less suffering (assuming only that it is quick and painless than does life imprisonment). So on this score it is indeed superior. But we might wonder whether Mill has not proved too much. Death, let us assume, results in no suffering at all. It is therefore superior on that score to any way of life which produces any suffering whatsoever. But it is a regrettable feature of the human condition that every way of life produces some suffering. Mill's reasoning, if plausibly extended, would yield the conclusion that we all ought to prefer death to any continuation of life and that we have all been deluded in thinking otherwise. Something has plainly gone wrong. The least that has gone wrong is that Mill has neglected the fact that death annihilates not only all of the evils but also all of the goods of life. It is therefore not quite the bargain it might otherwise seem: it is at best a mixed benefit, to be resorted to only when the individual otherwise is faced with the prospect of few goods and many evils. Does this describe the case of life imprisonment? Mill certainly believes that it does, but it is not clear that he is right. Obviously much depends on the conditions of one's imprisonment (it is not for nothing that Mill proposes hard labour). We must remember that Mill is committed by his own principles to the least penalty that will effectively deter murderers. He must therefore hold that there is no

form of life imprisonment which is (1) more humane than death, and (2) as effective a deterrent. On the second point the usual statistical arguments are relevant; a priori psychology will not serve. On the first we might try an opinion poll among convicted murderers sentenced to death on the one hand and to life imprisonment on the other to determine which group displays the greater desire to embrace the lot of the other. This sample is, after all, the nearest approximation available to Mill's competent judges.

Mill's argument threatens to produce another somewhat strange result. He reserves the death penalty for murder, which he calls "the greatest crime known to the law." But his very defence of the death penalty requires minimizing the evil of death. If death is not so great an evil why should we continue to treat murder as the greatest of crimes? Perhaps that habit as well is a delusion resulting from a distorted comparison of alternatives. Since we have revised the scale of penalties ought we not also to revise the scale of offences? But which offence will then be the one which merits the death penalty?

Finally we should note a curious irony of history. Mill's conclusion concerning the death penalty (that it ought to be preserved for the most serious crimes) differs from Bentham's earlier position more in emphasis than in substance. Further, the argument on which Mill relies is prominent in Bentham's treatment.¹³ Did Mill remember, or reread, his Bentham at the age of 61? If so, he passed over Bentham's later absolute abolitionism to return to the more moderate view which he had expressed almost a century earlier at the very outset of his career. On this issue at least it cannot be said that Mill was a revisionist.

NOTES:

¹I am grateful to Mark Thornton for drawing my attention to Mill's defence of the death penalty.

²For the earlier discussion see The Rationale of Punishment in John Bowring, ed., The Works of Jeremy Bentham (London, 1843), I, 441-50 (Bk. II, Chaps. xi, xii). The 1830 Appendix is in I, 525-32.

³Collected Works (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), XIII, 474.

⁴Michael St. John Facke, The Life of John Stuart Mill (London: Secker & Warburg, 1954), 370.

⁵Caroline Fox, Memories of Old Friends, ed. Horace N. Pym (2nd ed. London: Smith, Elder, 1882), I, 301.

⁶See Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), 3rd series, Vol. 191 (London: Cornelius Buck, 1868), columns 1047-55. Mill's speech is reprinted in full in Gertrude Ezorsky, ed., Philosophical Perspectives on Punishment (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1972), 271-8. My references are to this reprinting. The pith of Mill's position is also contained in a letter of 18 January, 1865, Collected Works, XVI, 987.

⁷The most accessible presentation of that doctrine is in An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, ed. J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart (London: The Athlone Press, 1970), Chaps. xiii-xv.

For Mill's opinion of the doctrine see his "Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy" (1833) and "Bentham" (1838), in Collected Works, X.

⁸Bentham, Introduction, 175.

⁹A weaker version of it is, however, central to his defence of individual liberty. See On Liberty (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956), 82, 93.

¹⁰The claim that such a comparison must generate absurdities is forcefully put in Richard G. Henson, "Utilitarianism and the Wrongness of Killing," The Philosophical Review, 80 (July, 1971). While I believe that Henson is mistaken, it must be admitted that Mill does fall into some of the traps which he sets.

¹¹Ezorsky, 273.

¹²Ibid., 275.

¹³See Bowring, I, 445, 450.

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DOROTHY WORDSWORTH'S UNPUBLISHED JOURNALS AND THE DATES OF
MILL'S VISITS WITH WORDSWORTH, 1831

Carl H. Ketcham

Anna J. Mill, in her article "John Stuart Mill's Visit to Wordsworth, 1831,"¹ summarizes the contents of a manuscript journal in which Mill recorded the events of a summer tour in the Lake District, including several days spent in Wordsworth's company. However, though Mill divided the descriptions of his activities into separate days, he did not date his entries, and Anna Mill, despite what was evidently a careful search, was unable to locate much external evidence with which to estimate the calendar dates. She looked into the family letters of Wordsworth and Southey, and Henry Taylor's biography and correspondence; tried without success to locate old inn registries, and consulted the Rydal Mount guest book and F.V. Morley's study of Dora Wordsworth's album. But the best source she could find was a recollection by Mrs. H.D. Rawnsley (widow of Canon Rawnsley, a devoted student of Wordsworth and of Lake District life and traditions) concerning the former date of the Rushbearing ceremony at Grasmere. Necessarily, then, the dates given in the article for Mill's stay in the Lake District (July 19-August 15) are conjectural.

It is now possible to offer a minor correction of the record: the dates are, in fact, a week late. From 1824 to 1835, Dorothy Wordsworth, in a series of small notebooks, wrote a daily account of her life at Rydal Mount and elsewhere. These diaries have remained unpublished except for short quotations and her description of her Isle of Man visit in 1828. Though they were briefly (and somewhat inaccurately) described by Ernest de Selincourt in his Dorothy Wordsworth: A Biography in 1935 (368) and in the preface to his Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth,² these later diaries have remained comparatively little known, and Anna Mill did not consult them during her

investigations in Grasmere. They contain three references to Mill which give us the correct dating for his visits, and other evidence which dovetails with the circumstances he records.

The information on which Anna Mill was obliged to base her dating--Mrs. Rawnsley's recollection that the Grasmere Rushbearing, up to about 1835, took place on the Saturday nearest July 20--was unintentionally misleading in its definiteness about the day of the week, and indeed caused Anna Mill to assume, unnecessarily, an error on Mill's part. It is true that Dorothy's journals seem at one point to support Mrs. Rawnsley: in 1825, a year with the same calendar dates as 1831, Dorothy mentions Rushbearing (probably at Grasmere, though it was also held at Ambleside and elsewhere) on Saturday, July 23, the date assigned to it by Anna Mill. But Mill's journal states that the Sunday on which he visited Grasmere was "the day for laying fresh rushes on the floor of the church" (328). Anna Mill treats this as a mistake, but in fact (as Canon Rawnsley could have testified if he had been available for consultation when Dr. Mill did her research) the date of Rushbearing has varied, over the years, from July to October, and it has sometimes been held on Sunday rather than Saturday.³ In 1833 Dorothy notes that the Ambleside ceremony took place on Sunday, July 28. It appears, then, that Mill was speaking of a Sunday Rushbearing, which may have been scheduled, as Mrs. Rawnsley indicated, on the date nearest to July 20--that is, the 17th, a date that fits Anna Mill's sequence of dates minus seven days.

However, the first entry in Mill's journal that provides certain evidence for the new dating occurs on the Monday following his visit to Grasmere. Mill, who knew Wordsworth slightly, had called at Rydal Mount on the preceding Friday, but had failed to find Wordsworth at home.⁴ On Monday he called again, as he was passing through Rydal on his way north to Keswick. (Dorothy, though he saw her both times, did not record either visit.)⁵ Wordsworth again was not at home, but when Mill, who was travelling on foot, got as far as Thirlmere, he encountered the poet returning to Rydal on top of the Keswick coach from a visit to his son John at Moresoy. Mill describes how Wordsworth halted the coach while he greeted his young acquaintance and asked him to call on his return. This episode, as we learn from the date of Wordsworth's arrival given in Dorothy's diary, took place on July 18.⁶

Mill was back in Ambleside--presumably at his former headquarters, the Salutation Inn--on August 3 (corrected date), having spent the intervening time exploring the countryside around Keswick and visiting with the Southes and with Henry Taylor of the Colonial Office.⁷ Upon his return, Mill records, he and his companion⁸ "remained four whole days at Ambleside chiefly for the purpose of seeing Wordsworth, with whom we passed as much of that time as we could, and were amply repaid both in pleasure, intellectual excitement, and instruction" (435). Unfortunately, neither Dorothy's journal nor Mill's tells us anything about the nature of the "intellectual excitement and instruction" which Wordsworth imparted; the best record of his conversations with Mill is still the impressions of them set down in Mill's well-known letter to John Sterling.⁹ Dorothy does, however, verify and date accurately the four-day period in which Wordsworth was actively seeking

Mill's company. On Thursday, August 4, she notes, "Mr. Mill to dinner"; on the 5th (following a call from Dr. Thomas Arnold), "The Taylors and Mr. Mill to Tea." Mill is not mentioned by name on the 6th, but Dorothy says that Wordsworth and his daughter Dora drove to Ambleside in their gig on that day to dine with the Taylors at Mill's inn, the Salutation, and Mill's presence at the dinner seems likely. The next day she records his final visit with the Taylors and Horace Grant.

According to Dorothy's account, Mill experienced indifferent weather during most of his two sojourns at Ambleside; there were frequent thunder-showers, and he and Wordsworth were probably lucky if they escaped being wet through more than once on their expeditions to Troutbeck or Bowness. Mill's final glimpse of the Lake Country on August 8, however, was brightened by an uncommonly beautiful day. Dorothy, after noting simply that the weather was "fine," crossed out the inadequate word and became briefly superlative: "Loveliest of clear days--not over hot." Mill, too, had an enthusiastic, if repetitious, comment: "The delightful afternoon . . . made the last farewell look of the lovely Windermere so delightful, that our departure had something of the melancholy character of departing from a beloved friend" (345). Clearly, Mill and Dorothy shared a common responsiveness to the variety of Lakeland scenes and Lakeland weather, as well as a common reverence for the poet whose vision of these scenes had helped to restore Mill to himself. The combined record shows that the two met several times. When Wordsworth was present, he may well have dominated the conversation with his wide-ranging, judicious, kindly talk, but surely the discussions between Dorothy Wordsworth and Mill must have contained many passages which we, with the advantage of retrospect, would like to share. It is rather a pity that the attention of both diarists was so taken up with other concerns--Dorothy's with the flow of events in a busy visiting season at Rydal Mount, Mill's with the great, simple man and the scenery--that neither took time to tell us more about the other.

NOTES:

Editors' Note: In a private letter, dated 26 June, 1966, Anna J. Mill, after her examination of the Diary of Henry Cole, corrected her "conjectural" dating for Mill's tour of the Lake District. See also Anna J. Mill, "Some Notes on Mill's Early Friendship with Henry Cole," *MNL*, IV:2 (Spring, 1969), 2-8.

¹*Modern Language Review*, 44 (1949), 341-50. Page numbers in parentheses refer to this article.

²(New York: Macmillan, 1941), I, xviii-xix. Excerpts from the Isle of Man tour were first published by William Knight in 1889 (in Volume XI of his edition of Wordsworth's works), and the (essentially) complete text by de Selincourt, *Journals*, II, 401-19. The manuscript journals are in the Dove Cottage Library, Grasmere; I am editing them with the kind permission of the Dove Cottage trustees. De Selincourt's descriptions of them--apart from what seems to me too slighting a tone--misstate the number of notebooks (actually 15) and the terminal year (1835).

³See H.D. Rawsley, *Months at the Lakes* (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1906), 128-30.

⁴On his arrival in Ambleside on July 13 (corrected date) Mill met a Mr. Madge, also an eager admirer of Wordsworth. Mr. Madge informed Mill that Wordsworth was not at home; he probably told him also that, as Dorothy's journal shows, Wordsworth was expected on July 14. This would explain Mill's futile attempt to see Wordsworth on July 15, and his hope that Wordsworth might have returned by the day of his second call on the 18th.

⁵Mill's account of Dorothy is rather unrevealing. He "formed a very favourable opinion" of her and of Sara Hutchinson, "two elderly maiden ladies," but he sees Dorothy mainly in terms of his interest in her brother's publications: "Miss Wordsworth is the sister so often alluded to, & with so strong an affection in his poetry, & is also the author of three little poems published in his works, & ascribed to a 'female friend'. He calls her in his verses, his sister Emmeline; but this is euphoniae gratia, her real name being Dorothy" (343). He then discusses the name and whether it is suitable for poetry, but tells us nothing further at this point about Dorothy herself. His only other mentions of her show her giving him two bits of information which may suggest her typical interests: the history of the villagers' respect for the flowers in the cottage gardens at Bowness, and the best approach on foot to the Troutbeck valley.

⁶This corrected dating makes unnecessary Anna Mill's speculation that Wordsworth's letter to Edward Moxon from Rydal Mount, dated by de Selincourt "21 July 1831," might have been written in 1832.

⁷Wordsworth and Mill had first met at breakfasts given by Taylor in London earlier in the year.

⁸Dorothy's journal indicates that this companion, whom Mill never names, was Horace Grant (1800-1859), Mill's co-worker in the Examiner's Office of the East India Company, 1826-1845. See Michael St. John Packe, The Life of John Stuart Mill (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), 206 n. On August 7, the day of Mill's last visit to Rydal Mount, Dorothy writes: "The Taylors, Mr. Mill--a Mr Grant of the India house to tea."

⁹20-22 October, 1831, Collected Works, XII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 74-88. The description of Wordsworth is on pages 80-2.

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THE EDUCATION OF JOHN--SOME FURTHER EVIDENCE

Anna J. Mill

In a letter from London dated 7 July, 1806, seven weeks after the birth of John on 20 May, 1806, James Mill writes to William Forbes, son-in-law of Sir John Stuart, to congratulate him on the birth of a son. In what must surely be the earliest reference we have to John Stuart Mill, his father says:

"My little family, you will be pleased to learn, are very well. The boy is as fine a child as possible. His mother was longer recovering her

strength, than from her uncommon good health during pregnancy I had reason to expect, or than she would have been but for some little mismanagement which I will take care to prevent another time. Now however she is nearly as well, as I could wish her. I intend to run a fair race with you in the education of a son. Let us have a well-disputed trial which of us twenty years hence can exhibit the most accomplished & virtuous young man. If I can beat you in this contest, I shall not envy you that you can have yours the richest. I know not how far I may fall from my good resolves in this as I do in most other cases, but I have a strong determination at present to exert myself to the utmost to see what the power of education can do. It may be well that we should stimulate one another in this course."¹

Unfortunately no further letters as to this "race" seem to have been preserved. The following letters, however, from a later correspondence of James Mill with Colonel Walker, Bowland, Selkirk, also in the National Library of Scotland, give some fresh details on Mill's educational experiments and the results.²

East India House
February 26, 1820

. . . You mentioned in your last letter a wish to have some explanation of what I said one day to you about having been the preceptor of my children. This is a favourite subject, & I should like to have an opportunity of communicating with you upon it at length. Being convinced of the advantages which a father enjoyed in swaying the mind of his child, & being occupied wholly at home when I first became a father, I began with my first child, a son. The principle of imitation, seeing books my grand occupation, made his curiosity attach itself to books; & when in our little intercourse he desired to look at a book, instead of showing him pictures, I showed him the letters. In this way, without any trouble he knew the letters, & more (how much more I do not recollect) before he was 18 months old--& before he was three years he could read English perfectly. The same principle of imitation led his curiosity to Greek books, owing to the novelty of the character. I availed myself in like manner of this curiosity to make him acquainted with the Greek characters, & after that with the inflections of the nouns & verbs. In the mean time he was occupied with maps; & by the time he was five years old, knew a good deal of Greek, & was acquainted with geography even to minuteness. Greek went on, & reading simple books of history, for perhaps a couple of years, during which he had begun arithmetic. With Latin after he began it, he became acquainted very rapidly, having first learned Greek. In this way, he has gone on; & from no part of his time having been allowed to go to waste, his acquirements are very unusual at his years. He is not 14 years old till next may [sic]--& he is not only a good Greek & Latin scholar, but he has actually read, almost all the Greek & Latin classics--he is well versed in Mathematics even fluxions & the higher branches--I know nobody who has in his memory a greater amount of historical facts--I have taught him Logic, & I have taught him political economy. Mr Ricardo who was interrogating him the other day, says he knows nobody by whom

even the most abstruse points of the science are better understood-- he has also a good knowledge of chemistry. His studies were always carried on in company with me. He sat in my room, & studied when I studied--& though attending to him when he needed it produced some interuption, yet all I have done, was done under it. If you meet with Mr Wallace, your new professor of Mathematics in Edin^r, who knows him well--he will tell you about his mathematics at least. His two sisters, next to him in point of time, were taught to read by their mother, after which they came into my room & prosecuted their studies under their brother. He has taught them under my eye & with my assistance Latin, Arithmetic, Geography & History. . . .³

East India House
June 24, 1820

My Dear Sir

I was not aware till Mr McCulloch showed me your letter a few days ago that you expected any opinions of mine with respect to schools, though I felt a strong wish to describe to you in more detail than I had done the course I had myself pursued, without sending my children to school at all.

If I had been obliged to look out for schools, I should like you have been very much at a loss. Defective as I consider many of our institutions, there is perhaps nothing so defective as the state of education in this country. Every man who is educated to any purpose in this country is educated by his own reading, not only without, but in spite of his masters. He loses, however, in this way, a great deal of time which skilful & virtuous masters would have [~~deleted~~ spared] saved.

You will not find much difficulty, I should think, in finding schools where Latin & Greek are very well taught, & with them mathematics, perhaps, & geography--beyond that I am not aware that you can get any assistance either from schools or universities. Yourself & books, must do all the rest. I should be at great pains to engender early a taste for reading; & that reading I should conduct, beginning with what I thought most adapted to the capacity, & going on from step to step, through the whole field of literature & philosophy. In conducting the readings of young persons I think it is of first rate importance to question them regularly & orderly upon what they read. I myself, for example, have two daughters, one of whom is eleven & the other nine years of age. They are just now reading the history of Greece & they walk out with me an hour & a half every morning, during which I put a series of questions to them calculated to embrace all the leading particulars in that portion of the history which they had read the preceding day. This compels them to read attentively, & to exercise their memory; it also teaches them to discriminate the important matters; it likewise habituates them to find words readily for their ideas, & as I insist upon correct language, though simple & in the pure tone of conversation, prepares them to have a ready & correct elocution. This method I have pursued with my son through the whole field of learning; making him also when the proper time came, write

down his thoughts, & the substance of the books which he read, to accustom him to written as well as to spoken language. I know no method which I could have taken to have this done, but by doing it myself. Had I been rich enough to afford it, I should doubtless have procured the most philosophical mind I could to aid me in these operations; but I should have expected them to be well done by nobody without taking the principal charge of them myself.

If I had needed a school to teach my children Greek & Latin, a principal object would have been to find one where these languages were taught in the least time. My opinion is that more than double the necessary time is wasted upon these languages, & I would recommend it to you to consider that as a main recommendation in fixing your choice. If I were to consult my own wishes I should advise you to come to the neighbourhood of London, where I should have the great pleasure of occasionally associating with you. I believe too that the best schools are really there. I shall be happy to communicate with you frequently on these subjects, which are peculiarly interesting to me, & am with great regard, most truly yours

J. Mill⁴

East India House
April 18, 1821

My dear Sir

. . . The principal points about which you wished for my opinion were some points relating to education, as far as I remember; & I know not well what advice I can give beyond the very general remarks I formerly troubled you with. I know no school, & no seminary, to which I think there are not many things to object. And it appeared to me that the plan which in that letter you spoke of as the one you had chalked out to yourself, had much to recommend it.

Mr Wallace, whom I am happy you have seen, is a very partial friend of my boy, & I fear has spoken of him a little too warmly, though his acquirements have always been unusual for his years. He is now coming to the critical period of life; & if I can preserve his habits of application through that, I may have hopes of his making a shining character. I am however as much [a]t a loss how to chuse for him a profession as you are how to chuse the means of education; & I should be happy if I could have the benefit of conversing with you on the subject. Of this more at another time. . . .

Most faithfully yours
J. Mill⁵

East India House
June 23, 1821

. . . I am anxious to hear something more of your projected motions relative to the education of your children & if there is any chance of having you in the neighbourhood of London. My son John is not yet returned, but he is now at Caen, spending a few weeks there with an friend of mine, who has been domiciled in France for some years.

I expect him home therefore soon. He has been away rather more than a year. And I am assured by my friends in Paris, that he speaks the language perfectly, & like a Frenchman. As he corresponds with me in French, I know that he writes it well. He attended several classes in their university at Montpellier during the winter, & I have no reason to think has lost any of the book-learning he went away with. . . .⁶

NOTES:

¹National Library of Scotland, MS. Acc 4796.

²I am indebted to Mr. Brian Hutton, Assistant Keeper, Department of Manuscripts, National Library of Scotland, for calling my attention to the Mill letters found among the Alexander Walker papers.

³MS. 13725, ff. 13a-13b.

⁴MS. 13727, ff. 5a-5b.

⁵*Ibid.*, ff. 77b-78b.

⁶*Ibid.*, f. 87b. The old friend at Caen was Joseph Lowe (see my John Mill's Boyhood Visit to France [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960], p. x).

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Announcements:

COLLECTED WORKS OF JOHN STUART MILL

Essays on Politics and Society, Vol. VI of Collected Works is now in proof and should appear in the Fall.

NORTHEAST VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

The Northeast Victorian Studies Association announces its intention to sponsor a bulletin serving as a clearinghouse of information for people interested in Victorian Britain. The editors hope that it will act as an international, in-house organ keeping Victorianists informed of the goings-on of various groups: noting exhibitions, conferences, publications, and research-in-progress; registering notes, queries, desiderata; and recording the movements of significant scholars (job-changes, visits, exchanges). Its format will be interdisciplinary, covering such fields as literature, history, art, economics, medicine, architecture, science, religion, psychology, law and photography. As a bulletin, it should appear as frequently and as cheaply as possible. Intended to fill a perceived gap, it will not compete with any existing publication. The mailing address is: Lynne F. Sacher, Editor, Victorian Studies Bulletin, Baruch College, City University of New York, 17 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010.

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLISHING IN PHILOSOPHY

The Canadian Association for Publishing in Philosophy wishes to announce the establishment of a book publishing division, "Canadian Library of Philosophy," to be edited by members of the Department of Philosophy, Carleton University.

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JAPAN MILL CONFERENCE

The second Japan Mill Conference was held in Tokyo on 10 October, 1975; sixteen scholars from Japanese universities attended under the chairmanship of Professor Shiro Sugihara. Professor Ishida (Department of Politics, Tokyo University) spoke on Chinese and Japanese translations of *On Liberty*, and Professor Takashima (Department of Economics, Yokohama National University) lectured on Mill's land tenure reform plan. The Conference will meet twice each year.

* * * * *

Recent Publications:

- August, Eugene. *John Stuart Mill: A Mind at Large*. New York: Scribner's, 1975.
- Bader, William C. Jr. "Jeremy Bentham: Businessman or 'Philanthropist?'" *Albion*, 7 (Fall, 1975), 245-54.
- Brayer, D.P. "Utilitarianism, For and Against," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 4 (March, 1975), 549-59. (An analysis of the utilitarian ethics of J.J.C. Smart using Smart and Williams, *Utilitarianism, For and Against* and Hampshire, *Morality and Pessimism*.)
- Letter, Frank Whitson. "The Influence of Economists in Parliament on British Legislation from Ricardo to John Stuart Mill," *Journal of Political Economy*, 83 (Oct., 1975), 1051-64.
- Martin, Gillian. "The Case of Thomas Pooley, Cornish Well Sinker, 1857," *Notes & Queries*, 21 (January, 1974), 18-24. (A full analysis of the prosecution of Pooley for blasphemous libel. The case is referred to by Mill in Chapter II of *On Liberty*.)
- Underich, Ted. "The Worth of Mill's *On Liberty*," *Political Studies*, 22 (Dec., 1974), 463-70.

- Jones, Clyde R. "John Ruskin and John Stuart Mill: A Comparative Study of their Concepts of Society." Ph.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1972.
- Letwin, Shirley. "Morality & Law," Encounter, 43 (Nov., 1974), 35-43. (Includes, inter alia, a critique of the "suppressed moral assumptions" in Mill's individualism.)
- McCloskey, H.J. "Liberalism," Philosophy, 49 (January, 1974), 13-32. (Distinguishes between a liberalism based upon respect for persons as ends in themselves [Kant] and one based on utilitarian ethical theories concerned with pleasure and reduction of pain. Also distinguishes positive and negative liberty--a distinction which he claims Mill does not make.)
- Nordquest, David A. "Mill's Concept of Individuality." Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1973.
- Ong, Walter J. Rhetoric, Romance and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971. (Reprints his "J.S. Mill's Pariah Poet.")
- Rosenblum, Nancy. "Bentham's Social Psychology for Legislators," Political Theory, 1 (May, 1974), 171-85.
- Schoeman, Ferdinand. "Bentham's Theory of Rights," The Personalist, 56 (Spring, 1975), 109-28.
- Sumner, L.W. "More Light on the Later Mill," The Philosophical Review, 83 (Oct., 1974), 504-27.
- Sylvester, Robert P. "Pleasures: Higher and Lower," The Personalist, 56 (Spring, 1975), 129-37.
- Walker, A.D.M. "Negative Utilitarianism," Mind, 83 (July, 1974), 424-8. (Challenges the easy assumption that there is equal merit in causing pleasure and avoiding pain.)
- Whitaker, J.K. "John Stuart Mill's Methodology," Journal of Political Economy, 83 (Oct., 1975), 1033-64.

* * * * *

Queries:

Two more of the queries in Vol. IX, No. 2, about passages in the next volume of the Collected Works have been most kindly answered by Roland Hall of the University of York. The "sabbathless pursuit of wealth" (properly, "sabbathless pursuit of a man's fortune") is from Bacon's Advancement of Learning, II, xxiii, 46; and "shelter and weather fend" is in Coleridge's "Pitt" (in Gillman's Life, 199). Though the volume has now gone to press, any further aid would be much appreciated (see MNL, Vol. X, No. 1, for other help received).

* * * * *

Reviews:

The Later Letters of John Stuart Mill, 1849-1873. Edited by Francis E. Mineka and Dwight N. Lindley. Volumes XIV-XVII of the Collected Works of John Stuart Mill. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972. Pp. xlvi, 2016 and Indexes.

These four volumes contain more than 1800 "later letters," a substantial Appendix of "additional earlier letters" (1812-1848), a smaller one of "additional later letters" discovered too late to be included in the main body, an Introduction devoted to Mill's personal associations and friendships, a general subject index, and index of correspondents. Added to the two volumes of 537 Earlier Letters, which appeared in 1963, the present series completes the correspondence in the Collected Works, except for letters written specifically for publication, which are promised for another volume. The editors have done their work exceptionally well, particularly in the meticulous preparation of the notes, which not only provide essential information, but are often intrinsically fascinating; on occasion, more so than the letters themselves. Only one reservation, by no means peculiar to this collection, might be expressed: it is a pity that the letters written to Mill, so many of which are preserved, and some of which are partially quoted in the notes, have not been included. Though somewhat more costly, how much more useful would such an edition have been!

In dividing the correspondence at the end of 1848 between "earlier" and "later" letters, the editors have accepted as "wholly sound" the implicit model established by Hayek, who set out in the mid 1940's to collect all letters written by Mill to the end of 1848, and who happily turned his work over to Professor Mineka. As Professor Mineka notes in the "Preface" of the Earlier Letters: "In that year [1848], with the publication of Principles of Political Economy, Mill became a widely recognized public figure, and his correspondence thereafter often took on much more of a public character as his advice and his opinions were sought by correspondents from all over the civilized world. By 1848, also, were virtually completed most of the correspondences with the friends and intimates of his youth and early manhood. . . ." (vii.) Some of these correspondences had been deeply personal and soul searching. The later letters, for the most part, are less personal, more restrained, and in matters intellectual and political, more self-assured. Except for the letters to Harriet, with their effusive expressions of adoration and abject submission, and the occasional glimpse which the correspondence allows into the recesses of his heart--e.g., his callousness towards his immediate family, his generosity with time and money to those whose views he respected such as Spencer and Morley, his sympathy and patience with associates and friends--the later letters lack the intensity and the sense of inner struggle that we find in the letters to Sterling, Carlyle, and even Comte. It is interesting that Mill's thoughts on "the very great significance in letter-writing" as "the life of man, and above all the chief part of his life, his inner life," which the editors chose to head their "Introduction" to these volumes, were written in 1832 in a letter to Sterling (xv).

Nevertheless, the body of letters written between 1849 and 1873 have their own intrinsic value. For one thing, they expand our understanding of Mill's personal associations and friendships in the last twenty-five years of his life. Much has been written by Mill, and others since, on his relationship with Harriet, and the largest single group of letters, 136 in all, is to her. Yet, the complete publication of Mill's side of the correspondence (most of Harriet's letters were destroyed at her own request) does not fundamentally alter our picture of the most important of Mill's relationships. However, the letters to Helen and particularly the references to her in letters to others, add significantly to our knowledge of her importance in his life and thought after her mother's death in 1858. Mill always considered himself the most fortunate of men to have been blessed with two such faithful companions. In discussing with Maurice the loneliness which Mill believed every writer of independent mind must feel, he confided: "I am in this supremely happy, that I have had, & even now have, that communion [of thoughts feelings & purposes] in the fullest degree where it is most valuable of all, in my own home. But I have it nowhere else. . . ." (St. Véran, 11 May, 1865. XVI, 1048.)

Mill's thoughts and Helen's became so harmoniously blended that it is virtually impossible to distinguish their respective contributions to portions of the correspondence. This is confirmed in Mill's reply (which I believe is worth quoting at length) to a request for having one of his letters on women's suffrage printed:

". . . I should be glad to see it printed, as well as more from the same hand, but I should not like to be a party to its being printed with my name because it was written (as is the case with no inconsiderable portion of my correspondence) by my step-daughter Miss Helen Taylor. Without this help it would be impossible for me to carry on so very voluminous a correspondence as I am at present able to do: and we are so completely one in our opinions and feelings, that it makes hardly any difference which of us puts them into words. It is often with regret that I see attributed to myself work which I think good and which is chiefly hers. In this case (by no means a solitary one) it happened to be entirely hers; what she wrote expressed so perfectly all I could have wished to say, that I transcribed it unaltered." (To Mary Carpenter, Avignon, 3 Feb., 1868. XVI, 1359.)

Mill had been shattered by Harriet's death, and not only by his sense of personal loss: "I do not speak from feeling," he wrote to Louis Blanc, "but from long standing and sober conviction in saying that when she died this country lost the greatest mind it contained." (Blackheath, 4 March, 1859. XV, 601.) Considering his state of mind, his recovery was indeed remarkable, and Helen deserves a large portion of the credit for that, as well as for his happiness, his creativity, and his increased sociability in the latter portion of his life.

While the letters deal with a great variety of subjects and bear witness to a number of friendships outside of the home--with Chadwick, Cairnes, and Morley, just to mention a few--the largest portion of the correspondence reflects Mill's concern with refining his thinking and

his preoccupation with extending his intellectual and political influence. By 1849, he had published his major works in philosophy and political economy, and though he continued to develop and modify his views in these areas and others (for example religion) till the end of his life, the foundation of his thought was firmly in place. Moreover, he had become a person of considerable reputation, in some respects "a sage," and he both measured and valued the force of his influence. First Harriet and then Helen became its jealous guardians and dispensers.

One is struck by Mill's earnestness, whatever the subject under consideration. Like many of his contemporaries, Mill treated all aspects of life--daily events, human relations, the pursuit of truth, or the improvement of society--as a deadly serious business. More so than most, he was blind to the comic side of existence, especially with himself as a part of it, and humorous touches in the letters are few and far between. Mill comes through as a sober, reasonable, and gentle person, except where alleged slights to Harriet brought out the worst in him, or when he believed that his prime cause, women's suffrage, was being subverted, and he turned into something of a ruthless wire-puller. (For the latter, it is well worth reading the series of previously unpublished letters to George Croom Robertson.) He held to his principles with conviction and even passion, but at the same time, he made a sincere effort to understand the viewpoints of others. In a letter to W.G. Ward, rejecting an invitation to join the Metaphysical Society, he noted: "It is very natural that those who are convinced of the truth of their opinions should think that those who differ from them do not duly weigh their arguments. I can only say that I sincerely endeavour to do the amplest justice to any argument which is urged, and to all I can think of even when not urged, in defence of any opinions which I controvert." (29 March, 1869. XVII, 1584.) The particular subject under discussion was theological opinion, but Mill's assessment of his own sense of fairness is by no means wide of the mark.

There is, however, also a severe and chilling quality in Mill's thinking and character. Once convinced of the correctness of a position, particularly on a political issue, he could pursue his goal with a zeal that sometimes submerged his more generous instincts. He could despise those he suspected of "mischief," and he could be remarkably insensitive toward those who were to be sacrificed for a higher purpose. He would "heartily" have seen Proudhon dead because of his "mischievous" influence. (To Harriet Taylor, ca. 31 March, 1849. XIV, 21.) He rejected an invitation to the Honorary Council of the Neophyte Writers' Society because its aim was merely "the improvement of writers as writers." "Now I set no value whatever on writing for its own sake & have much less respect for the literary craftsman than for the manual labourer except so far as he uses his powers in promoting what I consider true & just. . . . I am not desirous of aiding the diffusion of opinions contrary to my own. . . . There is already an abundance, not to say superabundance, of writers who are able to express in an effective manner the mischievous commonplaces which they have got to say." (To the Secretary of the Neophyte Writers' Society, Blackheath Park,

23 April, 1854. XIV, 205.) He seemed to have little sense of the agonies of war for its participants, when he was convinced of the righteousness of a cause, such as that of the North against the South. And once he had absorbed the shock of Lincoln's assassination, he was enraptured by his "glorious" martyrdom. "He is not to be pitied--to be envied rather." The cause, Mill reassures his friend John Plummer, will not suffer. "It may even gain, by the indignation excited. There was real danger lest the North, and Lincoln himself, should be too soft-hearted to the ex-slaveholders, and leave them too much power of mischief." (Avignon, 1 May, 1865. XVI, 1042.) Mill's sentiments were rooted in traditions--both Calvinist and Benthamite--which proclaimed that guilt must be followed by punishment. Judging France to be the culprit in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, he repeatedly wished upon her retribution of appropriate severity. Mill was by no means indifferent to human suffering--his leadership in the campaign against Governor Eyre gives adequate testimony to that--but did at times seem oblivious to the price paid by the innocent for a greater justice or a higher cause.

Liberal reformers must view the prospects of humanity with some degree of optimism, and Mill was no exception. Though he sometimes despised all mankind and always feared the oppressive power of the masses in a democracy, he did not wish to see democracy subverted. He hoped, in fact, that it would be saved by Hare's system of minority representation, of which he became a very strong champion. He also supported the cause of education and increasingly advocated a more equitable distribution of society's wealth, particularly the profits made on land. Above all, he battled on behalf of women's suffrage, and though he believed that victory was a long way off, he had no doubt that it was certain. He was surprised and flattered when asked to stand for Parliament in 1865. Showing his elation to his friend Cairnes, he proclaimed: "The greatest pleasure which public life could give me would be if it enabled me to shew that more can be accomplished by supposing that there is reason and good feeling in the mass of mankind than by proceeding on the ordinary assumption that they are fools and rogues." (Blackneath, 6 April, 1865. XVII, 1027.) With a good sense of what could and could not be achieved in the short run, he used his three years in Parliament as a platform to enlighten the public and to prepare the groundwork for future reforms. He accepted his defeat in 1868 and his return to private life as an unmixed blessing which would allow him to resume his normal more orderly life.

Of Mill's daily existence, we learn a good deal from the letters. He was a highly disciplined person who found joy in his work, and equal pleasure in walking, travelling, and "botanizing." The small details of life for which he was particularly inept, were usually looked after for him, first by Harriet and then by Helen. During Harriet's lifetime, his associations and friendships had been reduced, but after her death his contacts with the outside world increased. He seems on the whole to have been a happy man in the 1860s and 70s. And the story that on his death-bed he whispered to Helen: "You know that I have done my work" (XVII, 1952n.) rings true of his character and is consistent with the facts.

While the later correspondence is in some respects less satisfying than the earlier, and while the promise held out by the editors that it would provide us with the "inner life" of the man may not have been entirely fulfilled, these letters are nevertheless of very great value both for understanding Mill and the age in which he lived. This is a fine collection, superbly annotated and elegantly produced.

S. Eisen
York University

On Liberty and Liberalism: the Case of John Stuart Mill. By Gertrude Himmelfarb. New York: Knopf, 1974. Pp. xxiii, 345, v.

In the world of Mill scholarship nothing so controversial as this book has appeared for a long time. Professor Himmelfarb's argument is that there are two John Stuart Mills--the Mill of On Liberty (and of the essays on women), and the Mill of almost all his other writings, and that the positions of the two are incompatible, so much so that "the other Mill" is the best critic of On Liberty. Moreover, she argues (xv ff.) that Mill when writing On Liberty was fully conscious of the positions he had taken in his other writings. For at the very time he was writing On Liberty he was also working on the Autobiography which, being intended as a record of his mental progress, obliged him to review his earlier work; and at the same time he was carefully reviewing, sorting, and revising his published essays with a view to issuing a collection of them (which appeared as the two initial volumes of Dissertations and Discussions, published in 1859, two months after On Liberty). Hence, it is argued, if there are contradictions between On Liberty and his other work, Mill must have been aware of them and have deliberately permitted the contradictions to stand. If this is so, an extraordinary explanation is called for. Professor Himmelfarb offers one.

Her explanation, which she reached reluctantly (xix), is that Mill wrote On Liberty to provide a strong base, and one which would be acceptable to males, for women's liberation (177-82). If, and only if, male liberals could be converted to Mill's single and absolute principle of liberty, were they likely to be persuaded to liberate women.

"The peculiarities of On Liberty, those aspects of it which are so out of keeping with most of Mill's other work--the absolute nature of the principle of liberty, the exaltation of individuality whatever its particular form, the animus against society, opinion and tradition--became understandable when seen in the context of [the essays on women]. The essays on women were not, as might be thought, miniature versions of On Liberty, the application of On Liberty to a particular practical problem. Rather it would seem that On Liberty was the case of women writ large, the liberation of women magnified to the point where it became the liberation of all mankind." (181.)

If, by the time of writing On Liberty, Mill felt so strongly about the

liberation of women as this suggests, he might well, it is implied, have allowed contradictions with his other writings to stand, in full consciousness that they were contradictions. Thus the "two Mills" are accounted for.

Confronted with this striking thesis, the reviewer must ask, first, are the contradictions so serious as to call for such an explanation, and secondly, insofar as they are serious, can we conclude that Mill was conscious of them (in which case only would such an explanation be required)?

Few will doubt the seriousness of the contradictions between On Liberty and some of Mill's other writings (especially his Utilitarianism) in which Mill put the common good ahead of the individual, thought that men could, and should, subject themselves to a social good, and should even be subjected to it by public controls and public opinion. However, I think that Mill's increasingly permissive attitude, in the first few revisions of the Political Economy (before On Liberty), to a considerable measure of social control of the economy, is not as seriously inconsistent with On Liberty as Professor Himmelfarb suggests, and it may be that her handling of the Political Economy has led her to overlook a possible alternative explanation of other inconsistencies. Even at his most permissive towards "socialism" Mill was concerned with its possible threat to individuality and spontaneity: he simply was not persuaded that socialism would deny them more than the existing capitalism did. At the level of principle the two positions do not seem seriously inconsistent.

Again, Mill's insistence, which she notes (131), that society could do as it liked about the distribution of wealth, is not a grant of power to society as opposed to the individual. Here Professor Himmelfarb has, like some others who have written about Mill, misread the contrast Mill was making between the laws governing the production of wealth and those governing its distribution. Mill did not hold that (in her paraphrase) "the production of wealth obeyed its own natural laws, the laws of the marketplace": the socially unalterable laws of production he was talking about were not any laws of the market, but the laws governing the behaviour of physical and biological matter, such as the fertility of land and the necessary relation between the amount of the product and the amount of capital, effort, and inventiveness, applied to it. Mill's failure as a political economist was that he never did consider the relation between the social laws of production (which in his day were the laws of the market between individual owners of capital and land and labour) and the social laws of the distribution of the whole product between them. He never did see that any one set of the former required a certain set of the latter: in fact he allowed himself to believe the opposite. It was this that allowed him to be so ambivalent about private property and socialism: to say on one page that wage-earners were virtually as unfree as slaves, and on another to assert as self-evident the sanctity of individual property acquired by free contract, including that acquired by owners of capital in the wage contract.

This may well be thought a more serious contradiction in Mill than that between On Liberty and his other writings. But are the two

contradictions, and Mill's awareness of them, related? They are in one obvious way. A thinker who was clearly unconscious of the contradiction about property could well be unconscious of other similarly serious contradictions.

Is there a closer relation? I think there may be. Mill may have failed to see, rather than having seen and being prepared to stand by, contradictions between On Liberty and his other writings, because, ever since his early emotional break with Benthamism, he was unable to choose, and even to see a need to choose, between two views of the human essence. One, the Benthamite concept of man as consumer and appropriator, is clearly implied in Mill's defence of the "equitable principle" of private property--remuneration in proportion to exertion--and in his defence of competition, contract, and market. The other, the concept of man as developer and enjoyer of manifold capacities, is generally taken to be Mill's great improvement on Benthamism, and it can be combined either with a view of man as social or as individual. But the two concepts are inconsistent with each other. I am suggesting that Mill never saw this, that he was always confused about it. Ultimately, I would argue, that confusion was due to his failure to see that capitalist relations of production entailed a market relation between individuals that could not be combined with his humanistic developmental vision. In any case, the confusion was pretty constant.

I am suggesting, then, that the many contradictions between his works (and within some of them), and his unawareness of contradictions, can be traced to this underlying confusion. If this is so, then Professor Himmelfarb's case, that Mill must have been aware of the contradictions between On Liberty and his other works, fails, and no special explanation such as she offers is needed.

One may wonder, finally, whether Professor Himmelfarb's deep involvement in On Liberty has not led her to overvalue it. She holds that both the sympathetic and the less sympathetic reader of On Liberty "would probably agree that, for good or bad, liberty is the central issue of our time. And both would probably also agree that nowhere is that issue better posed than in On Liberty." (xiii.) But would they? Some would say that the only sense in which liberty is the central issue of our time is the contest between Isaiah Berlin's "negative liberty" and "positive liberty." If that is central, and the debates she cites about life-styles, homosexuality, pornography and so on are marginal, then it cannot be said that the issue of liberty is nowhere better posed than in On Liberty, which is entirely an exploration of negative liberty.

C.B. Macpherson
University of Toronto

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