

The Enigmatic Nature of J. S. Mill's Classical Liberalism and Utilitarianism

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Abstract

John Stuart Mill, a British political philosopher of the 19th century, got an extremely rigorous upbringing with his education greatly influenced by Jeremy Bentham, the English utilitarian. His father wanted to build a brilliant intellect that would support the cause of utilitarianism. Mill established the character of English liberalism and, in so doing, established himself as England's most generous classical liberal. Mill is honored as the father of liberalism, and his writings are consulted as indispensable for the understanding of moral and political issues surrounding the defense of individual liberty. He justifies individual freedom against total state control and is a supporter of utilitarianism, but his concept is very different from Bentham's utilitarianism. Mill is mainly concerned with the nature and limits of the power that society can legitimately exercise over the individual and supports each individual's right to act as he wants, so long as the action does not harm others. This paper attempted to describe and evaluate the concept of liberty as enunciated by J. S. Mill. It also looks into his views on utilitarianism and how he has modified the Benthamite utilitarianism into his model. The paper also shows Mill's enigmatic nature of sometimes supporting one type of liberty (negative liberty). In contrast, sometimes other types (positive liberty) similarly propose one kind of liberty for one class and another kind for another class. The paper is mainly a qualitative study of Mill's philosophy with a descriptive framework and is based on secondary data.

Keywords: John Stuart Mill, Liberty, Utility, Self-regarding, Other-regarding, Freedom of Thought, Classical Liberalism

Introduction

John Stuart Mill got an extremely rigorous upbringing and was deliberately kept away from association with children of his age other than his siblings. Jeremy Bentham greatly influenced his

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education. His father wanted him to support the cause of utilitarianism and its implementation after his father's and Bentham's death. Mill established himself as England's most generous liberal and is honored as the father of classical liberalism. He justifies individual freedom against absolute state control and is the supporter of utilitarianism, but his concept is very different from Bentham's utilitarianism (Berkowitz, 1999: 134). However, scholars have not appreciated Mill's strong liking for finding truth in diverse sources because of Mill's deep admiration for the ideas of both the reformer of institutions (Jeremy Bentham) and the preserver of traditions (Samuel Taylor Coleridge), which reflects the spirit of an indecisive man. Such possibilities would have to be taken more seriously if Mill is not repeatedly remarked upon the importance of discovering the partial truth in conflicting opinions and systems of ideas (Berkowitz, 1999: 135-36). However, Mill is highly honored for his defense of individual liberty and qualitative utilitarianism's moral and political importance.

I will restrict myself to the critical evaluation of only two areas of Mill's philosophy, i.e., his view on liberty and utilitarianism. I will also touch on the areas that show whether he supports only negative liberty or positive liberty and whether he proposes one kind of liberty for one class and another kind for another class.

Mill's Concept of Liberty

Mill is mainly concerned with the nature and limits of the power that society can legitimately exercise over the individual. He supports that each individual has the right to act as he wants, so long as it does not harm others. If the action only directly affects the person undertaking the action, society has no right to interfere, even if it feels the actor is harming himself. Mill introduces liberty to remedy society's tyranny in a modern democracy. In ancient democracies, the majority tyrannized the individual through the government; but in a modern democracy, society threatens to mold every individual in its image. Besides the purely individualistic or private aspects, there is also a social aspect to a man's personality, and here the society has the right of interference. Still, Mill says, this interference must be reduced to the minimum. If society issues any mandates at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression. Protection

against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough. There is a greater need for protection against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose its ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence. To find that limit and maintain it against encroachment, it is indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism (Mill, 2009a: 10-11). By prescribing a single notion of good character through the powerful instrument of public opinion, society could fetter "human development in its richest diversity" (Mill, 2009a: 11).

To protect individual character and society from the deadening effects of both the tyranny of society and government, Mill proposes the straightforward principle that "The sole end for which humanity are warranted, individually or collectively in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant" (Mill, 2009a: 18-19).

However, Mill himself suggests significant qualifications to his principle, saying that the application of the principle to concrete instances often turns on difficult practical judgments about the quality and directness of harms to others which are caused by apparently self-regarding, but in reality substantially other-affecting, actions (see for example Robson, 1965, 799-804). The essential qualification concerns society's legitimate interest in fostering certain qualities of mind and character and the appropriate means for doing so. This doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in their faculties' maturity. "We are not speaking of children or young persons below the age... Those who are still in a state to require being taken care of by others must be protected against their actions as well as against external injury" (Mill, 2009a: 19). According to Mill, despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided that the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end (Mill, 2009a: 20). There are also many positive acts for the benefit of others, which a person may rightfully be compelled to perform; such as, "to give evidence in a court of justice; to bear his fair share in the common defense....for which he may rightfully be made responsible to society for not doing. A person may

cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case, he is justly accountable to them for the injury" (Mill, 2009a: 21).

The Liberty of Thought and Discussion

Mill is the strongest supporter of freedom of speech, saying that legislature and the executive cannot prescribe opinions to the people and determine what doctrines or arguments they shall hear. "If all humankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, humankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing humankind. The peculiar evil of silencing an opinion's expression is that it is robbing the human race.... If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error. We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is a false opinion" (Mill, 2009a: 29-30). "Every age has held many opinions which subsequent ages have deemed not only false but absurd. It is as certain that many opinions, now general, will be rejected by future ages, as many, once general, are rejected by the present" (Mill, 2009a: 32). By rejecting the opinion as heretical, it is not the minds of heretics that are deteriorated most, but the most significant harm done is to those who are not heretics, and whose whole mental development and their reason cowed, by the fear of heresy (Mill, 2009a: 56).

Mill says that it is better to know all the sides of the case. "He, who knows only his side of the case, knows little of that. His reasons may be good. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side; if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion". He further says that "nor is it enough that he should hear the arguments of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and what they offer as refutations. This is not how to do justice to the arguments or bring them into real contact with his mind. He must hear them from persons who believe them (Mill, 2009a: 61-62). Discussion is necessary for both the right and wrong opinion. The wrong is corrected, and the right gains vitality and stability. The fact is that the grounds of the opinion are forgotten in the absence of discussion,

but too often, the meaning of the opinion itself. The necessity to the mental wellbeing of humankind of freedom and expression of opinion is recognized on the following grounds.

- a. If any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility.
- b. Though the silenced opinion is an error, it may contain a portion of the truth. Since the general or prevailing opinion on any object is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.
- c. Even if the received opinion is true, the whole truth, unless it is vigorously and earnestly contested, it will be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds.
- d. The meaning of the held doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct.

Individuality as one of the Elements of Wellbeing

Mill argues that we all have different ideas. Therefore, we must be allowed to explore and express those ideas, which are the essence of our difference and uniqueness. Mill valorizes the eccentric simply because the difference is vital to the productive interaction of ideas that stimulate individual mental processes. The need to be independent and different is, for Mill, the essence of human liberty, suggesting extreme individualism. The only freedom that deserves the name is pursuing our good in our way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs (Mill, 2009a: 23-24). Men should be free to act upon their opinions, without hindrance, either physical or moral, from their fellow-men, so long as it is at their own risk and peril. However, actions cannot be as free as opinions. On the contrary, even opinions lose their immunity, when the circumstances in which they are expressed are such as to constitute their expression a positive instigation to some mischievous act. "if [the individual] refrains from molesting others in what concerns them, and merely acts according to his inclination and judgment in things which concern himself...he should be allowed to carry his opinions into practice at his own cost. That humankind is not infallible, and their truths are only half-truths; that unity of opinion, unless resulting from the fullest and freest

comparison of opposite opinions, is not desirable, and diversity, not an evil, but a good, until humankind is more capable than at present of recognizing all sides of the truth, are principles applicable to men's modes of action, not less than to their opinions" (Mill, 2009a: 93-95).

Mill says that a person's individuality is developed by the freedom allowed to him. "A person whose desires and impulses are his own, is the expression of his own nature, as developed and modified by his own culture, is said to have a character. One whose desires and impulses are not his own have no character, no more than a steam-engine has a character. If, in addition to being his own, his impulses are strong, and are under the government of a strong will, he has an energetic character" (Mill, 2009a: 101).

He does not oppose despotism if it supports individuality. "Even despotism does not produce its worst effects, so long as individuality exists under it; and whatever crushes individuality is despotism, by whatever name it may be called, and whether it professes to be enforcing the will of God or the injunctions of men" (Mill, 2009a: 107). He equalizes individuality with originality and says that nobody will deny it, that originality is a valuable element in human affairs. There is always a need for persons to discover new truths, point out when truths are true no longer, commence new practices, and set the example of more enlightened conduct....Persons of genius are and are always likely to be a small minority but to have them, it is necessary to preserve the soil in which they grow. Genius can only breathe freely in an atmosphere of freedom (Mill, 2009a: 108-09).

However, when the opinions of masses of merely average men are everywhere become the dominant power, the counterpoise and corrective to that tendency would be the more pronounced individuality of those who stand on the higher eminences of thought. In these circumstances, exceptional individuals should be encouraged to act differently from the mass. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where the strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor, and moral courage contained (Mill, 2009a: 112-3).

The Limits to the Authority of Society over the Individual

Mill says that individuals and society will receive their fair share if each has more particularly concerned about it. To individuality should belong the part of life in which individual is chiefly interested; to society which chiefly interests society (Mill, 2009a: 126). The individual's matters should be left entirely to the individual, and no one should interfere, even if what he does is dangerous for him. He, himself, is the final judge. All errors which he is likely to commit against advice and warning are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain him to what they deem his good (Mill, 2009a: 129-30).

Mill admits that the mischief that a person does to himself may seriously affect those nearly connected with him and society. When a person is led to violate a distinct and assignable obligation to any other person(s), the case is taken out of the self-regarding class. If a man, through extravagance, becomes unable to pay his debts or undertake his family's moral responsibility, becomes incapable of supporting or educating them, he is deservedly condemned and might be justly punished. Still, it is for the breach of duty to his family or creditors, not for the extravagance. If the resources which ought to have been devoted to them had been diverted from them for the most prudent investment, the moral guilt would have been the same. In like manner, when a person disables himself by purely self-regarding conduct, he is guilty of a social offense from some definite duty performance to the public. No person ought to be punished simply for being drunk, but a driver, a soldier, or a police officer should be punished for being drunk on duty. Whenever there is actual damage, or risk of damage, either to other individuals or to the public, the case is taken out of the province of liberty and placed in that of morality or law (Mill, 2009a: 136-39).

Mill points out the cases in which the state has the power to intervene. For example, if poisons are bought for the commission of murder, it would be right to prohibit their manufacture and sale. Public control is permissible for preventing fraud by adulteration, sanitary precautions, or arrangements to protect work-people employed in dangerous occupations. It is a proper office of public authority to guard against accidents. If either a public officer or anyone else saw a person attempting to cross a bridge which had been confirmed to be unsafe, and there was no time to warn him of his danger, they might seize him and turn him back without any real infringement of his liberty; for liberty consists in doing what one desires, and he does not desire to fall into the river. Nevertheless, when there is not a certainty, but the only danger of mischief, no one but the person

himself can judge of the sufficiency of the motive which may prompt him to incur the risk: in this case, therefore, unless he is a child, or delirious, or in some state of excitement, he ought to be only warned of the danger; not forcibly prevented from exposing himself to it. When it is not such as to involve infringement of liberty, the objections to government interference may be of three kinds.

- a. When the thing to be done is likely to be better done by individuals than the government. Speaking generally, there is no one so fit to conduct any business as those who are personally interested in it.
- b. In many cases, though individuals may not do the particular thing so well as the officers of government, it is nevertheless desirable that it should be done by them, rather than by the government, as a means to their mental education, a mode of strengthening their active faculties, exercising their judgment. These are not questions of liberty, but they are questions of development.
- c. The great evil of adding unnecessarily to its power. Every function is superadded to those already exercised by the government.

Mill's Concept of Utility

Mill reexamined and restated Benthamism to save it from degradation and hedonism. While accepting the utility principle, he found that the pleasure-pain principle and the identification of pleasure with happiness represented a very narrow and rigid view that did not recognize that pleasure could also be derived from creative thought and laborious work. J. S. Mill tried to rescue Benthamism from materialistic hedonism by including the non-hedonistic quality of pleasure. He differs from Bentham because it is a pleasure and not its source that matters. To Mill, the source also matters. The pleasure of one thing (poetry) will be higher than another's pleasure (pushpin). Mill departs from Bentham, who believes that pleasure could be assessed in complete isolation from its source and from men who feel it. Another modification of Mill in Benthamism was that Bentham's utility was self-regarding while Mill's was self-regarding and other-regarding. Again, Bentham valued liberty, not for its own sake but because it is an incident for utility. For Bentham, the end of the man is maximum happiness, not maximum liberty, while

Mill is the other way around. For Mill, liberty is an end in itself and is a precious right of the man. Mill's modification of Benthamism made it less mechanical and more humane than before.

Mill argues that the moral worth of actions is to be judged in terms of the consequences of those actions and that utility is the proper standard for judging morality and politics. Mill expounds that the foundation of morals is the principle of utility. This principle of "the Greatest Happiness Principle," holds that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is meant to pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure. The theory of morality is that pleasure, and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain" (Mill, 2009b: 14). His utilitarianism recognizes a fundamental distinction between higher and lower pleasures that connected the development of higher faculties and nobler feelings to the overall increase of happiness. Human excellence may be the highest pleasure and true source of happiness, and so choice-worthy on utilitarian grounds. He argues that human beings require qualitative pleasure. Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness that does not include their gratification. The pleasure of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral sentiments is assigned a much higher value than those of mere sensation (Mill, 2009b: 15-16).

Mill distinguishes between what people *do* want, that is, what they think will make them happy, and what they *should* want, that is, what actually will make them happy. Bentham's famous axiom that pushpin is as good as poetry suggested that utility is a matter only of quantity; one person's enjoyment of a mindless game has the same value as another's the enjoyment of the intellectually complicated task of interpreting literature. But Mill argues that utility is a matter of quality: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied" (Mill, 2009b: 19), Mill maintained, because some kinds of desires and preferences are more valuable than others particularly, the mental pleasure is superior to the physical (Hirschmann, 2008, 232-33). So according to Mill, there are both quantitative and qualitative aspects of pleasure.

What makes one pleasure more valuable than another, there is but one possible answer. "Of two pleasures, if there be one to which all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it, that is the more desirable pleasure. If one of the two is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far above the other that they prefer it, even though knowing it to be attended with a greater amount of discontent, and would not resign it for any quantity of the other pleasure, we are justified in ascribing to the preferred enjoyment a superiority in quality, so far outweighing quantity" (Mill, 2009b: 16-17).

The utilitarian morality does recognize in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. The only self-renunciation which it applauds is devotion to the happiness or the means of happiness of others. Mill regards this sacrifice as a heroic job. He says "All honor to those who can abnegate for themselves the personal enjoyment of life, when by such renunciation they contribute worthily to increase the amount of happiness in the world" (Mill, 2009b: 29-30). However, he says that as between his own happiness and that of others, utilitarianism requires him to be strictly impartial. To do as you would be done by, and to love your neighbor as yourself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality (Mill, 2009b: 31-32).

Thus the maximization of pleasure or happiness is the moral end. For Mill, welfare consists in the satisfaction of desire, and the relevant pleasure is the pleasure that comes from satisfied desire. Secondly, when he insists that welfare consists in the experiencing of pleasurable states, he argues that quality, not simply the amount of pleasure, is to be taken into account. Thirdly, Mill holds that it is possible to be content with life even though dissatisfied, provided that one has the proper balance of pleasure, reckoned both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Critical Evaluation of Mill's Theory of Liberty and Utility

Himmelfarb's "two Mills thesis" maintains that the Mill who authored *On liberty* and individual sovereignty differed significantly from "the other Mill" who wrote the rest of his work, presenting a different mode of liberal thought that gave prominence to civic responsibility and social obligation (Himmelfarb, 1974; also see Rees, 1977). Though this latter view is consistent

with some aspects of positive liberty, other commentators explicitly take up Mill's relationship to the typology (negative liberty as associated with classical liberalism and positive liberty as associated with modern liberalism), and some even argue that Mill advocates positive liberty flat out (see for example Jones, 1992; Semmel, 1983; Scanlon, 1958).

Bruce Baum (1998: 190) reads Mill as more strongly in league with positive liberty theory, particularly its emphasis on higher-order desires. Others reject Mill's association with negative liberty and pure classical liberalism on more complicated grounds. Nadia Urbinati (2002; 159) suggests that "there are three concepts of liberty in Mill's work," not two: "liberty as *noninterference*, liberty as *nonsubjection*, and liberty as moral *self-development*". These three incorporate and cut across the positive/negative typology, leading Urbinati to claim that Mill's conception of freedom actually demonstrates the incoherence of the typology. The ideal of moral self-development, commit Mill to "a notion of liberty that doesn't fit into the conventional dichotomy of the negative and positive" because it involves "decisions supported by reasons" rather than "solely....personal preferences" (Urbinati, 2002, 6, 7, 10).

Joseph Hamburger (1999) takes an even more critical view arguing that Mill's devotion to negative liberty is exaggerated. Mill advocated placing quite a few limitations on liberty and many encroachments on individuality. Far from being libertarian and permissive, Mill advocated the introduction of inhibitions, moral restraints, and social pressures. Mill's overarching purpose was not the rights of the individual or his liberty of self-regarding action, but rather "bringing about moral reform, or, as he called it, moral regeneration." Hamburger says that Mill put less emphasis on, and trust in, the cultivation of individuals' self-restraint and more trust in restraints from external sources (Hamburger, 1999, xi, 5). Thus, rather than inconsistency between "two Mills," Hamburger argues that Mill saw his contemporaries in an age of transition and tried to develop a theory that could negotiate the inevitable tension between things as they were and things as they could be. The elite individuals of that time needed a great deal of negative freedom so that they could oppose the prevailing public opinion and not be restrained in developing new and better ideas. Cowling, who similarly challenged the "libertarian" and "simply individualistic" reading of Millian liberalism, emphasizing instead Mill's attention to "the religion of humanity" and "moral totalitarianism" (Cowling, 1963: xii, 97).

Nancy Hirschmann (2008) connects Mill's theory of freedom with gender and class. Mill's theoretical ambivalence is not about what freedom means. Rather, Mill's ambivalence is about what kind of freedom should be attributed to what kind of person. According to her, Mill constructed a vision of the free individual as one who is intelligent and knowledgeable, creative and thoughtful, virtuous and sympathetic, forceful and strong yet civil and civic-minded, respectful of the welfare of others. He also constructed a vision of the kind of individual who needs guidance if he is to be free: one who is lazy, uneducated, unthinking, uncritical, unmotivated, unoriginal, self-centered, focused on immediate pleasure and short-term consequences. Mill has a twofold theory of freedom that allocates one kind of freedom, negative liberty, to the former group of people, and another kind, positive liberty, to the latter group. For Mill, the divisions between these groups significantly cohere to lines of class and gender: generally propertied men, and some upper-class women, occupy the first group, while laborers, the poor, and most women occupy the latter. This division is not exclusive, for Mill seemed to allow that the boundaries between the two groups are fairly porous. Some workers and women could display a facility for creative and rational thinking and cross over into the kind of freedom enjoyed by wealthy and educated men, just as wealth might cause some privileged men to fall into indolence and sloth, in need of guidance (Hirschmann, 2008, 221-22). The duality in Mill's theory, then, is not between positive and negative liberty per se, but between the kinds of people who are the appropriate subjects of different aspects of liberty that cohere in different ways with positive and negative liberty ideals.

Similarly, Bhandari (1978) argues that Mill does not realize that the impulses and desires of men may be unhealthy and are not always a sure guide to the proper development of personality or proper social actions. Unless the impulses and desires of men are properly channelized, they may ruin him and society. Mill's distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding acts is also very complex and difficult and in many cases, this categorization may not be possible.

Similarly, Mill's utilitarianism concentrates on the issues of choice, virtue, and diversity, for he says that people do not "voluntarily choose the lower description of pleasures in preference to the higher....It may be questioned whether any one who has remained equally susceptible to both classes of pleasures, ever knowingly and calmly preferred the lower". Not only is the selection of lower pleasure evidence of one's unsuitability to judge utilitarian value; it also indicates a lack

of freedom. In this Mill's formula systematically favors the educated, professional, and wealthier classes, for their range of experience, will of necessity be larger than that of laborers and the poor. This bias suggests a tacitly elitist structure to his apparently democratic utilitarian framework. Mill emphasizes individual choice and freedom as the absence of external obstacles, but he also is afraid of what people will choose without guidance. His theory of utility tries to provide such guidance, but this guidance conflicts with his strong notion of individual liberty of conscience and thought (Hirschmann, 2008, 236). Similarly, as Isaiah Berlin noted, Mill so enlarged and refined the meaning of happiness that "he left the true utilitarian spirit" far behind (cited in Berkowitz, 1999: 148).

In his early days, Mill was a thorough-going individualist and opposed state interference. But in later days he became a qualified collectivist and considered the state as a great benefit and supported a measure of state interference in individual's domain like the state regulation, the state's imposition of limitation on hours of work to prevent exploitation of laborers, etc. Here Mill was turning to socialism with his sympathy for factory regulation (see for example Bhandari, 1978: 515). Thus we may conclude that in spite of his classic plea for individual liberty, Mill is an enigma. He is a utilitarian who undermined the creed as he once said "And I am Peter who denied his master" (Bhandari, 1978: 504). He started as a classical liberal who became socialist, a hedonist who taught self-sacrifice, and a democrat who distrusted democracy.

Conclusion

Mill is the champion of negative liberty saying that if individuals are left to their own in the areas which concern them; they will develop their individuality. In his emphasis on the discipline of individuality and the character that underlies good government, Mill's liberalism provides a strong warning and a timely corrective to the reigning forms of liberalism. Mill derives the essential importance of liberty, its right use, and its proper social regulation, from reflections on what is good for human beings and the requirements of the preservation of a society that grants liberty to all. In contrast to many contemporary forms of liberalism, Mill's liberalism puts first neither markets nor procedures nor rights. Rather, his liberalism grows out of, and constantly returns to, questions of character and the ends of human life. And in contrast to postmodern theorists who celebrate choice, diversity, and self-making in opposition to the very idea of

discipline, Mill champions diversity and choice in terms of a particular discipline, the discipline of individuality, which is a conception of human excellence that is achieved through a rigorous moral and intellectual training. Where the discipline of individuality is lacking, the capacity for reasoned choice, which in Mill's view made men and women truly human, cannot in its fullness and vitality be present. Mill's defense of liberty never drifts far from an awareness of the social and political conditions that make liberty possible and rarely loses sight of the ends for which liberty is rightly used.

But in later days he became a qualified collectivist and supported a measure of state interference in an individual's domain. Here Mill was turning to socialism. Thus we may conclude that despite his classic plea for individual liberty, Mill is an enigma. He is a utilitarian who undermined the creed, started as a classical liberal who became socialist, a hedonist who taught self-sacrifice, and a democrat who distrusted democracy.

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