

THE MILL NEWS LETTER

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Our Milliana this issue is drawn from the letters and memoirs of Sir William Hardman, who could not resist commenting, from a Tory perspective, on Mill and the 1865 Westminster election.

"You will see that J. Stuart Mill is being brought forward for Westminster by a body of enthusiasts. His opponents are Captain Grosvenor and Mr. W. H. Smith, the son and actual proprietor of the firm of W. H. Smith and Son, Railway Booksellers. This promises to be the most noteworthy contest of the coming elections, except perhaps Gladstone's fight at Oxford. Mr. Mill is at present somewhere in the south of France, and cannot be induced to pay his respects to the electors. This is not in his favour, and I doubt if he will go to the poll, much less be elected. Awkward citations are made from his books, which show that as to rights of property he is scarcely much less than communistic, that he would give votes to women, that he does not believe in either God or devil, and much more to the like purpose. It is urged by his apologists that there is no necessity for us to pay attention to these little eccentricities of his, which are to be regarded as nothing more than the chess movements of an abstracted thinker, who is playing a game all by himself, and seeing what moves can be made. They also say that he will not propound such ideas in the House of Commons, and that if he does, no one will listen to him. Of what value, then, is he to be either to his party or to the country when he shall be in Parliament? The answer given is that his return for Westminster will greatly dignify the electors; by which is meant, I suppose, that it will be regarded as a flattering thing by men of letters."

Following Mill's election, Hardman observed:

"J. Stuart Mill is in for Westminster, and poor W. H. Smith goes to the wall. Smith is a really good fellow, a man of the best Conservative stamp. I am told he has spent no less a sum than £45,000--almost incredible, but one knows what contested elections for Westminster cost. Mill has stated all his voters walked to the poll, for he pro-

vided no vehicles. This is all very fine, but the fact is that his committee colluded with Grosvenor's, and the understanding was that all Mill's voters conveyed by Grosvenor's cabs should vote for the two. Mill was returned by public subscription, and the funds began to fail, so that his supporters were obliged to sink the principle and join themselves to the monied Liberal candidate. I know that many of Mill's warmest adherents among the intellectual portion of society are utterly disgusted by this abandonment of principle."

(S. M. Ellis, ed., The Hardman Papers
[London: Constable, 1930], pp. 29, 33.)

The first article in this issue, by David A. Nordquest, examines Husserl's response to Mill's Logic and the Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, and considers the nature and legitimacy of his criticisms of Mill. We follow with an article by Mark Sheldon (Philosophy, Indiana University-Purdue University at Fort Wayne), on the problem of proof as applied to Mill's principle of utility. Then Bruce Kinzer looks at the major works on Mill that have been published in this decade. Information about books received and recent publications follows, and the issue concludes with L. W. Sumner's review of J. B. Schneewind's book on Henry Sidgwick.

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HUSSERL AND MILL'S "PSYCHOLOGISM"

David A. Nordquest

Professor McRae, in his fine introduction to the System of Logic in the Collected Works, argues forcefully that Mill's logic is psychologistic only in the self-evidently true sense of the term. In the course of defending Mill, McRae maintains that Edmund Husserl fundamentally misinterpreted Mill's position: "Mill's logic is not an exemplification of what Husserl calls psychologism, but, rather, a forceful condemnation of it."¹ However, McRae refers only to a judgment of Husserl in the Formal and Transcendental Logic. Husserl's major critique of psychologism, and his most careful analysis of Mill's position, are to be found in his Logical Investigations. It should be worthwhile to test Husserl's criticisms in this latter work against McRae's defense.

Husserl was a careful and respectful student of Mill. In a letter to Marvin Farber, he reported having "zealously read (especially as a student) Mill's Logic and later the work on Hamilton's philosophy."² He developed a keen appreciation for Mill's powers, found the Logic a notable work, and thought the criticisms of Hamilton "brilliant." He gave Mill most of the credit for the predominance of "psychologism" in contemporary philosophy.³

Husserl's high regard for Mill prompted him to devote substantial sections of his Investigations to the analysis of major positions of

Mill. His criticisms may be grouped under three headings: 1. the problem of the theoretical foundations, or of the autonomy, of logic; 2. the question of the nature of meaning; and, 3. the problem of abstraction. The father of phenomenology thought the first problem fundamental and determinative of positions on the other issues. Since the first problem is clearly the crucial one for us, most of our time will be devoted to it.

It will be useful to note that Husserl distinguished three schools of thought on the question of logic's foundation. The psychological approach is said to locate the seeming necessity in logical reasoning in psychological processes; behavioral "laws of mind" make reasoning appear compelling or not. The formal approach makes necessity rest instead on the relations of terms, considered without regard to their particular content. The last approach, the metaphysical, considers logic an a priori science, with its own theoretical foundations, and thinks it dependent on insight.⁴ Later, Husserl simplified the schema and reduced the contest to two parties--the first seeing logic as theoretical, formally demonstrative, and separate from psychology; the second finding it dependent on psychology and neither formal nor demonstrative.⁵ In Husserl's judgment, Mill belonged to the second party, at least in part.

Husserl's most obvious reason for thus classifying Mill is Mill's own apparent profession of psychologism: "It [i.e., logic] is not a Science distinct from, and co-ordinate with Psychology. So far as it is a science at all, it is a part or branch of Psychology. . . ."⁶ However, Professor McRae might counterquote from the Introduction to the Logic. There Mill argues that "logic is not the science of Belief, but the science of Proof, or Evidence."⁷ McRae does quote Mill's contention that logic "has no concern with the act of judging or believing."⁸

Since explicit statements will not settle the matter, we need to weigh several related arguments by Mill. In weighing them, it will be helpful to have a clearer conception of "psychologism" in mind. McRae reports four possible senses of the term. It may mean: 1. making the psychological principles of sensationalistic empiricism the basis for logic; 2. making concepts, judgments, arguments, proofs, and theories psychic occurrences; 3. understanding logical necessity to be the practical inability to conceive the opposite; and, 4. confusing questions of validity and questions of fact.⁹

McRae's position is that Mill did not rest logic on sensationalistic empiricism, because he looked to observation, rather than to sensation, for the testing of beliefs. In addition, the chapter in the Logic containing the best evidence for that case also contains divergent theories.¹⁰ Nor does McRae think that Mill considered concepts, judgments, arguments and proofs psychic events. Mill explicitly held the object of logic to be proof and he attempted to depsychologize the theory of names.¹¹ As for making logical necessary psychological, Mill could not have, as he denied that logic or mathematics possessed necessity.¹² Mill may also be acquitted of charges he confused questions of validity and of fact. According to McRae, Mill simply saw that "the investigation into the requisites of valid thinking" is part of the theory of valid thinking.¹³

A good place to begin our assessment of Husserl's and McRae's judgments will be at Mill's section on the principle of contradiction. In its traditional form, this principle holds that two contradictory propositions cannot both be true. Mill prefers to understand the principle as meaning that the same proposition cannot be both true and false at the same time. He holds that "if the negative be true, the affirmative must be false" really says the same thing twice, that both halves of the complex proposition must mean the same thing. Against the nominalists, Mill does not view the proposition as merely a verbal one, however. He takes it to be "one of our first and most familiar generalizations from experience."¹⁴

Here is a problem. If the proposition is "identical," and the halves are equivalent, then we would not need to learn this from experience. What we could learn from experience would be the particulars justifying the one proposition in question. Let us take an example. Assume there are four cases of snow--a, b, c, and d. We would hardly experience each as not black and then discover that it is false that each is black and, finally, see that the two expressions had the same meaning. Such reasonings could not, then, be the source of our principle.

Husserl remarks the problem and shows the inadequacy of Mill's argument through an analysis of our supposed generalization of the principle. He begins by quoting Mill to the effect that this principle depends upon our recognition that "light and darkness, sound and silence, equality and inequality, preceding and following, succession and simultaneousness," that is, "any positive phenomena whatever and its negative, are distinct phenomena, pointedly contrasted, and the one always present where the other is present."¹⁵

Husserl is puzzled how this position could have seemed persuasive to Mill. He points out that the phenomena Mill lists as the basis for the generalization are not contradictory propositions at all. Therefore, we do not have cases in which contradictory propositions are found to be not both true, with a generalization that this is always the case. Husserl "looks for light" in the Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy. There Mill cited Spence's law that "a positive mode of consciousness cannot occur without excluding a correlative negative mode" and a negative without excluding the positive.¹⁶ Husserl remarks that this makes our principle a tautology, because "exclusion enters into the definition of the correlative terms 'positive and negative phenomena.'"¹⁷ But Mill could not have regarded it as tautologous, for he considered it to be based on a generalization from experience. It looks as if Mill simply failed to provide an adequate account of the principle.

This becomes even clearer if we consider another passage from the Examination which Husserl quotes. There Mill argues:

"They [logical laws] may or may not be capable of alteration by experience, but the conditions of our existence deny to us the experience which would be required to alter them. Any assertion, therefore, which conflicts with one of these laws--any proposition, for instance, which asserts a contradiction, though it were on a subject wholly removed from the sphere of our experience, is to us unbelievable. The

belief in such a proposition is, in the present constitution of nature, impossible as a mental fact."¹⁸

Husserl remarks that Mill is talking not about propositions, but about "the corresponding acts of judgment," at the end of this passage.¹⁹ Rather than looking to the contradictory meanings to explain why contradictory propositions cannot both be true, Mill has recourse to the impossibility of the mind's judging both true, in the present circumstances.

The importance of the point becomes clearer if we follow Mill's position out further. On his premises, the holding of opposed judgments by one individual at different times or by more than one at the same time might call into question the validity of the principle of contradiction. Qualifications could be made, but Husserl doubts they could be effective: "Possibly the empiricist will escape these objections by suitably qualifying the law, e.g. by saying that it only applies to normal individuals of the genus homo, having a sound mental constitution. It is sufficient to raise the invidious question of the exact definition of the concept "normal individual" to see how imprecise and complex the content of the law, as now stated, has become."²⁰ The result is that this principle, "which has always counted as a wholly exact, self-evident, exceptionless law, is the very paradigm of a grossly imprecise, unscientific proposition, that can only be raised to the status of a plausible surmise after its seemingly exact content has been rendered quite vague by numerous corrections." Husserl emphasizes the importance of this when he observes, "At the very point where the last foundations of all science are in question, we have recourse to this naive empiricism with its blind mechanism of association."²¹

The best possible rejoinder is made in Mill's behalf by McRae. It is that Mill saw no true necessity in the logical laws. "It was those whom he opposed who attributed necessity to them, and the necessity which they attributed was, according to Mill, nothing but the psychological inability to conceive their negation. Such a psychological inability could be fully accounted for by the laws of association, and it had no bearing on the truth or falsehood of the logical or mathematical propositions asserted."²²

Against McRae are Mill's assertions in the Examination that these logical laws "are universally true of all phenomena" and that "if there are any inherent necessities of thought, these are such."²³ Since Mill could not possibly be aware of all phenomena, his assertion is a loose one, if it does not actually transcend empiricism. As for his reference to "inherent necessities of thought," it seems obvious that experience discloses only regular conjunctions, and not inherent necessities. Insight would be required to see that recurring conjunctions are necessary. Leaving this point aside, Mill clearly implies that the logical laws are the most necessary aspects of thought, but goes on to suggest that even they may not be necessary. In that case, there would be nothing necessary about thought and one would be left to wonder how a logic is possible.

It is true that Mill qualifies his contentions by restricting them to phenomena and by speculating that contrary instances might turn

up. However, when we consider inherent necessity, it makes no difference whether our reasoning refers to phenomena or to noumena. Mill provides no positive content for his hypothetical invalidating cases and identifies them solely by their supposed nonconformity to the logical laws. Their significance is, therefore, doubtful.

Taking stock at this point, we have seen that Mill left open the possibility that there is nothing necessary about thought. "The conditions of our existence" and "the present constitution of nature" may be responsible for the seeming necessity of the logical laws. If Mill means by these phrases that the way in which our minds presently work is responsible, then he is guilty of that type of psychologism which makes logical necessity the practical inability to conceive the opposite. If he is thinking that the world might take a new form, so that the sun might shine and not shine in one place at the same time, then we might object that logic would be impossible there, and that Mill ought not to stretch his theory of logic to apply where logic is possible and where it is not. If there is no order to thought, what order appears to exist might be the product of the psychological principles of sensationalistic empiricism. If Mill is not an advocate of this variety of psychologism, he nevertheless leaves the door ajar for it.

As for making concepts, judgments, and arguments psychic occurrences, Mill does not do so, though he does seem to make the logical laws dependent on our experience. He says that they may not be necessary, though they seem so. If they really are necessary and Mill says they only seem so, he has apparently equated necessity (in fact) with a psychological process. This is not quite the same thing as calling arguments psychic occurrences, but Mill at least leaves the door open for psychologism.

As for that type of psychologism which confuses questions of validity and questions of fact, Mill's idea that there may be no inherent necessities of thought suggests that he did not have a fully developed idea of validity, perhaps because of what Husserl calls his "empiricist prejudices."

The second problem on which Husserl criticizes Mill, that of the nature of meaning, is also of potential importance for determining Mill's "psychologism." Here again Husserl finds much to admire in Mill. He quotes "our distinguished thinker" on the need for a sounder understanding of language before beginning logic--because language is thought's tool and may distort thought in its origins, and because the meaning of propositions cannot be investigated unless language is understood. Husserl's agreement with Mill leads him to devote the first of his Investigations to "Expression and Meaning," and his high estimate of Mill's work leads him to devote important sections of the investigation to Mill's theory.

Husserl observes that, for Mill, the essence of meaning is to be found in connotation. Mill distinguishes connotative and denotative names according to whether or not a subject is designated and an attribute implied.²⁴ Connotative names do so, denotative names do not. Husserl thinks Mill's treatment of proper names especially revealing and gives special attention to this. Nor is this unusual. John Searle has observed that "in the history of philosophy, answers

to this question of the sense of proper names have been essential to answering the general question of how words relate to the world."²⁵ Mill's major explanation of how these names are used is given in a comparison to a robber's use of chalk marks in one of the Arabian Nights tales. Husserl quotes the passage:

"When we impose a proper name, we perform an operation in some degree analogous to what the robber intended in chalking the house. We put a mark, not indeed upon the object itself, but, so to speak, upon the idea of the object. A proper name is but an unmeaning mark which we connect in our minds with the idea of the object, in order that whenever the mark meets our eyes or occurs to our thoughts, we may think of that individual object. . . . When we predicate of anything its proper name; when we say, pointing to a man, this is Brown or Smith, or pointing to a city, this is York, we do not, merely by so doing, convey to the reader any information about them, except that those are their names. . . . It is otherwise when objects are spoken of by connotative names. When we say, 'The town is built of marble,' we give the hearer what may be entirely new information, and this merely by the signification of the many-worded connotative name 'built of marble.' Such names . . . are not mere marks, but more, that is to say significant marks; and the connotation is what constitutes the significance."²⁶

According to Husserl, Mill makes a crucial error here. He fails to distinguish between the indicative and expressive functions of words. In the passage quoted, he entirely misses the expressive function of proper names, and sees them as meaningless in themselves. Husserl attributes Mill's error to the false dichotomy of proper names that indicate and are meaningless and other names which have meaning. Mill's analogy with the chalk marks hinders him from seeing that, while we do not "look through" the mark to the house, we do "look through" the proper name to the thing named. Husserl thinks Mill cracked the analogy wide open when he spoke of the names "occurring to our minds" and thereby creating a consciousness of the things named. This implies our ability to use names as standing for the things they name, as expressing them, rather than as being pointers to them. This explains something Husserl emphasizes, their ability to express non-existent objects.²⁷

Mill's trouble may stem from his preference for an external, mechanical interpretation of how names function. He seems too reluctant to abandon the viewpoint of the observer for that of the language-user. Mill's apparent reluctance to speak from the participant's or the user's point of view may have helped produce his external interpretations of the logical laws, as well. Such external explanations leave no place for the role of insight.

When we turn to Mill's account of abstraction, we find him in even greater difficulty, at least in Husserl's view. The problem of abstraction involves the question of how the same general term may apply to different individuals. When Spencer denies that a general term indicates the same attribute in each individual, Mill remarks that it could not, then, indicate one in an individual considered at two different times. Husserl approvingly quotes Mill's argument

that no general language could exist in this case, but he thinks Mill's own premises subject his own position to similar criticisms.²⁶

Mill attempts to escape Spencer's problems by making the names of attributes refer to "the resemblances of our sensations."²⁹ But this leaves the problem of why similarities of attributes do not vary with our feelings. Mill's account seems psychologistic, as it makes identity dependent on psychic processes. Nor does Mill's account simplify the issue. Each attribute would be replaced by a corresponding type of sensation, and it is not clearer how one type of sensation could encompass several sub-types than it is how one attribute could be found in several individuals.

Mill was uneasy about his explanation. Husserl notes the struggling in the following passage: "the things compared are many, but the something common to all of them must be conceived as one, though corresponding to numerically different sensations of sound each time pronounced."³⁰ This fails, because the name's being one is not the reason why we must conceive of what is common to the things named by it as one. Husserl believes Mill's empiricism prevented him from acknowledging "the ideal unity of intention."³¹ Mill did not give sufficient attention to what we mean when we use such names.

In basing the general application of names of attributes on the resemblances of sensations, Mill again looks to mental facts for the foundation of his logic. McRae might well argue that Mill understood "mental facts" to mean much more than psychic occurrences. If so, it would be very difficult to discover exactly the extent of Mill's psychologism. But if Mill did intend the term to be understood in this way, he failed to distinguish things that he should have separated. This would make him a pre-psychologistic, rather than a psychologistic, logician.

Husserl recognized the amalgam of truth and error in what he took to be psychologistic arguments. He did not mean to give a comprehensive account of Mill's logic, or to deny its valid points. He emphasized the weaknesses he found in the foundations of Mill's theory and attributed these to psychologism. His criticisms would seem to show Mill's guilt on some occasions. McRae's defense shows Mill's innocence at other times. However, Husserl watches Mill as he tries to solve some of the key questions of logic. What Mill relies on at crucial moments may well be more revelatory than explicit statements at other times.

NOTES

¹A System of Logic, ed. J. M. Robson, The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vols. VII & VIII (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), VII, xlii. McRae applies the statement to Mill's account of concepts and judgments.

²Marvin Farber, The Foundation of Phenomenology, 3rd ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1963), 17.

³Edmund Husserl, Logical Investigations, trans. J. N. Findlay, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), I, 53.

⁴Ibid., 53-7.

⁵Ibid., 56.

- ⁶Ibid., 90; CW, VII, 145.
⁷CW, VII, 9.
⁸CW, VII, xli and 87.
⁹CW, VII, xl.
¹⁰CW, VII, xl.
¹¹CW, VII, xlii.
¹²CW, VII, xlii. McRae is wrong here. Mill's position was that the logical laws might be inherently necessary, as will be seen.
¹³CW, VII, xlii.
¹⁴CW, VII, 276-9.
¹⁵CW, VII, 277-8.
¹⁶An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy, ed. J. M. Robson, Collected Works, IX (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 381n.
¹⁷Husserl, I, 112.
¹⁸CW, IX, 381; Husserl, I, 113.
¹⁹Husserl, I, 113.
²⁰Ibid., 114.
²¹Ibid., 114.
²²CW, VII, xlii.
²³CW, IX, 380-1.
²⁴CW, VII, 30-40.
²⁵John R. Searle, "Proper Names and Descriptions," in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, VI, 487.
²⁶CW, VII, 35; Husserl, I, 296.
²⁷Husserl, I, 297.
²⁸Ibid., 346.
²⁹CW, VII, 178n-80n; Husserl, I, 346.
³⁰CW, VII, 178n-80n; Husserl, I, 347.
³¹Husserl, I, 347-8.

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COMMUNITY, HISTORY AND PROOF*

Mark Sheldon

It would, of course, be a very fine thing to be able to prove that a particular principle of morality has a basis in reality in some descriptive sense, though it is not clear what this would mean if such proof does not also include a basis by means of which persons would be motivated to do the "moral" thing. It would, of course, be best of all if it turned out that the principle justified by "proof" was also somehow inherently capable of motivating persons morally, or if, in fact, it already does--if not "inherently capable" or "self-evident," perhaps "self-recommending."

Though Bentham does not think it logically possible to give a proof of the principle of utility,¹ he does think it possible and important to discount the validity of other views adverse to the principle of utility. Those that he discounts (using his terms) are

Moral Sense, Common Sense, Understanding, Rule of Right, Fitness of Things, Law of Nature, Law of Reason (Right Reason, Natural Justice, Natural Equity, Good Order), Truth, Doctrine of Election, and Repugnancy to Nature.² Aside from the obscurity he attributes to these views, there is the "mischief they produce." He writes, "The mischief common to all these ways of thinking and arguing . . . is their serving as a cloak, and pretence, and alimant, to despotism. . . ."³ This passage, with its concern for public accountability and democracy, tends to support the views of those who view Bentham as being concerned with the principle of utility primarily within the context of social and legislative concerns.⁴ In fact, subsequently in the same footnote he writes, "Whether a moral sentiment can be originally conceived from any other source than a view of utility, is one question: whether upon examination and reflection it can, in point of fact, be actually persisted in and justified on any other ground, by a person reflecting within himself, is another: whether in point of right it can properly be justified on any other ground, by a person addressing himself to the community, is a third. The two first are questions of speculation: it matters not, comparatively speaking, how they are decided. The last is a question of practice: the decision of it is of as much importance as that of any can be."⁵ It is clear, from this quotation, in what context the validity of the principle of utility interests Bentham. It does not matter ultimately whether a person does, however confusedly, regard the moral sentiment as having a source other than utility. It does not matter if a person is able to justify such a view to himself. What does matter, to Bentham, is the basis on which such sentiments are justified to the community. And in a very important passage, which concludes Chapter ii of An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, he writes, "Other principles in abundance, that is, other motives, may be the reasons why such and such an act has been done: that is, the reasons or causes of its being done: but it is this alone that can be the reason why it might or ought to have been done. Antipathy or resentment requires always to be regulated, to prevent its doing mischief: to be regulated by what? always by the principle of utility. The principle of utility neither requires nor admits of any other regulator than itself."⁶

It is clear, I think, therefore, especially in terms of the last passage, that Bentham's concern is not to prove the validity of the utility principle as what, in fact (descriptive) motivates people. After all, he offers an extensive list of all sorts of confusing notions people do have of the bases of their moral views, and of the confusing ways in which they are motivated (often to the detriment of others). His concern, rather, is to offer and defend a normative theory, a view of what ought to motivate people in the context of community, of concerns that ought to orient the legislator in terms of his or her task. In this context, then, the question of what does motivate people does not interest Bentham. Were he concerned to argue this question, he would offer additional proofs. His purpose, rather, is to put forward an argument as to what ought to motivate people. And for this there is no further proof except his recommendation of the principle vis à vis the confusions of the other views and

their social consequences.

Mill's proof is another matter. But here, too, I think there are different problems from those usually considered at issue by some of his critics.⁷ I will begin by first quoting probably the most often quoted paragraph from Mill's Utilitarianism. He writes:

"The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible, is that people hear it: and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, I apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it. If the end which the utilitarian doctrine proposes to itself were not, in theory and in practice, acknowledged to be an end, nothing could ever convince any person that it was so. No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable, except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. This, however, being a fact, we have not only all the proof which the case admits of, but all which it is possible to require, that happiness is a good: that each person's happiness is a good to that person, and the general happiness, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all persons."⁸

There is more, of course, to this paragraph, but for the purposes of this paper I shall concentrate on these sentences. One person who had much to say concerning the quoted passage is G. E. Moore, who has been answered by Mary Warnock. While it may be true that there are problems with Moore's argument, there are also problems with Warnock's response.

Moore focuses upon the "visible-desirable" analogy, which, he feels, leads to a confused claim concerning "good." After quoting the same passage quoted above, he writes, "There, that is enough. That is my first point. Mill has made as naive and artless a use of the naturalistic fallacy as anybody could desire. 'Good,' he tells me, means 'desirable,' and you can only find out what is desirable by seeking to find out what is actually desired."⁹ But I think Warnock's argument is correct.¹⁰ She suggests that Mill does not define "desirable" as "good." It is true that Mill claims the "desired" is what is "desirable," but his assertion that happiness is the only thing that people desire is distinct from his discussion of the proof of the desirable being that which, in fact, is desired. Mill writes, "the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it. If the end which the utilitarian doctrine proposes to itself were not, in theory and practice, acknowledged to be an end, nothing could ever convince any person that it was so." Warnock detects no difficulty with this passage, and seems to suggest that it turns on an empirical observation. She writes, "The question of proving the ultimate end does not arise; but you can find out what people recognize as ultimate ends by finding out what they desire. What they desire, Mill goes on to say, is happiness. I cannot see anything wrong or fallacious about this."¹¹

But it seems to me clear that there is something wrong about the argument, especially when it is viewed as having an empirical basis. However, I am not concerned here with the question of whether Mill

position that morality is 'founded on' pure reason and the position that it is 'founded on' a sentiment or feeling of sympathy, unity, or benevolence toward one's fellow men."¹⁴ I will return to Narveson's point.

Quinton's response to Mill's critics takes another approach. In essence, he rejects the view that it is necessary for the utilitarian proof that there be an identification of the good of all with the good of each. He writes, "we have an intense interest in the welfare of some other people and some direct interest in the welfare of nearly everyone. What has not been shown is that the good of all is the total, ultimate and overriding good of each. But this, for all the lip service that is paid to it, is a very extreme and millennial belief."¹⁵ Behaviour beyond this is morally heroic and supererogatory.

What I want to suggest, however, is that in dealing with Mill's argument one does not have to tack on an analytic explanation, as Narveson does, in order to establish the identity of general interest with individual interest. Nor does one have to give it a realistic qualification, as Quinton does. Rather, I would suggest that, given the correctness of Mill's assumption (which I will discuss shortly), the argument is firm.

It should first be pointed out that Mill begins this passage by saying, "No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable. . . ." Clearly, he states that no reason can be given to support the desirability of the general happiness and he does not attempt to give one. Instead, he writes "except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness." The "it" refers to "his happiness," not the general happiness. That each person desires his own happiness he believes to be "a fact." But this is the problem. Is it a "fact" that each person desires his own happiness? If this were true, certainly it would follow (as Narveson argues) that the general happiness is a good to the aggregate of all persons. The important word is "all." And this, I think, is Mill's premise, that there is already an aggregate of all persons. This he describes in detail in Chapter iii:

"the moral feelings are not innate, but acquired, they are not for that reason the less natural. . . . Like the other acquired capacities above referred to, the moral faculty, if not a part of our nature, is a natural outgrowth from it; . . . susceptible of being brought by cultivation to a high degree of development. . . . To doubt that the same potency might be given by the same means to the principle of utility, even if it had no foundation in human nature, would be flying in the face of all experience.

But moral associations which are wholly of artificial creation, when intellectual culture goes on, yield by degrees to the dissolving force of analysis: . . . if there were no leading department of our nature . . . with which that association would harmonize . . . if there were not . . . a natural basis of sentiment for utilitarian morality, it might well happen that this association also . . . might be analysed away.

But there is this basis of powerful natural sentiment; and this it is which, when once the general happiness is recognised as the

ethical standard, will constitute the strength of the utilitarian morality. This firm foundation is that of the social feelings of mankind; the desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures, which is already a powerful principle in human nature, and happily one of those which tend to become stronger, even without express inculcation, from the influences of advancing civilization."¹⁶

Without discussing this long passage in detail, I wish to point out that here is expressed in full the empirical premise of Mill's proof, his optimism about the existence of a social instinct of some sort which has a tendency to gain strength in a progressively civilized society. (It might be argued that the concern for unity is as great as or greater than the concern for happiness.) And on this we can judge Mill either correct or incorrect. But his argument does maintain its force when left on this basis, set in the context of history (aside from Narveson's concern). Bentham's argument, on the other hand, is not dependent on this descriptive and empirical base. It thus remains experimentally possible, depending on effective implementation.

NOTES

*Written for National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar, "The Plausibility of Utilitarianism." I want to thank Richard Brandt and seminar members for their comments.

¹He writes, "Is it susceptible of any direct proof? it should seem not: for that which is used to prove every thing else, cannot itself be proved: a chain of proofs must have their commencement somewhere. To give such proof is as impossible as it is needless." (An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Collected Works, Jeremy Bentham, ed. J. H. Burns and H. L. A. Hart [London: Athlone Press, 1970], 13.)

²Ibid., 25-8.

³Ibid., 28.

⁴Mary Warnock and E. W. Hall.

⁵Bentham, 28.

⁶Ibid., 33.

⁷Moore and Rashdall, for instance.

⁸"Utilitarianism," in Essays on Ethics, Religion, and Society, ed. J. M. Robson, Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, X (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 234.

⁹G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1968), 66.

¹⁰Mary Warnock, Ethics since 1900 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 11-38.

¹¹Ibid., 21.

¹²Jan Narveson, Morality and Utility (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 285.

¹³Ibid., 285.

¹⁴Ibid., 293.

¹⁵Anthony Quinton, Utilitarian Ethics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 71.

¹⁶CW, X, 230-1.

* * * * *

No decade of this century has seen the publication of so many substantial works on J. S. Mill as that of the seventies. In part, the greatly increased interest in Mill, which first became evident in the sixties, is the product of a more general phenomenon--the striking development of Victorian studies as a whole. Perhaps no Victorian thinker enjoyed as much distinction and influence in his own time as did Mill. It is natural that scholars anxious to understand the Victorian period should turn to Mill, who consciously attempted to absorb, assimilate, and articulate the significant strains of thought pervading the nineteenth-century English intellectual scene, and whose contribution to the ethos of his age proved to be in many respects more original and important than that of the seminal thinkers whom he sought to reconcile. It is not only because he spoke to the Victorian condition that Mill has been the object of so much scholarly attention; of equal significance is the conviction that he speaks to our condition as well. Varying considerably in quality and approach, the works on Mill which have appeared in the 1970s all assert the historical and contemporary relevance of his thought and agree on the need to understand what he was about.'

One of the most significant aspects of recent studies has been the growing tendency to treat Mill as a systematic thinker. That there have been relatively few works on Mill's philosophy as a whole can be largely attributed to a widespread conviction that however interesting and valuable the parts might be, the whole was riddled by a lack of coherence and consistency. While the detailed examination of Mill's writings characteristic of recent scholarship has not revealed a body of thought free from tension, ambiguity, and ambivalence, it has brought to light a degree of coherence and system not previously observed.

Alan Ryan's John Stuart Mill (New York: Pantheon, 1970) has contributed in a major way to this reassessment. Doubtless the most thorough and important study of Mill's philosophy yet to appear, Ryan's work lucidly contends that the connection between scientific and moral rationality was Mill's central concern and that his empiricist metaphysics provided the link between the two. Ryan presents a detailed and closely argued analysis of Mill's attempt to establish a rational ethical system on the basis of a coherent theory of scientific explanation, human action, and social science. The deficiencies and inconsistencies of Mill's system are fully exposed; yet Ryan's criticism is an appreciative one which reveals the impressive character of Mill's philosophical achievement.

H. J. McCloskey's John Stuart Mill: A Critical Study (London: Macmillan, 1971), a contribution to the Philosophers in Perspective series, is not nearly so sympathetic. A not entirely accurate summary of Mill's life is followed by chapters on his logic, ethical theory, political theory, metaphysics, and philosophy of religion.

Placing his survey firmly within the context of twentieth-century philosophical developments, McCloskey's study is largely taken up with an examination of where Mill went wrong. The effect, perhaps unintended, is a very negative treatment which portrays Mill as a philosophical failure on a rather massive scale. That Mill so rarely passes McCloskey's test may be a reflection of the unfairness of the questions. If McCloskey had devoted more attention to the historical and intellectual framework within which Mill worked, and less to the philosophical concerns of the twentieth century, the result would have been more useful and constructive. Oddly enough, despite the general thrust of his argument, McCloskey too insists on Mill's continuing relevance and importance (p. 174).

A significant proportion of the works on Mill published during the 1970s deal primarily with his political philosophy. The first of these to appear was Graeme Duncan's comparative study of Marx and Mill (Marx and Mill: Two Views of Social Conflict and Social Theory [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973]). Duncan raises and tackles the issue which has been central to recent analyses of Mill's political thought: should Mill be considered a representative of nineteenth-century laissez-faire democratic individualism, or was he indeed something quite different--a thinker whose major objectives were the strengthening of old or the creation of new social bonds, and the establishment of a polity dominated by a cultural and intellectual elite. While Duncan does not ignore the democratic, individualistic, and libertarian elements present in Mill's thought, he clearly regards such elements as subordinate to Mill's major concerns, which he identifies as a commitment to social harmony and the political ascendancy of competence and expertise. Duncan's sophisticated analysis suggests that the presence of the former elements reflected a measure of unease on Mill's part respecting the possible abuses which might arise from an emphasis on the latter. Mill may have sought a satisfactory balance, but Duncan argues that his primary loyalty to a harmonious social organism, politically administered by a competent and disinterested elite, could not effectively accommodate the democratic and individualistic undercurrents. A work which we shall turn to shortly demonstrates the extent to which Duncan has exaggerated the importance of the elitist at the expense of the democratic Mill.

In her On Liberty and Liberalism: The Case of John Stuart Mill (New York: Knopf, 1974), Gertrude Himmelfarb provides a striking elaboration of her thesis of the "two Mills," first presented in her introduction to Mill's Essays on Politics and Culture (1962) and further developed in a chapter of her Victorian Minds (1968). Himmelfarb's clearly stated preference is for the Mill of the "Spirit of the Age," "Coleridge," and the two reviews of Tocqueville. In these essays, she argues, one finds the Mill who understood the complexity of society and who appreciated the importance of law, authority, public opinion, and social discipline. The Mill of On Liberty, however, attempted to establish an absolutist position in support of extreme individualism. The highly unsatisfactory condition of western society at the present time, Himmelfarb suggests, is in large part attributable to the triumph of the pernicious doctrines which she

associates with On Liberty.

Himmelfarb has set herself the task of explaining why On Liberty is so very different from most of Mill's other writings. She has modified her thesis somewhat, in that her previous essays argued that the division was essentially between the "earlier" and the "later" Mill. Her book on the subject asserts that On Liberty differs markedly not only from his earlier writings, but also from Utilitarianism and other works written at approximately the same time as On Liberty. She turns to the J. S. Mill-Harriet Taylor relationship and their mutual absorption in the issue of sexual equality to account for the discrepancies. Arguing that On Liberty and Mill's essays on women have a great deal in common, Himmelfarb contends that the former represents Mill's views on the subjection of women writ large. The acceptance by society of the principle announced in On Liberty would ensure the emancipation of women.

In Himmelfarb's experienced and skillful hands, this usually intriguing argument impressively unfolds. One is left, however, somewhat troubled by the performance. For one thing, she credits Mill, rather than Harriet, with the authorship of "Enfranchisement of women." Her contrary assertions notwithstanding, the evidence does not support such an attribution. More importantly, her definition of the problem derives from her interpretation of On Liberty. The anxieties given expression in Mill's classic essay were not absent from his other writings, including his early ones, and the concerns which inform his earlier essays are not entirely absent from On Liberty. Thus the validity of Himmelfarb's answer is placed in serious doubt by her dubious formulation of the question.

The central thesis of R. J. Halliday's study of Mill's political thought (John Stuart Mill [London: Allen & Unwin, 1976]) is scarcely less startling than Himmelfarb's. Essentially, Halliday gives us a portrait of Mill as trimmer. Emphasizing the significance of Mill's mental crisis and rejection of Benthamism, Halliday's Mill is an eclectic, timid, and pessimistic political thinker whose primary commitments are to self-culture, social and political consensus, expertise in government, and a cautiously pragmatic approach to political issues. According to Halliday, On Liberty and Representative Government are "shot through with pessimism" (p. 129). One can indeed locate such strains in Mill, but a concentration upon them to the exclusion of the genuinely positive and radical elements produces serious distortion. Mill was most definitely not a trimmer (it should be pointed out that Halliday does not actually use this word, though he very well might have, considering the character of his argument). His brand of radicalism may not be easily categorized, but his position on inheritance, the land question, Ireland, and the subordination of women places him firmly on the left within the nineteenth-century political context. His views on these issues, far from tending to promote consensus, could not help but provoke intense hostility and stiff resistance. Fortunately, however, Halliday's determination to present an original overall interpretation does not prevent him from tackling various aspects of Mill's political thought in a sensible fashion. His discussion of Mill's perspective on laissez-faire and socialism, for example, possesses considerable merit. Thus, despite a rather irritat-

ing introductory chapter and a thesis requiring substantial modification, there is a real measure of value in Halliday's work.

Unquestionably the most satisfying treatment of Mill's political thought yet to appear in the seventies is Dennis F. Thompson's John Stuart Mill and Representative Government (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976). Whereas Duncan concludes that Mill's attempt to combine elitist and democratic ideas results in an "untidy and unsuccessful compromise" (p. 259), Thompson convincingly demonstrates that Mill integrates these apparently incompatible commitments into a philosophy of politics that is remarkably comprehensive, systematic, and coherent. Mill's political theory, according to Thompson, rests on two fundamental principles, participation and competence. The content and implications of these principles, Thompson argues, determined the framework for Mill's analysis of the processes and institutions of representative government.

The protective and educative functions of participation and competence led Mill to structure his analysis on the basis of the requirements of these two principles. Participation in the political process protects the interests of individuals, groups, and the more general public interest, while a skilled and conscientious leadership ensures that the government will respond to the needs of the community and obstruct the pursuit of power and influence by sinister interests. But the protection provided by participation and competence is not purchased at the expense of education. Participation imparts to individuals an understanding of the political process, an awareness of important public issues, and a sense of personal responsibility for the well-being of the community. A competent leadership, on the other hand, is obliged to use its knowledge and expertise to enhance the political capability of the mass of citizens. Thus, for the purposes of protection and education, the principles of participation and competence are both indispensable.

Thompson intelligently and persuasively demonstrates that these two principles governed Mill's institutional preferences with respect to the organization of a representative democratic polity. In addition, Thompson refers extensively to the work of twentieth-century political scientists in order to evaluate the contemporary validity of Mill's analysis. He concludes that there is much of value to be learned from Representative Government, and the case he makes for Mill is a very strong one. A sympathetic, yet not uncritical study of Mill's political thought, Thompson's book deserves a wide and attentive readership.

No less appreciative of Mill is Pedro Schwartz, whose The New Political Economy of J. S. Mill (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972) represents a significant contribution to Mill studies. It was as a political and social philosopher that Mill wrote political economy. Whereas modern economists have tended to dismiss Mill for his lack of method and analytical rigour, Schwartz's book suggests that Mill's broadly humanistic approach to economic questions proved fruitful for the nineteenth century and holds a considerable measure of value for the twentieth.

The first quarter of Schwartz's work sets out the personal and intellectual context within which Mill's political economy evolved. Although useful and necessary, there is not much new here. Schwartz's

substantive chapters concern Mill's response to trade unions, laissez-faire, socialism, and his vision of society's future. Mill had not much to say about trade unionism, largely because he considered it a phenomenon of ephemeral significance. The cooperative character of the future stationary economy postulated by Mill would render trade unionism anachronistic. With respect to laissez-faire, Schwartz shows that Mill's deep concern for individual freedom did not prevent his enunciating a sophisticated and original doctrine of governmental intervention in the economic sphere. Mill's ambivalent and fluctuating attitudes towards socialism form the subject of Schwartz's most striking and incisive chapter. He persuasively argues that Mill's dissatisfaction with the existing social and economic organization of society did not lead him to adopt socialism as a desirable and practicable alternative. Rather Mill called for a reform of the competitive system and emphasized the important role to be played by the political process in determining the distribution of the national income. Schwartz concludes his discussion of substantive issues with an examination of Mill's hopes for the future, and his conception of the stationary society.

Mill's strengths and weaknesses as a political economist are ably elucidated by Schwartz. He firmly establishes Mill's important place in the history of economic thought and amply demonstrates that his constructive achievements have been unjustly neglected. Schwartz's book will not be the last on Mill's political economy, but it is nonetheless a very good book indeed.

It is unfortunate that the same cannot be said of Bruce Mazlish's James and John Stuart Mill: Father and Son in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Basic Books, 1975). Perhaps the most ambitious work on Mill to appear in this decade, this contribution to psychohistory promises considerably more than it delivers. Mazlish's application of psychoanalytic theory to Mill and the nineteenth century, with the Oedipus complex and generational conflict as the central themes of his analysis, leaves one feeling slightly uneasy about the fruits of psychohistory. As the title suggests, Mazlish's study interprets the details and pattern of Mill's life largely within a framework determined by the latter's childhood experiences and, in particular, by his relations with his father. The problem with the case that Mazlish attempts to make is that it is built upon innumerable assumptions and conjectures which frequently rest upon evidence either questionable or non-existent. Although a number of his observations are interesting and novel and should not be dismissed lightly, confidence in them is somewhat undermined by inaccuracies of fact which occasionally creep in. He has also overlooked a considerable body of material, including many of Mill's own articles, which would certainly have thrown light on the subjects discussed.

Mazlish's explanation of Mill is tied in with an examination of nineteenth-century social change. Just as generational conflict is the key to achieving an understanding of Mill, so an understanding of nineteenth-century social change is greatly facilitated by the application of this concept. Generational conflict, as one factor among many, should not be disregarded, but Mazlish claims far too much for it. Furthermore, his analysis of the historical context suggests that one

may reasonably question his competence to judge the determinants of nineteenth-century social and political change. Thus, although an interesting and stimulating work, Mazlish's book does not deal satisfactorily with the issues it raises.

There remain to be briefly considered two general works on Mill, each of which allocates individual chapters to Mill's major writings. These are Alan Ryan's J. S. Mill (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) and Eugene August's John Stuart Mill: A Mind at Large (New York: Scribners, 1975). As the sophisticated and trenchant analysis of Ryan's earlier contribution would lead one to expect, his general study is a solid and balanced assessment of Mill the autobiographer, logician, social philosopher, political economist, political theorist, and metaphysician. He aptly constructs the relevant historical and intellectual context for his discussion of Mill's works, consistently asks the right questions, and fairly sums up Mill's achievements and deficiencies. Ryan's virtues are not matched by August. Admittedly, the latter's emphasis is somewhat different, in that he is particularly anxious to demonstrate Mill's literary and rhetorical power. Although he offers some useful observations in this regard, they do not carry the reader very far. August's admiration for Mill is akin to that which the latter felt for Harriet, and the picture he draws of the great man is consequently nearly as superficial as that drawn by Mill of his wife in the Autobiography. Approximately an equal amount of space is devoted to summarizing and praising Mill's individual works. Unlike Ryan, he provides little substantive discussion of the difficult issues those works raise. In addition, August's overheated prose style tends to distract when it does not astonish. "But before he was twenty-one he would suffer a crushing emotional collapse, and afterward he would go lusting after strange philosophical gods" (p. 4). In short, Ryan's book is very much the better of the two.

Thus we find that J. S. Mill has attracted his full share of scholarly attention during the seventies. Apart from the books referred to here, there has been in recent years a flood of articles, many of them of considerable value, dealing with various aspects of Mill's life and thought. The growth in Mill studies has attained such momentum that one can reasonably expect the eighties to be as productive as the seventies. The more that is known about Mill the clearer it becomes that we do not know enough.

* * * * *

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- Bogen, Daniel and D. M. Farrell. "Freedom and Happiness in Mill's Defence of Liberty," Philosophical Quarterly, 28 (Oct., 1978), 325-38.
- Brown, D. G. "Mill on Harm to Others' Interests," Political Studies, 26 (Sept., 1978), 395-9.
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- Granger, Daniel William. "'The Working Man' and Working Men: John Stuart Mill, John Ruskin, and the Working Class," Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 1978. (DAI 39, p. 2953A)
- Griffin, Andrew. "The Interior Garden and John Stuart Mill." In Nature and the Victorian Imagination. Ed. U. C. Knoepfelmacher and G. B. Tennyson. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1977. Pp. 171-86.
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- West, E. G. and R. W. Hafer. "J. S. Mill, Unions, and the Wages Fund Recantation: A Reinterpretation," Quarterly Journal of Economics, 92 (Nov., 1978), 603-19.

* * * * *

Books Received

- Brundage, Anthony. The Making of the New Poor Law: The Politics of Inquiry, Enactment, and Implementation, 1832-1839. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1978. Pp. xv + 204.
- Macaulay, Thomas Babington. Napoleon and the Restoration of the Bourbons. Ed. Joseph Hamburger. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. Pp. ix + 117. Professor Hamburger provides an excellent introduction to Macaulay's manuscript, long thought lost but recently discovered in the Longman Archives.

- Mill, J. S. On Liberty. Ed. Elizabeth Rapaport. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978. Pp. xxiii + 113. An inexpensive but nicely printed paperback edition, with a useful introduction and a modicum of informational footnotes.
- Utilitarianism. Ed. George Sher. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979. Pp. xv + 63. In the same series as the above edition of On Liberty, and possessing similar virtues, though the introduction is brief and there are no editorial footnotes.
- Vann, J. Don and Rosemary T. Van Arsdel, eds. Victorian Periodicals: A Guide to Research. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1978. Pp. xi + 188. A collection of articles of a bibliographic nature.

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REVIEW

Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy. By J. B. Schneewind. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. Pp. xvi + 465.

It is an oddity that J. S. Mill, although he is remembered above all as a utilitarian, wrote very little in ethics. His essays (on Bentham, Whewell, etc.) are fragments which are far too unsystematic to serve as statements of a theory. The political tracts for which he is justly so renowned presuppose and capitalize on an ethical theory but reveal little of its inner structure. In the end the main sources for Mill's ethics reduce to Utilitarianism and Book VI of the Logic--theory and metatheory respectively. While the former is every student's first point of contact with a utilitarian morality, it is itself a series of popular essays in which concision has conspired with carelessness to generate employment in perpetuity for a legion of commentators and critics. If we make the mistake of considering it as a treatise then it is surely one of the least satisfactory ever produced. As for the moral epistemology of the Logic, few have found it other than perfunctory and obscure.

In short, if one is shopping about in the nineteenth century for a complete and coherent formulation and defence of utilitarianism then Mill is the wrong merchant to whom to bring one's custom. So is Bentham: although his ethical theory was in many respects more thoroughly worked out than Mill's, he never managed to assemble all the pieces in any single location. The only treatise on utilitarianism worthy of being called such is Henry Sidgwick's The Methods of Ethics. In this work Sidgwick accomplished a task which none of his predecessors had ever attempted: he constructed a theory of utility on a purely rational footing, attending to all of the major issues which such a construction raises, defended the theory against the main criticisms to which it was commonly subjected, and explored in detail the relations between utilitarianism and the morality of common sense. By every philosophical standard the Methods is immeasurably superior to Mill's Utilitarianism: it is more complete, more thorough, more considered (running through seven editions), more coherent, more profound. Its counterpart among Mill's writings is not Utilitarianism.

but the Logic or the Political Economy. It is in the Methods that the theory of utility first comes to maturity.

If this is so, why does everyone read Mill and no one read Sidgwick? Why is there no Sidgwick News Letter? One answer to these questions would stress the undoubted fact that Mill was the more versatile thinker; his interests and his influence were both much broader. If Utilitarianism had been written by an unknown it might have gone the way of most philosophical pamphlets. But there is another answer as well which fastens upon the need for an accessible introduction to utilitarianism. This is a need which the Methods confessedly does not serve well: it is long, intricate, dense, difficult, and rather boring. Though philosophically wanting, Mill's piece is much the better propaganda.

This latter consideration goes far toward explaining why Sidgwick's magnum opus has never reached a wide public, but it cannot account for its neglect by scholars who do not generally shrink from tedious tomes. Most philosophers working in the area of utilitarianism, whether friendly or hostile to the theory, have long conceded that the best extant version of the theory is found in Sidgwick. And yet until now the only worthwhile study of Sidgwick's ethics as a whole has been a long chapter in C. D. Broad's Five Types of Ethical Theory. With the publication of J. B. Schneewind's Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy this deplorable neglect has at last been rectified. Sidgwick now has a serious, scholarly, orthodox secondary source.

Schneewind has divided his project into three parts. The first traces the historical background against which the Methods is to be understood, especially the two rival traditions which Sidgwick attempted to reconcile: intuitionism (from Reid to Whewell) and utilitarianism (principally Bentham and Mill). The second, and longest, section is a systematic exposition of the main doctrines of the Methods, importing such evidence from Sidgwick's other writings as is pertinent. The final part compares Sidgwick with his most formidable contemporary opponents (Spencer, Bradley, Green) and ponders his place in the history of ethics. The scholarly apparatus of the work includes, in addition to an analytic index, four bibliographies: a "reasonably complete" list of Sidgwick's manuscripts and published works, a valuable compilation of publications by British moralists from 1785 to 1900, a survey of the secondary literature on Mill's Utilitarianism, and a general bibliography.

The centrepiece of the book is of course the analysis of the Methods itself. Since Sidgwick obviously designed this work as the authoritative source for his own ethical theory, Schneewind is quite justified in using it as the framework for his exposition of that theory. One does wonder, however, whether some of the other normative works might not have been used to greater advantage. Given the intimate connection between Sidgwick's ethical and political theories (the same connection found in Bentham and Mill), it is especially puzzling that there is not a single reference to The Elements of Politics. Could one write a satisfactory account of Mill's ethics while omitting all mention of On Liberty and Representative Government? Be that as it may, students of Sidgwick will find few surprises in Schneewind's

reconstruction of his ethical theory. We encounter the familiar tension between the two professed aims of the Methods: on the one hand to investigate from a neutral standpoint the nature of and relations among the three 'methods of ethics' (intuitionism, egoism, utilitarianism), and on the other to advocate one of them. Schneewind rearranges Sidgwick's order of presentation of material, generally to the advantage of intelligibility. His own paraphrases of Sidgwick's views are usually canonical and his handling of objections is workmanlike, although the latter is pervaded by an unshakable loyalty to his subject. This is no revisionist reading of the Methods; neither does it elect to pursue beyond moderation any of the thick and knotty problems to which Sidgwick addressed himself. For those who do not already know the Methods (surely the majority even among philosophers), these central chapters of Schneewind's book will serve as a convenient, and not misleading, introduction. For students of Sidgwick the book will offer interpretations of his views on virtually all significant topics, assembled by the person who must know the corpus better than any of the rest of us.

The historical setting is, perforce, merely sketched. Nonetheless, these opening chapters also serve an important purpose in redirecting attention to the principal figures in the most exciting period of British moral philosophy. To review the controversies of that time is to be vividly reminded of just how little has been accomplished in ethics during the present century. By and large the problems now current were also debated then, often with at least as much acuity as that displayed in the more recent and better known sources. Needless to say, Schneewind's brisk tour through a century of ethical writing will not please everyone. This reviewer, for example, was dissatisfied by two claims concerning Bentham: that his work in ethics was largely ignored in England during his lifetime (which takes no account of the popularity and influence of the Dumont editions, especially the Traité de législation civile et pénale which before Bentham's death ran through three editions in French, was translated into English, and was certainly widely known in England); and that Mill's version of utilitarianism was generally thought to be less radical than Bentham's (which overlooks both the fact that many of Mill's views on moral and social matters offended contemporary public opinion and that public opinion itself shifted considerably from Bentham's heyday to Mill's, so that positions extreme in 1800 could count as mere platitudes in 1860). I daresay that most readers of these pages will discover their own complaints, but these are slight matters in a work whose reputation will stand on its treatment of Sidgwick.

Schneewind's painstaking scholarship, his valuable sketch of the background, his determination to say something useful on all of the main themes of Sidgwick's ethics--these virtues ensure that this book will remain for some considerable time the standard secondary source for the Methods. There remains, however, room for a different kind of treatment of Sidgwick, one which would deliberately sacrifice these virtues in a higher cause. While the Methods is still, a century after its first appearance, the best single statement we have of a utilitarian theory, that century has seen our understanding of the theory immeasurably advanced through the discovery both of more power-

ful tools of analysis and of new dimensions in the conflict between utilitarians and their rivals. This new work, however, is still largely piecemeal; it lacks precisely that scope and unity which makes the Methods the exposition of a system. A book both well versed in Sidgwick and proficient in modern analytic techniques could use each to illuminate the other. Such a work would be neither simply a commentary on the Methods nor an entirely independent construction. Its approach to Sidgwick would be critical and selective, discarding what can no longer stand and incorporating what remains (and much, surely, would remain) into a fuller and better grounded version of the theory. It would, in other words, extend to Sidgwick precisely the respect with which he approached the more worthy of his predecessors.

Schneewind's book, excellent of its kind, does not undertake this daunting task. Sidgwick has at last found his Kemp Smith or Paton, but his Strawson or Beunett is still to come.

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Introduction by Alan Ryan

First published in 1865, with a second edition in the same year, and a third and fourth editions in 1867 and 1872, the Examination was a most significant and popular work, presenting an extended treatment of some matters central to empiricism that found little space in Mill's logic, the best known being his treatment of matter and mind from a psychological viewpoint.

Appearing just before his successful parliamentary candidature, the Examination with its deliberate and explicit onslaught on the 'intuitionists' who were, in Mill's view, allied with anti-progressive political and religious forces, brought his beliefs into the public arena in a new way. Some of those who supported him politically, such as Gladstone, found themselves viciously attacked because they had associated themselves with one who assailed settled religious beliefs. Other religionists, such as Kingsley and Maurice, who rejected many of Mill's attitudes, strongly expressed their admiration of the Examination because of its exposure of what they, with him, saw as dangerous theological and moral positions.

Alan Ryan's analytical and historical introduction dwells on the most significant philosophical elements in the work, placing them in perspective and showing their relations to other aspects of Mill's thought. The textual introduction by John M. Robson examines the treatise in the context of Mill's life in the 1860s, outlines its composition, and discusses, among other matters, the importance of the extensive revisions Mill made, mostly in response to critics. These revisions appear in full in the textual apparatus. Also provided are a bibliographical index, an analytical index, and appendices giving the readings of manuscript fragments and listing textual emendations.

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