Mill before Liberalism (I)*

Abstract. Current understanding of Mill as a founding father of liberalism is a Cold War creation. Discarding this conception opens the way to a general reassessment of his thought: who was the historical Mill ? He did not define himself as liberal and there is no simple template. Most obviously he is a pluralist, defined by a plural heritage received through his father. This framework permitted great creativity in political and social theory, but it was diffuse. The one clear unifying theme is a unique conception of a hierarchy of intellect founded on the inexorable accumulation of positive knowledge. The one important exception to this is political economy. What stands out overall is his individuality, where Mill embodies his own ideal. So apart from political economy, where he could be identified in more conventional terms, his 19th century legacy was personal and incalculably diffusive rather than doctrinaire. This left it ripe for 20th century re-invention.

I. The Question of Identity

When confronting British intellectual history in the 19th century, and in particular the history of political and social theory, the prominence of J.S. Mill is self-evident. No single author is more written about, even if the majority of those who write about him are theorists, not historians. But this very prominence is problematic. Mill is a canonical author *par excellence* and this implies that he is known; so well-known in fact that the most fruitful inquiries into him would appear to be inquiries in detail, while the central elements in our conception of him remain undisturbed. It may be said that this does not matter too much, provided we are confident that what is well-known is well-founded in fact, but in Mill's case it is not so. He has become a victim of the kind of intellectual consensus that he so famously attacked in *On Liberty*. His canonical elevation may draw on the fact that there was once a prominent 19th century thinker called John Stuart Mill, but the principal defining features of the canonical Mill are not historical. They derive from the intellectual history of the mid-20th century when he was created as a canonical figure, rather than from the 19th century.

Mill as we know him today is a creation of the Anglo-American "liberal" canon that was erected after 1945. In 1900 he had been filed as one of *The English Utilitarians*, when utilitarianism was a recognisable category in English thought and liberalism was not.[1] But in 1952 Isaiah Berlin could announce on the BBC that 'the essay on liberty… remains the most eloquent, the most sincere and the most convincing plea for individual freedom ever uttered.' On this basis Mill 'founded modern liberalism'.[2] The new, Cold War canon was the work of a number of thinkers and embraced a number of authors,[3] but in Mill's case those primarily responsible were Berlin and Friedrich Hayek. At first sight it was an unusual form of canonisation since neither Hayek nor Berlin wrote a substantial treatment of Mill as a thinker, but this was in fact symptomatic. Their starting point was not Mill himself but the need to reaffirm the idea of liberty in opposition to the threats posed by Nazism and Communism, and liberty was the kernel of their idea of liberalism. Berlin's principal statement was his enormously influential lecture *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1958);[4] Hayek's his equally famous (if less read) *Constitution of Liberty* (1960). In order to promote mid-20th century liberty, eminent precursors were required and the author of *On Liberty* was much the most obvious candidate. Even so, he was important because he was typical, not because he was unique. He was a member of a group: an item in a 19th century 'liberal tradition' alongside Tocqueville and Constant, or else one of the set of 'liberals in the modern world from the days of Erasmus' (in Berlin's case).[5] Hayek's view was not dissimilar: 'It must probably… be admitted that it is not so much for the originality of his thinking as for its influence on a world now past that Mill is chiefly of importance today.' Even so, he was representative: 'he governed liberal thought as did no other man' in the forty years before 1914, the point at

which (he supposed) traditional European liberalism collapsed.[6] (Hayek's early biographical researches were also one of the origins of the North American edition of Mill's *Collected Works*, launched in 1959-60 — an indispensable accompaniment to his canonisation.)[7] Commentators with contrary political agendas differed sharply about both Mill and the nature of liberalism, but that he was 'the godfather of English liberalism' was not in dispute.[8]

There has been a vast body of commentary on Mill since then, but when all allowance is made for its variety and interest, the pole stars of our view today are still those laid down in the 1950s. Seventy years on, he is 'regarded as a founding father of modern liberalism' and the text that brings together the 'main themes which unite his thought' is *On Liberty*.[9] Now this situation is extraordinary because, despite a wealth of work that is in varying degrees historical and contextual, it depends upon unexamined premisses: that there was such a thing as 'liberalism' in Britain in Mill's lifetime and that Mill identified himself accordingly. But there was not and he did not. The words 'liberal' and 'liberalism' derive from the French Revolution which, given profound differences in historical experience, institutional structure and political culture, could have no relevance in an English or British context. In Mill's day this was self-evident, but it is now largely lost to the sight of English-speaking historians. They have "rediscovered" the Revolutionary origins of liberalism, but its foundation in the group history of the Western Allies of 1945, Britain, France and America, remains unchanged.[10] However, if we return to the linguistic origin of 'liberal' as a political term in 1799, '*les idées libérales*', 'the ideas on which the French Revolution was founded', connoted a set of legal rather than libertarian ideas: the rights of man and written constitutions above all.[11] These were alien to any English tradition, whether that of the constitutionalist majority or the Benthamite and theoretical minority. Benthamite hostility to legally defined, Continental 'rights', which Mill shared, is notorious.[12] After 1832 there was a political party that came to be called 'Liberal', which was committed to reforming the ancient constitution and the parliament at its centre. However, veneration for the constitution and parliament was a bipartisan, national possession. Reform did not imply revolution. It did not require the constitution to be written and codified, and the core "ideology" of the English continued to be national, historical and to a large degree intuitive. The intellectual identity of the two main parties was otherwise very thin and there was no distinct body of ideas called 'liberalism' or 'conservatism'.[13] So 'liberalism' is an absentee from political and theoretical discourse in Britain prior to the "new liberalism" of the 1880s (a search for a new, post-constitutional party programme), unless it pointed to its alien, Continental root, or else was invoked as a loose label in isolated usages which never acquired discursive traction.[14]

It might perhaps be supposed that, as a consciously European thinker who considered France to be '*l'oeil droit du monde*',[15] Mill was an exception, a conduit for the importation of Continental liberal ideas and their assimilation to English tradition. But it is not so. His references to 'liberalism' are infrequent and of little consequence. 'Liberalism' means either Continental liberalism, where he may use the French term *libéraux* to mark out the point,[16] or else the doings of the British Liberal party, where 'Radicalism' the radicalism of the two Mills and their organ the *Westminster Review*, 'was the only attempt to give principles and philosophy to… Liberalism' (*A* I.132).[17] But at no point does he conflate or equate the two, since they are so obviously different. Mill's *Autobiography* is one of his more voluble texts in its references to 'liberalism', but this means just a half dozen disconnected instances embracing these various meanings.[18] Again, there is only a single reference to the 'Continental section' of 'European liberalism' in *On Liberty* (1859), which encapsulates the original Continental associations of the term and Mill's sense of Continental and English difference within an ultimate unity.[19] Given his loyalty to European unity, one can find an

exceptional usage which appears to resemble today's view. In *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865) 'the most fundamental doctrine of liberalism' is not unlike the central doctrine of *On Liberty*: '"the absolute right of free examination or the dogma of unlimited liberty of conscience"'. However, this is a quotation from Comte and the context is French. Thus it involves questions of '*legal* restraint' quite as much as the '*moral* right' that interests Mill here, and this 'fundamental doctrine' is the property of 'the so-called liberal or revolutionary school'.[20] Mill also agrees with Comte that implicitly "illiberal" intellectual hierarchy and authority has its rights: 'All this is, in a sense, true'.[21]

So we reach the paradoxical situation today where there is a wealth of discourse about Mill's liberalism on the part of commentators and practically none in Mill citation. This may not matter to theorists, but it is a transgression of one of the most elementary rules of method in the history of ideas: respect for the use and significance of language in its historical forms. And if Mill did not regard himself as a liberal in a meaningful sense, then the centrality of *On Liberty* to his oeuvre also lapses, since no other justification of this assumption has ever been presented. So the identity of the historical John Stuart Mill remains an mystery. As one historian of ideas has observed: 'Of all the canonical political thinkers, John Stuart Mill is perhaps the one who has proved [most] resistant to the contextualist method. There is a vast literature on Mill … but there has hitherto been no historically grounded study of his thought'.[22]

The best defence of this situation is that Mill, a whole Mill, is indeed difficult to grasp. Without *On Liberty* or "liberalism" his thought has no clear centre and he ceases to be a known quantity. Nor should we suppose that his thinking was necessarily representative. Often it was not. Some of his views are as unusual as the situation he was born into, or else, as in the case of *On Liberty*, they were mistaken by contemporaries as such. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Mill enjoyed an evident intellectual centrality in his day. This is most obviously reflected by the range of his thought. It has a panoramic quality which displays with unique clarity the possibilities for political, economic, ethical and social theory in Britain in the years c.1830-50. It is as if Bentham, Ricardo and James Mill had been rolled into one. It might be said that there is a weak link here. The final Book of his *System of Logic* (1843) accepts that, in principle, there could be a 'general Science of Society' which would describe both the historical evolution and the internal cohesion of 'States of Society'.[23] However, this was not a current but a future possibility, something for 'the next two or three generations of European thinkers', and Mill did nothing to advance the project in another 30 years of active life.[24] So in regard to social theory he is a Moses: he stands on the threshold of systematic sociology but does not embark upon it. Might this not mean, then, that he is primarily a political and individualist thinker who has no substantial contribution to make to social thought ? Yet as we shall see, this view is mistaken. He *is* a social thinker, albeit of a most original and unusual kind, though this is a possibility that readers today usually fail to register, with the exception of his 'liberal socialism'.[25]

He is also the closest thing there is to a focal point in the networks of British intellectual life outside the constitutionalist archipelago: a pronounced Francophile who prided himself on his Goethean 'many-sidedness' (*A* I.171).[26] In the first instance this derived from the accident of his birth into the heart of an intellectual aristocracy. He also had a unique ability to shoulder and develop this extraordinary legacy in his maturity, something which no-one else in his generation could. (George Grote is an obvious contrast here.)[27] Thus he is variously the editor and intellectual leader of the *Westminster Review*, the journal of the philosophic radicals (1834-40) (*A* I.221); the author of major theoretical texts in *Logic* and *Principles of Political*

Economy (1848) which became standard in British university education; and then the creator of a set of tracts half-way between the book and the review essay, of which *On Liberty* is the most famous. The tracts were designed to be read and, together with the *Principles*, they enjoyed a measure of success beyond Mill's expectations, being rather at odds with the gloomy estimate of British philistinism on which *Liberty* is founded.[28] So if we wish to understand (for example) why the radicals created no meaningful alternative to constitutionalism in political theory, or what was the situation of social theory in Britain prior to the new epoch inaugurated by Herbert Spencer (whom Mill generously supported), he is *sans pareil*.[29]

Both these features – the range of his ideas and connections – suggest the essence of Mill's identity: his pluralism. He mocked the 'demand for "unity" and "systematization"' in theory, whether in Benthamite or Comtean form, insisting that 'there is no necessity for a universal synthesis'.[30] It was a view he was prepared to substantiate theoretically, by expounding an evolutionary conception of the development of scientific knowledge as piece-meal and cumulative, but it was also a personal preference.[31] Thus the nearest he ever came to a systematic exposition of his views came in the essays on 'Bentham' and 'Coleridge' (1838-40). These were planned as a dual presentation in support of a dualist view: 'that in every one of the leading controversies, past or present, in social philosophy, both sides were in the right in what they affirmed, though wrong in what they denied'.[32] When Mill insisted on the need to defend 'opinions favourable to democracy and to aristocracy, to property and to equality, to co-operation and to competition… to sociality and individuality, to liberty and discipline', he was giving a recognisable description of polarities in his own thinking.[33] Nor did he content himself with mere duality, since it was evident that 'no whole truth is possible but by combining all the fractional truths' in their multiplicity, regardless of the cost incurred thereby: 'A man of clear ideas errs grievously if he imagines that whatever is seen confusedly does not exist.'[34] Note, too, that Mill's principal form of expression lay in essays on single subjects written for periodicals, despite his doubts about the value of this format: 'the writings by which one can live, are not the writings which themselves live' (*A* I.85 cf. 95).[35] His late tracts were a more weighty version of this format, whatever his doubts, and for this reason he could accept in 1869-70 that his principal bequest to posterity would 'likely' be *On Liberty*, 'a kind of philosophic text-book of a single truth' (*A* I.259).[36] But still it was only a single truth while his self-descriptions remained obstinately plural: 'My own strength lay wholly in the… region… of theory, or moral and political science', which manifested itself in a series of individual 'forms… whether as political economy, analytic psychology, logic, philosophy of history, or anything else' (*A* I.197).

Still the term 'philosophic' points to a broader foundation underlying Mill's 'fractional truths', and it suggests a label for his activities which, unlike liberalism, is historical: 'philosophic radicalism'. Now this was Mill's own invention but, as in the case of liberalism, our understanding of language is deficient and so we have to retrieve the meaning of the phrase. It was popularised by Elie Halévy c.1900 and his usage has remained standard.[37] There would have been some justification for making it into a label for a broadly conceived intellectual movement that began with Bentham and climaxed with John Mill, but Halévy supposed that it centred on Bentham and was terminated by his death in 1832. This was a mistake. In fact 'philosophic radicalism' was coined by Mill in an obituary of Bentham with the aim of showing 'that there was a Radical philosophy, better and more complete than Bentham's' — his own (*A* I.221).[38] It was thus a counter and successor to an earlier label, the consciously Benthamite and partisan label of 'utilitarian', which Mill had adopted as a title for the discussion group, the Utilitarian Society, that he founded in 1823 (*A* I.81-3).[39]

The ‘philosophic’ half of ‘philosophic radicalism’ is of course an intellectual description, but ‘radicalism’ indicates there was also a political component. The context in 1832 was not merely the death of Bentham but the passage of the “great” Reform Act, a measure so sweeping that it appeared to create space for a new radical politics.[40] So while the phrase allowed for varying degrees of emphasis as between intellect and politics, Mill’s recorded usages in the 1830s carry a more political weighting: ‘philosophic radicals… are those who in politics observe the common practice of philosophers’.[41] However, by 1840 the prospect of an independent radical politics was seen to be vain. Two-party and Liberal politics were asserting themselves and so Mill’s use of the label fades. When John Chapman suggested in 1851 that a re-founded *Westminster Review* be identified with the cause of ‘philosophic Reform’, it evidently reminded him of his bygone usage and he dismissed it: ‘I think this a bad phrase. “Philosophic Reformers” is a worn-out & gone by expression; it had a meaning twenty years ago.’[42] And yet the phrase did not die, because Mill made prominent use of it in the *Autobiography* drafts of 1853-4 and 1861, and this is what made it known to Halévy and posterity. It first appears there as a label for the intellectual group round his father in the mid-1820s, although he points out that it was a later coinage (*A* I.107, 132-3). Subsequent usages relate to the post-1832 period as one would expect (*A* I.202-3, 206-9, 221), but these too include an admission that there could both an ‘old’ and a ‘new’ (post-1832) philosophic radicalism even if the latter was the pure state (*A* I.208-9).

‘Philosophic radicalism’ does not create a neat box into which we can fit Mill, but it is revealing for that reason. The only intellectual description he was prepared to accept was the loose one of ‘philosophy’, consistent with dispersed or plural nature of his oeuvre, and the only political one was ‘radicalism’. ‘Liberalism’ does not feature. While Mill the journalist made use of all the various party-political labels that were current in his lifetime, what lay behind these fluctuating badges of loyalty was a more fundamental division: between ‘“natural Radicals” and “natural opponents of Radicalism”’ or Conservatives. Thus the Liberal party was caught in no man’s land. The Reform coalition of 1831-2 could perhaps be described as ‘the whole Liberal party’, but it was the Whigs who were the ‘real Liberals’, if there was any reality in their middle position.[43] ‘Philosophic radicalism’ also reminds us that, because his thought was linked to a current political agenda, most of his works are not pure theory and it is a mistake to take them as such. The *Logic* is the one exception, and even this was designed to provide what Mill hoped was an intellectually unshakable foundation for his political commitments. However, the principal interest of ‘philosophic radicalism’ here is intellectual. It shows both that his thought had roots in the generation of his father and Bentham, but also that he sought to transcend those roots.

The best guide to Mill’s intellectual profile will always be his *Autobiography*, a work which sometimes receives a bad press because its true character, as a peerless exploration of his intellectual history, is short on human interest. However, for the historian it is the clearest possible indication that the methods of intellectual history are authentic and appropriate. From it we know that the source of Mill’s distinctive pluralism was his father, James, not the systematiser Bentham.[44] James was the intellectual co-ordinator who aligned his own interests with those of Bentham in law and ethics and Ricardo in political economy. He knew them personally and worked with them as an intellectual co-adjutor and promoter: he is like Engels to Marx, but twice over.[45] It was a nexus of ideas without parallel in British intellectual history, and he was able to pass it on to his son by means of a uniquely personal participation in his education. (He also provided him with a plan of life in the form of employment at the East India Company, which provided a balanced mix of income and

sufficient free time for intellectual work.) The ability of the son to enter into this bequest was indeed exceptional, but the modern tendency to sideline his education as an inhumane prelude to his "mental crisis", and so to be passed over, is a mistake. He believed in education just as profoundly as his father did, and this is the entrance portal which defines his *Autobiography*, a history of lifelong 'mental progress' (*A* I.229).[46] It is true that the son drew an implicit distinction between his education and what he perceived to be his father's adherence to Benthamite 'system' in politics, and this must be considered (*A* I.169). But the fact remains that, if we ask after the younger Mill's intellectual profile and identity, the conventional description of him as a modified Benthamite is misleading: he was a thorough-going Millite. Out of a regard for original intellect, John Mill promoted the idea of an intellectual tradition centred on Bentham: both by his studies of Bentham, however critical, and lifelong usage of the Benthamite terminology of 'utility', even though this meant 'utility in the largest sense', a sense which 'stretches its meaning to the point of vacuity'.[47] But still he lamented the fact that his father was 'so little remembered', for 'he was anything but Bentham's mere follower or disciple'(*A* I.213).[48] He allowed that '[Bentham] is a much greater name in history. But my father exercised a far greater personal ascendancy' — that is, over Mill himself and the group of philosophic radicals prior to the father's death in 1836. 'Their mode of thinking was not characterised by Benthamism… but rather by a combination of Bentham's point of view with that of the modern political economy [of Ricardo], and with the Hartleian metaphysics' (*A* I.105, 107). Such was the authentically plural legacy of James Mill.

John Mill's high estimate of his father's importance was maintained throughout his life.[49] However, the *Autobiography* also tells us that education alongside his father was succeeded by a complex process of intellectual adjustment which, taken at its fullest extent, spans the years 1826-31, with its central episode concentrated in 1829-31. It was, he said, 'The only actual revolution which has ever taken place in my modes of thinking' (*A* I.199) and there is no reason to doubt the truth of this judgement. (That our respect for intellectual history is weaker than his is evident when commentary habitually ignores, or at best marginalises, this fundamental proposition.)[50] He did indeed speak of a 'third period… of my mental progress' (*A* I.237), inaugurated by his partnership with Harriet Taylor after 1849, but this was above all a change in the form and expression rather than the substance of his ideas. Thus there is no idea in the "late" texts from *On Liberty* (1859) onwards that cannot be found in draft in 1829-33. Furthermore, the intellectual 'revolution' he describes was plural ('modes of thinking') and regardless of the disagreement with his father in regard to politics, it was not a severance: 'All my new thinking only laid the foundation of these [early opinions] more deeply and strongly, while it often removed misapprehension and confusion of ideas which had perverted their effect' (*A* I.175). In short, the mature Mill can only be understood through his original formation, and this means his father above all.

This continuity then links him to the wider continuity of British thought in all its branches, a continuity which stands in stark contrast to the rupture created on the Continent by 1789. John Mill (b.1806) is evidently a 19th century thinker, but his greatest debts to named authors are to 18th century Englishmen: David Hartley (b.1705) and Jeremy Bentham (b.1748). (Herbert Spencer reveals an analogous context.) But there is also a substantial indebtedness to 18th century Scottish culture ("the Scottish Enlightenment"). His father (b.1773) was a late enlightenment thinker, who passed on a firm belief in a philosophically grounded history ('the principles of human nature'), and a set of recognisably Scottish traits: a keen interest in India, in education, a staunch moralism at odds with both David Hume's scepticism and the ethics of English utilitarianism, while couching some of his most important theoretical statements in the form of articles for the Edinburgh-based *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Dugald

Stewart, under whom James Mill had studied at Edinburgh, was the most important single source here.[51] However, the particular influence of Stewart (as distinct from his representative qualities) is modest at best, and James Mill's principal bequest was that he carried the unionist commitment of the Scottish Enlightenment authors to its logical end-point: by settling in England and assimilating the currents of thought he found there. (Smith and Hume both spent extended periods in England but they never settled or sought long-term employment there.)[52] Besides Hartley and Bentham this includes Ricardo, who trumped Adam Smith. So while John Mill would be much interested in national character, Scotland played no part in it. The only character he considers within the island of Britain is the English one, whereas 'the Scottish Highlander' is dismissed as an irrelevance.[53]

II. Starting Points

Since Mill's identity was primarily determined by intellectual bequest, we shall chart his thought across the thematic strands that made up his education: beginning with early foundations (logic, history), false starts (Benthamite ethics), and those areas where continuity was most prominently maintained (political economy and psychology), before moving on to his assertions of independence (politics, intellectual hierarchy).

His 'more advanced' education (from the age of 12) 'commenced with Logic' (*A* I.21).[54] This was an enthusiasm of his father's – he considered writing a school book on the subject[55] – and his son found nourishment in a range of authors. For example, Bentham. However, what was important here was not the idea of utility, but Bentham's mode of reasoning, with its remorseless linguistic and logical destruction of 'fictitious entities': 'He introduced into morals and politics those habits of thought and modes of investigation, which are essential to the idea of science… It was not his opinions, in short, but his method, that constituted the novelty and the value of what he did'.[56] So an apparently traditional, school subject was also a contemporary one, and when Mill was just 20 years old, he had 'formed the project of writing a book on Logic' (*A* I.125). Here, rather than in Comte, is the root of the *System of Logic*, the most purely theoretical work he ever wrote and the only systematic foundation for his thinking as a whole. Book V of the final work was entitled 'On Fallacies', is an evident homage to Bentham's *Book of Fallacies* (1824), though Mill also nurtured an enduring loyalty to Plato's dialogues as another tool whereby 'the man of vague generalities is constrained either to express his meaning to himself in definite terms, or to confess he does not know what he is talking about' (I.25).[57] However, he would develop his conception of the subject far beyond Bentham and Plato. Not unlike Hegel, Mill recast traditional, static, deductive logic in progressive, historicist form; but without this early training, the singular priority he attached to logic could not have existed. As he wrote in 1831, 'If there is any science which I am capable of promoting, I think it is the science of science itself, the science of investigation — of method.'[58]

Another general feature of his education was that it included large amounts of philosophical history, a subject wholly alien to Bentham. This included self-selected readings of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon and John Millar's *Historical View of the English Government* (1787/1803), and climaxed with his father's *History of British India* (1817).[59] In later life he 'still [thought] it, if not the most, one of the most instructive histories ever written', 'an important chapter in the history and philosophy of civilization', where 'civilization' was a synonym for 'society' in historical motion.[60] As with logic, Mill's ideas about history would be much enlarged by the revolution in his ideas c.1830, but what he learned now was essential: that history had an ahistorical, philosophical grounding in 'the laws of human nature'; and that the 'critical' and

accurate establishment of a body of historical knowledge, 'real facts', consciously aligned with those laws, was an indispensable addition to positive knowledge as a whole. In his father's words, 'As all our knowledge is built upon experience, the recordation [*sic*] of the past for the guidance of the future is one of the effects in which the utility of the art of writing principally consists', and here is an origin for the son's somewhat different priority: 'looking far forward into the future history of the human race'.[61] The father also anticipates the son at a central point when he observes the interaction between historical particularity and theoretical universality: 'the historian requires a clear comprehension of the practical play of the machinery of government … so he may correctly appreciate the counteraction which the more general laws of human nature may receive from [its] individual or specific varieties'.[62] To be sure, the contrasts that interested James Mill were those between the Hindus, the Mohammedans and the British rather than within European modernity, and this weakness is evident in his summary reduction of history to 'experience' and the *a priori* springs of human action in the article or 'Essay on Government' (1820) for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.[63] But still the son's axiomatic belief in a minimum of philosophical uniformity made manifest in a wide variety of historical forms, originates with his father.

Alongside such general traits there is a set of subject areas that remain lifelong foci. The first to consider is ethics, because its initial impact was so prominent. In 1821-2 James Mill gave his son Étienne Dumont's three volume digest of Bentham, *Traités de Législation* (1802), as an accompaniment to legal study. Now James Mill's interest in law is easily overlooked, but law reform is an obvious foundation of his alliance with Bentham and had he not secured a position at the East India Company, the proposed successor project to the *History of British India* was 'a History of English Law'.[64] (Once he took up official employment he confined himself to writing the advanced school books on political economy and psychology.) But his son (famously) made something quite different out of Dumont: 'The "principle of utility"' – the greatest happiness principle which underlay Benthamite ethics – became 'the keystone which held together the detached and fragmentary component parts of my knowledge and beliefs… I now had… a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy' (*A* I.69). John Mill was even (as we saw) moved to propagate the term 'utilitarian' as a 'banner' of allegiance by founding the Utilitarian Society, a discussion group.[65] It was a first assertion of independence in the wake of his year abroad in France (1820-1), and the one time in his life that Mill (aged 16) was seduced by the idea of a unitary intellectual system.

But this commitment was brief. Bentham the author (as opposed to Bentham the family friend) arrived at quite a late date in Mill's education: that is, after his introductions to logic, history, psychology, and political economy, and after the point (c.1819) when the close personal relation between his father and Bentham began to wane.[66] So we should not be surprised if by the end of 1820s Mill was looking beyond Bentham's identification of a narrowly defined self-interest as the basis of a universal ethical scheme. It is true that his criticism of Bentham is most stark in his writings of the 1830s and that thereafter he moderated his tone.[67] But it was a question of tone only. As he stated in 1861, 'the substance of this criticism I… think perfectly just' (*A* I.225). To say, as he does in *On Liberty*, that 'I am the last person to undervalue the self-regarding virtues; they are only second, if even second, to the social' is still an outright repudiation of the foundation of Benthamite ethics.[68] His affirmation of belief in 'social' as well as selfish man was grounded in the view that it was not enough to consider 'the specific consequences of a class of acts', pain and pleasure; these must be situated as a component within 'the entire moral being of the agent' or '*character*'.[69] And with this he turned away from Bentham back to another component in his father's curriculum: Hartleian psychology.

The foundation underlying this repudiation was Scottish (or Presbyterian) moralism. Here (as noted) was another quality alien to Bentham which John Mill inherited from his father, with his 'exalted public spirit, and regard above all things for the good of the whole' (*A* I.105 cf. 47, 49, 109). Hence pronouncements such as that 'politics is not the entire art of social existence: ethics is a still deeper and more vital part'.[70] However, as Mill repeatedly insisted, 'morality itself is not a science, but an art', a realm of practice for social and political actors, not of theory.[71] His tract on *Utilitarianism* (1861) exemplifies this.[72] Once Mill had abandoned the unified Benthamite scheme, he had no *science* of ethics, only an eclectic and untheorised compound, which fulfils to a nicety his desire to see both sides of a question. Thus it was 'not necessary' when trying to define utilitarianism, 'to decide whether the feeling of [moral] duty was innate or implanted', and he had a deep dislike of Bentham's posthumously published *Deontology; or, the Science of Morality* (1834).[73] On the other hand, both sides, the selfish and the social, had to be represented. Benthamism could not be omitted and Mill generously chose utilitarianism as his label to advertise this.[74] (This sectarian label from the 1820s was reworked to show the relevance of the sectarian component within a non-sectarian scheme.) But it follows that, though they were of considerable public and polemical importance, his views on ethics were of little theoretical interest to him — a position that would conveniently align with the eclecticism of younger contemporaries who were theorists, such as Sidgwick and Spencer.[75]

The shift in theoretical focus from ethics back to psychology reflects the fact that the deposit of Mill's early education was most durable in the areas where his father's guidance was most clear-cut. Besides psychology the outstanding example was political economy. Having served as a pupil assistant while his father was writing his pedagogic *Elements of Political Economy* (1821), Mill then read the original: Ricardo's *Principles* (1817). Here again it was the logical clarity of Ricardo's thinking (the tripartite division between land, capital and labour) that stood out, and the association of 'logic and political economy' helps explain why Ricardo was so important to Mill as a theoretical statement which was deemed to render Smith's luxuriant *Wealth of Nations* obsolete (*A* I.31).[76] Now political economy is unique in that the transition in John Mill's thought in c.1830 left his early training largely untouched. His earliest original publications from 1824-8 are all in political economy,[77] just as his earliest idea for a book publication was the collection of *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions in Political Economy*, drafted in the midst of his intellectual transition in 1829-31. The title, with its implicit acceptance that there were some settled questions, indicates his intention was only to refine a previously established framework, not to overthrow it, and Mill was proud to assert in his *Autobiography* that elements of his economic thought had been incorporated into the 3rd edition of his Father's *Elements*, which appeared in 1826 (*A* I.125).[78] But in a wider perspective what was important was the foundation on which the preservation of continuity was based. For this was no simple conservatism. It rested on the entirely new logical and methodological foundation set out (famously) in the concluding essay in the collection, 'On the Definition of Political Economy' (revised in 1833).[79] So continuity was preserved at precisely the point when Mill's broader views were in transition.

After briefly noticing 'the vulgar notion' of Smith, Mill cites the definition of political economy 'most generally received among instructed persons', his father's: it 'informs us of the laws which regulate the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth.'[80] He then criticises this in the light of the more comprehensive perspectives he has recently acquired. The old definition does not place political economy within the circle of sciences as a whole; it does not trace it back to 'the moral and psychological laws' which determine 'the production

and distribution of wealth' (albeit Mill's conception of these laws derived from his father); it does not take account of the fact that the psychological imperative at work in economics, 'the pursuit of wealth', is only one among the much larger number within 'a state of *society*'; and so it does not take cognisance, as it should, of the wider '*laws* of society' that govern its historical evolution.[81] Such a formidable critique, one might think, would point to the abandonment of political economy as a separate study: surely it ought to be co-ordinated with a conception of society, as it is in Marx ? But Mill's conclusion is precisely the reverse. He notes that '"Political Economy" is not the science of speculative politics', where 'speculative politics' was a rubric for a comprehensive science which could also be labelled 'social science', the 'science of *political society*' or 'social philosophy'. It was only 'a branch' thereof.[82] But he holds that the limitation is beneficial. A comprehensive science that took account of all motives and their historical evolution could be envisaged, but it would be hopelessly complicated. By means of an artificially isolated inquiry 'a nearer approximation is obtained than would be otherwise be practicable to the real order of human affairs' and such was the case in those 'departments of human affairs, in which the acquisition of wealth is the main and acknowledged end'.[83] This yielded a practical benefit in that it permitted theoretically founded policy applications – the prescriptions of Ricardian political economy – that were far superior to the empirical hunches of ordinary politicians. So what was required was not a complete theoretical system, but 'a man who united the spirit of philosophy with the pursuits of active life', 'the practical philosopher'.[84] (Here is a variant on the language of philosophic radicalism.) Mill's strategy for political economy was unique; but it also reflected a constant view, that the only good theory was usable theory, and acknowledged theoretical or 'scientific' imperfection would be a recurrent feature in his oeuvre.

Mill hoped his essay might 'become classical',[85] and a continuing British tradition from Marshall to Keynes whereby economics remained the kernel of social theory shows that in effect it did. Its premisses foreshadow the arguments of the *Logic* regarding the nature and problems of any general or synthetic theory, but the tangible result was that the theoretical content of Mill's political economy would remain conservative and any "revolution" in ideas here is marginal. Thus the organisation of the later *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) follows his father's *Elements* quite literally. Books I-III (out of five) on production, distribution and exchange are identical with the first three chapters of his father's *Elements*, just as Book V on Government was a recognisable descendant of his father's fourth and final chapter on Consumption.[86] The one outright novelty was the short Book IV, 'Influence of the Progress of Society on Production and Distribution'. But though this imported a historical dimension and invoked the Comtean language of 'Dynamics' in contrast to the 'Static' perspective that governs the rest of text,[87] it did not subvert the remainder. Instead it led to a consideration of probable future progress that was still based on Ricardian categories: the tendency of profits to fall to a minimum leading ultimately to a non-progressive stationary state — a dimension that Ricardo himself envisaged and which Marx also treated in the unpublished third volume of *Capital* (1861-5).[88] So the framework of the book remained theoretically conservative throughout.

This does not mean that the practical applications of the *Principles* were unimportant. On the contrary, the political and policy returns on economic thought had been uniquely high in the post-1815 period; and in accordance with the prescriptions of his 1833 essay, Mill was also keen to present the *Principles* as a philosophic radical text: 'it invariably associates the principles [of the subject] with their applications'.[89] Yet their direct importance proved to be limited. What was historical but untheorised was, by its nature, mutable. The February Revolution of 1848 in France and with it the appearance of 'this new phenomenon termed

Socialism' – meaning socialism in a different guise from the Owenite 'co-operation' with which he was familiar – is an obvious illustration.[90] It caused a text first completed in December 1847 to be profoundly modified by the time of the 3rd edition of July 1852, especially in what it had to say about property (Bk. II c.i) and on 'The Futurity of the Labouring Classes' (Bk. IV c.vii). But even at this high point Mill recognised (with unconscious humour) that 'The only objection' to the realisation of a future socialist state to which he attached any great importance was 'the unprepared state of mankind in general, and of the labouring classes in particular; their extreme unfitness for any order of things, which would make any considerable demand on either their intellect or their virtue'.[91] He was always fascinated by the prospects of what he would revert to calling 'The *Probable* Futurity of the Labouring Classes' in later editions. So this chapter became an ever-expanding storehouse of empirical matter regarding the prospects of 'co-operation', and it would be a central point of reference for readers such as Alfred Marshall and Beatrice Webb. Yet major objections, that is to say, the contradictions innate to Mill's many-sided world-view, remained. For example, he held that the higher, intellectual progress of humanity depended on the material liberation supplied by a more equitable distribution of property, but he could not conjecture what the future of private property might be.[92] This goes hand in hand with a continuing respect for the self-regarding virtues (as we have seen), as well as a profound libertarian commitment to competition.[93] The lament in *On Liberty* that 'There is now scarcely any outlet for energy in this country except business' does not suggest that Mill was going to take up money-making; but still he found it preferable to the conformism and stagnation he identified in intellectual and political life.[94] He might declare that his and Harriet Taylor's 'ideal of future improvement… would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists'; but what sort of ideal was it when 'We had not the presumption to suppose that we could… foresee' the future ?[95] So for readers to view the *Principles* as Ricardianism eked out only by what Marx called 'mindless syncretism', was – if we strip away the caustic – not unreasonable.[96]

The larger point is the *Principles*' continued adherence to the tunnel vision laid down in 'On the Definition of Political Economy': the 'subject is Wealth' and nothing else.[97] Of course, it is evident from a stream of utterances elsewhere, ranging from a survey such as 'Civilization' (1836) to the single-issue texts after 1859, that Mill is not a materialist, but that he looks to the wider diffusion of property to permit the liberation of intellect and character, which he believes to be the motor and embodiment of human progress.[98] Yet such issues only appear in the most fleeting form here, as for example in a paragraph where Mill anticipates the arguments of *On Liberty* and prefers 'individuality of character' to the uniformity he associates with communism, since that is 'the mainspring of mental and moral progression'.[99] However, at no point is the interface between property and the ideal sphere presented as a subject for systematic discussion, and one does not need to be Marx to view this as a very damaging renunciation. Instead political economy remains in the ghetto Mill carved out in 1831/3. It is even a retreat from his father's loose pluralism based on 'the principles of human nature', in that it consciously upholds fragmentation or specialization as an offset to his widening intellectual horizons after c.1830. We shall come back to this below (§.V).

III. Psychology and Character

Still the ghetto of political economy was a solitary case, which may be counterposed to the universalism of his conception of psychology. The origin of his interest here is identical in form to that in political economy: he served as a pupil assistant to his father prior to his writing an advanced schoolbook, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829). So

the intellectual continuity that resulted is just as great, yet the form it took was entirely different. James required his son to 'study what he deemed the really master-production in the philosophy of mind, Hartley's *Observations on Man*' of 1749 (*A* I.71): this was the work he wished to present in modern form. Amidst the cornucopia of his early education John Mill estimated this as second only to Dumont's digest of Bentham, and the estimate rose as Bentham's star waned. For the rest of his life he would regard Hartley's associationist psychology (the idea that sense-perception and external 'circumstances' generate associated ideas) as the foundation of all correct, empirical psychology, in contrast to the fictitious entities postulated by idealist or "intuitionist" philosophy such as an innate 'moral sense' or human 'spirit'. The principle of association was 'universal' in that it supplied the elementary foundation of all human behaviour: 'the groundwork of all other philosophy must be laid in the philosophy of the mind'.[100] For this reason Mill considered that what were conventionally called the 'moral sciences' (in contrast to the physical ones) were more properly called 'psychological',[101] and psychology would be a lifelong presence in his work: most explicitly in the *Logic* (1843),[102] *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865), and the new edition of his father's *Analysis* which he caused to be issued in 1869.

These testimonies of esteem must be taken at their full extent. Hartleian psychology gave Mill an alternative to Benthamite utility. It adhered to the language of pains and pleasures that was routine in 18th century England, but rose above Bentham's self-centred perspective. When he turned away from Benthamism at the end of the 1820s, what he put in its place (as noted) was the idea of integral 'character' and this he attributed to Hartley: 'his fundamental doctrine was the formation of all human character by circumstances' (*A* I.109-111). However, character was really Mill's innovation and an extremely important one.[103] Hartley's six classes of intellectual pleasure rose up beyond self-interest to 'sympathy', and the highest of all was an empirically grounded 'moral sense', but still this was a disaggregated scheme like Bentham's. He had no category of 'character' and Mill as a careful reader of texts undoubtedly knew this.[104] Even so, he deduced his idea of character from Hartleian premisses: the operation of circumstances or experience and the associations they created. Furthermore, he never attempted to say what character *was*, other than a miscellany of 'opinions, feelings, and… habits'.[105] Character was not something positive or identifiable as it is conventionally understood; it was an open space, and this was surely the heart of his belief that he was only developing Hartley rather than altering him. But of course he did so for his own ends. Since circumstances and associations were infinitely various then, in principle, character too was various. This was a key desideratum which (famously) he celebrated in the chapter on 'individuality' in *On Liberty*. 'Individuality' after all meant 'individuality of character', and his plea for this was a plea for 'the importance, to man and society, of a large variety in types of character' (*A* I.259).[106] Furthermore, 'character' was placed in a relationship of continual 'reciprocal action' with surrounding and ever-changing 'circumstances'.[107] So all social phenomena including character were 'eminently modifiable', which in turn opened up 'the consequent unlimited possibility of improving the moral and intellectual condition of mankind'.[108] Here we see why Mill was so concerned with character and why his conception of it was so open. It was both the channel and an engine of progress.

However, a difficulty remained. A character of unlimited possibility required a psychological motive force. In this respect Mill's 'character' was apparently conventional, as was his motive force: free will. Hence an epigram he derived from Thomas Carlyle: 'A character' in the fully developed sense 'is a completely fashioned will.'[109] But here he stepped outside the Hartleian framework and this posed a problem. Hartley had explained the psyche through two simple and universal factors standing in a causal relation: external circumstances and the

mental principle of the association of circumstances with ideas. Mill himself found the principled nature of this scheme deeply attractive: it was 'a real analysis', a causal analysis, and not a set of 'verbal generalizations' or incomplete 'gropings' such as were found in the psychologies of Condillac and Locke (*A* I.71). But it left no room for free will. Hartley himself had seen the difficulty and felt obliged to apologise for it. It was only once he had traced out the workings of circumstance and association (he said) that he realised that this was a 'Doctrine of Necessity… nor did I admit it at last without the greatest Reluctance'.[110] Mill could not agree with this; yet neither could he throw over associationism, and this caused him mental turmoil, since it cast the very foundation of human liberty into question (*A* I.175-7). (Whether we like it or not, Mill's account of his mental "crisis" is exclusively designed to illustrate his intellectual development. It is not an appeal to our sympathies.) This then gave rise to a chapter in the *Logic*, 'Of Liberty and Necessity', where he "resolved" this crux. He decided that associationism was not a 'doctrine of Necessity': a person's 'character is formed by his circumstances… but his own desire to mould it in a particular way is one of those circumstances'.[111] In this way (whatever we think of the quality of the reasoning) Mill rescued free will and progress while persuading himself that he had stayed loyal to Hartley.

Individual character was not the only kind of character that interested Mill. A central, yet less noticed component of his education was the 14 months he spent in France staying with Bentham's brother Samuel in 1820-1. It was a unique period of freedom from his father's tutelage, yet it was part of James' educational design. He himself had planned to go abroad for an extended stay in France, so that John could learn French, but this became impossible when he took up his post in the East India Company in 1819.[112] Still the substitute arrangement worked very well. Its first consequence was that Mill became a good French speaker. He began to read French history for the first time, and this coincided with the beginnings of a serious historiography of the French Revolution, such as Mignet's history of 1824.[113] The differences between French and English history were central to the process whereby the differences he observed *in situ* between French society and culture and that of the English took on significance in his mind. In 1820-1 (he observes) 'I could not then know or estimate the difference between [the English] manner of existence, and that of a people like the French… but I even then felt, though without stating it clearly to myself, the contrast' (*A* I.61).[114] The theoretical result was another major novelty: national character; a middle tier (*axiomata mediata*) between the psychological laws that defined individuals and the behaviour of humanity as a whole.[115] Strictly speaking it was just a postulate and no more, so its theoretical profile is somewhat shadowy. It first surfaces in Mill's major essay on 'Scott's Life of Napoleon' (1828). He pointedly asks 'what is meant by a *people*', while mocking Scott's assumption 'that whatever is English is best'.[116] He answers his question (though not at first in print) as follows: 'I am satisfied, that better consideration would shew, that different nations, indeed different minds, may & do advance to improvement by different roads; that nations, & men, nearly in an equally advanced stage of civilization, may yet be very different in character'.[117] Still the new idea was based on a familiar foundation. By appealing to 'character', Mill could suppose that national character, though an unknown, was a collective analogue of (allegedly) known individual character. Hence the proposal announced in the *Logic* in 1843 for a new 'sociological' science of 'ethology' and particularly 'Political Ethology': the science of 'national (or collective) character', which would be 'derivative… from the general laws of mind' supplied by Hartley.[118]

Variety of national character is central to any characterisation of Mill's thought, because, so far as social theory goes, it is a much more substantial indication than the diversity of individuals that pluralism in the expression of his ideas corresponded to a pluralist conception

of reality. He was, for example, a pronounced Francophile who after his consumptive illness in 1853-4 spent almost half his life in France, but this was complemented by an emphasis on English peculiarity quite sufficient to satisfy an orthodox constitutionalist.[119] Yet although he perceives the English as singular, he does not believe in singularity. On the contrary, he approves of diversity as a progressive principle, in nations as much as in individuals. A 'remarkable diversity of character and culture' was the obvious cause of the uniquely progressive nature of 'the European family of nations', and this diversity had been continually increasing throughout recorded history.[120] And of course his idea of 'nationality' had nothing to do with contemporary nationalism which, with good reason, he regarded as the very opposite of his own thinking: 'nationality in the vulgar sense of the term' was 'an unjust preference of the supposed interests of our own country' considered in isolation.[121]

But to think in "national" terms alone is a limited view.[122] For Mill's conception of nationality is one of the principal senses in which he was a *social* thinker: 'That… which alone enables any body of human beings to exist as a society, is national character'.[123] He is a consciously social or collective thinker, yet one who found great difficulties in moving beyond an individualist framework. The tension between these two perspectives is a thread that runs throughout his writings after the *Logic*. Great credit is due to modern scholars who have begun to explore this neglected subject, but they have assumed that Mill's individual and collective characters are not merely analogous but continuous; thus that there is no problem or even question regarding their interrelation.[124] By implication he becomes an ancestor of the British "New Liberals" after c.1885 who practised a similarly easy assimilation of individualism and collectivism. But for Mill the relationship between individual and social thought was problematic. All the works that treat this question after it was first exposed in 1843 treat it differently, and with differing degrees of success. That Mill made an explicit distinction between individual and social thought is evident from his postulate of a separate science of ethology in the *Logic* as distinct from psychology. It is true that the laws of national and collective character derived from the same associationist base as those of individuals, but when Mill says that ethology includes 'the formation of national or collective character as well as individual',[125] this does not mean single individuals, but individuals '*en masse*' who conform to character 'types'.[126] There was both analogy and difference between these two tiers, and Mill's work after the *Logic* can only be understood in terms of the problematic relation between them.

Note, first, two general problems. Mill's understanding of social collectivities was extremely loose and his ideas about 'the nation' exemplify this. Because he is not a nationalist, when he uses the vocabulary of 'nationality' or 'nation' he does not mean a community defined by nationality, but any community: 'the members of the same community or state' who feel 'a strong and active principle of cohesion', and this comes in a great variety of forms.[127] In *Representative Government* (1861) he says that a 'nationality' has two principal defining features: a people or 'portion of mankind' must be united both by common sympathies and the 'desire to be under the same government'. He further observes that historically nations have only been formed 'through previous subjection to a central authority'.[128] This sounds quite clear – nationality means nation-state – and the fusion of social and political categories this reflects is fundamental. Yet the phrase 'portion of mankind' is open-ended, designed to cope with all historical eventualities. So while the focus on government is an important reminder that Mill is instinctively a political thinker, just as 'character' as a moral agency is prominent in a political context, a political basis to unity is not in fact *sine qua non*. Hence an alternative formulation: 'Every form of polity, every condition of society… had formed its type of national character'. For example, Athenians and Spartans each have a 'national

character', but so do Indians and Arabs (*sic*), and Germans and Italians before the creation of nation-states.[129] It is true that in these latter cases he supports political unification. Without it he conceives of the Germans as 'an essentially *subjective* people', and this underlies his comment to Marx's one-time comrade in arms Arnold Ruge in 1859: 'I am aware that my little book [*On Liberty*] is, generally speaking, as little needed in Germany as it is much here; citizenship and political activity are what Germany most wants'.[130] However, he also notes that Italian unification was only 'the final stage of [Italians'] transformation' into a nation, which considerably reduces its significance. Meanwhile despite his radicalism in Irish politics, he does not support an independent Irish state, but favours an 'admixture of nationalities' with the English under a single government.[131] So 'nation' can be equated with either polity or society, and in all their possible forms throughout history — to say nothing of the other possible formations of collective or group character outside the nation.

Then there is the problem posed by ethology, or rather its absence. As noted, the formation of a science of ethology was one of Mill's claims on the future. Correct understanding of the principles governing national character (he held) would open up immense possibilities for political reform based on principles far superior to the blind empiricism of 'common sense' which ordinarily characterised policy formation.[132] For this reason he insisted in the *Logic* that the laws of political ethology were 'by far the most important class of sociological laws'. However, they were as yet unknown: 'The causes of national character are scarcely at all understood, and the effect of [political] institutions or social arrangements upon the character of the people is generally that portion of their effects which is least attended to, and least comprehended.' For this reason the science had 'still to be created'.[133] But what was the significance of this apparent failure ? Mill says simply that 'The circumstances … which influence the condition and progress of society, are innumerable, and perpetually changing; and though they all change in obedience to causes, and therefore to laws, the multitude of causes is so great as to defy our limited powers of calculation.'[134] But the obstacle here (if that is what it was) is defined by the mind that sees it. Multiplicity of historical circumstances never daunted Comte or Spencer or Marx when they wished to frame social or sociological systems. Mill also insisted (as we saw) that the essence of character was that it should be 'eminently modifiable', which thereby opened up the prospect of unlimited progress.[135] So he already understood (to his own satisfaction) what character was, and the presence or absence of a finished science of collective character made no difference to this. Nor can we take seriously a complaint about the perpetual change in social circumstances, since this was what he *wanted*, whilst his emphasis on the infinite variety of circumstances similarly reflects his preference for pluralism and diversity over uniformity.

In fact Mill's interest in a future science of ethology was a secondary concern. In the history of the evolution of sociology, the admission that he could not establish a social science on this basis is important. But how much did the admission cost him personally ? Was it 'a fatal stumbling-block', a turning point in his life ?[136] It was not. Ethology may not have materialised, but Mill continued to argue on the basis that national and group character existed. He never doubted that, whether they were known or not, the laws of ethology existed, because the laws of psychology existed. The only reason they had not been established (as he stated in 1869) was due to 'unspeakable ignorance and inattention' and consequent want of study.[137] But while 'differences of character' remained an item on his and Harriet's list of subjects for possible future study,[138] there is not the slightest sign that he meant to establish those laws himself after he had renounced the attempt in the *Logic*. Yet the fact that they existed and would one day be established, licensed a continued interest in what concerned him most: the diverse varieties of national and collective character, and the

practical and political applications that might be derived. Even in the *Logic* he insists repeatedly that 'a degree of knowledge far short of the power of actual [scientific] prediction is often of much practical value', and notes that 'ethology' as a 'science… corresponds to the art of education'.[139] So despite the admission of a theoretical impasse, reflection on group character is a constant feature in his oeuvre after 1843. In particular in three of the tracts that dominate his 'third' and last phase after 1851: *Representative Government*; *On Liberty*; *The Subjection of Women*.[140] All these works pose problems, but there is no sign that they stem from the want of a trans-historical, scientific definition of group character. Let us consider them in this light.

It is not usual to view *On Liberty* as an English-national text, yet on the page its Englishness is self-evident: the frequent references to England, and to English locality and practices such as the Cornish assizes and the Old Bailey, cannot be mistaken.[141] On the other hand, Mill's frame of reference is in principle universal: to 'the nations of Europe', 'mankind', 'human development in its richest diversity', and the argument throughout is framed around universal theoretical categories.[142] The simple resolution of this contrast would be to say that the English matter is purely illustrative, and Mill makes some attempt to square the circle in this way. Having identified his subject as the social rather than political constraints on liberty, he notes that England is an outstanding example; but he quickly follows this with the familiar refrain that 'the tendency of all the changes taking place in the world is to strengthen society, and diminish the power of the individual'.[143] Yet reconciliation along these lines is hardly satisfactory. Above all, because the assumption underlying the idea of national character is precisely that 'all the changes taking place in the world' are *not* uniform in their tendency. They may ultimately lead to a common end, but their present-day working is founded on variety. So to support a general argument regarding the threat posed by 'society' as adverse to individuality and variety, Mill must rely overwhelmingly on a single society or nation: England.

In thinking about nationality the only modern nations to which he gave substantial consideration were Britain and France, with Germany a distant third.[144] As we have seen, they were practically opposites in his mind. The contrast is rehearsed at length in the drafts of the *Autobiography*, written either side of *On Liberty*: 'Among the ordinary English', he notes, 'the absence of interest in things of an unselfish kind… causes both their feelings and their intellectual faculties to remain undeveloped… reducing them, considered as spiritual beings, to a kind of negative existence.' However, in France and its neighbours there is a 'general culture of the understanding, which results from the habitual exercise of the feelings, and is thus carried down into the most uneducated classes… in a degree not equalled in England among the so-called educated' (*A* I.61 cf. 60). Here is the origin of the diatribes against England in *On Liberty*: 'this country [is] not a place of mental freedom'; 'The greatness of England is now all collective: [but] individually small'.[145] But it also reveals that the arguments of *On Liberty* were practically irrelevant to a French or German audience (as Mill admits in his foreign correspondence).[146] For this reason reference to France is absent from *On Liberty* until its close, when it briefly takes up the separate subject of governmental coercion of the individual.[147] There is also an implicit contrast with Germany as another home of intellect and individuality contained in the famous epigraph by Wilhelm von Humboldt, and this leads to a unique moment in the text where Mill accepts that 'The traditions and customs of other people… have a claim to [a person's] deference'.[148] However, he dismisses the idea that the English should learn from a foreign example, since the point of the variety of national character is variety, not the conversion of other nations.

Not only does the text wilfully ignore England's national peculiarity within a diverse European context, but it fails to address the relationship between 'nationality' or society and the individual in any adequate way.[149] At first sight society appears simply as an abstract and external 'other', the miscellany of all the possible external threats to individual liberty: 'the tyranny of the majority', 'mankind… collectively or individually', 'countries, sects, churches, classes, and parties', Puritans etc.[150] Hence the title 'Of the limits of the authority of society over the individual' (c.IV). However, the tract's principal, intellectual argument, 'Of the liberty of thought…' relies on a quite specific view of society based on a hierarchy of intellect. Mill stated that his principal concern was 'to make the many more accessible to all truth by making them more open-minded', where the source of truth came from 'an intellectual aristocracy of *lumières*'.[151] Everyone should use their 'judgement': this much is quite clear in the text.[152] However, there are 'ninety-nine in a hundred' who, 'on any matter not self-evident', that is, on the 'infinitely… complicated' questions of 'morals, religion, politics, [and] social relations', are 'totally incapable of judging'. So for the vast majority the best use of personal judgement was to learn to *trust* the few who were capable: 'It is not too much to require that what the wisest of mankind, those who are best entitled to trust their own judgement, find necessary… should be submitted to by that miscellaneous collection of a few wise and many foolish individuals, called the public.'[153] And this idea of an 'intellectual aristocracy', of 'the wisest of mankind', is very narrowly drawn. When Mill speaks of 'ninety-nine in a hundred' he means what he says. This benighted mass includes 'what are called educated men', 'belonging chiefly to the middle class'.[154] So the intellectual argument which lies at the root of *On Liberty* requires *both* liberty and authority based on a conception of intellectual hierarchy. However, the authoritative component, though undoubtedly present, receives no formal statement, and it is omitted when Mill refers to the text elsewhere (eg. *A* I.257-60). Since the primary appeal was to liberty – that everyone should be open-minded to individuality – the ultimate reason for open-mindedness, the need to respect intellectual authority, eluded ninety-nine in a hundred of his readers. They readily understood his emphases on the need for intellectual liberty, individuality and variety, even if they felt that they hardly needed defence since the danger of social tyranny seemed so remote. But there is no sign they registered his belief in a higher authority, or that his pleas for intellectual liberty are pleas on behalf of a very few, and so *against* the middlebrow reviewers and reviews who were responsible for these broadly affirmative responses. Drawing on more conventional and loosely drawn 19th century assumptions about social and intellectual hierarchy, they simply assumed that they were hierarchs, and so untouched by Mill's brickbats.[155]

On Liberty, like all the other late tracts, was a new species of philosophic radicalism. It combined theoretical statement and political engagement but in a single-issue format, in contrast to the broader focus of the major review essays of the 1830s such as 'Civilization', 'Bentham' and 'Coleridge'. But the theoretical cost of a narrowly focussed, polemical and practical presentation was higher here than before. When Mill described it as a 'text-book of a single truth' (*A* I.159), he was recurring to the language of 'one very simple principle' in the text, which in turn went back to his original desire to write something 'that will be read & make a sensation'.[156] But Mill's ideas were not simple or singular; nor had they changed. For this reason the earlier and more complete presentations of his views in 'The Spirit of the Age' (1831) and 'Civilization' (1836) are better guides to the full argument of *On Liberty*.[157] But since then the balance between philosophy and radicalism had shifted. Mill's sense of the 'philosophic radicals' as a group in the 1830s fell away to be replaced in the decade 1849-58 by the all-embracing presence of Harriet Taylor, 'who… reached her opinions by the moral intuition of a character of strong feeling' (*A* I.197). She is the dedicatee of *On Liberty* just as she was present at every stage of its composition, and hence the lop-sided, libertarian

presentation in the text with all its protests against English social myopia and conformism.[158] This sets it apart from *Representative Government* and *The Subjection of Women* which originated independently of her.[159] The weighted presentation of his views that Mill colluded in, has governed the reading of *On Liberty* ever since, and due to the centrality that is mistakenly attached to this text, it has in turn distorted our understanding of his thinking as a whole. There have of course been modern presentations of Mill as an elitist, but these have simply reinforced the consensus view of him as a unilateral libertarian, because they were driven by their own mid-20th century, political and anti-liberal agendas. And they too ignored the subtlety of Mill's grouping of liberty and authority, where authority rested on a voluntary foundation.[160]

The treatment of group character or what we call gender in *The Subjection of Women* has a quite different set of strengths and weaknesses. Simply to raise this subject pitted Mill against all conventional opinion, so the critique of convention pursued in *On Liberty* would have been pointless. His views here originate with his father's enlightenment belief in universal, ungendered principles of human nature, with an associated emphasis on women's intellectuality and distaste for their physicality (*A* I.109).[161] John Mill then encountered other voices in this tradition. First, William Thompson, whose *Appeal of One Half the Human Race* (1825), attacked the 'paragraph' (really sentence) in James Mill's essay on 'Government' stating that it was not necessary for women to have the vote. The Owenite Thompson was a friend of Bentham and James Mill, and John Mill was 'well acquainted' with him from their encounter at the Co-Operative (Debating) Society also in 1825 (*A* I.107, 129).[162] After this he read the Saint-Simonians c.1829 (*A* I.175).[163] However, there is no outward sign of him reflecting on the character of women as a group until he lists 'the differences between men and women' as a subject for ethology in 1843.[164] Like many theoretical novelties it raised problems. Yet the difficulty here was not that of reconciling the claims of group or social with individual character which dominates *On Liberty* and *Representative Government*; it arose from the differences between gender and nationality as types of collective character.

They are alike in some respects, of course. They are both collective bodies, which can be supposed to have collective character attributes, standing in reciprocal relation to sets of multiple 'circumstances' relevant to the groups in question: 'the diversities of education, occupations, personal independence, and social privileges', that Mill wishes to promote.[165] It is also true that all Mill's ideas about character revolve round an idea of progressive reform by means of the mobilization of intellect, and this idea appears in *Subjection*: 'For, what is the peculiar character of the modern world… ? It is, that human beings are no longer born to their place in life', as was historically the case for women, 'but are free to employ their faculties'.[166] (This was the 'age of discussion' to which we return below.) In this context he looked to recreate the marriage relation, whereby a mentally sterile relationship of patriarchal subjection would be replaced by a creative intellectual partnership of equals. However, in other respects the categories of nation and gender are quite different. There are only two genders, not a plurality, and Mill, far from celebrating diversity as he does in the national case, wishes to abolish it so far as possible in order to create a 'perfect equality' between men and women.[167] Furthermore, while he is confident he knows a good deal about the differences between a Frenchman and an Englishman, his central premiss in regard to women is that we do not know their characteristics as compared to those of men: are they at all different ? These premisses lead to the Janus-faced procedure in the text, which has long been recognised. First Mill seeks to remove 'the broad line of difference which [women's] disabilities create between the education and character of a woman and that of a man', and

supposes that if all such unnatural distortions were removed there would be 'no radical difference… or perhaps any difference at all'.[168] However, the text then reintroduces the idea of difference based on 'natural' capacity. Drawing avowedly on the foundation of his personal relations with Harriet, he outlined a supremely intellectual contrast that amused contemporaries. Men, he suggested, have superior abstract and theoretical and speculative capacity, while women are more practical, direct and in this sense 'intuitive', which drew the quip that 'To him marriage was a union of two philosophers in the pursuit of truth'.[169] Yet the idea of natural difference is entirely opposed to the associationist psychology. Thus it is practically absent from his conception of nationality (or ethnicity), and may also be set against his statement that 'the English are farther from a state of nature than any other modern people'.[170]

This leads to further oddities. Mill focusses above all on marriage and marriage law as the source of women's 'subjection' and 'bondage', a fixation that originated in his longstanding relationship with Harriet Taylor outside marriage, and which they would continue to resent once they had entered into it.[171] Yet this perspective was as unusual as the rest of Mill's personal biography. He was dismissive of the philanthropic work of the unmarried women who made up the most vocal feminists of his day, because (he held) it tended to undermine the liberty of those they helped.[172] At the same time the idea that marriage lay at the root of women's problems had practically no contemporary supporters. It ran contrary to a centuries-old theme of reflection by women writers, who took their intellectual achievements within a traditional family context as testimony to their autonomy and agency.[173] Mill's famous claim that 'No production in philosophy, science, or art, entitled to the first rank, has been the work of a woman' reveals a starkly limited conception of women's achievements in this context, in that it assumes there was no 'originality of conception' in women's literature.[174] (Here was a whole intellectual world that was excluded from his educational curriculum and, regardless of his eccentric reliance on Wordsworth – 'the poet of unpoetical natures' (*A* I.153) – as a prop to his personal and theoretical psychology, there is not the slightest sign that he ever stepped outside the limit this imposed.) He further admits that the "law" centred on the promise to 'obey' in the marriage service (which was of no legal force and could be omitted), was probably of no practical consequence in 'a great majority' of marriages 'in the higher classes of England'.[175] Even sympathetic women readers could not understand why he was wasting time on a 'fancy picture'.[176] And although Mill stated quite forcefully in private that women should be allowed to separate from husbands in the case of failed marriages, he says practically nothing about divorce here:[177] not only because of the unpopularity of the idea and the recent passage of legislation in 1857, but because his own concern was to reform marriage, not to end it. Thus the one practical reform he focusses on is amendment of the law of coverture, whereby women's property on marriage transferred to their husbands. However, such a reform was unnecessary for the rich (as Mill recognised), since they were already protected by the use of legal settlements, and any deficiency was being rectified by parliament at the time the text was published (as reviewers pointed out). For male MPs the driving concern was consciousness of property, specifically of family property, not gender. Hence the Married Women's Property Act of 1870.[178]

The converse of the fixation on marriage was neglect of the substantial and practical reform agenda for women regarding the vote, education, or access to professions, subjects which, despite Mill's well-known support for franchise reform, are mentioned only in passing.[179] (However bizarre this may seem, it is an indication that the kernel of this text is theoretical, not political.) He is closer to the middle class feminism of his day when he admits that the conditions for working class marriages based 'not on property, but on earnings' were of less

interest, given his belief that intellectual independence could only be founded on material independence. So here he accepts that 'the common arrangement, by which the man earns the income and the wife superintends the domestic expenditure, seems… the most suitable division of labour.'[180] Working class wives were also, in his view, the only ones who had to reckon with the burdens of child-bearing and child-rearing, though he continued to uphold an intensely cerebral idea of marriage by insisting that this was a 'particular use of [the wife's] faculties.'[181] (Ca.1833 he had observed that for the middle class woman with servants, the mother should indeed "be" with the child 'but *this* does not take up *time*: it is not a business, an occupation' — a comment on Mill's alienation from his mother and siblings, rather than evidence of real knowledge of the lives even of middle class women.)[182] The end result was that *Subjection* links a utopian conclusion to proposals for reform that were absurdly limited: as if tweaking the law on marriage would lead to a 'doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity'.[183]

However, neither practical inconsequence nor any perceived theoretical deficiency in the *Subjection* can cancel its importance. This hinges on an elementary, yet easily neglected contextual fact: that it was a unique achievement. There was of course a large amount of private, periodical and literary reflection on these subjects in 19th century Europe and America, but *Subjection* stands alone in the history of social theory of this era as an original inquiry into women's identity as a social group.[184] The absence of any comparable text by a woman, even in a world where (according to Margaret Fuller) 'Good books are allowed [to women], with more time to read them' than men, and where Fuller's own rhapsodies mark a kind of intellectual summit,[185] is a striking testimony to its unusual perspective. Note similarly the isolation of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: a tumultuous *pièce d'occasion* that was then consigned to oblivion after its immediate revolutionary context passed. (Presumably Mill passes over her in silence because because of Wollstonecraft's doubtful morals, when he and Harriet were anxious to avoid any comparable suggestion of impropriety. But in any case the *Vindication* was of no theoretical use to him; and if he needed an enlightened starting point then James Mill had supplied it.)[186] Meanwhile the eminent male theoreticians who comment on this subject, subsumed women under alternative theoretical systems, constructed without regard for gender, as for example Comte;[187] August Bebel and a range of Marxist authors;[188] and Durkheim.[189] Even the less known William Thompson falls into this category. For though he cannot be criticised for adapting his ideas in instrumental fashion (unlike most of these authors), still he finds the true solution to women's problems in socialism.

Besides these thin streams of discussion, there is a much larger public silence on this subject which, whatever the difficulty of an argument from silence, is surely more important. Silence surely implied dismissal of the feminist case for most, but not all. Many who reflected on the position of women believed like Mill in gender *equality* in the public sphere: Max Weber is an obvious example.[190] However, they made a contrary inference to Mill: that, while one should support practical reform, to try to theorise a distinct female *identity* was a mistake and a potentially damaging one, since thinking about gender distinction was so dominated by ideas about patriarchy and separate spheres. There might be an alternative to this but Mill, by his own admission, could not say what it was. And this is surely a principal reason for the predominant silence on this subject for almost a century after the publication of *Subjection*.

Yet the book's peculiarity is also its intellectual distinction. Mill is like other male writers insofar as his arguments draw freely on categories he employs elsewhere in his thought: group character; the centrality of intellect to social progress; the importance of property;

competition as a determinant of women's roles in society (pointing them mainly but not exclusively towards marriage).[191] And this can sometimes lead to peculiar results, as for example, when (like Thompson) he seeks to assimilate marriage and child-bearing to the political economists' division of labour.[192] Even so, women are not being forced into an alien framework, because his principal categories of character and intellect are intentionally plural and open, and from the moment the novel idea of group character was posited in the *Logic*, Mill saw a place for women in it. In the history of theory *Subjection* is important: as a late expression of enlightenment universalism confronted by the alternative idea of gender distinction; as another example of how group character took him into social theory; and as a reflection of the freedom conferred by intellectual pluralism — a strength to offset the difficulties it raised. Like the *Logic*, *Subjection* displays a great confidence in the future of intellectual inquiry; but unlike the *Logic*, this confidence has been substantiated to an almost unimaginable degree. Nor was the text forgotten, and this too is a milestone, even if the occasion for its prominent reissue in 1912 was women's suffrage, a subject it practically overlooked.[193] When Mill is taken together with the much neglected Beatrice Webb,[194] it appears that Britain had the most developed feminist theory in either Europe or America before 1914. So we need not lament the absence of a science of ethology too much.

(To be continued.)

[*] Abbreviation: *CW*: *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto, 1963-91). My grateful thanks to Stuart Jones for reading this piece in draft and to Sam Moyn for his fruitful conversation.

1 Leslie Stephen, *The English Utilitarians* vol.iii *John Stuart Mill* (London, 1900). For the received categories of English thought at this date: Elie Halévy, *La formation du radicalisme philosophique* (Paris, 1901-4); A.V. Dicey, *Lectures on the relation between law and public opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1905); Ernest Barker, *Political Thought in England from Herbert Spencer to the Present Day* (London, 1915). Stephen's one reference to 'liberalism' is a treatment of Mill's relation to religious liberalism, meaning F.D. Maurice and Carlyle: iii.452-77.

2 Resp. Isaiah Berlin, *Freedom and its Betrayal* [radio lectures, 1952] ed. Henry Hardy (London, 2002), 52; Berlin, 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life' [1959] in *Liberty* ed. Henry Hardy (Oxford, 2002), 218. Some modern authors acknowledge this context, but without any critical agenda: Joseph Persky, *The Political Economy of Progress. John Stuart Mill and Modern Radicalism* (Oxford, 2016), xi-xiii.

3 Compare Samuel Moyn, *The Cold War and the Canon of Liberalism* (Oxford, forthcoming).

4 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life' was an afterthought, the occasional product of an invitation to lecture. But Berlin's message was consistent: Mill was 'not original': *Liberty*, 244, 250.

5 'Two Concepts of Liberty', *Liberty*, 211, 175.

6 'Introduction' (1963), *CW* XII.xvi.

7 Hayek edited *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor: their correspondence and subsequent marriage* (Chicago, 1951) and continued to play a role in the volumes of correspondence of the *Collected Works* edition: *CW* XII.vii-xi, xv-xxiv (1963). Note too his support for St. John Packe's *Life of John Stuart Mill* (London, 1954), xi-xiv. His first step in Mill scholarship, an edition of the article series, *The Spirit of the Age* (Chicago, 1942) was a false start. The approach there was critical and historical rather than biographical and canonical, and his view of Mill at this date as 'eclectic' rather than 'representative' was the opposite of his later one: 'John Stuart Mill at the age of twenty-five', ibid., vii.

8 Maurice Cowling, *Mill and Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1965/1990), xlviii. Cf. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Liberty and Liberalism: the case of John Stuart Mill* (New York, 1974).

9 Gregory Claeys, *John Stuart Mill* (Oxford, 2022), xvii, 117.

10 Helena Rosenblatt, *The Lost History of Liberalism* (Princeton, 2018); William Selinger, *Parliamentarism* (Cambridge, 2019). Rosenblatt greatly expands the cast of possible liberals, whereas Selinger adheres quite closely to the canon (Constant, Tocqueville, Mill) laid down by Berlin and Hayek. But neither challenges it.

11 On linguistic usage: *Le Diplomate*, Quintidi 25 Brumaire (15 November 1799) cit. Jörn Leonhard, *Liberalismus: zur historischen Semantik eines europäischen Deutungsmusters* (Munich, 2001), 132-3 cf. 133-5. (Rosenblatt's claim to offer 'a *word history* of liberalism' is honoured more in the breach than the observance: *Lost History of Liberalism*, 3.) See previously eg. François Mignet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* [1824] (Paris, 1827[4]), ii.298; Alphonse Aulard, *Histoire Politique de la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1901), 625, 720, 724, 753 etc. There is an approximation to this view deriving from Elie Halévy: that the term 'liberal' originated with the Spanish *liberales* of 1812. But while this is relevant to the term's importation into England, it is not the origin of the word 'liberal', though the idea remains widespread amongst English scholars: Halévy, *Histoire du Peuple Anglais au XIX[e] Siècle… 1815-1830* (Paris, 1923), 74 cf. David Craig, 'Origins of "liberalism" in Britain', *Historical Research* 85 (2012), 481; Duncan Bell, 'What is Liberalism ?', *Political Theory* 42 (2014), 693; Selinger, *Parliamentarism* (2019), 16.

12 Cf. Greg Conti & Cheryl Welch, 'The receptions of Elie Halévy's *La Formation du radicalisme philosophique*…', *Modern Intellectual History* 12 (2015), 211-6. Isaiah Berlin overrides this point in order to frame a consolidated European liberalism: 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life', *Liberty*, 218, 225, 235.

13 Robert Saunders, 'Parliament and People: the British Constitution in the long nineteenth century, 1800-1914', *Journal of Modern European History* 6 (2008), 72-87; P. Ghosh, 'Whig Interpretation of History' in ed. K. Boyd, *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing* (London, 1999), 1293-4; Joseph Coohill, *Ideas of the Liberal Party… 1832-1852* (Chichester, 2011); Norman Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics* (Oxford, 1965) cc.5-6.

14 James Fitzjames Stephen, 'Liberalism', *Cornhill Magazine* 5 (1862), 70-83, is a well-known example. It argued that there must be a new set of liberal ideas – hence 'liberalism' – to accompany the democratic franchise reform that (he supposed) the Liberal party would soon pass. This anticipated the discourse of the "new liberalism" of the 1880s, but at the time it was an isolated utterance. Stephen had no clear vision of what the future 'liberalism' might be and the essay found no echo.

15 To Alexis de Tocqueville 15 Dec. 1856, *CW* XV.

16 Eg. 'Scott's Life of Napoleon' (1828), *CW* XX.109.

17 References in this form are to the drafts of Mill's *Autobiography* [1853-4, 1861, 1869-70], *CW* I.

18 *CW* I.62-3, 78-9, 100-1, 102-3, 132, 172-3, 276.

19 c.1, *CW* XVIII.218.

20 *CW* X.303, 301, 313.

21 Ibid., 302.

22 Stuart Jones, 'John Stuart Mill: Law, Morality, Liberty', *Modern Intellectual History* 15 (2018), 879.

23 *System of Logic*, *CW* VIII.911. Compare 'On the definition of political economy' [1831/3], *CW* IV.320.

24 *Logic*, *CW* VIII.952.

25 Helen McCabe, *John Stuart Mill, Socialist* (Montreal, 2021), 12-17. Graeme Duncan is an exception from an earlier epoch: *Marx and Mill* (Cambridge, 1973), Parts III-IV. Of course titular recognition of Mill's "social" thought is frequent eg. Dale Miller, *John Stuart Mill: Moral, Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2010), Part III.
26 Cf. 'Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History' [1845], *CW* XX.259; *On Liberty* (1859), *CW* XVIII.252 etc.
27 See Mill to Carlyle 2 Aug. 1833, *CW* XII; William Thomas, *The Philosophic Radicals* (Oxford, 1979) c.9; ed. Kyriakos Demetriou, *George Grote and the Classical Tradition* (Leiden, 2014).
28 Compare Mill to Harriet Taylor 12 Feb. 1855 with Mill to G.J. Holyoake 2 March 1859, to Theodor Gomperz 31 March 1859, *CW* XIV-XV.
29 Herbert Spencer, *An Autobiography* (London, 1904), ii.118-22, 132-7, 490-3.
30 *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), *CW* X.336, 359.
31 *Logic* (1843), Book III c.xiv.
32 'Coleridge' [1840], *CW* X.123. Text of 1840.
33 *On Liberty* (1859), *CW* XVIII.253-4.
34 'Bentham' [1838], ibid., 94, 91.
35 Among other such testimonies: 'Civilization' [1836], including citation of 'Review of "Austin's Lectures on Jurisprudence' [1832], *CW* XVIII.133-5. He finds some justification in his father's essay on 'Periodical Literature', *Westminster Review* 1 (1824), 206-49, here 206-22; but overlooks the fact that James Mill is not criticising all reviews, only the majority, with the *Westminster* (in which he is writing) as an exception cf. [J.S. Mill] to *Morning Chronicle* 27 Dec. 1824, *CW* XXII.101-2, *A* I.95.
36 Compare 'Bentham': 'all writing which undertakes to make men feel truths as well as see them, does take up one point at a time… to make it sink into and colour the whole mind of the reader or hearer. It is justified in doing so, if the portion of truth which it thus enforces be that which is called for by the occasion': *CW* X.114.
37 'Introduction', *La formation du radicalisme philosophique I. La jeunesse de Bentham* (Paris, 1901), VI-X cf. *III. Le radicalisme philosophique* (Paris, 1904). Later historians, Joseph Hamburger, *Intellectuals in Politics. John Stuart Mill and the Philosophic Radicals* (Yale, 1965) and William Thomas, *The Philosophic Radicals* (1979), 2, 200-2, were much more correct in associating the term with John Mill. Even so Hamburger supposed that 'philosophic radicalism' began in 1820 (cc.1-2) and describes Mill as its 'last spokesman' (c.8), which was practically a license to continue Halévy's usage. As his title suggests, Joseph Persky's subject is 'modern radicalism'. Historically he has nothing to add to Halévy: *The Political Economy of Progress. John Stuart Mill and Modern Radicalism* (Oxford, 2016), 9.
38 The 1832 describes Bentham 'as the first name among the philosophic radicals', *Examiner*, 10 June 1832: *CW* XXIII.471. This is evidently a salute, yet 'the first' may be superseded in future. — Harriet Grote shared Mill's history and chronology in her essay *The Philosophical Radicals of 1832* (London: privately printed, 1866). In its public and "masculine" aspect this focussed on the fortunes of the philosophic(al) radicals in Parliament, specifically Sir William Molesworth and her husband, George Grote, in the decade 1832-41.
39 Compare Macaulay, 'those philosophers who call themselves Utilitarians, and whom others generally call Benthamites': 'Mill's Essay on Government', *Edinburgh Review* 49 (March, 1829), 159. Macaulay encountered the 'utilitarians' at a range of debating society venues from 1822 to 1828: *A* I.79, 131.
40 Because of the consensual and continuous evolution of British institutions, political historians have not registered the seismic impact of 1832, though contemporaries of all persuasions commented upon it. Angus Hawkins has the best modern account: *Victorian Political Culture* (Oxford, 2015) c.2.
41 'Fonblanque's England under Seven Administrations' [1837], *CW* VI.353. Note, too, a related invocation of 'neoradicalism' based on 'a utilitarianism which takes into account the whole of human nature not the ratiocinative faculty only', that is, of a John Mill variety: to Edward Lytton Bulwer, 22 Nov. 1836, *CW* XII.
42 9 June 1851, *CW* XIV.
43 'Reorganization of the Reform Party' [1839], *CW* VI.468, 467 resp.
44 On the father-and-son relationship see William Thomas, *The Philosophic Radicals* (1979) cc.3-4; *Mill* (Oxford, 1985) c.1.
45 For modern support of John Mill's high estimate of his father's role in getting Ricardo to write the *Principles*: Donald Winch, 'Introduction', *James Mill: Selected Economic Writings* (Edinburgh, 1966).
46 He also administers a sharp rebuff to those who dismissed his education as irrelevant: 'The reader whom these things do not interest, has only himself to blame if he reads farther…' *A* I.5.
47 Resp. *On Liberty* (1859), *CW* XVIII.224; Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in *Liberty* ed. Hardy, 226.
48 Cf. 'Bentham' [1838], *CW* X.97 where James Mill appears as one of the 'the able men who… have been regarded as [Bentham's] disciples', but who did not follow him in his narrowness; 'Whewell on Moral Philosophy' [1852], *CW* X.175 etc.
49 J.S. Mill, Preface to James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (London, 1869), xiii-xiv. An important supplement to the *Autobiography*.
50 Historically minded authors notice it, but they too re-shape it: eg. John M. Robson, *The Improvement of Mankind* (Toronto, 1968), Preface; Greg Claeys, *John Stuart Mill* (2022), 21, 51.
51 On Stewart: James Mill to Macvey Napier 11 May 1820, 10 July 1821 in *Selections from the Correspondence of the Late Macvey Napier* ed. Macvey Napier (London, 1879), 24, 27. John Mill then read Stewart: 'On the definition of Political Economy' [1831/3], *CW* IV.311 cf. *A* I.189-91. See also on John Millar below.

52 James Mackintosh was one of the first to settle in London (1788). Mill comes in 1802, Francis Horner in 1802-3, and Brougham in 1803, followed by a continual stream which includes McCulloch (1828) and Carlyle (1831). Literary authors such as David Mallet and James Thomson had done this as far back as the 1720s, but for them, unlike authors in the "sciences" and philosophy, there was an obvious commercial reason to do so.
53 *Considerations on Representative Government*, *CW* XIX.549. Despite a politically radical commitment to justice for Ireland, he remains a unionist there too: ibid., 550-1 cf. *England and Ireland* (1868), VI.519-26.
54 Modern scholarship here begins with Alan Ryan, *The Philosophy of John Stuart Mill* (London, 1970). This centres on a Newtonian and 'rational' interpretation of the *Logic* and Mill's ethics but, drawn by inexorable attraction, it concludes with an account of *On Liberty* standing beyond rules and rationality (c.13).
55 To Macvey Napier 11 Sept. 1823, pr. Alexander Bain, *James Mill* (London, 1882), 208-9. In fact he decided to treat psychology instead.
56 'Bentham', *CW* X.83. Compare *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* [1789] (London, 1970), 52n.c and 319 s.v. 'Fictions…'
57 Compare *On Liberty* (1859), *CW* XVIII.251; Antis Loizides, 'Taking their Cue from Plato: James and John Stuart Mill," *History of European Ideas* 39 (2013), 121–40.
58 Mill to Sterling 20-22 Oct. 1831, *CW* XII.
59 On Robertson, 'The British Constitution' [1826], *CW* XXVI.368, 383-4; Millar: 'Modern French Historical Works' [1826], *CW* XX.46, 51-2; Gibbon (eg) 'Carlyle's French Revolution' [1837], XX.134-6; Hume (eg): 'Brodie's History of the British Empire' [1824], VI.3-58, an authentic if juvenile diatribe. — On James Mill compare Callum Barrell, *History and Historiography in Classical Utilitarianism* (Cambridge, 2021) c.2. However, complexity of presentation tends to submerge readings of individual texts here.
60 Resp. *A* I.29 cf. 11; Preface to James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1869), xiv.
61 Resp. *History of British India* (London: Baldwin, 1817), I.648 cf. Preface, ix-x, xix; *Logic* (1843), *CW* VIII.929. Compare J.S. Mill, 'Scott's Life of Napoleon' [1828], *CW* XX.55-6, 58-60 with James Mill, Preface, x-xix.
62 *History of British India*, Preface, xix.
63 Written for the *Supplement* to the 5th edition of *Britannica* (1817-24), it was reprinted in a collection of Mill's articles, *Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, Liberty of the Press…* (London, 1825). Hence the familiar reference by readers who did not rely on the *Encyclopaedia*: the 'Essay on Government' (eg. *A* I.107).
64 To Macvey Napier 5 Aug. 1818, *Selections from the Correspondence of the Late Macvey Napier* (1879), 20.
65 *A* I.81-3. Law was a strand in John Mill's intellectual activities, but it was secondary, and so is relegated here. He distinguished between 'Legislation' (a term deriving from Dumont as well as from Bentham), concerned with the ends which laws should serve (utility or otherwise), and 'Jurisprudence', the examination of law as such: 'Austin's Lectures on Jurisprudence' [1832] *CW* XXI.51-60; repeated *A* I.69. His interest lay with 'Legislation', and after the brief period of Benthamite enthusiasm, he reverted to his father's position, that this, rather than ethics, was where Bentham's importance lay: eg. 'Bentham' [1838], *CW* X.100-4. Even so, legislation led back to ethics, though now it was a post-Benthamite ethics, since this was the real science of ends: ibid., 94-6 etc. His writings on jurisprudence are more marginal and largely derive from his personal connection to John Austin: cf. Philip Schofield, 'John Stuart Mill on John Austin (and Jeremy Bentham)' in ed. M. Freeman & P. Mindus, *The Legacy of John Austin's Jurisprudence* (Dordrecht, 2013), 237-54.
66 The intellectual biography of James Mill remains under-researched, and the welcome tendency to liberate him from the shadow of Bentham is of no help to us here: eg. Antis Loizides, *James Mill's Utilitarian Logic and Politics* (London, 2019), which omits law and Bentham as subjects. However, the obvious turning point comes in 1819. Mill took up his East India Company position and thereby became a government official. This set a limit to his life as a writer and thinker, and both of these changes separated him from Bentham. Bentham's new link to the wider intellectual world was John Bowring, a man with no intellectual credentials outside literature. They met in 1820 and their contacts developed rapidly thereafter cf. *A* I.93.
67 See most famously the essays on 'Bentham' and 'Coleridge' (1838, 1840) *CW* X.77-163.
68 *CW* XVIII.277
69 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy' in Edward Bulwer Lytton, *England and the English* (London, 1833), ii.321, 320.
70 *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), *CW* X.300.
71 'On the definition of political economy' [1831/3], *CW* IV.319; cf. *Logic* (1843), *CW* VIII.943.
72 Compare *Logic CW* VIII.951 n.*, added in 1865.
73 *Utilitarianism*, *CW* X.230. On *Deontology*: 'Bentham' [1838], *CW* X.90 cf. 95-6 on the 'Table of the Springs of Action'.
74 See eg. 'Whewell on Moral Philosophy' [1852], *CW* X.167-201.
75 Cf. Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (1851) etc; Henry Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (1874).
76 Compare on Smith, Preface, *Principles of Political Economy* (1847), *CW* II.xci-xcii; *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), *CW* X.305.
77 *CW* IV.1-192.
78 The *Autobiography* appears to suggest that his father benefited from ideas related to *Essays on Some Unsettled Questions*, but chronology makes it clear that the gain came from the essays of 1824-8: *CW* IV.3-180.

79 *CW* IV.230-1, 309.
80 Resp. *CW* IV.312, 313. Compare James Mill, *Elements of Political Economy* (London, 1821), 1.
81 'On the Definition of Political Economy', *CW* IV.314, 318-20 resp.
82 Ibid., 321, 321n.1, 334-5.
83 Ibid., 323.
84 Ibid., 335-6.
85 To J.P. Nichol, 17 Jan. 1834, *CW* XII.
86 After a brief demonstration 'That consumption is co-extensive with production' (§.3), it is confined to government taxation as a form of parasitic consumption (§§.4-15).
87 *CW* III.705.
88 Ricardo, Preface, *Principles of Political Economy* (London, 1817), iii.
89 Preface, *Principles of Political Economy* (1847), *CW* II.xci cf. *A* I.255-7.
90 'Vindication of the French Revolution of February 1848', *CW* XX.351.
91 'Preface', July 1852, *CW* II.xciii.
92 Loc. Cit.
93 Cf. Helen McCabe, *John Stuart Mill, Socialist* (Montreal, 2021), here 103-8.
94 *CW* XVIII.272. Repeated *Representative Government* (1861) XIX.421.
95 *A* I.238, 239. The first half of this declaration comes from 1853-4; the near contradiction that follows was added in 1861.
96 'Nachwort' [1873], *Capital* I, *Marx-Engels Werke* 23.21.
97 *CW* II.3.
98 'Civilization' [1836], *CW* XVIII.120-47. See too 'The Negro Question' [1850], *CW* XXI.91, 94.
99 *CW* II.209.
100 'Coleridge' [1840], *CW* X.121 cf. 125-30.
101 'On the definition of political economy' [1831/3], *CW* IV.316.
102 Book VI cc.2-3.
103 Stefan Collini was one of the first to raise the subject of Mill and character, yet his interest is not so much in Mill himself, as in using Mill as a focal point for a broader construction of British politics and culture: *Public Moralists* (Oxford, 1991), cc.2-4, 8 esp. So character is more a *datum* than an object of analysis.
104 David Hartley, *Observations on Man* (London, 1749), Part I, c.IV; Part II, c.III. Compare Mill, 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy' in E. Bulwer Lytton, *England and the English* (1833), ii.329; 'Bentham' [1838] *CW* X.97. Cf. Richard Allen, *David Hartley on Human Nature* (New York, 1999).
105 *System of Logic* (1843), *CW* 8.905.
106 Cf. *On Liberty* (1859), c.3. The association of individuality with character, hence 'individuality of character' goes back to the 1830s: eg. 'Bentham', *CW* X.108; 'Coleridge', ibid., 123.
107 *Logic CW* VIII.913 cf. 847.
108 Resp. *Logic CW* VIII.898, *A* I.111 cf. I.187 on 'the "extraordinary pliability of human nature"'; 'Civilization' [1836], XVIII.145; *Subjection* [1869], *CW* XXI.139 'extreme variableness'.
109 *Logic CW* VIII.843 cf. MS. on Marriage c.1832-3, XXI.39; *On Liberty* (1859), XVIII.264; *Utilitarianism* (1861), X.238-9.
110 *Observations on Man* (London, 1749), Part I, Preface, v.
111 *Logic CW* VIII.839-40. The only critical opponent mentioned in this chapter is Robert Owen: ibid., 840-1, but this does not mean that Mill's agenda derives from Owen. He was just an Aunt Sally: cf. Terence Ball, 'The formation of character: Mill's "ethology" reconsidered', *Polity* 33 (2000), 25-48, here 30-1.
112 John Mill to Samuel Bentham 30 July 1819, *CW* XII. On James' French culture: note his student reading: Bain, *James Mill*, 19; the French extracts in his commonplace books (https://intellectualhistory.net/mill); his translation from the French of Charles Villers, *Essay on the Spirit and Influence of the Reformation of Luther* (London, 1805); and the quality of his library holdings reported by J.S. Mill to Carlyle, 17 Sept. 1832, *CW* XII.
113 'Mignet's French Revolution' [1826], *CW* XX.3-14. The *Autobiography* suggests (imprecisely and obscurely) that Mill first read a history of the French Revolution shortly after his return from France (I.65). This could have been Mignet, whose work appeared in 1824. However, the editors of *CW* suggest François Toulongeon's *Histoire de France* (1801-10) (I.65n.*), presumably on the basis of Mill to Charles Comte 25 Jan. 1828, *CW* XII, where 'Mignet, Toulongeon and others' are grouped together.
114 There is no evidence of such thinking in Mill's original travel journal and letters: *CW* XXVI.3-143.
115 *Logic CW* VIII.870.
116 *CW* XX.59-60.
117 To D'Eichthal 7 Nov. 1829, *CW* XII.
118 *Logic CW* VIII.904-5, 869 resp.
119 'Bentham' [1838], *CW* X.105. Compare *Auguste Comte and Positivism* (1865), ibid., 300, 321.
120 *On Liberty* (1859), *CW* XVIII.274. See the fundamental statement in 'Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History' [1845], *CW* XX. 267-9.
121 'Coleridge' [1840], *CW* X.135. Mill, like most English people down to c.1880, avoids the term 'nationalism'. The only early and precise usage in *OED* derives from a translation of a French text: the *Memoirs* of the emigré Jesuit,

Augustin Barruel (1799).
122 Even so, compare the valuable study by Georgios Varouxakis, *Mill and Nationality* (London, 2002).
123 'Bentham' [1838], *CW* X.99.
124 Terence Ball, 'Mill's "ethology" reconsidered', *Polity* 33 (2000), 28-33. Ball goes so far as to consider Mill's *Autobiography* – the most individual of formats – as ethology: 33-7. Frederick Rosen, *Mill* (Oxford, 2013), c.4, is silent as to the possible difference between individual and collective character.
125 *Logic* (1843), *CW* VIII.869 cit. Ball, 'Mill's "ethology" reconsidered', 32.
126 '*En masse*' *CW* VIII.866, 873, 942; 'types', ibid., 864, 867, 873.
127 'Coleridge' [1840], *CW* X.134-5.
128 *CW* XIX.546, 417.
129 'Coleridge', 'Bentham' [1838-40], *CW* X.141, 105; *The Subjection of Women* (1869), *CW* XXI.309.
130 To Ruge 2 Mar. 1859, *CW* XV.
131 *Representative Government* (1861), *CW* XIX.417n.*, 549 cf. Mill to Pasquale Villari 6 Nov. 1860, *CW* XV.
132 *Logic CW* VIII.879.
133 Ibid., 905, 872-3 resp.
134 Ibid., 878.
135 Ibid., 898.
136 Stefan Collini, *That Noble Science of Politics* (1983), 156. This goes back to Alexander Bain, who much preferred Mill in academic and systematic guise: *John Stuart Mill* (London, 1882), 78-9, 84.
137 *Subjection of Women* (1869), *CW* XXI.277 cf. 312.
138 To Harriet Taylor Mill 7 Feb. 1854, *CW* XIV.
139 *CW* VIII.869 cf. 874, 878, 898.
140 See previously *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), Book I c.vii.
141 *CW* XVIII.239 cf. 128-9.
142 *CW* XVIII.215 (epigraph).
143 Ibid., 227 cf. 222-3.
144 Mill learned German in the late 1820s (*A* I.123); he enjoyed the great literary authors (Goethe and Schiller, *A* 161) but suffered a linguistic breakdown when confronted by Hegel (to Alexander Bain, 4 Nov. 1867, *CW* XVI). He took a holiday in the Rhineland in 1835, but regrettably the journal he kept has been lost (to Joseph Blanco White, 1 July, 28 Aug., 1835, *CW* XII); Germanists such as Carlyle and Sarah Austin ('Mutterlein') were prominent correspondence partners in the 1830s; and later on he would keep in touch with Germans whom he met in London, such as Theodor Gomperz. Even so, the fruits of his German reading, 'philosophy of history, literature and the arts', were either marginal or inconsequential: to D'Eichthal and Charles Duveyrier 20 May 1832. After 1830 one finds an odd review notice of a German periodical published in London in 1834 (*CW* XXIII.748-9) but there is no sign of him reading German books. Even in the 1820s he was reading in translation (*A* I.160) and later citations of works such as Fichte's *Characteristics of the Present Age* (1806, trans. 1847) and von Humboldt on the *Sphere and Duties of Government* (1792 trans. 1853) come from English translations cf. *A* I.172. In every respect his engagement with France and French culture was more deep-rooted and substantial.
145 *CW* XVIII.241, 272 resp. For 'collective' one could as well read 'national'.
146 Egg. Mill to Ruge 2 Mar. 1859, cited above at n.130; and the correspondence with Charles Dupont-White, 1 July 1858 – 28 Feb. 1862, *CW* XV.
147 *CW* XVIII.307. Previously there had been a casual mention of Tocqueville, who 'in his last important work [*L'Ancien Régime*], remarks how much more the Frenchmen of the present day resemble one another': 274. Mill cannot decide whether this is a parallel or a contrast to England. Compare *The Subjection of Women* (1869), where the English/French contrast resurfaces intact: *CW* XXI.312-3.
148 *CW* XVIII.262. Elsewhere in the text Humboldt features only as an enlightened individual, not as a German: ibid., 215, 274, 300, 304.
149 R.H. Hutton criticised this, though of course he supposed that 'national or social character' was simply absent from the text: 'Mill on Liberty' [1859], ed. A. Pyle, *Liberty. Contemporary Responses to John Stuart Mill* (Bristol, 1994), 97; cf. J.C. Rees, *Mill and his early Critics* (Leicester, 1956), 32.
150 *CW* XVIII.219, 223, 230, 232, 236, 236, 283, 286.
151 To Alexander Bain 6 Aug. 1859, *CW* XV.
152 *On Liberty CW* XVIII.230 (eg).
153 Ibid., 231-2, 244-5.
154 *On Liberty CW* XVIII.245, 286, 269.
155 James Fitzjames Stephen throws the 'middle classes' overboard and elects himself to the group of those who are 'serious': *Saturday Review*, 12 Feb. 1859 in ed. A. Pyle, *Liberty. Contemporary Responses to John Stuart Mill* (1994), 6, 8. John Morley quotes from the text as above and opines uncritically that *On Liberty* is 'one of the most aristocratic books ever written': *Fortnightly Review* [1873], ibid., 285. R.W. Church construes Mill's elite as the voice of society: 'those who are responsible for truth in society', where 'the mass of the people *must* depend more or less on society for their opinions': *Bentley's Quarterly Review* [1860], ibid., 252, 242. Cf. Rees, *Mill and his early Critics* (1956), 28-32. Compare the PhD thesis by Stephanie Conway, 'Interpreting Mill's On Liberty, 1831-1900' (Royal Holloway, University of London, 2019). She mentions the existence of elite readings of Mill, most obviously Cowling (pp.24-5),

but her focus is on the libertarian aspects of the text.
156 Resp. *CW* XVIII.223; Mill to Harriet Taylor Mill, 17 Feb. 1855, *CW* XIV.
157 Eg. 'The Spirit of the Age' *CW* XXII.238-45.
158 *A* I.259. Compare the Dedication, *CW* XVIII.216; *A* I.257.
159 Compare the list of possible subjects to write about in Mill to Harriet Taylor Mill 7 Feb. 1854, *CW* XIV.
160 Below §.V.
161 Compare James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*, aimed at 'persons of either sex', Preface (London, 1821), iii, even though this was notoriously not a "ladies' subject". The idea that, because of a sentence in the essay on 'Government', James Mill was not a "feminist" is not uncommon; but it is mistaken even so: eg. Claeys, *John Stuart Mill* (2022), 22.
162 Compare Mill, 'Cooperation: Closing Speech' [1825], *CW* XXVI.314-22 on Thompson's Owenite views and citing the *Appeal*. *A* I.107 reproduces the language of the 'paragraph' which comes from Thompson, *Appeal of One Half the Human Race… in reply to a paragraph of Mr Mill's celebrated 'Article on Government'* (London, 1825) cf. James Mill, 'Government', *Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1992), 27.
163 Their views are signalled in the *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Exposition. Première année 1829* (Paris, 1830^2) but the 'special development' of these is postponed for later: 6^{th} Séance, 178. Note also the more detailed context represented by the Unitarian *Monthly Repository*: Janelle Pötzsch, 'Marriage, Morals and Progress: J.S. Mill and the early feminists', *History of European Ideas* 48 (2022) 795-810.
164 *Logic CW* VIII.868. John Mill's most important statement prior to the *Logic* is the untitled manuscript on marriage c.1833: *CW* XXI.37-49. Here he links consideration of marriage to 'the condition and character of women in general' (49 cf. 42), but whether this suggests any developed meaning for 'character' is unclear. The text anticipates his and Harriet's "mature", post-1851 views in some important respects, but not in others. For example, there is no sign of the later conception of marriage as an intellectual symbiosis.
165 *CW* VIII.868.
166 *Subjection* (1869) *CW* XXI.272-3
167 Ibid., *CW* XXI.261.
168 Ibid., 333, 302, 305 resp.
169 Ibid., 278 (why a husband should study his wife), 304-7 (intuition); Goldwin Smith, 'Female suffrage', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 30 (1874), 139-50, here 140. Cf. *A* I.195-9 etc.
170 Ibid., 313. — On natural difference between nations: see 'Michelet's History of France' [1844]. Here Mill is disposed to allow importance to 'race' or innate characteristics and geography in the early stages of society, but over time the homogenising tendencies of social evolution 'tend more and more to efface the pristine differences': *CW* XX.235-8, here 238. Cf. 'The Negro Question [1850] where, though he does not use the term, Mill denies outright that there is any evidence of what we call 'race' in the sense of 'original differences… among human beings': *CW* XXI.93.
171 See the untitled manuscript on marriage c.1833 and the 'Statement on Marriage' of 1851: *CW* XXI.37-49, 181. The former identifies the impossibility of divorce as that which makes a woman 'to a great extent… [a] slave' (49), which is a good deal more substantial than the agenda of 1851 or 1869. Indeed he largely avoids this subject in *Subjection*: ibid., 298. Note, however, that *Subjection* was not started in Harriet's lifetime, nor was it on the list of subjects they drew up in 1854, although 'family' and 'sex' as a category in 'differences of character' appear: Mill to Harriet Taylor Mill 7 Feb. 1854, *CW* XIV.
172 *Subjection CW* XXI.329-31. For this feminist culture eg. Candida Lacey (ed.), *Barbara Leigh Bodichon and the Langham Place Group* (London, 1987).
173 Eg. Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (London, 1694-7).
174 *Subjection CW* XXI.314-5.
175 *Subjection CW* XXI.295. On the promise to obey: 284. He is thinking of the Church of England, but neither here nor elsewhere does he implicitly rely on English singularity as he did in *On Liberty*.
176 Margaret Oliphant, 'Mill on the subjection of women', *Edinburgh Review* (1869) repr. A Pyle (ed.), *The Subjection of Women: Contemporary Responses* (Bristol, 1995), 109-40, here 111. A superior piece.
177 Compare *Subjection CW* XXI.298 with the manuscript on marriage c.1833, ibid., 45-9.
178 33 & 34 Vict. c 93. On settlements: *CW* XXI.284, 297.
179 *CW* XXI.270, 324.
180 Ibid., 297.
181 Ibid., 298. This corresponds to his belief in the importance of Malthusian population control as crucial to working class living standards, though he makes no mention of the subject here.
182 Manuscript on marriage c.1833, ibid., 44 cf. 47 on the insuperable problem posed by children for Mill's belief in women's freedom in marriage. This is why in *Subjection* he opts for separation rather than divorce: ibid., 298.
183 Ibid., 326.
184 For substantial literary reflection by an English male contemporary: Anthony Trollope, *Framley Parsonage* (1861), *He knew he was right* (1869). But as literature this was outside Mill's field of vision.
185 *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Greeley, 1845), 96-7.
186 Setting aside publication in the 1790s, the only British edition of the *Vindication* prior to 1891 was an abridged edition in 1841 (London: John Cleave), reissued in 1845 (London: W. Strange), which was in any case a rare book.

There were by contrast three New York editions (1833, 1845, 1856), all complete, though still not widely sold. William Thompson sets aside Wollstonecraft's 'narrow views': *Appeal of One Half the Human Race* (1825), vii. Margaret Fuller refers primarily to Godwin's *Memoirs* of Wollstonecraft (1798) rather than the *Vindication* itself: *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 62-3. Compare George Eliot, 'Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft', *Leader*, VI, 13 Oct. 1855, 988b: 'There is in some quarters a vague prejudice against the *Rights of Woman* as in some way or other a disreputable book'.

187 Compare *Discours sur l'esprit positif* (Paris, 1844), where there is no mention of women, with *Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme* (Paris, 1848), Part IV, 'Influence féminine du positivisme'.

188 *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (Zurich, 1879). The title is appropriate since this is a work in two halves: first on the position of women (to p.90), and then a gender-free presentation of socialism and SPD party desiderata, with only the briefest consideration (pp.154-60) of their specific relevance to women.

189 Émile Durkheim, 'La famille conjugale' [1892], *Revue Philosophique* 91 (1921), 1-14.

190 P. Ghosh, *Max Weber and the Protestant Ethic* (Oxford, 2014), 5-9, 32-33, 69-71.

191 *Subjection*, *CW* XXI.326 (quotation) cf. 280-1 on competition.

192 Thompson, 'Introductory Letter', *Appeal of One Half the Human Race* (1825), x.

193 *On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women: Three Essays* (London: Oxford UP, 1912), ed. Millicent Garrett Fawcett. It had been preceded by a centenary reissue of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* (London: Unwin, 1891), also edited by Mrs. Fawcett. However, this did not enjoy the association with "mainstream" theory that the Oxford edition of Mill assumed.

194 See above all *The Co-operative Movement in Britain* (London, 1891).