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FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY: AN ANALYSIS OF JOHN STUART MILL'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a thesis entitled "Freedom and Authority: An Analysis of John Stuart Mill's Philosophy of Education" submitted by Nicholas G. Coccalis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation deals with certain aspects of John Stuart Mill's social and political philosophy and educational recommendations. It attempts to clarify the role that Mill assigns to education in his suggestions for social and political reform. In particular, it presents an interpretation of Mill's conception of social authority which is related to his notion of education and attempts to show the connection between some of his educational recommendations and certain aspects of his conception of freedom.

In Mill's view a system of education should help create a social leadership whose authority is readily recognized and freely accepted by the citizenry. Mill believes that the successful performance of such a task entails an emphasis on intellectual education. The educational content must keep pace with the growth and accumulation of knowledge while the educational system must avoid interference with the individual's independent judgment. It is with these aspects of Mill's philosophy of education that this study is particularly concerned.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. N.C. Bhattacharya, for his instruction and guidance as well as for allowing me to pursue my own independent approach in the preparation of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problems currently besetting institutions of higher learning are not all unique. Some, it is true, are related to questions which in all likelihood never had to be answered before. The student demand for a reassessment of the relationships governing the various constituent bodies of the university, for instance, requires a solution acceptable to this new source of such a demand as well as to the traditional sources. Many of these questions, however, are new in the sense of their dimension rather than in their fundamental nature.[1] The question of the function of higher education with respect to the student's intellectual development and growth as well as the more general role that the university is expected to perform in society are matters which have often been debated in the past.

John Stuart Mill's contribution in this debate appeared in the form of an 'Inaugural Address' delivered in 1867 to the students of the University of St. Andrews who had elected

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1. For one of the latest discussions on the issues facing the university today see Daedalus, Winter 1970, Special issue on 'The Embattled University', Vol. 99, No. 1, of the Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; see also, C. Jencks, and D. Riesman, The Academic Revolution (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1968); T. Roszak, (ed.), The Dissenting Academy (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., 1968).

him Rector. It came at a time when there was a good deal of discussion in England on the concept and merit of a liberal education.[2] The debate centered mainly around such issues as the place of science in the curriculum, the usefulness of the classics and the appropriateness of religious teaching in the university. On these issues Mill had something to contribute partly because of the unique early education he had himself received and partly because of his extensive and thorough studies. He made no differentiation between 'liberal' and 'general' education[3] and his conclusion on the function of higher education could be summarized quite briefly: the university should provide general and not specialized knowledge; it should help the student become a good citizen and not merely to provide him with the means of earning a living. To take such a conclusion at its face value, however, is to miss the real significance of the role of higher education in Mill's social

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2. Some other notable contributions to this debate during the same period included Cardinal Newman's lectures published later as The Idea of a University (1852), Herbert Spencer's Education (1861), a collection of Essays on a Liberal Education edited by F.W. Farrar (1867) and T.H. Huxley's address on 'A Liberal Education' (1968).

3. For some points on such a differentiation see Horace T. Morse, 'Liberal and General Education: A Problem of Differentiation', General Education, J.G. Rice (ed.), (Washington: Association for Higher Education, National Education Association, 1964), pp. 7-12.

and political thought.

The 'Inaugural Address' represents the culmination of a change in Mill's educational thought which began with his well-known emotional and intellectual crisis nearly forty years earlier.[4] Scattered throughout his books, essays, articles, reviews and letters written during those years are numerous statements and opinions concerning education.[5] A real understanding of the significance of Mill's educational recommendations and their relation to his arguments on other matters requires an examination of these statements. Such an understanding is not possible from the study of his 'Inaugural Address' alone.

Very little seems to have been written on Mill's philosophy of education.[6] This is rather surprising in view of Mill's great impact on western thought, the close link (as we propose to show) between his educational ideas and his social and political philosophy, as well as the fact

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4. Mill's own account of this personal crisis is given in his Autobiography (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1957), Chapter V.

5. For the most complete bibliography of Mill's works see N. MacMinn, J.R. Hainds, J. Mc. McCrimmon, Bibliography of the Published Writings of John Stuart Mill (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 1945).

6. See Kingsley Price, Education and Philosophical thought (Boston : Allyn & Bacon, 1963) Chapter IX; see also R.X. Roellinger, 'Mill on Education', Journal of General Education, Vol. VI, (July 1952), pp. 246-259 and E.G. West, 'Liberty and Education: John Stuart Mill's Dilemma', Philosophy, Vol. XL, (1965), pp. 129-142.

that he exerted considerable influence on educational policy in England. Indeed, one scholar suggests that none has had a more lasting influence on educational development in England than John Stuart Mill.[7] The aim of our study is to contribute to some extent to an understanding of Mill's philosophy of education in its relation to the basic concepts of his social and political thought. In particular, this study will examine two aspects of Mill's thought: first, the role which Mill attaches to education in the search for authority, i.e., for satisfactory grounds on which social action could be justified; secondly, the relation in Mill's thought between education and freedom of the individual.

It is necessary, then, to have a clearly defined concept of authority in order to understand Mill's position. Such a concept is discussed in Chapter II. It is argued that any concept of social authority rests for its justification on the values it purports to represent. Acceptance of an authority, therefore, is contingent upon its acceptance as an interpreter of values regarded as desirable and worthy. The early utilitarians did realize the crucial role of education in the recognition and acceptance of an authority acting on the principle of utility. Mill, with his own

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7. Smith, W.O.L., Education (London: Penguin Books, 1957) pp. 9 and 194. However, Smith does not elaborate on this suggestion.

interpretation of that principle, maintained that whatever is to be regarded as authoritative must be shown to lead to the improvement of man. As is pointed out in Chapter III, Mill argued that good government cannot be guaranteed merely by the identification and satisfaction of sectional interests in society. He maintained that what is required is a clear conception of what constitutes human progress. Such a conception could be used to distinguish between power and authority and Mill based his distinction on the contention that whatever is to be regarded as authoritative must be related to the best in man, which for Mill meant man's intellectual capacity. His interpretation of history indicated to him that in spite of many retrograde steps a progressive development of man could be discerned not merely in terms of material achievement but, above all, in terms of intellectual improvement. He thought that this desirable trend should be encouraged and not weakened by too great a preoccupation with material well-being. Mill argued that the motive for personal material gain should not be allowed to dominate social action and that true political leadership should be based on a conception of man as an intellectual and not a materialistic being. This view, as he himself declared, constituted a fundamental deviation from the political thought of the early ulilitarians. In Chapter IV it is pointed out that this deviation is also evident in his educational thought. In contrast to the early utilitarians

who paid more attention to the education of the masses Mill shifted his attention to the intellectual education of social leaders. Mill was very much aware of the powerful socializing forces at work in modern industrial society. He maintained that those in positions of social influence should receive the sort of education which would convince them of the desirability of stressing intellectual as opposed to material improvement. He thought, as is pointed out in Chapter V, that this could be achieved in a way that would preserve individualism and at the same time foster in the individual a sense of social responsibility. It could be achieved if education, especially higher education, stressed the importance for the intellectual development of the individual, of the need for the consideration of as many points of view as possible. This would foster in the individual an attitude of sincere regard for the opinions of others and thus increase his sense of social responsibility. Mill suggested, furthermore, the adoption of measures which would tend to strengthen the social standing of those who had had higher education or, at least, had had the opportunity to exercise their judgment in the consideration of various points of view. This would act as an example worthy of emulation and would thus tend to motivate other individuals to pursue the kind of intellectual education which Mill regarded as desirable. In this way the authority of the intellect rather than the power of wealth would tend to pre-

vail in society.

There is an elitist element in Mill's political thought and his philosophy of education which may seem to be contrary to his concept of freedom. An adequate assessment of this elitist element requires an examination of his educational theory in its relation to his liberalism. In Chapter IV the concept of liberty is discussed. It is suggested that Mill's concept of liberty cannot be interpreted as a purely negative one. It is based on positive conditions whose nature must be understood. These conditions are closely related to Mill's insistence on the prevalence in society of a sufficiently high level of education of the sort he prescribed. His defence of the freedom of the individual was not anarchistic and envisaged not only rights but also certain obligations on the part of the individual. Since these obligations are related to the individual's own education an understanding of Mill's concept of freedom requires an elucidation of two aspects of his educational theory.

First, it is necessary to examine the nature of the educational provisions he suggests which would, in his view, open the way to the acquisition of the desirable sort of education by everyone. In other words, if freedom for the individual in society is to be related to a certain sort of education then appropriate means for its acquisition by every individual must be made available.

The second aspect that must be considered is related

to Mill's intellectualism. This is undertaken in Chapters VII and VIII. Specifically, it is necessary to establish whether this stress on the intellect is or is not identifiable with a narrow form of rationalism. It must be shown that Mill's insistence on the need for an education which stresses the consideration of various viewpoints does not preclude viewpoints merely on the grounds that they are expressed in a 'non-rational' idiom. This requires some clarification. In the first place, the term 'non-rational' in this context is not to be identified with 'violent'. Rather, it refers to the absence of the process of reasoning and the presence of the intuitive element which is involved in most art forms. Secondly, it must be emphasized that our concern is not with the epistemological aspect of these points but with their bearing on the communication of social values and ideas. Clearly, the ability to communicate with others is an indispensable prerequisite in any attempt to understand someone else's point of view or express one's own for some social purpose. The rational expression of a viewpoint is no guarantee of its social validity while a 'non-rational' or intuitive expression may contain acceptable social values; an appreciation of the latter requires an understanding of the particular 'non-rational' form in which those values are being expressed. Thirdly, it is not being suggested here that Mill did not emphasize the importance and primacy of reasoning - that is not being questioned. What is being sug-

gested is that if the principle of freedom of expression in Mill's thought is to have a real and not merely a token significance then it must be shown that Mill did at least envisage the need to consider seriously, and not merely tolerate, points of view expressed without the use of the process of reasoning. If the principle of freedom of expression by the individual is to have any substance it must be shown that Mill does not advocate the suppression, through education, of the tendency of the individual to express his point of view in an idiom which is most natural to him. If the intellectual education that Mill advocated was truly meant to be related to the consideration of various viewpoints it must be shown that Mill envisaged the need to help the individual develop the willingness and ability to understand a point of view whether it be expressed in a rational or a 'non-rational' idiom.

Finally, Chapter IX gives a review of Mill's position pointing out the general consistency between his social theory and his educational thought. This consistency is evident also in his attitude towards vocational education. There are, however, certain flaws and omissions in his educational thought which tend to weaken this basic consistency. These stem primarily from his preoccupation with higher education and his assumption of maturity in the individual when dealing with freedom and education.

Our main concern is not so much with an examination

of Mill's more technical philosophical doctrines or the controversies surrounding his version of empiricism, his utilitarianism and his principles of liberty. These aspects of Mill's work have been widely discussed. We are aware that his rejection of intuitionism, on the one hand, and his attempt to defend the Coleridgian school of thought, on the other, make a clear understanding of the nature of his empiricism rather difficult.[8] His introduction of a qualitative element in utilitarianism is tantamount, according to some, to a rejection of that doctrine; nor does it appear easy to establish whether Mill's version should be interpreted as rule or acti-utilitarianism.[9] In connection with his principles of liberty the most recent controversies concern the difficulties in differentiating between self-regarding and other-regarding actions and the limits imposed on his liberalism by his stress on reason.[10] This study is not an attempt to deal directly with these controversies but

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8. See, for example, J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, (London: Duckworth, 1957), Chapter I; K. Britton, John Stuart Mill (London: Penguin Books, 1953), Chapter IV; J.L. Stocks, Reason and Intuition (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), Chapter XIV; R.P. Anschutz, The Philosophy of J.S. Mill, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

9. In addition to Britton op. cit., Chapter II see also the various articles in Mill: A Collection of Critical Essays, J.B. Schneewind (ed.), (New York: Anchor Books, 1968).

10. Some articles in Schneewind's collection, op. cit., are relevant here; see also J.C. Rees, 'A Re-Reading of Mill on Liberty', Political Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 2. (1960), pp. 113-129; M. Cowling, Mill and Liberalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

an attempt to explicate Mill's views on education in the context of what appear to us to be his basic social and political concepts. For this reason, as was suggested earlier, it has been found necessary to refer frequently to his less philosophical writings, addresses, letters, essays and autobiographical notes. While the possible bearings of some of these views on his logical and ethical doctrines have been pointed out one of our primary purposes has been to interpret his social and political philosophy as providing a background for his educational thought. The other purpose is to determine the important features of what may be called Mill's philosophy or theory of education. These two purposes are closely related. An examination of Mill's basic social and political concepts is expected to clarify many of his utterances about the aims and practices of education; a clear formulation of his recommended aims and practices in education is expected to illuminate some aspects of his social and political thought. It is hoped that this effort might provide the grounds for a better understanding of other aspects of Mill's work.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

I

The complexity of questions concerning the definition of authority is not unrelated to the complexity of human relations in modern pluralistic society. One of the difficulties is that a definition of authority throws little light on the underlying factors involved in the justification of authority. Categorization into types of authority, such as those suggested by Max Weber for example,[1] is helpful but even there limitations are imposed by the fact that in a dynamic and fast-changing society the actual grounds of justification for obedience to authority may transcend such divisions. Furthermore, changes in social mores may involve changes in the nature of obedience to the rules of a certain social institution, such as the family for instance, which are not amenable to easy categorization.

Obedience to authority may be justified on a variety of grounds. The justification may be expressed in terms of religion, social or family status, positive law, personal

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1. Weber, Max, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York: The Free Press, 1947) Chapter III; see also, S.I. Benn & R.S. Peters, Social Principles and the Democratic State (London: Allen & Unwin, 1959) Chapters 1 and 14.

material advantage. These and other areas of justification suggest values and beliefs within a society[2] and a breakdown in any one of these may or may not be a matter for serious social concern. The breakdown, however, of all traditional authority which is being experienced in our century, according to some thinkers,[3] reflects the lack of a single fundamental and generally-accepted justification of authority. It is in part a consequence of an inability to provide an answer to the ultimate question 'Why should I obey?' which would be consistent with what may be called a philosophy of life or ideology. Once such a question is asked, as T.D. Weldon points out,[4] it can lead to the erosion of the basis of any authority. To Hannah Arendt, for example, the most extreme manifestation of such a situation

> is the gradual breakdown of the one form of authority which exists in all historically known societies, the authority of parents over children, of teachers over pupils and, generally, of elders over the young. Even the least 'authoritarian' forms of government have always accepted this kind of 'authority' as a matter of course.[5]

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2. Friedrich, C.J., 'Authority, Reason and Discretion'; Nomos I: Authority, C.J. Friedrich (ed.), (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 32.

3. Arendt, Hannah, 'Authority in the Twentieth Century', Review of Politics, (October 1956), Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 403-417.

4. Weldon, T.D., The Vocabulary of Politics, (London: Pelican Books, 1953), p. 56.

5. Arendt, op. cit., p. 403.

Yet this apparent breakdown of the most traditional of all authorities may reflect not an anarchistic attempt at the complete elimination of authority as such but a desire for a change in the way obedience to authority should express itself. It may reflect, in other words, a desire for a change in the form of communication between the person in authority and a person who is the subject of that authority. For, after all, it can just as validly be asserted that no historically known society has experienced the degree of literacy, formal education and wide-range communication among its members that is being experienced by Western societies today. To conclude, therefore, that a change in attitudes towards authority is indicative of a clear breakdown in authority itself may be somewhat premature because such a conclusion could possibly be based on an inadequate consideration of social forces and factors which affect the nature of communication. In the light of such considerations as the expansion of education and the development of new methods of communication the breakdown of traditional authority may be less a cause for anxiety than an incentive for a reassessment of social values and a readjustment of social practices.

II

In the bewildering array of definitions of authority the two most extreme forms are perhaps best illustrated on

the one hand by the vague and vacuous concept of "that which exercises a force or influence over us"[6] and, on the other, by the narrow and positivistic identification of authority with "the expected and legitimate possession of power".[7]

In the social sciences 'authority' has usually been associated with power and legitimacy and, as a result, definitions of authority have tended to provide little more than descriptions of positive functions. Two such definitions, for instance, refer to authority as a "property of a person or office" and "a relationship between two offices".[8] Applied to the case of a teacher such definitions would tend to stress the position of the teacher vis-à-vis the student in terms of function without throwing any light on the precise nature of the relationship between teacher and student. Such a relationship is certainly different from the relationship that might exist in other situations where authority is in evidence, such as the relationship between an officer and a soldier.

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6. Nash, Paul, Authority and Freedom in Education (New York: Wiley & Sons, 1966), p. 6.

7. Laswell, H.D. & Kaplan, A., Power and Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 133.

8. See article on 'Authority' in the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan & Free Press, 1968) Vol. 1; see also the articles on 'Authority' in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Macmillan, 1930) Vol. 2 and The Encyclopedia of Philosophy (New York: Macmillan & Free Press, 1967) Vol. 1.

What is therefore required for our purposes is a conception which throws some light on the nature of the relationship which involves authority. One such attempt at the definition of authority has been made by Carl J. Friedrich.[9] He rejects the suggestion that the term authority has reference to any sort of power and argues that, fundamentally, the authority of any individual is derived from the acknowledgement by others that he possesses superior knowledge, ability or insight. Such a basis for authority is evident in the case of the relationship between the member of a profession and his client but in the case of social or political relationships this basis involves more than mere competence in a specific field. For it is associated with reasoning and by reasoning Friedrich does not mean the kind of rationality associated with mathematics, logic or any other kind of reasoning which does not involve value judgments. Instead, Friedrich refers to "the reasoning which relates actions to opinions and beliefs, and opinions and beliefs to values, however defined".[10] Such values may be 'truth', 'justice' or any other variety of values included in a particular culture. It is the kind of reasoning which does not claim to be culturally neutral or unmindful of social values.

The connection between this kind of reasoning and

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9. Friedrich, C.J., op. cit.

10. Ibid., p. 35.

authority is to be found in the nature or quality of communication. Authority of any kind involves communication between the person holding that authority and the person who receives the opinion, suggestion or command for behavior. Reasoning may or may not be expressly used in this communication but what is important is that such a communication possesses what Friedrich calls the "potentiality of reasoned elaboration". By this is meant that judgments, opinions or commands must be based on "reasons" which could be validated in terms of the relevant values accepted generally by the society. Thus authority is seen primarily as a "quality of communication, rather than of persons, and when we speak of the authority of a person we are using a shorthand expression to indicate that he possesses the capacity to issue authoritative communication".[11]

Friedrich agrees that this "potentiality of reasoned elaboration" could be simply described as the rational factor in authority but insists that whatever it is called, it is vital to the concept of authority as a necessary factor in the distinction between authority and power. There may be identity between power and authority but power derived from such authority is based upon reasoning which can be related to values which are believed to be meaningful. Where such values have lost their validity or are differently inter-

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11. Ibid., p. 36.

preted the power of the particular authority is undermined, although that power might be preserved by resort to means other than the use of reasoning in terms of the accepted values.

The significance of this concept of authority for our purposes lies on two related points. In the first place, it has an important bearing on the question of the grounds of recognition and acceptance of authority. Since authority associated with power is often accompanied by "psychological concomitants" of power,[12] such as wealth and public esteem, the recognition and acceptance of authority by the subject may thus occur on grounds which are the direct result of power rather than genuine authority - the genuineness here being determined through "reasoned elaboration".

Secondly, the grounds of recognition and acceptance of authority throw light not only on the nature of that authority but also on the nature of the subject himself. False authority, i.e., authority which cannot be reasoned in terms of meaningful values, would be more readily accepted by people unaccustomed to exercising judgment prior to accepting pronouncements or directives than by those who are prepared to accept authority only if they are convinced of its genuine nature.

It is with this conception of authority, a conception

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12. Ibid., p. 45.

that enables us to distinguish the exercise of authority from the exercise of power, that this study proposes to examine those aspects of John Stuart Mill's notion of social authority which seem particularly related to his philosophy of education. It should be made clear at the outset that the term 'social authority' rather than 'political authority' may be preferable for our purposes. The former is a more inclusive term and, as will be shown later, Mill explicitly stated that he included in the term 'authority' not only what is understood by 'political' but also other sources of influence and control in society.

III

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to take a brief preliminary look at the problem of recognition of authority in relation to Mill's position. Historically, the concept of authority in Western political thought has moved, in its early stages, from the Platonic identification of authority with personal competence to the Aristoteliam parallelism between household function and authoritative action on the political level. It proceeded then with the association of authority with the concepts of 'auctor' or 'auctoritas' - which referred to an author, in contrast to

a maker, in terms of command or counsel[13] - and the act of foundation characteristic of Rome and the Catholic Church. In modern times the concept of authority has often been treated within the narrower confines of the concept of a social contract between individual and society. Much of the political thought in the West in more recent times, however, has been devoted to a search for some new and broad foundation as a source of political authority. Indeed, modern revolutions can be seen as directly inspired by such a search for an authoritative foundation.[14] Yet this should not obscure the fact that a great deal of this search has been guided less by a desire for a social or historical myth than by a concept of the nature of man. Such a concept may be expressed in terms of natural rights or reason or even in the terms of contemporary psychoanalysis. In this respect the concept of man that comes closest to John Stuart Mill's is that of man as being capable of learning from experience, willing to change his way of life accordingly and thus naturally inclined towards improvement. The notion of improvement is closely tied to Mill's qualitative utilitarianism and provides a unifying theme throughout his work.[15] In a

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13. See Hannah Arendt, 'What was Authority?', Nomos I: Authority, p. 100; see also, R.S. Peters, Authority, Responsibility and Education (New York: Atherton Press, 1966) p. 15; also S.I. Benn & R.S. Peters, op. cit., p. 18.

14. Arendt, 'What was Authority', p. 109.

15. Robson, J.M., The Improvement of Mankind (London: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. ix.

letter to G. D'Eichthal, Mill specifically names the "improvement of man" as the main function of government. He writes:

> Government exists for all purposes whatever that are for man's good: the highest and most important of these purposes is the improvement of man himself as a moral and intelligent being.[16]

In Mill's position, then, the problem of recognition of authority presents itself with the question of whether the authority does indeed meet the requirements necessary for the improvement of the citizens. The nature of the improvement must remain, for the moment, an open question but whatever the terms of such improvement willing acceptance of an authority, as distinct from the enforcement of power, depends on the recognition that the authority in question meets the appropriate requirements leading to improvement.

The role of education in such recognition is vital. This was acknowledged by the early utilitarians who expected that the expansion of literacy would lead automatically to the recognition and acceptance of authority based on the principles of utility. John Austin, for example, made the recognition and intelligent acceptance by the vast majority of the authority of the few contingent upon the expansion of education. Through the "diffusion of knowledge", Austin writes, the multitude would soon

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16. Letter to G. D'Eichthal, 8th October 1929, The Earlier Letters of John Stuart Mill, F.E. Mineka (ed.), Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vol. XII (University of Toronto Press, 1963, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) p. 36.

> apprehend the leading principles of ethics, and also of the various sciences which are nearly related to ethics... and would soon acquire the talent of reasoning distinctly and justly.[17]

Thus the multitude,

> to that extent... might be freed from the dominion of authority: from the necessity of blindly persisting in hereditary opinions and practices; or of turning and veering, for want of directing principles, with every wind of doctrine.[18]

Austin saw the connection between authority and education and held, with optimism, that the spread of education would diminish the acceptance of authoritative pronouncements on belief with little or no scrutiny as to their relevance or real connection with the values to which they allegedly referred. Austin spoke of the multitude acquiring "the talent of reasoning distinctly and justly" and these are terms which, as Friedrich's concept suggests, must refer to values and the clear understanding of those values. For Austin the benefits to be derived from the spread of education lay in the development of the ability to recognize and accept genuine authority.

Similarly, for Weldon the conscious and voluntary acceptance of authority which is not prompted either by habit or fear is based on the assumption that the person who exer-

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17. Austin, J., The Province of Jurisprudence Determined, with an Introduction by H.L.A. Hart, (New York: The Humanities Press, 1965), p. 72.

18. Ibid.

cises that authority "is intelligent and well-intentioned".[19] Both these terms have to be interpreted and their interpretation cannot be altogether divorced from the grounds on which the person's authority, as opposed to power, rests.

Thus the recognition and willing acceptance of authority, as opposed to blind or unthinking acceptance, rests on grounds which are very closely related to one's ability to satisfy oneself as to the validity of the reasons given for the exercise of such authority. This implies, as the utilitarians saw it, that an increase in such ability through education would widen the area over which a person in authority would have to supply satisfactory reasons to justify his actions. This, they argued, was bound to lead to better government.

Although Mill's approach to education, as will be shown later, was basically the same he differed from the earlier utilitarians in that he emphasized different aspects of education. This shift reflected the change in his political philosophy after his well-known crisis. It is therefore necessary to begin with a brief examination of this change in his approach to politics.

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19. Weldon, op. cit., p. 56.

CHAPTER III

THE SPIRIT OF AN AGE

I

One of the earliest indications of Mill's concern with the concept of authority came with the publication in 1831 of his essay 'The Spirit of the Age'. While it is true that Mill appears to have been concerned primarily with the question of deference to the moral and political beliefs of others,[1] it would be misleading to conclude that authority in the sense of political power and leadership in government occupied a minor place in his thought. For like Plato - epistemological and other differences notwithstanding - he was preoccupied with the problem of defining the terms which would give an authority power in every sphere of society.

Plato was disillusioned with a democratic system which considered it fit and proper to execute a Socrates. Mill was disillusioned with a class of aristocrats which remained in power when it could no longer count among its ranks any

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1. Friedman, R.B., 'An Introduction to Mill's Theory of Authority', Mill: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 380. This essay is preliminary to a study of Mill and deals mainly with aspects of John Austin's theory and influence on Mill. Friedman seems to have missed the point about the connection between education and authority in Austin's theory; see pp. 414-415.

men possessing the superior qualities of moral and intellectual leadership which had distinguished earlier generations of English aristocracy.[2] The 'Spirit of the Age' is basically the search for an ideology. And as in most ideological pursuits, it is also an indictment of a class which remained in positions of power and influence when it was no longer concerned with providing necessary leadership but was preoccupied primarily with the furtherance of its own material interests. It was a class whose members did not "love England as one loves human beings, but as a man loves his house or his acres".[3]

Mill's concern with the question of authority and leadership was connected with his reconsideration of the views on government and politics he inherited from his father and Bentham. He came to the conclusion that their premises were too narrow and that they failed to provide for the need for moral and political guidance and leadership. He thought that reliance on a conception of what constitutes sectional and community interests and the identification of the former with the latter provided no guarantee of good government. He "felt that politics could not be a science of specific experience" and that "identity of interest between the govern-

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2. Mill, J.S., 'The Spirit of the Age', Essays on Politics and Culture, G. Himmelfarb (ed.), (New York: Anchor Books, 1963) pp. 27-28.

3. Ibid., p. 43.

ing body and the community at large is not, in any practical sense which can be attached to it, the only thing on which good government depends". And as far as the "identity of interests" itself is concerned, even that could not be assured "by the mere conditions of election".[4]

Similarly, in his 'Logic', Mill rejects the "interest-philosophy of the Bentham school". He points out that the term interest as applied in political thought was understood by the Benthamites to mean not "wishes" but "what is commonly termed private, or worldly, interest". Mill argues that men's actions are not always determined by their interests. There are other factors which, in the case of the rulers for instance, affect rule-making; such factors as "the habitual sentiments and feelings, the general modes of thinking and acting" in the community, as well as "the feelings, habits and modes of thought" characteristic of the particular class to which the rulers belong. Therefore, Mill concludes, while self-interest in the material sense may be a powerful motive for political action it is not sufficient, in itself, to explain political behaviour.[5]

The political situation in England at that time was, to Mill, a perfectly good example of the inadequacy of delv-

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4. Autobiography, pp. 101-102.

5. Mill, J.S., A System of Logic, Eighth Edition, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891) pp. 616-619.

ing into politics on a purely interest-oriented, non-ideological basis. For it illustrated that such an approach led to an undue preoccupation with material interests to the detriment of intellectual and philosophical advancement. The solution of political and social issues required not merely leadership in the identification of interests but also leadership in the interpretation of those interests in terms of social concepts, social institutions and legal enactments. Any such interpretation, if it is to show any consistency at all, must be based on some philosophical or ideological foundation.

This interest-orientation of Bentham's political thought, moreover, was not the only objection that Mill raised. He objected also to any justification of absolute authority on the grounds that it expressed the wishes of the majority. In his essay on Bentham, Mill attacks Bentham's majoritarianism on the grounds that absolute authority on behalf of the majority is no guarantee of good or just government. In this criticism he makes a point of showing how closely he associated social authority, i.e., authority exercised in all manifestations of social life, with political authority. He also demonstrates how very much aware he was of the power of social authority to influence and control education. Mill writes:

> Is it, at all times and places, good for mankind to be under the absolute authority of the majority of themselves? We say the authority, not the political

> authority merely, because it is chimerical to suppose that whatever has absolute power over men's bodies will not arrogate it over their minds - will not seek to control (not perhaps by legal penalties, but by the persecutions of society) opinions and feelings which depart from its standard; will not attempt to shape the education of the young by its model, and to extinguish all books, all schools, all combinations of individuals for joint action upon society, which may be attempted for the purpose of keeping alive a spirit at variance with its own. Is it, we say, the proper condition of man, in all ages and nations, to be under the despotism of Public Opinion?[6]

Some of these views Mill would elaborate twenty years later in his essay 'On Liberty'. At this stage, however, they reflect his disenchantment with Benthamism. Taken together with the views expressed earlier they indicate that Mill was dissatisfied, on the one hand, with a social authority which tended towards totalitarianism and, on the other, with a political authority that was based primarily on the reconciliation of sectional interests in society. In the same essay Mill stresses what became the two major pillars in his ideological foundation, namely, "respect for the personality of the individual" and "deference to superiority of cultivated intelligence". Mill writes:

> The power of the majority is salutary so far as it is used defensively, not offensively - as its exertion is tempered by respect for the personality of the individual, and deference to superiority of cultivated intelligence.[7]

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6. Mill, J.S., 'Essay on Bentham', Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Essay on Bentham, Mary Warnock (ed.), (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965), p. 114.

7. Ibid., p. 117.

Mill then came to advocate less reliance on a narrowly empirical, non-ideological approach in the conduct of social and political life and to stress the need for the adoption of some ideological framework. His own framework became more and more evident as he drew away from the basic premises of philosophical radicalism. In particular, Mill wished to incorporate in his thought a number of ideas he had encountered in the works of idealist writers which seemed to him to contain a great deal of truth. He became convinced that "any general theory or philosophy of politics supposes a previous theory of human progress". It was evident to him, first, that the progress of the "human mind" follows a certain order "in which some things must precede others, an order which governments and public instructors can modify" only to a limited extent. Secondly, it followed that society would reflect that progress in some way; more specifically, that progress would be and "ought" to be reflected in the society's institutions. Thirdly, the nature of the institutions did not necessarily depend on that progress of the human mind but depended, instead, on "whatever is the strongest power in society" which either controlled the government or was in the process of acquiring that control.[8]

Thus Mill, by emphasizing the concept of a progressing human nature as the basis for social change, introduced into

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8. Autobiography, pp. 104-105.

his thought the conceptual foundations of what has been described as the 'psychologistic' study of history.[9] His individualism and the utilitarian roots of his thought prevented him from adopting completely the approach of social positivism which, he felt, was held by some thinkers and social reformers "in an exaggerated and violent manner".[10] In matters of education the emphasis placed on the development and progressiveness of the human mind influenced his suggestions on practical educational policies. His educational recommendations, as will be shown later, illustrate his concern with the detrimental effect that a strictly positivistic approach to the solution of educational problems might have on the future progress of mankind. Authority in his educational thought as well reflected his individualistic and utilitarian approach to social authority.

II

By attaching great significance to the role which the quality of the human mind plays in bringing about institutional changes in society Mill introduced an element of distinction between authority and power which is evident in his essay on the 'Spirit of the Age'. There he divided society

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9. See K. Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), Vol. II, Chapter 14.

10. Autobiography, p. 105.

into two conceptual types, the 'natural' or 'organic' and the 'transitional' or 'critical', which succeed each other through history. This and the idea of corresponding progressive stages in human intellectual development are somewhat similar to the ideas expressed by Comte and Saint Simon and are aspects of Mill's conception of history. What is of particular significance for our purposes, however, is the use he makes of his notions of "worldly power" and "wisdom and virtue" and the influence they are supposed to exert in society.

What confers "worldly power", says Mill, is "the possession of wealth, or the being employed and trusted by the wealthy".[11] This must be read in conjunction with what was quoted before about "private, or worldly, interest" and indicates that Mill had in mind everything connected with the private pursuit of material wealth, be it through one's professional occupation or through other social action aiming at the furtherance of one's material interests. It is important to bear in mind that Mill associates this concept of worldly power with private interest in the sense of private well-being of a material nature.

"Wisdom and virtue" must be interpreted in terms of the utilitarian ethic to which Mill subscribed. In Mill's version of utilitarianism the concept of virtue is tied to

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11. 'The Spirit of the Age', p. 28.

the concept of an improving human mind. Mill writes:

> In the improving state of the human mind, the influences are constantly on the increase, which tend to generate in each individual a feeling of unity with all the rest; which, if perfect would make him never think of, or desire, any beneficial condition for himself, in the benefits of which they are not included.[12]

In other words, improvement of the human mind involves an increasing awareness of the effects of individual action on the other members of society. Hence, "wisdom and virtue" is not independent of the knowledge that has been achieved at a specific period in history both about human relations and the structure of society and about the progress and capacity of the human mind itself.

Now, Mill argues that influence in society can be exerted either from a position of "worldly power" or from "wisdom and virtue". (He adds also from "the power of addressing mankind in the name of religion" but in so far as he appears to treat this as knowledge reached at a certain period in history it does not differ conceptually from "wisdom and virtue". In so far as Mill associates the temporal power of the church with the material interests of a dominant class it does not differ conceptually from "worldly power".) However, Mill associates influence based on "worldly power" with a less advanced state of civilization. Government based on

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12. 'Utilitarianism', Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Essay on Bentham, p. 286.

such power, he says, might be approved "even by a philosopher" when mankind "are in a backward state of civilization". This would be so because "it is part of the inevitable lot of mankind, that when they themselves are in a backward state of civilization, they are unsusceptible of being well governed".[13] In other words, in a less advanced state of civilization the power to govern and exert influence which wealth confers might be regarded as authoritative because the progress of the individual is such as to make the power of wealth alone an appropriate political authority. However, it is clear that authority based purely on such power can be acceptable, according to Mill, only in certain circumstances.

Next, Mill argues that it is possible to exert influence in society from a position which combines "worldly power" and "wisdom and virtue"; it is possible for such influence to be "united in the same individuals". This is most likely to occur where "the holders of power are chosen by the people (or by the most highly civilized portion of the people) for their supposed fitness". In such cases the chosen rulers have the opportunity of giving real moral and political leadership from a position of conspicuous prominence, a fact which is likely to influence also those who are capable of recognizing only the value of "worldly power". Mill says:

The station to which they are elevated gives them

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13. 'The Spirit of the Age', pp. 28-29.

> greater opportunities of rendering their wisdom and their virtue visible, while it fixes the outward stamp of general recognition upon that merit, which would otherwise operate upon each mind only in proportion to its confidence in its own power of discriminating the most worthy.[14]

To use Friedrich's phraseology at this point, Mill is saying that there are different levels of recognition between rulers and ruled. Some recognize authority only in so far as it could be identified with the "phychological concomitants of power" while for others such power is not in itself a sufficient condition of authority. For the latter group a ruler is "worthy" only in so far as he can demonstrate "wisdom and virtue", i.e., in so far as he can justify his actions, or give a reasonable elaboration in justifying his actions, in terms of the principle of utility as understood by Mill. The fact that he may also possess "worldly power" is of secondary significance.

It was Mill's contention that mankind has moved beyond the stage in civilization when it had to be governed solely on the basis of "worldly power" and all its implications in terms of values, way of life and social pursuits. The ruling wealthy classes, he maintained, showed no evidence of having adjusted to such an advance in civilization. As he writes:

> Mankind are capable of being better governed than the wealthy classes have ever heretofore governed them:

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14. Ibid., pp. 30-31.

> while those classes, instead of having improved, have actually retrograded in capacity for government.[15]

This situation reflected, in his view, what often happens in a "critical" stage or a stage of "transition", when new ideas and knowledge about man and society develop which involve a break-up of established institutions, changes in patterns of behaviour, adoption of new values or reinterpretations of old-established values in terms of new relationships. In such a situation safeguards are needed against the transformation of an authority founded on earlier progressive ideas into a coercive power for the preservation of vested interests. It is a measure of Mill's individualism and his distance from positivistic solutions that he finds the answer not in positivistic legislation but in his concept of the improvement of the individual. The best safeguard, he says, is the realization by mankind of the importance of the role of personal freedom for the achievement of progress in society. Any legislation that purports to be truly progressive in that sense and at this stage of human development and claims, therefore, to be authoritative, must reflect that realization. Mill writes:

> Some particular body of doctrine in time rallies the majority round it, organizes social institutions and modes of action conformably to itself, education impresses this new creed upon the new generations without the mental processes that have led to it, and by degrees it acquires the very same power of compression,

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15. Ibid., p. 29.

> so long exercised by the creeds of which it had taken the place. Whether this noxious power will be exercised, depends on whether mankind have by that time become aware that it cannot be exercised without stunting and dwarfing human nature. It is then that the teachings of the 'Liberty' will have their greatest value.[16]

This means that for Mill the principles expressed in his essay 'On Liberty' must be seen as performing a dual role. In the first place, they are a value in themselves, a fundamental value implicit in the concept of an improving mind and part of a higher stage in human development. For Mill, in other words, freedom acquires value when individuals become aware of its vital role in promoting the improvement of mankind. This must be so since Mill states that the usefulness of those principles would depend "on whether mankind have by that time become aware" of the effects of coercive power on human nature. The second role of the principles of 'Liberty' is connected with the first. Because they have such a value they provide a basis for distinguishing between genuine authority and power. Mill's principles of 'Liberty', in other words, form part of those values in terms of which social action could be justified and the genuineness of authority established. In particular, only that piece of legislation would be described as being authoritative and progressive, rather than motivated by the power of vested interests and therefore reactionary, which could be shown to

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16. '<u>Autobiography</u>', p. 163.

be consistent with the concept of an improving human mind which has realized the importance of allowing freedom of individual expression.

Mill's letters abound with comments on British legislation which reflect such an approach. Perhaps a single lengthy excerpt indicating his reaction to the passing of the Catholic Emancipation bill in 1829 would suffice as an illustration. Mill described the tactics of the opponents of the bill as "disgraceful artifices" whilst its supporters were seen as the "leading minds" forming the vanguard of an advancing civilization. His remarks are all the more significant in view of his own strong anti-clericalism:

> It forms an era in civilization. It is one of those great events, which periodically occur, by which the institutions of a country are brought into harmony with the better part of the mind of that country - by which that which previously existed in the minds only, of the more intelligent portion only of the community, becomes the law of the land, and by consequence raises the whole of the community to its own level. The great advance in the national kind, until thus adopted by the government and incorporated in the institutions of the country, is the advance of only the leading minds, of those who already were furthest in advance.... This measure will bring forward the rear-guard of civilization: it will give a new direction to the opinions of those who never think for themselves, and who on that account can never be changed unless you change their masters and guides. The intelligent classes lead the government, and the government leads the stupid classes. -Besides all this, the alteration of so important and so old a law as that which excludes Catholics from political privileges, has given a shake to men's minds which has loosened all old prejudices, and will render them far more accessible to new ideas and to rational innovations on all other parts of our institutions.[17]

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17. Letter to G. D'Eichthal, 11th March 1829, Collected Works, Vol. XII, pp. 27-28.

This provides a good example of treatment of legislation on the basis of a distinction not merely between two conflicting groups of interests but, in Mill's view, between what constituted a group representing vested interests, or "worldly power", and a group representing ideas consistent with the most advanced concepts of the nature of the individual and his social relations, or what might be said to represent "wisdom and virtue". Furthermore, the example illustrates how freedom of the individual formed an integral part of those values which constituted "wisdom and virtue". Finally, it is also evident here that Mill emphasized strongly the need for an intellectual elite to influence both government and public and to promote the kind of legal provisions which would ensure the prevalence of what would be regarded as the most advanced ideas of an age.

It is with these views of Mill in mind that this study will attempt to examine his philosophy of education. For these views are not only part of the central core of his political philosophy but are crucial in reaching an understanding of his approach to the role of education and of his distance from the educational theories of the earlier utilitarians.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEED FOR EDUCATION

One of the principal concerns of the early utilitarians was the expansion of popular education in the simplest, most efficient and most immediately effective manner. They tended to be utilitarians not only in the philosophical but in the colloquial sense of the word as well. This is evident in the priority which Bentham gave to vocational training and to training in prudent behaviour so that people would "continue to be contented with their lot". Bentham advocated the kind of education that seemed to gear the individual more to social adjustment than to personal improvement. Education, he said, should aim at creating "capacities for happiness by forming tastes with the corresponding powers of gratification" and should teach pupils that "the condition they are bound to is as good as, i.e., as favourable to happiness as any other".[1]

With his practical and legalistic approach Bentham tended to regard literary and art subjects as educational frills unless they could be shown to have direct social utility. Thus, music might be taught in order to "occupy

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1. From the Manuscripts of Jeremy Bentham at University College, London, quoted in D.J. Manning, The Mind of Jeremy Bentham, Monographs in Politics, (London: Longmans, 1968) p. 107.

the vacuum of thought which might be filled up by drunkenness or mischief", but as far as poetry was concerned there was "no more reason for teaching it than chips or cards".[2] It did not concern him that the totality of his prescriptions for education might amount to no more than an attempt at "constructing a set of machines under the similitude of men"; happiness was the ultimate end of education: "Call them soldiers, call them monks, call them machines, so they were but happy ones, I should not care."[3]

James Mill retained a strong utilitarian approach to education but, compared to Bentham, his approach seems less narrow and legalistic. He admitted that the nature of happiness remained an open question and in bringing educational theory and psychology together he made what one scholar has described as "the first attempt at a completely scientific treatment of education".[4] Yet he was not free from the early utilitarian outlook on education. He subscribed to the cult of economic efficiency in education and was an ardent supporter of Lancaster's monitorial system. He applied the Lancastrian system in the education of his children and John Stuart Mill, who had to teach his younger sisters and brothers as he himself was learning, measured efficiency in non-econo-

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2. Ibid., p. 106.

3. Ibid., p. 107.

4. Cavenagh, F.A., (ed.), James and John Stuart Mill on Education, (Cambridge University Press, 1931) p. xi.

mic terms and condemned the system. He remarks:

> The teaching, I am sure, is very inefficient as teaching and I well know that the relations between teacher and taught is not a good moral discipline to either.[5]

John Stuart Mill's deviation from orthodox utilitarianism is reflected, as was suggested earlier, in his approach to education. Fundamentally, he retained a utilitarian emphasis on the influence of external circumstances in the education of the individual. Thus, in the opening remarks of his 'Inaugural Address', he states that education includes "whatever helps to shape the human being", i.e., "whatever we do for ourselves, and whatever is done for us by others, for the express purpose of bringing us somewhat nearer to the perfection of our nature" but also "the indirect effects produced on character and on human faculties,... by laws, by forms of government, by the industrial arts, by modes of social life,... by climate, soil, and local position".[6] To the extent that he retained a generally empirical approach in matters of education, John Stuart Mill remained close to the views of early utilitarians. But when one compares the aim of education that James Mill endorsed with the one his son expressed then the similarity becomes less obvious.

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5. Autobiography, p. 8.

6. Mill, J.S., 'Inaugural Address', Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, J.B. Schneewind (ed.), (New York: Collier Books, 1965), pp. 353-354; see also the chapter on 'Ethology', A System of Logic, pp. 596-606.

James Mill spoke directly in terms of achieving human happiness. Education he wrote, may be defined,

> the best employment of all the means which can be made use of, by man, for rendering the human mind to the greatest possible degree the cause of human happiness.[7]

When John Stuart Mill narrows down his definition he speaks of education as,

> the culture which each generation purposely gives to those who are to be its successors, in order to qualify them for at least keeping up, and if possible raising, the level of improvement which has been attained.[8]

While this definition does not necessarily contradict his father's it carries with it implications of a different sort and it does show John Stuart Mill's preoccupation with the quality of mankind. It projects a sense of history, of development and progress; it implies that education must contribute not merely to the social adjustment of the individual but also to his change for the better.

In his article on some of Mill's educational ideas, F.X. Roellinger[9] finds the fundamental deviation in John Stuart Mill's thought reflected in the fact that while Mill was at first an ardent supporter of the movement for popular education he became sceptical about the efficacy of such an approach and shifted his concern from popular to higher edu-

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7. Mill, James, 'James Mill's Article on Education', James & John Stuart Mill on Education, p. 1.

8. 'Inaugural Address', p. 354.

9. Roellinger, F.X., op. cit., p. 248.

cation. As Roellinger points out, Mill came to regard his father's faith that the basic literacy of the masses coupled with universal suffrage could lead to good government as being rather simplistic.[10]

From our point of view this shift has significant implications. For it meant that Mill had lost the faith of early utilitarians that a policy of expanding simple literacy would be adequate for the creation of good citizens and a good society. As was pointed out earlier, Mill had become very much aware of the fact that education, like any other aspect of social life, was subject to the intended manipulations and unintended influences of social authority. For him this meant that if changes leading to a desirable society were to come about they would have to come from the top; from the social and political leaders who provide the examples worthy of emulation, the values to be upheld, the attitudes to be adopted.

The shift reflects Mill's increasing concern with the quality of leadership and indicates that he became more and more preoccupied with the education of the middle and upper classes. The failure of these classes to provide the moral and intellectual leadership which Mill wished to see established testified to the inadequacy and inappropriateness of the kind of education they were receiving. As early as 1826,

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10. Autobiography, pp. 68-69.

the year when his famous emotional and intellectual crisis began and five years before the publication of 'The Spirit of the Age', he attacked the educational institutions for failing to provide the kind of education that the qualities of leadership demanded. He argued that those destined to become political leaders were given no opportunity to study subjects necessary for an understanding of social and political problems, such subjects as "the laws of human thought, and action, the principles of legislation, government and political economy". The institutions of higher education did everything to discourage the pursuit of such intellectual studies by awarding honours "exclusively to pursuits of a character diametrically opposite". In this way, students with "active minds" who aimed at "higher distinctions than that of being victor at a rowing match, or a horse race" were completely discouraged.[11]

His criticism of the universities in an essay he wrote in 1835 is in a similar vein and points out clearly the role he assigned to the universities. After suggesting that matters concerning public education, i.e., education dealing with "the common business of life", could be left to "the stimulus of individual interests", he argues that there is "an education of which it cannot be pretended that the

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11. Mill, J.S., 'Paper Currency and Commerical Distress', Essays on Economics and Society, Collected Works, Vol. IV, p. 112.

public are competent judges". It is "the education by which great minds are formed". He adds:

> To rear up minds with aspirations and faculties above the herd, capable of leading on their countrymen to greater achievements in virtue, intelligence and social well-being; to do this, and likewise so to educate the leisured classes of the community generally, that they may participate as far as possible in the qualities of these superior spirits, and be prepared to appreciate them, and follow in their steps - these are purposes, requiring institutions of education placed above dependence on the immediate pleasure of that very multitude whom they are designed to elevate. These are the ends for which endowed universities are desirable.[12]

In the above excerpt Mill is hinting not only at the need to educate an elite but also at the need to provide at the same time the means of recognizing and endorsing the authority of such an elite and its influence in society.

If there is a single end which could be said to be the function of a university to achieve, that end, says Mill, is to "keep alive philosophy". He accuses the English universities of failing to perform such a function with the result that in England "instead of the ardour of research, the eagerness for large and comprehensive inquiry" that one finds in France and Germany, there was "not a vestige of a reading and thinking public engaged in the investigation of truth as truth, in the prosecution of thought for the sake of thought". Instead, adds Mill,

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12. Mill. J.S., 'Professor Sedgwick's Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge', Dissertations and Discussions, Vol. I, (London: Parker, 1859), pp. 95-96.

> philosophy - not any particular school of philosophy, but philosophy altogether - speculation of any comprehensive kind, and upon any deep or extensive subject - has been falling more and more into distastefulness and disrepute among the educated classes of England.

This does not mean, writes Mill, that the universities had lost their prestige among the public. It does mean that their prestige was based completely on the wrong grounds; it was based on their capacity to produce individuals whose behaviour was socially acceptable - "English gentlemen" - and not astute thinkers and researchers who were devoted to the search for truth and knowledge. Mill adds:

> The universities then may flourish, though the pursuits which are the end and justification of the existence of universities decay. The teacher thrives and is in honour, while that which he affects to teach vanishes from among mankind.

The end result is that

> the celebrity of England, in the present day, rests upon her docks, her canals, her railroads. In intellect she is distinguished only for a kind of sober good sense, free from extravagance, but also void of lofty aspirations; for doing all those things which are best done where man most resembles a machine, with the precision of a machine.[13]

Clearly, as far as Mill was concerned, university education in England was a failure because the universities instead of being the guiding institutions they were supposed to be had become the servants of a public that placed an overriding emphasis on material progress. The materialistic outlook pervaded the entire range of social activity and social

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13. Ibid., pp. 96-99.

relations.

In another letter to D'Eichthal, Mill points out that the business mentality and the undue preoccupation with material well-being can undermine the proper function of government and can lead to the corruption of human intellect. In England, he says,

> where this idol 'production' has been set up and worshipped with incessant devotion for a century back,... the disproportionate importance attached to it lies at the root of all our worst national vices, corrupts the measures of our statesmen, the doctrines of our philosophers and hardens the minds of our people so as to make it almost hopeless to inspire them with any elevation either of intellect or of soul.

Therefore,

> a philosophy which makes production expressly the one end of the social union would render the only great social evil, of which there is much danger in the present state of civilization irremediable.[14]

Mill also argued that a social philosophy which emphasized worldly goods and "worldly power" succeeded only in promoting selfishness. Any social change which stressed the common good would require a "change of character" both "in the uncultivated herd who now compose the labouring classes, and in the immense majority of their employers". The difficulty lies "not in the essential constitution of human nature" but in the quality of education, as that term is understood in its widest sense. For, "education, habit, and the cultivation of the sentiments, will make a common man dig or

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14. Letter to G. D'Eichthal, 8th October 1829, p. 37.

weave for his country, as readily as fight for his country".[15] If, therefore, "interest in the common good is at present so weak a motive in the generality" it is because the individual is not provided with any opportunity or encouragement to assess the worthiness of his actions in terms of the social good; it is "because the mind is not accustomed to dwell on it as it dwells from morning till night on things which tend only to personal advantage".[16]

Mill tended to think that any movement which sought to reform society by attacking first the social structure as such or that tended to find ready solutions in the expansion of simple literacy was not likely to succeed. He thought, however, that any such movement would have some good effect. As he wrote:

> It is becoming more and more clearly evident to me that the mental regeneration of Europe must precede its social regeneration and also that none of the ways in which that mental regeneration is sought, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, Puseyism, Socialism, Chartism, Benthamism etc., will do, though doubtless they have all some element of truth and good in them.[17]

Indeed, he seemed to believe that all kinds of cooperative or socialistic experiments, whether successful or not, were bound to have an educative effect for the better.[18]

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15. Autobiography, p. 149.

16. Ibid.

17. Letter to R.B. Fox, 19th December 1842, Collected Works, Vol. XIII, pp. 563-564.

18. Autobiography, p. 150.

In any case, it was evident to Mill that if education were to help in the advance of the principle of utility, as he understood it, it could not do so by the spread of popular literacy alone. He argued that the upper classes had had literacy, leisure and other advantages and had shown "no increase of shining ability, and a very marked decrease of vigour and energy".[19] The object of education, he thought, had become distorted and instead of qualifying "the pupil for judging what is true or what is right", education encouraged him to

> think true what we think true, and right what we think right - that not the spirit in which the person's opinions are arrived at and held, but the opinions themselves, are the main point. This is the deep-seated error, the inveterate prejudice, which the real reformer of English education has to struggle against.[20]

Mill's point emerges clearly. Much more was required than the spread of popular literacy if education were to contribute to the regeneration of society. It was necessary to reform the attitudes toward learning and intellectual advancement of those who were already in positions of power and influence or belonged to a class whose opinions and attitudes were respected and followed, albeit on the wrong grounds according to Mill. This meant that attention had to be turned to the function of higher education.

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19. Mill, J.S., 'Civilization', Essays on Politics and Culture, p. 52.

20. Ibid., p. 69.

CHAPTER V

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

The shift in emphasis to higher education and the function which Mill expected the universities to perform are consistent both with the qualitative distinction he introduced in his utilitarianism and the elitist nature of a good deal of his political thought.

In his distinction between higher and lower pleasures Mill made the awareness of such a distinction part of the 'higher' pleasure. This awareness implied experience and knowledge as well as the intellectual capacity for self-examination and appraisal. Yet Mill's distinction is based on the assumption that anyone who had tasted the pleasure of intellectual pursuits was bound to agree that such pleasure was, indeed, qualitatively higher.[1] As he said:

> It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied and if the fool or the pig are of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.[2]

The Millian concept of social utility is predicated to the notion of the improvement of mankind in terms of the indivi-

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1. For a discussion of this point see K. Britton, op. cit., pp. 52-53 and M. Cowling, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

2. 'Utilitarianism', p. 260.

dual human mind. Consequently, the justification of an act in terms of its social utility must ultimately be made by those who are capable of assessing its social worthiness not in terms of the narrower material interests which a group or class may represent but in the wider, universal terms of the improvement of mankind, as that improvement is understood by those who have had the intellectual experience of a Socrates. For it was the universality of such an assessment which, for Mill, guaranteed the material disinterestedness of the judges.

On moral grounds, Mill associated the concept of the improvement of the human mind with a selfless approach to life and humanity by the individual. To repeat an earlier quotation:

> In an improving state of the human mind, the influences are constantly on the increase, which tend to generate in each individual a feeling of unity with all the rest; which if perfect, would make him never think of, or desire, any beneficial condition for himself, in the benefits of which they are not included.[3]

One of the advantages he saw in his 'Religion of Humanity' over the supernatural religions is that the former is "disinterested". He argued that

> it carries the thoughts and feelings out of the self, and fixes them on an unselfish object, loved and pursued as an end for its own sake.[4]

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3. Ibid., p. 286.

4. Mill, J.S., 'Utility of Religion', Essential Works of John Stuart Mill, Max Lerner (ed.), (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), pp. 424-425.

In the ideal body of political representatives envisaged by Mill it is not the sectional interests which that body may contain that provide it with authority. It is the knowledge and wisdom which its individual members bring with them and place at the service of the public that bestows genuine authority on a governing body. Mill states:

> As regards interests in themselves, whenever not identical with the general interest the less they are represented the better. What is wanted is a representation, not of men's differences of interest, but of differences in their intellectual points of view. Shipowners are to be desired in parliament, because they can instruct us about ships, not because they are interested in having protecting duties. We want from a lawyer in Parliament his legal knowledge, not his professional interest in the expensiveness and unintelligibiiity of the law.[5]

Mill then argued that the justification of social authority must be sought in individual intellectual advancement which is motivated primarly not by the desire for the improvement of one's material and social position but by one's concern for humanity. Such an approach is also consistent with his interpretation of the course of history. For he believed that every significant social change was preceded by changes not at the material but at the intellectual level. It was this change in intellectual direction that determined the future nature of society in its totality. Mill writes:

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5. Mill, J.S., 'Recent Writers on Reform', Essays on Politics and Culture, p. 352.

> Every considerable advance in material civilization has been preceeded by an advance in knowledge; and when any great social change has come to pass, either in the way of gradual development or of sudden conflict, it has had for its precursor a great change in the opinions and modes of thinking of society. Polytheism, Judaism, Christianity, Protestantism, the negative philosophy of modern Europe, and its positivist science - each of these has been a primary agent in making society what it was at each successive period, while society was but secondarily instrumental in making them, each of them being (so far as causes can be assigned for its existence) mainly an emanation not from the practical life of the period, but from the previous state of belief and thought.[6]

Society, of course, would always continue to be guided by some form of philosophy but whenever "the speculative propensity" had been weak one would find that "the intellectual progression has come to an early stand". Thus Mill reaches the conclusion that

> the order of human progression in all respects will mainly depend on the order of progression in the intellectual convictions of mankind.[7]

The implication of such an approach for education is that if education is to contribute to the improvement of mankind it must do so in a manner what would strengthen the "speculative propensity" since this is what encourages "intellectual progression" which in turn contributes to "the improvement of mankind". When Mill complained that the study of philosophy had lost ground, as was shown earlier, he did not mean non-normative philosophical analysis but rather the

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6. A System of Logic, pp. 641-642.

7. Ibid., p. 642.

consideration of the implications for humanity of the growth and accumulation of man's knowledge. He deplored the fact that philosophy, "speculation of any comprehensive kind, and upon any deep or extensive subject", had fallen into disrepute among the educated classes in England.[8] What he criticized was the fact that educated persons failed to consider the wider implications of the advance in knowledge in all fields of human endeavour. He thought that this was evidence of narrowness of approach in matters of social concern. What was required was the sort of general education that would encourage in the individual the consideration of different points of view. This position is made quite clear in Mill's 'Inaugural Address' where he advocated the study of various subjects precisely for that reason. He expected that a general education which would provide an insight into the problems of knowledge in various subjects could encourage in the individual the habit of considering the wider implications of his own area of concentration. Hence, the virtue that is to be found in professional education is to be measured by the extent to which it can ultimately be put to use for the public good and not merely for the promotion of individual or sectional interests which may be opposed to the general interest. A course of studies of a non-profes-

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8. 'Professor Sedgwick's Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge', p. 99.

sional nature could make the professionally-oriented individual aware of the wider cultural and social implications of professional activity. This is the essence of Mill's remarks about the usefulness of university education for the professional individual. Mill maintained that a university education should give individuals "not professional knowledge, but that which should direct the use of their professional knowledge". It should help "bring the light of general culture (stress added) to illuminate the technicalities of a special pursuit". Thus a lawyer who had received such a general education would tend to be a "philosophic" lawyer who would "demand" and would be "capable of apprehending, principles, instead of merely cramming (his) memory with details".[9]

The function of university education as envisaged by Mill was to serve the principle of utility as understood by him. In the search for a genuine social authority such an education would help satisfy two necessary conditions. On the one hand, it would create a public capable of appreciating the values inherent in the concept of genuine authority and able to recognize social leadership based on such authority. On the other hand, it would increase the number of in-

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9. 'Inaugural Address', p. 355. Cf. "Education is the acquisition of the art of the utilisation of knowledge". - A.N. Whitehead, The Aims of Education (New York: A Mentor Book, 1957), p. 16.

dividuals in positions of prominence who would be fit for such leadership and capable of exercising influence in society based on "wisdom and virtue".

Mill realized that an authority which claims as its foundation the improvement of the human mind must be provided with a citizenry capable of assessing the validity of its claim. He argued that the combination of being acquainted with a wide range of subjects to such a point "so as to have a true conception of the subject in its great features" and knowing "some one subject with the completeness required by those who make it their principal occupation" would create "an enlightened public". He explained that it would be a public of

> cultivated intellects, each taught by its attainments in its own province what real knowledge is, and knowing enough of other subjects to be able to discern who are those that know them better.

In this way, Mill adds,

> the elements of the more important studies being widely diffused, those who have reached the higher summits find a public capable of appreciating their superiority, and prepared to follow their lead. It is thus, too, that minds are formed capable of guiding and improving public opinion on the greater concerns of practical life.[10]

However, Mill was not thinking in non-political terms alone for he continued the above assertion with a statement that reflects his insistence that social and political authority should be based on a combination of intellectual excellence

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10. 'Inaugural Address', p. 362.

and general education. He thought that "government and civil society are the most complicated of all subjects accessible to the human mind". Consequently, he argued, to deal with these subjects competently one

> requires not only a general knowledge of the leading facts of life, both moral and material, but an understanding exercised and disciplined in the principles and rules of sound thinking, up to a point which neither the experience of life, nor any one science or branch of knowledge, affords.[11]

Ideally then, authority should be in the hands of those who have had a broad educational foundation, those who have had the opportunity to come into contact with as many points of view as possible. For, in Mill's opinion, it is just such a contact that is likely to lead to the adoption of the detached and personally disinterested approach that is envisaged in the principle of utility.

It is this educational prerequisite that contributes substantially to the elitist character of some of Mill's political prescriptions. This is clearly demonstrated in his support of an electoral system of proportional representation based on educational qualifications. In this he allocated votes on a rising scale giving the largest number to those who, he thought, would be forced by reason of their occupation or education into the consideration of many varied and complex issues and points of view. Starting with one

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11. Ibid., pp. 362-363.

vote for the unskilled labourer, Mill suggests two votes for the skilled worker "whose occupation requires an exercised mind and a knowledge of some of the laws of external nature". Three votes to be allocated to a foreman who is expected to have some "general culture, and some moral as well as intellectual qualities". Three or four votes were to be given to a "farmer, manufacturer or trader, who requires a still larger range of ideas and knowledge, and the power of guiding and attending to a great number of various operations at once". Five or six votes to be awarded to "a person freely elected member of any learned society" or "a member of any profession requiring a long, accurate, and systematic mental cultivation", which in Mill's view included lawyers, physicians, clergymen, literary persons, artists and public servants. Finally, "a graduate of any University" would get "at least" as many as the professional individual.[12]

Mill was no doubt aware that such a gradation in itself might reflect intellectual capacity only and not necessarily moral virtue. Yet he provided a rather weak justification for the acceptance of his position on this point by simply stating that it is difficult to test moral worth directly. Although "moral worth" is "more important even than intellec-

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12. Mill, J.S., 'Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform', Essays on Politics and Culture, p. 317.

tual, it is not so easy to find an available test".[13] Nevertheless, he felt that a system of graded educatioal qualifications would have some relation to the individual's potential for public good and would thus allow the individual to exercise a degree of social influence "proportioned" to such potential. He argued that, at least,

> education can be tested directly or by much stronger presumptive evidence than is afforded by income or payment of taxes, or the quality of the house which a person inhabits.[14]

It is important to note that Mill's endorsement of educational qualifications for electoral purposes was made in the face of other suggestions which placed a premium on property and income.[15] As such the endorsement is consistent with his view on the need to consider different intellectual points of view and on the function of general education.

As was pointed out earlier, Mill's preoccupation with higher education was motivated by his search for an authority which, in his view, would be morally just by recognizing the superiority of man's intellectual over his material progress. Mill was aware that the adoption of such a posi-

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13. Ibid., p. 315, Moral evaluation is still beset by this difficulty; see, for example, N.C. Bhattacharya, 'Objectivity and Moral Evaluation', Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society, Vol. 25 (1969), pp. 34-37.

14. 'Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform', pp. 317-318.

15. See 'Recent Writers on Reform', pp. 334-367.

tion in political philosophy meant the rejection of unqualified support for a democratic system of government. This he admitted and declared that his position was likely to remain the same as long as education remained "wretchedly imperfect" and had no ameliorating effect on the masses.[16] It would seem to be quite reasonable, therefore, to conclude that for Mill democracy fails because it assumes that men are equal in those moral and intellectual qualities which are necessary for the exercise of political power.[17] Yet to leave his elitism at this point is to overlook his conception of history and his stress on the progressive development of the human mind. For it is essential to remember that his elitism was not dictated by a belief in the absolute inequality of men but by the conviction that such inequality was determined by historical and social circumstances and as such was not beyond elimination.

In a letter to Thomas Carlyle, for instance, Mill states that he did believe that the good he saw in a few did not derive, as he put it,

> from any peculiarity of nature, but from the more perfect development of capacities and powers common to us all - and that the whole race was destined, at however remote a period either of individual or collective existence, to resemble the best specimen of it

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16. Autobiography, p. 148.

17. This is the conclusion reached by J.H. Burns, 'J.S. Mill and Democracy 1829-61', Mill" A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 327.

he himself had known.[18] In his essay on 'Endowments' Mill argued that men are not unequal but are born into circumstances of social inequality which are very difficult for the poor to overcome.[19] In his essay on 'Utilitarianism' he expressed the view that the movement of history indicated that an ultimate state of complete social equality was inevitable.[20] Mass democracy was not the most appropriate form of government, Mill believed, because mankind was not ready at that historical juncture for a social system which made such high demands on the individual's sense of equality. The struggle to get on in life and acquire social and material power at the expense of others was neither the normal nor the ideal state of human life. At best it could be seen as one of "the disagreeable symptoms of one of the phases of industrial progress". The state of affairs in which human nature can best flourish is one in which the pressures, stresses and fears that accompany such material progress are removed.[21]

In spite of all these remarks which are related to his conception of history, however, Mill's political prescriptions do contain an element of elitism. This elitism is based on

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18. Letter to Thomas Carlyle, 9th March 1833, Collected Works, Vol. XII, pp. 145-146.

19. Mill, J.S., 'Endowments', Essays on Economics and Society, Collected Works, Vol. V, p. 628.

20. 'Utilitarianism', p. 285.

21. Mill, J.S., Principles of Political Economy, (London: Longman's, Green, 1909), pp. 748-749.

an educational foundation which stresses the intellectual qualities of man. Any attempt, therefore, to reconcile this elitism with Mill's liberalism requires a clear understanding of this educational foundation. Two crucial aspects, in particular, must be analyzed and their role clearly understood. The first concerns the association that Mill makes between educational attainment and social and political influence. If such an association is to be made at all consistent with his liberalism and individualism it must be shown that he allows for the kind of educational provisions which would make the possibility of achieving such social influence open to all individuals. It is in this light, for instance, that his support for compulsory secular education must be seen. Yet this very provision if not properly understood can be interpreted as being contrary to the true spirit of freedom and can lead to charges of illiberality. Thus, one can reach the conclusion that in the final analysis J.S. Mill's individual does not enjoy perfect freedom.[22] The second aspect of this educational foundation that needs to be analyzed concerns the nature of intellectualism that Mill emphasized. What is crucial in this connection is whether or not this intellectualism in education can be understood only as a narrow type of rationalism which attaches no significance to

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22. This is the conclusion reached by E.G. West, op. cit., p. 142.

'non-rational' idioms of human expression. One interpretation, for instance, sees Mill as placing an excessive emphasis on rationality to the extent that his liberalism appears to be little more than an attempt to ensure the supremacy of a rational elite.[23] If it can be shown that this intellectualism in education is not intended to mean that the rational aspects of human expression should be encouraged at the expense of the 'non-rational' then Mill's elitism may not be as restrictive and narrow with respect to the growth and development of the individual as it might appear. An understanding of these aspects of Mill's educational thought is crucial to an understanding of his concept of freedom and these we shall examine in the following chapters.

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23. This is the general conclusion reached by M. Cowling, op. cit.

CHAPTER VI

FREEDOM, INDIVIDUALISM AND EDUCATION

I

A generally-accepted concept of freedom or liberty[1] in society is no less elusive than is the case with the concept of authority. One difficulty stems from the fact that in referring to the freedom of the individual there is a tendency to identify it with a concept of 'sovereignty' of the individual and to imply that an individual can only be free if he is independent of all others.[2] This concept, which is similar to what Sir Isaiah Berlin calls negative freedom, is con-

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1. There appears to be no difference of substance between these two terms. It might be interesting as suggested by Dr. N.C. Bhattacharya, to consider the possibility of restricting the term 'liberty' to social or political liberty and the term 'freedom' to individual freedom. However, in the literature on this subject and in the context of the present study the two terms are used synonymously; see B. Crick, 'Freedom as Politics', Philosophy, Politics and Society (Third Series) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), p. 202 and M. Cranston, Freedom: A New Analysis (London: Longmans, 1967), p. 15.

2. For a discussion of this and other concepts see: Hannah Arendt, 'Freedom and Politics', Freedom and Serfdom, A Hunold (ed.), (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Reidel, 1961) pp. 191-217; Sir Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', Political Philosophy, A Quinton (ed.), (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 141-152; David Spitz, The Liberal Idea of Freedom (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1964); C.J. Friedrich (ed.), Nomos IV: Liberty (New York: Atherton Press, 1962); article on 'Freedom' by P.H. Partridge in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol. 3.

cerned primarily with stressing the element of non-interference with what may be regarded as the individual's private affairs. It tends to minimize the need for 'externally-imposed' conditions for the attainment of freedom and tends to maximize the area of activity described as private. One consequence inherent, perhaps, in this concept is the tendency to underestimate the degree of interdependence in modern industrial society and to overlook the role of socialization and social interaction in the formulation of values. A realistic concept of individual freedom cannot assume the existence of a social 'near-vacuum' and define such freedom merely in terms of the absence of positive constraints, i.e., in terms of 'freedom from'; it must also consider the case of 'freedom for', i.e., consider the presence of conditions which allow for the performance or achievement by the individual of what is thought to be good or desirable in society.[3]

Our concern here is to consider whether Mill's concept of freedom can be interpreted, as some writers tend to, as exclusively a negative one. If the attainment of freedom by the individual is contingent upon the attainment of certain other positive conditions then the concept of freedom cannot be defined in a purely negative sense. Sir Isaiah Berlin,

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3. See Crick, op. cit.; Arendt, 'Freedom and Politics', L.A. Reid, Philosophy and Education, (London: Heinemann, 1966), p. 109.

for example, in dealing with the concept of negative freedom refers to Mill's ideas as an example of such a concept;[4] yet in referring to Mill's emphasis on the freedom of enlightened and civilized men Berlin writes:

> He (Mill) thought that others like them could be educated, and, when they were educated, would be entitled to make choices, and that these choices must not, within certain limits, be blocked or directed by others. He did not merely advocate education and forget the freedom to which it would entitle the educated ..., or press for total freedom, and forget that without adequate education it would lead to chaos and, as a reaction to it, a new slavery.... He demanded both.[5]

What is involved here is a clear case of positive freedom, i.e., freedom contingent upon the attainment of a certain educational standard. Furthermore, that educational requirement by Mill is not a vague and non-prescriptive one but a requirement which emphasizes education of a certain sort, namely, intellectual education.[6] The nature of Mill's concept of freedom then is not as clear as Berlin seems to suggest. In view of the educational requirements that Mill emphasizes it would seem more realistic to interpret it as containing a certain element of positivism sufficient, perhaps, to bring it closer to a form of positive freedom which Berlin himself

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4. Berlin, op. cit., pp. 141-148.

5. Berlin, I., 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life', Four Essays on Liberty (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 197-198.

6. For a criticism of Berlin's concept of negative freedom see Crick, op. cit., p. 199.

discusses. Berlin suggests that in one form of positive freedom, in which more reliatnce is placed on rational persuasion than the use of force, the justification for any element of coercion involved in pursuing a certain social goal is given on the grounds that if the individual were "enlightened" he would himself agree on the desirability of such a goal. In this form, says Berlin, an individual while not in a position to assess the desirability of the goal or the appropriateness of the relevant legal enactments willingly accepts the element of coercion or interference in his personal affairs. In this way, he could then be described as being free. This suggests a rather mild form of positivism for the emphasis on the willing acceptance by the individual of a law or 'state of affairs' in society implies a limit in the legitimate means of coercion at the disposal of the authority. In this way, a certain compulsory measure which might appear to be inconsistent with a concept of negative liberty might be regarded as quite consistent with a concept of positive freedom if that measure is seen as furthering a generally-accepted social goal. In the case of Mill, for instance, if the support of compulsory secular education emphasizing intellectual development seems to be inconsistent with a notion of negative freedom[7] it ceases to be so once

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7. This would seem to be the notion held by E.G. West, op. cit., who criticizes Mill for supporting compulsory secular education on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the idea of individual freedom.

it is read as part of a social context which provides the conditions necessary for an increase in the number of those enabled to enjoy a greater freedom of action: conditions such as awareness of alternatives, of the possibility of choices and of the consequences proceeding from such choices.

In the light of the preceding discussion it would seem more realistic to assume that Mill's concept of freedom entails the imposition of certain positive conditions without which the attainment of a state of freedom by the individual in society is not possible. These positive conditions are fundamentally of an educational nature and appear to be incompatible with an interpretation of Mill's position as implying only negative freedom. Any assessment of Mill's emphasis on the freedom of the individual, therefore, requires a close examination of these educational conditions. In particular, it is necessary to examine, on the one hand, those educational measures Mill suggested which are more directly related to his political prescriptions and, on the other, the nature of intellectualism that Mill emphasizes in his educational thought. The remaining parts of this chapter will deal with the former aspect of these educational conditions.

II

The emphasis on intellectualism in education and the pursuit of general studies at the level of higher education

imply a degree of leisure and freedom from financial concerns which, without some appropriate positive measures, could be regarded as beyond the reach of the vast majority of citizens. Yet Mill attached great importance to such an education with respect to training in citizenship and it is necessary to see if Mill did envisage the need for some provisions which would make the attainment of such an education a little easier for most citizens. In this brief section, we shall refer to those economic measures Mill suggested which are related to the creation of conditions favourable to the expansion of intellectual education. Our primary concern is not to assess the feasibility of any measures he may have suggested but to establish whether he did, indeed, suggest any.

In discussing measures for the improvement of the material conditions of wage-earners Mill suggested "a twofold action, directed simultaneously upon their (wage-earners') intelligence and their poverty". First, "an effective national education of the children of the labouring class" was required. Secondly, it was necessary to introduce "a system of measures which shall... extinguish extreme poverty for a while generation".[8] With regard to the first, he argued that intellectual education for the mass of the people at that historical juncture should aim at cultivating "common sense". This, he thought, was necessary in order "to qualify them

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8. Principles of Political Economy, p. 380.

for forming a sound practical judgment of the circumstances by which they are surrounded". To Mill this was the "indispensable ground work on which education must rest" and the diffusion of "such knowledge as would qualify them to judge the tendencies of their actions" would give the working classes some insight into the operations of the labour market and its effects in a market economy. This would help create a public opinion among such classes which would be based on some knowledge and understanding of the issues relating to their economic condition.[9]

With respect to the need to eliminate poverty, Mill argued that sufficient leisure and comfort were required because "education is not compatible with extreme poverty". Therefore some means must be found of raising the working classes "to a state of tolerable comfort, and maintaining them in it until a new generation grows up".[10] At one point he stated that he had "even ceased to think that a leisured class, in the ordinary sense of the term, is an essential constituent of the best form of society". He thought that what was essential was that "society at large should not be overworked, nor over-anxious about the means of subsistence.[11]

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9. Ibid., pp. 380-381.

10. Ibid., p. 381.

11. Letter to John Austin, 13th April 1847, Collected Works, Vol. XIII, p. 713.

Mill's emphasis on individualism prevented him from endorsing any form of direct assistance that would tend to strengthen the dependence of one individual on another. Thus, he referred contemptuously to those members of the working classes who believed "that it is other people's business to take care of them".[12] He also stated that in a discussion on measures to help the poor he would support the view that greater good can be achieved through "indirect" means by "stimulating and guiding the energy and prudence of the people themselves".[13] Specifically, he suggested such things as colonization and the distribution of common lands to the poor[14] and thought that a redistribution of income through inheritance taxes and a reduction in the rate of population growth would also help.[15]

What is significant for our purposes in these arguments and suggestions is the fact that Mill was aware that only the adoption of some large-scale plan which would raise the general standard of living within a reasonably short period of time would provide the proper social foundation for what he regarded as the best kind of education. His suggestions re-

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12. Letter to H.S. Chapman, 8th November 1844, Collected Works, Vol. XIII, p. 641.

13. Letter to MacVey Napier, 20th November, 1844, Collected Works, Vol. XIII, p. 645.

14. Principles of Political Economy, pp. 381-384.

15. Letter to John Austin, 13th April 1847, p. 713.

flect his intent to use a national system of education at the elementary level as part of a programme of reform which would establish a social environment conducive to further learning. It should be borne in mind that the leisure, comfort and education that Mill wished to see established for the lower income groups were meant primarily as a means towards the intellectual improvement of the individual and not merely as a basis for further material advancement. This would be consistent with what was demonstrated in the earlier part of this study. It would also be consistent with Mill's view that sufficient material progress had been achieved by the middle of the nineteenth century to allow for a more equitable distribution of wealth which would bring about an all-round improvement in the quality of life, including intellectual improvement.[16]

III

Mill was convinced that the increasing experience that members of the lower income groups were beginning to receive

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16. Principles of Political Economy, pp. 749-750. Certain aspects in Mill's economic theory, such as his theory of distribution, are socialistic and cooperative in nature and as such are consistent with Mill's arguments presented in this section. For an examination of the socialistic aspects of Mill's economic thought see L. Rogin, The Meaning and Validity of Economic Theory (New York: Harper, 1956), pp. 281-288; see also, E. Roll, A History of Economic Thought (London: Faber, 1950) pp. 335-369 and W.J. Barber, A History of Economic Thought (London: Penguin, 1967), pp. 94-106. Mill's essays on 'Socialism' appeared in the Fortnightly Reviews, 1879.

in many aspects of political life together with the growth in the various means of communication and transportation could have only desirable educational effects.

As was shown earlier, his objection to the leadership of the upper classes was based on their assumption of superiority of culture and intellect which, in fact, was no longer in evidence. On the one hand, the upper classes had used their power of influence and their privileged positions in society "in the interest of their own selfishness, and have indulged their self-importance in despising" those who had to work under them.[17] On the other hand, the social effect of industrial progress, the expansion in the means of communication, the extension of the electoral franchise, all had tended to give the lower income groups a degree of independence which had began to undermine the prestige and social influence of the upper income groups. Mill thought that there was a marked growth of self-awareness among members of lower income groups who had began to demand greater social equality. This meant that members of such groups would no longer be satisfied with the kind of authoritarian treatment which aimed at keeping them at the lower levels of the social scale. It meant, he argued, that

> whatever advice, exhortation, or guidance is held out to the labouring classes, must henceforth be tendered to them as equals, and accepted with their eyes open.

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17. Principles of Political Economy, p. 754.

> The prospect of the future depends on the degree in which they can be made rational beings.[18]

To Mill this trend towards greater social equality was irreversible and any efforts by upper income groups to contain it and maintain social control through the control of education and through religious exhortation were doomed to failure. He argued:

> Some among the higher classes flatter themselves that these tendencies may be counteracted by moral and religious education (but) the poor will not much longer accept morals and religion of other people's prescribing.[19]

The significance of the new and powerful means of socialization and informal education which had by that time become available was very evident to Mill. He thought that "the spontaneous education going on in the minds of the multitude" would be "greatly accelerated and improved" by such things as "newspapers and political tracts", "the institutions for lectures and discussion, the collective deliberations on questions of common interest, the trade unions, the political agitation". He maintained that such things would "serve to awaken public spirit, to diffuse variety of ideas among the mass, and to excite thought and reflection in the more intelligent".[20] The end result, it seemed to Mill, would be

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18. Ibid., p. 757.

19. Ibid., p. 756.

20. Ibid., pp. 757-758.

an increased individual self-assertion and independence among the masses. This independence would manifest itself, in terms of attitudes to authority, by a change in what would be regarded as authoritative. Instead of mere social power and social prestige, knowledge and intellect would tend to become the point of recognition of genuine authority. To use the expressions of the 'Spirit of the Age', social influence based on "wisdom and virtue" would tend to become stronger than social influence derived from "worldly power". The individual citizens would "feel respect for superiority of intellect and knowledge, and defer much to the opinions, on any subject, or those whom they think well acquainted with it". This sort of deference, he thought, was perfectly consistent with individual independence because "such deference is grounded in human nature".[21]

However, Mill did not imagine that the informal education referred to above would in itself have a sufficiently strong liberating effect to bring about the improvement of the masses. It has to be supported by well-organized formal education, and he was determined that no efforts should be made to counteract the liberating tendency of education by controlling and manipulating formal education. This is an important point to bear in mind in examining his statements and arguments on formal education. Mill argued that the bene-

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21. Ibid., pp. 758-759.

fits to be derived from those things which are not simply useful "in ministering to inclinations, nor in serving the daily uses of life" but from "those things which are chiefly useful as tending to raise the character of human beings" may not be obvious to everyone. Certainly, "the uncultivated cannot be competent judges of cultivation". Therefore, he concluded,

> any well-intentioned and tolerably civilized government ... should... be capable of offering better education and better instruction to the people, than the greater number of them would spontaneously demand.[22]

Mill supported compulsory elementary education on two specific grounds. On the one hand, such education was desriable because there are "certain primary elements and means of knowledge" that should be acquired by everyone in the community at an early age. On the other hand, such education is likely to strengthen the individual's degree of independence and as such it is likely to contribute also towards the improvement of his mind. Such education "strengthens as well as enlarges the active faculties" and "its effect on the mind is favourable to the spirit of independence".[23]

In view of the above points, a failure on the part of the parents to provide such an education should be regarded as a failure both in their duty towards their children and in

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22. Ibid., p. 953.

23. Ibid., pp. 954-955.

their obligations towards the other members of the community who are liable to suffer from the lack of education of their fellow citizens.[24] Any objections to such an argument on the grounds of interference with personal liberty became, for Mill, one example of "misplaced notions of liberty" which "prevent moral obligations on the part of parents from being recognized, and legal obligations from being imposed".[25] Mill argues that to fail to provide a child with "instruction and training for its mind, is a moral crime, both against the unfortunate offspring and against society".[26] It is therefore one of society's "solemn obligations" to make certain that a basic education is available to everyone. This is all the more important since the intelligent use of the franchise must depend on individuals who have "acquired the commonest and most essential requisites for taking care of themselves".[27]

Given the acceptance of the above obligations the financial means for meeting these obligations must be made available to all citizens. The alternatives Mill sees are those between an education financed by government and an

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24. Ibid., p. 954.

25. Mill, J.S., 'On Liberty', Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Essay on Bentham, pp. 241-242.

26. Ibid., p. 239.

27. Mill, J.S., Considerations on Representative Government, (Chicago: Gateway, 1962), p. 171.

education relying on voluntary charity, between, as he most significantly put it, "interference by government, and interference by associations of individuals, subscribing their own money for the purpose".[28] In other words, once one accepts the principle of compulsory education "interference" becomes unavoidable. The question resolves itself into one of choice between sources of "interference".

Mill rejected the possibility of complete reliance, in terms of total control of education, on either of these two sources. On the one hand, to consider public education, "an education established and controlled by the state" would be nothing more than "a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another". Therefore, such education, he argued,

> should only exist, if it exist at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence.[29]

A government should not exercise any form of monopoly in education. It should establish schools and colleges but it should not make any attempts to place such public institutions in an advantageous position vis-a-vis private ones. The only monopoly that Mill seemed to allow a public authority to exercise was to require "from all the people that they

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28. Principles of Political Economy, p. 955.

29. 'On Liberty', p. 239.

shall possess instruction in certain things" without "prescribing to them how or from whom they shall obtain it".[30] Yet Mill must have realized that publicly established institutions would be freer than private ones from financial difficulties and would thus have an advantage over the latter. For he argues that public institutions would have the opportunity to concentrate on providing "models of good education" something that the private institutions, which financed their operations and remunerated their teachers on the basis of the "trading principle", had failed to do. Since people, in their ignorance on matters of education, simply followed what was fashionable, "it must be made the fashion to receive a really good education". This is what public institutions and the granting of endowments and scholarships would help achieve.[31]

On the other hand, to consider now the private schools, education given on a voluntary or private basis is open to the influence and control of sectional interests and as such it had been proven, for Mill, to be inadequate both "in quantity" and "in quality".[32] Mill's opinion on this point should be read in the light of all his objections to any efforts by sectional interests to counteract what was to him a tendency towards the improvement of the human mind. Thus,

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30. Principles of Political Economy, p. 956.

31. 'Endowments', pp. 622-625.

32. Principles of Political Economy, pp. 955-956.

his insistence that a system of national education should be secular[33] must not be viewed only as related to matters of knowledge but must also be read in the light of his statements about the temporal powers of the organized church. His criticism of the Church of England, for instance, was that it had lost its spiritual independence when it became a state church and, as a result, "sunk... into an integral part, or a kind of appendage of the aristocracy". Its moral influence, therefore, "was merely a portion of the general moral influence of temporal superiors". People adhered to it, maintained Mill, simply because it was "the religion of their political superiors" and as the influence of the latter declined so did the people's "adherence to the established church".[34] For Mill, the loss of spiritual independence that the overemphasis of the church's temporal powers implied was bound to reflect on the quality of the teaching that such a church was likely to sanction. He thought that the test of independence should be applied not merely to the doctrines but to the qualifications of the clergy "as teachers, and to the spirit in which they teach". He explained:

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33. Letter to C. Dilke, 28th February 1870, and Letter to T.H. Huxley, 18th August 1865, Letters of John Stuart Mill, H.S.R. Elliot (ed.), (London: Longmans, Green, 1910) Vol. II, pp. 243-244 and pp. 43-44 respectively also Letter to W.J. Fox, dated End of 1849, Vol. I, pp. 150-151.

34. 'The Spirit of the Age', p. 40.

> When you give a man a diploma as a physician, you do not bind him to follow a prescribed method; you merely assure yourself of his being duly acquainted with what is known or believed on the subject and of his having competent powers of mind. I would do the same with clergymen.[35]

Mill was not objecting to religious teaching as such or the teaching of anything related to matters of religion. He was objecting to the indoctrinating that seemed to be inevitably attached to any religious study. He asks:

> Why should it be impossible, that information of the greatest value, on subjects connected with religion, should be brought before the student's mind; that he should be acquainted with so important a part of the national thought, and of the intellectual labours of past generations, as those relating to religion, without being taught dogmatically the doctrines of any church or sect?[36]

All the preceding points illustrate Mill's argument in support of compulsory secular education at the elementary level and his justification for introducing this positivist element in his concept of liberty. It was essential to Mill that there should be a system of public compulsory secular education to ensure that those trends in society which he described as "spontaneous education" and which he saw as contributing to the improvement of human nature would be enhanced and not undermined. Such trends would be undermined, Mill felt, by leaving education completely in private hands where it would face all the dangers inherent in inadequate

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35. Letter to J. Martineau, 26th, 1825, Collected Works, Vol. XII, p. 264.

36. 'Inaugural Address', p. 399.

financial support and the pursuit of material power. It was necessary, therefore, to provide for some government interference in order to ensure that a good education was available to all and that models of such good education would help raise the general standard of education to a satisfactory level.

To leave matters at this point, however, is not enough. For, Mill must be shown to have made some provisions, at least, which would enable members of the low income groups to proceed beyond the level ofelementary education. If education was, for Mill, the only authoritative basis for exerting influence in society then he should have given some consideration to the availability of means for reaching the highest levels of education for all social groups. For instance, with reference to his educational qualifications for electoral purposes, if the unskilled labourer were to have the opportunity to raise his influence at the polls and not be condemned to the single vote which Mill allotted him then there must be some provision which would allow him to do so without having to acquire a formal university or professional qualification. Furthermore, the nature of the educational content must be such as not to reflect a class or sectional bias which might discourage an attempt at improving one's educational qualifications.

In the first place, Mill relies on the idea of public

examinations open to all.[37] He envisaged some system of public examinations at various levels which would be free from government control except in one aspect affecting the nature of content. Apart from the compulsory aspect at the minimum elementary level such examinations would be voluntary. He suggested, for instance, that in the case of educational qualifications for electoral purposes a plurality of votes should be granted not only to those who possessed certificates of professional, vocational or university education but to anyone who passed a certain examination. He proposed:

> There ought to be an organization of voluntary examinations throughout the country... at which any person whatever might present himself, and obtain from impartial examiners, a certificate of his possessing the acquirements which would entitled him to any number of votes, up to the largest allowed to one individual.[38]

Similarly, he thought that a system of open public examinations would tend to ensure that no undue advantage would be

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37. It has been suggested that Mill's ideas on this point are reflected in the emphasis on examinations which is evident in the recommendations of four Royal Commissions on education in the middle nineteenth century; see W.H.G. Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English Education (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965) p. 129. Public examinations were also instituted in various parts of the British Empire and Mill must have had some direct influence here. He served in the East India House from 1826 to 1858 and was involved in decisions affecting matters of education; see. D.P. Sinha, The Educational Policy of the East India Company in Bengal to 1854 (Calcutta: Punthi Partak, 1964) p. 62.

38. 'Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform', p. 317.

conferred to those holding professional certificates or degrees "other than the weight which may be attached to their testimony by public opinion".[39]

Secondly, Mill was aware that in such examinations some public control of content was unavoidable but his justification for allowing it is given not in the name of exercising positive influence and interference in matters of opinion but, on the contrary, as a means of ensuring that such positive influence is avoided. The way to ensure this, he argued, was to make certain that the content on which such examinations were based was strictly factual. He explained:

> To prevent the State from exercising, through these arrangements, an improper influence over opinion, the knowledge required for passing an examination (beyond the instrumental parts of knowledge such as languages and their use) should, even in the higher classes of examinations, be confined to facts and positive science exclusively. The examination on religion, politics, or the disputed topics, should not turn on the truth or falsehood of opinions, but on the matter of fact that such and such an opinion is held, on such grounds, by such authors, or schools, or churches.[40]

Similarly, in associating the extension of the franchise with the expansion of education he referred to subjects which could be treated on a strictly factual basis. He said:

> It would be eminently desirable that other things besides reading, writing, and arithmetic, could be made necessary to the suffrage; that some knowledge of the conformation of the earth, its natural and political divisions, the elements of general history,

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39. 'On Liberty', p. 241.

40. Ibid., pp. 240-241.

> of the history and institutions of their own country, could be required from all electors.[41]

He thought that in this way people would be in a position to base their arguments on some factual knowledge which had been empirically and scientifically established and not on other people's opinions. At the same time he regarded such knowledge as the best guarantee against the use of public examinations by a public authority for the exercise of control over thought and opinion; in his view, this measure would ensure that there would be no interference with the individual's independence of mind. As he wrote:

> All attempts by the State to bias the conclusions of the citizens on disputed subjects are evil; but it may very properly offer to ascertain and certify that a person possesses the knowledge requisite to make his conclusions, on any given subject, worth attending to.[42]

Clearly, Mill realized that members of the low income groups should be provided with the opportunity to gain respect and authority in society through the attainment of a recognized educational standard above the required minimum. It is important to bear these points in mind. For it must be emphasized that our concern is not with the epistemological aspects of this insistence on factual knowledge. We are concerned with its significance in matters of social relations, i.e., in matters of communication among individuals and of

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41. Considerations on Representative Government, p. 171.

42. 'On Liberty', p. 241.

consideration and understanding of other points of view. Factual knowledge in these terms seems to be the only kind of knowledge which, according to Mill, could be objectively tested and whose acquisition at a given time could be objectively certified. This is not to imply that knowledge which could not be described as factual Mill regarded as having no educational value; it does imply that the acquisition of such knowledge could not be tested or certified in the same way as factual knowledge.

One general conclusion about Mill's educational provisions is quite clear. It is that Mill failed to think through some significant consequences of these provisions. These provisions cannot be described as strongly positivistic and in his effort to allow the individual as much freedom from interference as possible Mill suggested measures the implementation of which could easily fail to have the desired effect. In the first place, he fails to elaborate on what those "certain primary elements and means of knowledge" which should be acquired at an early age really are. One is left to assume that they consist of the three Rs and little else. There are no provisions for testing attitudes and approaches to learning itself. Such attitudes may encourage or hinder a desire for further learning.

Secondly, his provisions with reference to finance remain somewhat vague. He stated that the publicly-supported schools should not be given any undue advantage over private

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Secondly, his provisions with reference to finance remain somewhat vague. He stated that the publicly-supported schools should not be given any undue advantage over private

ones but it is rather difficult to see how this could be avoided in the case of financing. His own suggestion that the publicly-supported schools would serve as "models of good education" implied that these schools would have better opportunities for experimentation and improvement.

Thirdly, Mill says very little about the criteria for selecting public examiners and as to who will do the selecting. In a discussion on public examinations for civil servants he suggested that such examinations should be "conducted by persons not engaged in politics, and of the same class and quality with the examiners for honours at the Universities". "This", he added, "would probably be the best plan under any system".[43] These remarks give some indication of what Mill might have in mind about public examinations generally but they are rather inadequate especially in view of the importance he attached to all kinds of public examinations.

Fourthly, Mill seems to give little attention to the implications for questions of methodology of his insistence that public examinations should be based on factual knowledge alone. This again is related to the question of attitudes towards learning and his criticism of cramming only serves to emphasize a rather serious inconsistency of thought on this point. He criticized the extent to which education had become merely cram and wrote:

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43. 'Thoughts on Parliamentary Reform', pp. 276-277.

> Modern education is all cram - Latin cram, mathematical cram, literary cram, political cram, theological cram, moral cram. The world already knows everything, and has only to tell it to its children, who, on their part, have only to hear, and lay it to rote, (not heart). Any purpose, any idea of training the mind itself, has gone out of the window.[44]

Admittedly, what he mainly criticized was the fact that a good deal of what passed for fact was nothing more than opinion and doctrine. Nevertheless, he seems to have given no thought to the fact that by insisting on factual knowledge alone for public examinations he might be contributing to the increase and not to the decrease of cramming. On the one hand, he emphasized the need for an approach to learning which would stimulate the mind and encourage further learning and the consideration of different points of view while, on the other, he insisted that public examinations should be conducted on the basis of factual knowledge alone. However good the reasons for insisting on the latter - providing reliable grounds for assessing the validity of opinions and ensuring the avoidance of unwarranted interference with the individual's independence of mind - the overriding emphasis Mill placed on factual knowledge would tend to encourage cramming and the acquisition of factual knowledge for its own sake. Educationally, this appears to be a serious inconsistency.

All these weaknesses, apart perhaps from the last one,

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44. Mill, J.S., 'On Genius', Mill Essays on Literature and Society, p. 99.

seem to be more the result of errors of omission than of inconsistency in thought. By attempting to balance the unavoidable interference between the private and the public sectors Mill neglected to examine more closely some of the implications of his educational provisions for the improvement of the mind of the individual. Yet his intent is evident enough: to allow the individual to move towards a more adequate recognition of what constitutes, for Mill, genuine authority. His educational provisions in this respect must be regarded as forming part of the social and political environment within which liberty for the individual could be achieved. Such as they are, these provisions could not be described as strongly positivistic. The positive element they contain does not appear to be contrary to the spirit of his liberalism and individualism except in so far as the provisions themselves insist on intellectual development. It is necessary, therefore, to examine more closely the nature of Mill's intellectualism in education and also to ascertain whether he gives some consideration to individual differences in matters of learning.

CHAPTER VII

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

It was pointed out earlier that Mill spoke of education as "the culture" which is transmitted by one generation to the next in the hope that this would contribute to the improvement of the latter. It is significant here that Mill did not even use the work 'knowledge' in this context. For the word 'culture' is an all-embracing work and implies a great deal more than what an empiricist may generally mean by 'knowledge'. It is essential, therefore, to clarify the term 'culture' in this context and to determine how it is related to Mill's educational thought. It is particularly important to understand how this reference to culture is related to Mill's emphasis on the need to consider different viewpoints. In this respect, Mill's stress on factual knowledge for the reasons indicated in the previous chapter would imply a rather narrow approach if seen without any reference to culture; for it would mean that Mill's position is a rather narrow rationalistic one which sees no value in 'non-rational' forms of expression which might, otherwise, be included in a concept of culture.

In his examination of J.S. Mill's literary criticism F.R. Sharpless points out that Mill's conception of culture does not consist only of matters related to reason and facts but "includes aspects of mental activity beyond the rational

and factual". He suggests that for Mill "real progress and culture" will be achieved not by obtaining knowledge in a narrow sense, i.e., knowledge related to science and "more efficient money-making", but by acquiring "wider knowledge of all kinds, knowledge obtained from art, and history, and poetry". Sharpless concludes that culture for Mill meant the development of human character along two lines:

> On the one hand, culture means intellectual culture, the expansion of the rational and analytic powers of the mind, the freedom from bigotry, narrowness, superstition, and ignorance. On the other hand, the term suggests a broadening and opening out of the feelings, an extension of the capacity for sympathy, and an ability to 'feel' and imagine the emotions of others.[1]

Sharpless supports this view with references from Mill's essay on 'Nature' and on 'Utilitarianism'. An excerpt from 'Utilitarianism' has special significance for our purposes. Mill writes:

> Next to selfishness the principal cause which makes life unsatisfactory is want of mental cultivation. A cultivated mind... finds sources of inexhaustible interest in all that surrounds it; in the objects of nature, the achievements of art, the imagination of poetry, the incidents of history, the ways of mankind, past and present, and their prospects in the future.[2]

The significance of this in terms of education is hinited at in the passage which follows the above excerpt. Mill adds:

> It is possible, indeed, to become indifferent to all

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1. Sharpless, F.P., The Literary Criticism of John Stuart Mill (The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1967), pp. 183-184.

2. 'Utilitarianism', p. 265.

> this, and that too without having exhausted a thousandth part of it; but only when one has had from its beginning no moral or human interest in these things, and has sought in them only the gratification of curiosity.[3]

He continues:

> Now there is absolutely no reason in the nature of things why an amount of mental culture sufficient to give an intelligent interest in these objects of contemplation, should not be the inheritance of everyone born in a civilized country.[4]

In the preceding excerpts Mill is making a number of points which are significant for our purposes. In the first place, he is saying that "mental cultivation" and not mere "gratification of curiosity" is needed as a motive to acquire culture through education. By using the expression "gratification of curiosity" the way he does he seems to be referring to what is generally regarded as the tendency to search for empirical and scientific knowledge. In the passages quoted above he seems to be saying, in effect, that one must accept the fact that moral and human values can also be expressed in ways, such as in art, which are not entirely dependent on the empirical or scientific facts and attitudes for the full appreciation of their worth. In other words, if one wishes to appreciate fully the values expressed in these different ways - ways which are also part of the culture - one should not always adopt the approach of a detached

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3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

scientific observer; instead, one should be prepared to partake in them as best he can or develop the ability to understand and appreciate the principles involved in their particular mode of expression. For instance, having knowledge of the empirically ascertainable fact that poem A was written by poet B and that C is its subject is not in itself an evidence of "mental cultivation" unless one is also able to show that he has appreciated the meaning and beauty of the poem and the message it may contain; in order to that one must be in a position to appreciate poetry and all that it entails in terms of composition and self-expression.

Secondly, Mill is saying that it is this cultivated approach and not the approach connected with the mere "gratification of curiosity" that denotes the existence of an "intelligent interest" in such matters. Thirdly, Mill is also arguing in favour of recognizing the right of every individual "born in a civilized society" to "an amount of mental culture" which would allow him to develop "an intelligent interest" in these things.

For Mill, then, culture has a broad meaning which when applied to education implies a change in the individual in the sense of an increased capacity to communicate through the use of one's power to reason as well as to feel. Moral and social values, in Mill's view, are to be found not only in the concrete products of man's rational forms of expression but also in the less tangible products of such 'non-rational'

but because his message lacked a certain inspirational quality. Thus, in contrast to the work of "such a moralist as Socrates, or Plato of (speaking humanly and not theologically) as Christ's", Bentham failed to inspire anyone with optimism and hope.[8]

These examples illustrate what Mill regarded as a weakness in one's ability to communicate adequately with others because of an overemphasis of the rational aspects of man. He claimed, however, that a similar weakness would result from an overemphasis of the 'non-rational'. Thus, in a letter to Thomas Carlyle, Mill wrote that the difficulty which the artist faces with respect to the public's appreciation of his work is that his work is likely to be understood readily only by those in whom there is a strong element of intuition, by those to whom "truths are intuitive". The artist's message is not likely to receive such an immediate appreciation from those who lack this quality. This was, Mill wrote,

> because the means which are good for rendering the truth impressive to those who know it, are not the same and are often absolutely incompatible with those which render it intelligible to those who know it not.[9]

This should not be taken to mean that for Mill the rational

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8. Mill, J.S., 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy', Mill's Ethical Writings, J.B. Schneewind (ed.), (New York: Collier Books, 1965), pp. 59-60.

9. Letter to Thomas Carlyle, 5th July 1833, Collected Works, Vol. XII, p. 163.

and non-rational elements in appreciation and expression were mutually exclusive. On the contrary, he maintained that when the two elements are combined in the same person and ideas are expressed with great intensity of feeling and thought great works are produced. Thus he talked with great admiration of the work of Milton and Coleridge in whom the "poetic nature had been united with logical and scientific culture".[10] There was little doubt in Mill's mind that in principle the writings of one who combined these two elements would have a "more beneficent" influence than those of one who did not. He thought, however, that in practice because of bad education and because "the so-called training of the intellect consists chiefly of the mere inculcation of traditional opinions" this was not always the case.[11]

It would appear then that for Mill 'culture' meant a great deal more than the mere acquisition of factual knowledge. It seems that Mill expected education to have a much deeper effect on the individual in terms of cultural growth than might be anticipated from his emphasis on factual knowledge. He evidently expected that, ideally, education should make it possible for the individual to develop to the utmost a capacity to appreciate both rational and non-rational forms

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10. Mill, J.S., 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, p. 129.

11. Ibid.

of expression. This aspect of education, however, is not one that can be treated in terms of subject matter alone. Mill seems to have realized the complexity of questions involving the process of learning as is indicated both in the excerpt from his letter to Carlyle and in the following quotation. He writes:

> Every circumstances which gave a character to the life of a human being, carries with it its peculiar biases; its peculiar facilities for perceiving some things, and for missing or forgetting others. But, from points of view different from his, different things are perceptible; and none are more likely to have seen what he does not see, than those who do not see what he sees.[12]

Despite his awareness of the significance of factors affecting the learner Mill seldom refers to them at length directly in terms of education. As was pointed out earlier, for instance, he makes no reference to such factors when dealing with public education and public examinations and his approach seems totally subject-centred with an emphasis on factual knowledge. Mill's principles of liberty emphasize the individual's freedom to express himself in a manner peculiar to himself and any attempt to assess the degree of liberalism in Mill's philosophy of education must give some indication of the extent to which Mill dealt with this aspect of the individual's freedom in relation to education and learning. It is best to do this by examining Mill's treatment of a specific area of expression in which he makes a direct reference

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12. 'Essay on Bentham', pp. 94-95.

to education in terms that can be interpreted as a concern for the personality and growth of the individual. His treatment of poetry, as his letter to Carlyle indicates, is appropriate here because he deals with the issue in some detail and because he does make a direct reference - albeit a rather short one - to its educational aspects.

CHAPTER VIII

POETRY BY NATURE AND BY CULTIVATION

In poetry, in the widest sense of the term, Mill sees not only the art of expressing oneself in verse but also the ability to communicate with others in an intuitive fashion. For, he says, poetry can be found in prose and is "something which does not even require the instrument of words, but can speak through" the language of music, sculpture, painting and architecture. Mill adds that

> all this, as we believe, is and must be felt, though perhaps indistinctly, by all upon whom poetry in any of its shapes produces any impression beyond that of tickling the ear.[1]

Since poetry communicates itself through the emotions its "logical opposite" is not prose but "matter of fact or science".[2] Although poetry is "truth", it is truth which the poets reach not necessarily by observing the world around them but "by observation of themselves". To the poet the kind of knowledge about mankind which "comes to men of the world by outward experience, is not indispensable". For they find in themselves the kind of "highly delicate", "sensitive" and "refined" human nature "on which the laws of human emotion

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1. Mill, J.S., 'What is Poetry', Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, p. 103.

2. Ibid., p. 104.

are written in large characters, such as can be read off without much study".[3]

Before proceeding any further with this discussion it is necessary to clarify Mill's use of the terms 'thought', 'feeling' and 'emotion' in dealing with poetry. In his 'Logic' Mill distinguishes between the use of these terms in the "language of philosophy" and in the "popular language". According to Mill, in the "language of philosophy",

> a Feeling and a State of Consciousness are... equivalent expressions: everything is a feeling of which the mind is conscious: everything which it feels, or, in other words, which forms part of its own sentient existence.[4]

On the other hand,

> in the popular language, Feeling is not always synonymous with State of Consciousness: being often... conceived as belonging to the sensitive, or to the emotional, phasis of our nature, and sometimes to the emotional alone.[5]

This, however, Mill regards as "an admitted departure from correctness of language" for, he adds,

> Feeling, in the proper sense of the term, is a genus, of which Sensation, Emotion, and Thought, are subordinate species.[6]

In other words, in Mill's view the term 'feeling' should be regarded as having a broader meaning than the term 'emotion'.

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3. Ibid., p. 106.

4. A System of Logic, p. 48. Italics in original.

5. Ibid. Note: Mill is using the transliteration of the original ancient Greek word for phase.

6. Ibid.

Although Mill does not indicate which usage he adopted in his discussion of poetry, and at times seems to use the terms 'feeling' or 'emotion' interchangeably, his general argument suggests that he attaches a broader meaning to 'feeling' than to 'emotion'. With the term 'feeling' Mill implies a condition of consciousness, an awareness of one's own condition or one's relation to some external situation; this condition of consciousness he describes as the source of all motives which lead men in the pursuit of truth.[7] It is with these points in mind that we shall now return to the main stream of the discussion.

For Mill the facts of an external situation can be reflected in the work of a poet if that poet is sufficiently sensitive to it. The poet's reaction to a situation need not be the result of a purely rational assessment of that situation by him. Instead, the expression of the poet's ideas may be indicative of a state of consciousness based on emotion though such a basis not, after all, invalidating those ideas. In other words, a poet in expressing his ideas on a topic may not follow a pattern which indicates that he reached those ideas through a rational process; yet this need not affect the validity of his ideas but may only reflect the uniqueness of his own nature. This is what Mill means by his

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7. 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', pp. 128-129.

definition of a person with a "poetical nature". He writes:

> What constitutes the poet is not the imagery not the thoughts, nor even the feelings, but the law accroding to which they are called up. He is a poet, not because he has ideas of any particular kind, but because the succession of his ideas is subordinate to the course of his emotions.[8]

This type of person Mill contrasts to "the man of science... or of business" who follows a pattern of classification of things adopted "for the convenience of thought or of practice.[9]

Mill draws a distinction between two main types of poets. One is the type who might be described as a 'natural' poet while the other could be described as a 'cultivated' poet. Thus we can distinguish "between the poetry of a poet' and the poetry of a cultivated but not naturally poetical mind". In the case of the 'natural' poet, poetry "is Feeling itself, employing Thought only as the medium of its utterance". The poet's thoughts are not presented in some organized fashion but "are floated promiscuously among the stream".[10] In other words, in this case the very fact of consciousness, of awareness, is the factor which dominates the poet's expression without the thoughts associated with this awareness being presented in some organized, logically disciplined, fashion. An example of such a poet, says Mill, is Shelley for whom

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8. Ibid., p. 126.

9. Ibid., p. 120.

10. Ibid., p. 121.

"intentional mental discipline had done little" while "the vividness of his emotions and of his sensations had done all".[11] Shelley, in other words, appeared to Mill to be the sort of person who relied primarily on his emotions for his poetical expression.

In the case of the 'cultivated' poet, "the thought itself is still the conspicuous object". The thought may be "surrounded and glorified" by what are essentially poetical expressions and indications of strong feeling but it is the poet's thought that dominates his work.[12] An example of such a poet, in Mill's view, is Wordsworth whose poetry reflects "an air of calm deliberation" and the fact that he never allowed the intensity of his awareness to control his poetical expression to such an extent that it betrayed anything but carefully considered thoughts.[13]

The significance of all this for our purposes is that these two assessments illustrate what were, for Mill, two individuals who relied on different, and apparently opposed, grounds and applied different ways in the organization of their ideas. Yet they both expressed their ideas through the same idiom, namely, the 'non-rational' idiom of poetry. Wordsworth appeared to Mill to rely primarily on thought which is associ-

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11. Ibid., p. 123.

12. Ibid., p. 121.

13. Ibid., p. 122.

ated with a rational approach while Shelley relied on emotion characteristic of a 'non-rational approach. Mill's attitude towards these two examples of expression in a non-rational idiom should throw some light on the degree of rational positivism in his philosophy of education. What he has to say about the role of education in the development of personalities so radically different should indicate the extent to which his philosophy of education allows for the sort of liberalism and degree of personal freedom he advocates in his 'Liberty'. That he attaches considerable significance to the role of education in this context is evident from his assertion that education can affect such "natural tendencies".[14] But Mill makes a direct and explicit statement which leaves little doubt as to his position on this question. After explaining in approving terms that in "poetical natures", generally, consciousness or awareness is experienced with a much greater intensity than in others,[15] he adds the following:

> Ordinary education and the ordinary course of life are constantly at work counteracting this quality of mind, and substituting habits more suitable to their own ends: if instead of substituting they were content to superadd, then there were nothing to complain of. But when will education consist, not in repressing any mental faculty or power, from the uncontrolled action of which danger is apprehended, but in training up to its proper strength the corrective and antagonist power?[16]

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14. Ibid., p. 120.

15. Ibid., p. 125.

16. Ibid., p. 126. Italics in original.

Here Mill states clearly that in his view education should not be based on a policy of suppressing what is the individual's unique and natural way of perception and self-expression. At the same time Mill indicates that he expects education to help the individual widen his field of perception by introducing him to ways of expression which did not come naturally to him. Mill's concern here with the danger of excessive reliance on one form of expression is consistent with his emphasis on the cultural function of education and the need for consideration of different viewpoints. His preoccupation with the problem of relying exclusively on one idiom in communicating ideas and values was pointed out earlier with reference to Bentham's overemphasis of the rational aspects of man. Mill, however, was equally concerned with the possible narrowness of one's appeal and ability to communicate with others through an overemphasis of the 'non-rational' aspects. This is particularly evident in his praise of Wordsworth. Mill described Wordsworth as "the exemplar of what the poetry of culture may accomplish" and found his usefulness to others precisely in the fact that he was not a 'natural' poet. This, according to Mill, made it easier for him to communicate with 'non-poetical' persons through his poetry in a way that such persons could appreciate. Mill writes:

> Compared with the greatest poets, he (Wordsworth) may be said to be the poet of unpoetical natures, possessed of quiet and comtemplative tastes. But unpoetical natures are precisely those which require poetic cul-

> tivation. This cultivation Wordsworth is much more fitted to give, than poets who are intrinsically far more poets than he.[17]

In this respect the 'natural' poet, according to Mill, would be restricted in his ability to communicate with 'non-poetical' persons. His 'natural' poetic talents would tend to have a rather narrow appeal unless the poet develops his "thinking faculty". This is what will determine, in Mill's view, "whether he will construct anything of value to anyone but himself".[18]

One criticism of this approach is that it betrays a conception of antithetical forces in the individual which is fundamentally rationalistic. It has been argued, for example, that such an approach tends to regard art and poetry as a 'substitute' for feeling, i.e., a recourse to these forms of expression in this case indicated not an acceptance of the substance of feelings but merely a rationalistic attempt to enlarge the mind. Such an appraoch, it is argued, regards the predominance of feeling essentially as a hindrance to thought.[19] This criticism has some merit in so far as Mill failed to solve the difficulty and in the final analysis, as will be pointed out later, tended to suggest solutions in terms

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17. Autobiography., pp. 96-97.

18. Mill, J.S., 'Tennyson's Poems', Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, pp. 140-141.

19. Williams, R., Culture and Society 1780-1950 (London: Penguin Books, 1963), Chapter 3, p. 81.

of subject matter alone. But the suggestion that Mill did not realize the difficulty is less than just. For, in addition to his express support for the encouragement of natural tendencies, Mill waged the same sort of criticism against Roebuck and "most English thinkers" who, Mill thought, seemed to regard feelings and emotions as a hindrance and as "necessary evils".[20] Furthermore, in one of his letters to Carlyle quoted earlier, Mill expressed his admiration for those comparatively few and unique intuitive individuals who were capable of perceiving and expressing the truth of social values without engaging in a systematic rational analysis.[21] Mill does not seem to have regarded the emotions as necessarily a hindrance to thought. On the contrary, he seems to have expected that education, far from suppressing the emotions, could help the individual transcend the division between thought and emotion and become able to communicate in both the rational and the non-rational idioms. A more valid criticism of Mill's treatment of the poets would be that he tended to place too much significance on whether or not they had developed a social philosophy. This is evident in his criticism of Tennyson[22] and in his readiness to divide poetical works

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20. Autobiography, pp. 97-98.

21. Letter to Thomas Carlyle, 5th July 1833, p. 163.

22. 'Tennyson's Poems', p. 146.

into various types of social and political philosophy.[23] In this sense, his own rational approach and his fundamentally scientific attitude of mind towards social problems is much in evidence. The point to bear in mind is that Mill regarded himself as a social reformer and his use of the concept of 'culture' and its association with education was an attempt to broaden the basis on which social values could be expressed and understood. To the adherents of the idealist school of thought Mill's attempt may not appear very successful but it is, at least, consistent with his concept of individual freedom of expression and its importance for the society at large. His realization of the limitations of utilitarianism could note lead him to an outright rejection of the basic validity of the utilitarian approach since it was through such an approach that he himself had acquired an awareness about social values and a sense of social responsibility. Mill was quite willing to admit his own limitations and his attachment to the rational idiom. He stated that he was a "man of speculation" and "not in the least a poet, in any sense", and that what was "most suitable" for a man like him to do in the circumstances was to try and convince others that acceptable social values could be expressed just as validly in a 'non-rational' idiom.[24]

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23. See, for example, J.S. Mill, 'Writings of Alfred de Vigny', Mill's Essays on Literature and Society, pp. 210-212.

24. Letter to Thomas Carlyle, 5th July 1833, p. 163.

The main weakness in Mill's attempt to balance the rational and 'non-rational' elements in education lies in his failure to consider the implications of his emphasis on factual knowledge. It has already been pointed out that he prescribed such knowledge for purposes of public examinations. But he also indicated that he expected schools at all levels to provide extensive factual knowledge in a wide variety of subjects as preparation for studies at the university level. Mill deplored the fact that universities found themselves in a position where they had to provide the sort of basic factual knowledge which, he thought, educational institutions at lower levels ought to be supplying. He recommended that university education should include "a philosophic study of the Methods of the sciences", or more explicitly, the study of "how man discovers the real facts of the world"; but, he added, before the study of this "philosophy of knowledge" could be undertaken it was necessary to ensure first that such knowledge had been acquired in the schools.[25] He indicates here that he expected the schools to provide a rich background of factual and empirical knowledge. In addition, it must be pointed out that most of what Mill says about the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and study of the arts was expressed in the context of higher education. There is very little in his writing to indicate that his basic

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25. 'Inaugural Address', pp. 356-357.

approach to the public education of children was such as to encourage a balanced development of both the rational and 'non-rational' powers of the child. It is difficult, therefore, to avoid the conclusion that in so far as public education at the pre-university level is concerned Mill's approach was oriented primarily towards the development of the individual's rational powers. The statement that his concept of freedom is not meant to apply either to children or young persons who had not reached "the maturity of their faculties"[26] seems to imply also that the desirable sort of education, which was supposed to broaden the individual's freedom of expression and his understanding of all points of view, was to be given only at the higher level after the individual had reached maturity. Although Mill realized the importance of encouraging in the individual the form of expression which was most natural to him it seems that he failed to consider its implications for levels of education where such encouragement would have the most significant effect.

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26. 'On Liberty', p. 135.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

A review of Mill's position reveals a substantial degree of internal consistency between his social thought and educational proposals. In Mill's mind individual freedom in inextricably related to the individual's knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence him. The role of education in this respect is crucial. If a system of education does indeed aim at the promotion of individual freedom then, in Mill's opinion, it must help the individual become aware of the significance of this sort of knowledge and understanding.

In Mill's words,

> any education which aims at making human beings other than machines, in the long run makes them claim to have the control of their own actions.[1]

To achieve this end education must develop the individual's intellectual powers for it is with such powers that an understanding of human motives can be reached. Such understanding entails a degree of consciousness, self-awareness and self-examination which Mill associates with "logic and the philosophy of mind".[2] He deplores the tendency,

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1. Considerations on Representative Government, p. 56.

2. 'Civilization', p. 74.

which he thought was especially evident in the teaching of these two subjects, to instill in the individual ideas simply on the grounds that they seem to follow from certain accepted premises. Such ideas were often void of meaning and were disassociated from reality. Instead, Mill suggests,

> the pupil must be led to interrogate his own consciousness, to observe and experiment upon himself: of the mind, by any other process, little will he ever know.[3]

In Mill's view this sort of self-knowledge is essential to an understanding of casual relationships; for it is knowledge contributing to the realization that the factors which influence individual social action, although common to many, affect different individuals in different and unique ways. Individual social action, argued Mill, is seldom based on a single motive.[4] Furthermore, it is not purely the result of circumstances prevalent at a given time but, as Mill put it,

> the joint result of those circumstances and of the characters of the individuals; and the agencies which determine human character are so numerous and diversified...that in the aggregate they are never in any two cases exactly similar.[5]

The difficulties in establishing the primary cause in this interplay between individual character and social environ-

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3. Ibid., pp. 74-75; see also 'On Genius', p. 101.

4. A System of Logic, p. 583.

5. Ibid., p. 588.

ment are not resolved by Mill and his final position on this point is not clear.[6] He argues that social values and institutions originate from individual motives, and that an understanding of the effect of such values and institutions entails an understanding of the individual and the factors that motivate his actions. Hence social leadership and good government cannot be guaranteed merely by efforts to satisfy the material interests of various groups. For, material interest is not the only motive of human action. Mill's position hinges upon his ideology, his assumption of what constitutes the desirable elements in the nature of man. In Mill's view, the most desirable elements are those which tend to motivate the individual not towards his own material aggrandisement and personal power but towards his intellectual development. The pleasures derived from intellectual pursuits are also those which Mill regards as superior in his interpretation of the principle of utility. Thus the desirability of social values and institutions, according to Mill, should be assessed on the basis of whether they contribute towards the intellectual improvement of man. In Mill's concept of historical evolution this intellectual development of man is seen as a dynamic process fostered by the assumulation of knowledge and exchanging ideas, and by the constant search for truth. Mill's concept of liberty is related to

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6. Anschutz, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

this historical process in two ways. In the first place, liberty is regarded as a means of achieving the establishment of the ideal society, i. e. a society guided by the principle of utility as interpreted by Mill. He saw individual liberty acting as a safeguard against the pressures and practices of sectional interests operating at the expense of the other members of society. Similarly, the principles of liberty are expected to operate against the social pressures of a majority aimed at the suppression of possible new truths that individual endeavour might reveal. The exercise of such pressure constituted for Mill an exercise of sheer power and was therefore in conflict with the progressively expanding intellectual improvement of mankind. Viewed as a means, then, the principles of liberty represent a negative or restraining aspect in social relations in the sense that they are intended to prevent interference with the individual rather than promote a specific social ideology. Secondly, the principles of liberty have a positive aspect in the sense that liberty is seen as a value in itself. For, the recognition of the importance of liberty in social relations is in itself an evidence of very significant and vital progress in the intellectual improvement of mankind. Liberty, in other words, is linked in a positive way to the accumulated knowledge about human relations in society. It is this knowledge, i.e., knowledge about the factors which affect

relations between individual and society in the direction of man's intellectual improvement, that forms the basis of what Mill describes as wisdom and virtue. Only the kind of social action that can be justified on such a basis constitutes, for Mill, action based on genuine authority.

Mill associates education with individual freedom in a very specific way. He does not suggest that freedom can be achieved only through complete knowledge of factors affecting social relations; nor does he maintain that it is possible for the individual to achieve complete knowledge in these matters. He does however, maintain that it is essential for the individual to have this knowledge to a degree sufficient to enable him to assess the validity of claims by others that they are acting on the principle of utility. In Mill's view this cannot be achieved either by a professional education alone or by an education which fails to encourage the individual not only to acquire knowledge but, above all, to exercise his judgment. Vocational or professional education in itself does not contribute to the attainment of freedom except in so far as it can be seen to contribute towards the intellectual improvement of the individual. Such education must not be geared to the pervasive motivation of a social system based on the pursuit of material power. Instead, vocational education should aim at increasing the amount of leisure available for intellectual pursuits by contributing to the reduction of

time expended on earning a living. Mill seldom refers directly to the function of vocational or industrial education but it is quite clear that this is his position on this point. He argues, for example, that in the ideal concept of the 'stationary' state when there would be comparative economic stability and "the minds ceased to be engrossed by the art of getting on", the "Art of Living" is much more likely to be improved. He adds:

> Even the industrial arts might be earnestly and as successfully cultivated, with this sole difference, that instead of serving no purpose but the increase of wealth, industrial improvements would produce their legitimate effect, that of abridging labour.[7]

Viewed this way every practical application of acquired knowledge could itself be seen as an indirect motivation to further learning and development of the intellect. Thus, Mill writes that intellectual education even of an elementary type for peasants and workers is justified on the grounds that the practical application of intellectual knowledge helps stimulate the mind of such individuals.[8] Thus Mill appears consistent in his treatment of vocational education or the practical use of knowledge by maintaining that the ultimate justification for such education must be the intellectual improvement of the individual and not just his material advancement.

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7. Principles of Political Economy, p. 751.

8. Ibid., p. 286.

Mill maintained that intellectual improvement would be achieved by a general or liberal education which familiarized the student with the problems peculiar to the various fields of human intellectual endeavour. On the one hand, this would give the individual sufficient insight to judge the significance for human relations of the growth of knowledge in the various fields. On the other hand, it would accustom the individual to consider many points of view before forming an opinion on a question concerning social values. Mill's realization that social values could be expressed not only in rational but also in 'non-rational' terms led him to include the Fine Arts in the curriculum of a general education at the higher level. This is consistent with his principle of the freedom of individual expression in that it broadens the range over which social values can be expressed and thus allows for a greater scope for the communication of values. Mill argued that if such an education were to be generally regarded as desirable it had first to be regarded as such by those who set the standards and provide the examples which are followed by the rest of the society. He also attempted to modify the apparent elitism of his position on this point by suggesting certain measures which would open the way to positions of some authority and influence to all who attained certain standards based on the principle of general education. Thus Mill expected that in the long run, given the universal application of this sort of education, the general ability of the

intelligent understanding the motives and actions of those in positions of authority would be raised. It is as a consequence of such a higher educational standard that, according to Mill, the freedom of the individual would be increased in real and positive terms.

There are, however, certain weaknesses in Mill's position which tend to undermine the general consistency between his social and educational ideas. One such weakness is the apparent failure on Mill's part to consider the implications of some of his suggestions. Some of his specific recommendations do not seem to have been adequately thought out. The result is that some recommendations appear to be self-contradictory in their implications. This is obvious in Mill's failure to consider the practical consequences of his emphasis on factual knowledge while condemning at the same time the prevalent habit of cramming in the schools. This failure to consider thoroughly the possible practical consequences of many of his ideas seems to be a general weakness in Mill's thought and is also evident in other aspects of his work.[9]

Another weakness stems from the preoccupation with higher education. Mill's conclusion that the desired social and political reforms could come into effect through changes in the attitudes of the upper classes led him to emphasize

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9. See Noel Annan, 'John Stuart Mill', The English Mind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) pp. 227-228; see also Roll, op. cit., esp pp. 360-363.

the role of higher education and to neglect the equally important sphere of pre-university education. As a result his educational recommendations are geared primarily to the needs of those with the ability to benefit from an intellectual education at the higher level. For this reason his philosophy of education on the whole, tends to reflect and, indeed, to strengthen the elitist elements of his social and political thought. A further consequence of the concern with higher education is Mill's failure to apply to the education of children the relation he saw between the uniqueness of individual character and personality and the freedom of individual expression. He realized the significance of avoiding the suppression of what he described as the 'natural tendencies' in learning and expression. Yet he did not consider this in connection with the education of the younger age groups. This is all the more surprising in view of Mill's own strong reaction against the strict rationalistic early education he himself had received.

Then, again, the balance between rational and 'non-rational' elements that he favoured remains in his system of education predominently a matter of balance between different types of courses. Questions of individual attitudes and predispositions toward learning, the significance of which he seems to have perceived, are not incorporated in a consistent fashion in his educational thought. In that sense these matters receive a rather casual attention, and in empha-

sizing the importance of knowledge derived from all possible sources Mill simply assumes a high level of mental and psychological maturity in the learner. In this respect his position falls well within those traditional philosophies of education which emphasize the discipline of knowledge and the mastery of subject matter.[10]

One of Mill's main concerns was the avoidance of undue interference with the individual. This is evident in his insistence that public education should not be concerned with direct moral and religious training. He maintained, nevertheless, that intellectual education at the university level could have an indirect moral influence, i.e., an influence exercised less through "any express teaching" than through "the pervading tone of the place".[11] As he continues his argument, however, it becomes evident that what he envisages is a good deal more positive and direct than he thought. Whatever the university teaches, he writes:

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10. Mill's position here bears a strong resemblance with Hirst's interpretation of the traditional concept of liberal education; see Paul Hirst, 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge', Philosophical Analysis and Education, R.D. Archambault (ed.), (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965) esp. pp. 122-128.

11. 'Inaugural Address', p. 396. Mill's point here suggests a similarity with Newman's concept of a community of scholars, op. cit.; or T.M. Greene's 'ethos' of the academic community, see T.M. Greene 'A Liberal Christian Idealist Philosophy of Education', Modern Philosophies and Education, (N.S.S.E. Yearbook, LIV, Part 1, 1955), N.B. Henry (ed.), p. 120.

> it should teach as penetrated by a sense of duty; it should present all knowledge as chiefly a means of worthiness of life, given for the double purpose of making each of us practically useful to his fellow-creatures, and of elevating the character of the species itself; exalting and dignifying our nature.[12]

Mill maintained that knowledge of the truth is in itself conconducive to moral behaviour. It is, as he put it, "a great way towards disposing us to act upon it.[13] The extent of this positive element becomes more explicit in Mill's references to the role of the teacher. Teachers of "the philosophy of morals, of government, of law, of political economy, of poetry and art", he suggests, should be chosen not for the specific views they may hold but for their ability to help students "to choose doctrines for themselves".[14] Furthermore, he argues that the teacher's function is not to impose his own judgment "but to inform and discipline that of his pupil".[15] These remarks about the role of the teacher are quite consistent with a liberalism of the traditional sort. Yet Mill would neither debar the teacher from expressing and arguing his point of view[16] nor would he prevent him from adopting an atti-

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12. 'Inaugural Address', p. 396. Cf. R.S. Peters, 'What is an Educational Process?', The Concept of Education, R.S. Peters (ed.), (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967) pp. 1-23.

13. 'Inaugural Address', p. 395.

14. 'Civilization', p. 75.

15. 'Inaugural Address', p. 398.

16. Ibid.

tude which leaves no doubt as to the values he holds and the influences he might exert on his students. Mill writes:

> Often and often have students caught from the living influence of a professor a contempt for mean and selfish objects, and a noble ambition to leave the world better than they found it, which they have carried with them throughout life.[17]

Mill did not regard this function by the teacher as anything unusual but merely as a specific and more effective way of doing what, he thought, everyone else in society ought to be doing. Teachers, he writes, have "natural and peculiar means of doing with effect" what everyone else in society "should feel bound to do to the extent of his capacity and opportunities".[18] Mill, in other words, was aware of the fact that formal education is only one of the many factors, albeit an important one, that influence the individual in society. He did not deem it necessary, therefore, that in a society in which there is constant interaction and free exchange of opinion the teacher should be forced to abdicate his right to express his own judgment. The teacher in Mill's educational theory then does not function merely as a neutral arbitrer but is also, as everyone else is expected to be, an open-minded exponent of a point of view. It should be borne in mind, however, that this view of the teacher's role is contingent upon the assumption of a sufficiently high level

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17. Ibid., p. 397.

18. Ibid.

of mental and psychological maturity in the student. It is, in other words, applicable in the case of higher education only. This is consistent with Mill's effort to avoid undue influence on the young and his insistence on a school curriculum of predominently factual subject matter. But it also underlines Mill's failure to give adequate thought to the question of the teacher's role in the encouragement of constructive attitudes to learning among the young.

Mill wrote at a time when, as a sympathetic critic has point out,[19] the social sciences were becoming divorced from social philosophy. Mill retained the philosophy of individualism he had inherited and attempted to provide explanations for social phenomena by adopting an all-encompassing approach. He delved extensively into a variety of social science fields at a time when such sciences were beginning to receive a much more intensive and specialized treatment than hitherto. The result was that many of his suggestions seem superficial and a large part of his work became outdated before too long. Yet his principles of liberty have not lost their validity and his brilliant defence of individual freedom remains a classic. In a very real sense Mill's philosophy of education, despite its obvious shortcomings, constitutes the main positive element in his liberal social thought. For, Mill's liberalism does not consist only of a defence of the negative

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19. Annan, op. cit., pp. 224-227.

attitude inherent in a rejection of social pressure and conformity. It is based primarily on the premise that the ideal society is founded on the positive attitude of an individual engaged in the process of learning through his interaction with his environment in its totality. In this sense, individual freedom in Mill's thought is linked to learning not merely through a narrowly conceived idiom of reason and rationalism but through the experience and contact with individuals whose modes of understanding and expression are different from one's own.

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