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**Unequal Benefactors and Beneficiaries:  
The Utilitarian Inadequacy of Mill's Arguments for Freedom**

by

**Sulma N. Portillo**

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through Philosophy in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts at the  
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Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the complex, causal interconnection among freedom, power, and utility found in J. S. Mill's conception of individual development in On Liberty. For Mill, individuals must form their character through modes of independent thought, and the free expression of opinions and conduct in order to expand their developmental power. Thus, individuals can obtain knowledge of self and society, and thereby add to the common beneficial social and epistemic consequences, namely utility.

The thesis analyzes Mill's argument that free individual expression adds to utility. The freedom-utilitarian project's pursuit of individual development and multi-sided truth relies on practices that are inconsistent with the goals to maximize the individual's developmental power and knowledge acquisition by the majority of society. The project facilitates the elite's role as benefactors and beneficiaries to utility, but it hinders others' roles in utility, and thus it is more an elitist project than a utilitarian one.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| ABSTRACT .....   | iii   |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....  | 1 -   |
| CHAPTER 2: DIVERSITY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL<br>POWER .....                                       | 19 -  |
| I. Introduction .....  | 19 -  |
| II. Individuality and Developmental Power .....  | 22 -  |
| i) Individual Development and Human Nature .....   | 23 -  |
| ii) The Individual Characteristics that Have High Utility .....  | 27 -  |
| iii) Mill's Argument that Society Should Grant the Developmentally Powerful<br>Greater Political Power .....   | 32 -  |
| iv) Argument that the Free Expression of Individuality Adds to Progress .....                                  | 37 -  |
| III. Diversity and Developmental Power .....   | 40 -  |
| i) Argument that Diversity Renders Benefits to Individual Development.....                                     | 41 -  |
| ii) Diversity of Opinions and Diversity of Modes of Life.....  | 42 -  |
| iii) The Rise of Negative Political Power and the Descent of Developmental Power<br>.....                      | 44 -  |
| iv) Diversity of Education and Diversity of Experiments.....   | 49 -  |
| 1) The Roles of Social Comparison and Competitive Free Play in Self-<br>Education and Experiments of Life..... | 50 -  |
| 2) The Epistemic Limitations of Experiments of Life.....   | 54 -  |
| IV. Conclusion .....   | 58 -  |
| CHAPTER 3: THE PROGRESS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL ELITE .....   | 62 -  |
| I. Introduction .....  | 62 -  |
| II. Social Progress: .....   | 64 -  |
| i) Individual Development and History .....  | 64 -  |
| ii) The Relationship between Progress and Custom .....   | 67 -  |
| iii) The Justice of Utilitarianism: Just for the Elite? .....  | 69 -  |
| III. The Elitist Assignment of Utility to Human Natures .....  | 81 -  |
| i) Moral and Intellectual Elitism and Self-fulfilling Prophecies .....   | 81 -  |
| ii) The Fallacy of Innate Mental Giftedness .....  | 86 -  |
| IV. Conclusion .....   | 89 -  |
| CHAPTER 4: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND CULTURAL IMPERIALISM<br>OVER THE TRUTH .....                              | 91 -  |
| I. Introduction .....  | 91 -  |
| II. Mill's Main Argument that Freedom of Expression has Beneficial Consequences<br>for Society .....           | 93 -  |
| i) Free Opinion Formation .....  | 93 -  |
| ii) Free Expression of Held Opinions: .....  | 94 -  |
| 1) Argument from Fallibility.....  | 95 -  |
| 2) Argument from Rationality .....   | 95 -  |
| 2.1) The Rationality of Responding to Objections .....   | 96 -  |
| 2.2) The Satisfaction of the Necessary Conditions for Liveliness of Truthful<br>Beliefs .....                  | 96 -  |
| 3) Argument from the Synthesis of Truth: Epistemic Diplomats.....  | 98 -  |
| 5) The Equal Treatment of Falsehood and Truth.....   | 100 - |

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| <b>III. Utilitarian Problems with the Use of 'Unrestricted' Expression for the Pursuit of Truth</b> .....                | - 101 - |
| <b>i) Response to the Argument from the Rational Sustenance of the Life of Truth for 'Unrestricted' Expression</b> ..... | - 103 - |
| <b>ii) Response to the Rationalization of the Equal Treatment of Falsehood and Truth</b> .....                           | - 105 - |
| <b>iii) Response to the Synthesis of Truth Argument</b> .....  | - 109 - |
| <b>iv). Response to the Argument from Rationality for 'Unrestricted' Expression</b> .....                                | - 117 - |
| <b>1) Free for Whom? 'Unrestricted' Expression: A Restricted Form of Expression</b> .....                                | - 120 - |
| <b>2) Free Speech as a Social Transmitter of Cognitive Independence</b> .....  | - 127 - |
| <b>3) The Pursuit of Truth through Laissez-faire Expression and Social Darwinism</b> .....                               | - 131 - |
| <b>IV. Conclusion</b> .....  | - 136 - |
| <b>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</b> .....   | - 139 - |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....  | - 147 - |
| <b>VITA AUCTORIS</b> .....   | - 149 - |

**Unequal Benefactors and Beneficiaries:  
The Utilitarian Inadequacy of Mill's Arguments for Freedom**

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**

Mill argues that freedom has beneficial consequences for society. Mill views utilitarianism, not as merely the mechanical application of principles, but as a "long-term social project" (Wilson, 2007). In accordance with this interpretation of Mill's utilitarianism, this thesis discusses the various roles of freedom in Mill's utilitarianism, as evident in *On Liberty* (1859), and understands his utilitarianism as a freedom-utilitarian project. As a project, utilitarianism seeks to intensify the societal expression of utility, which is the common beneficial consequences of individual progress, the intensity of which is based on the utility that society assigns to each of its members. The more that society contributes to the maximization of the utility of each of its members, the more that society can be called utilitarian. Thus, I maintain that utility and political equality are intertwined.

Mill grounds utility on the "permanent interests of man as a progressive being" (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶11),<sup>1</sup> and thus, he causally bases utility on individual progress. Individual progress is the advancement of an individual's capacity for the exercise of developmental power. Developmental power is an individual's capacity to learn about self and others, act and think creatively, exercise choice, and determine her<sup>2</sup> individuality. The acquisition of knowledge of self and others depends on an individual's capacity to exercise her individuality, that is, to keep individuality active by means of free individual expression. Mill's view of free individual expression includes two general forms of freedom. The first part is characterized by free speech and independent

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will use the abbreviation CW to refer to the Collected Works of John Stuart Mill; the full citation of this work can be found in the bibliography of the current thesis. For Mill's essay On Liberty and for his work Utilitarianism, I will textually draw primarily from the eighteenth and the tenth volumes respectively of the Collected Works of John Stuart Mill.

<sup>2</sup> For the rest of this thesis, I will use the feminine pronouns "her" and "she" to balance the use of the masculine pronoun in the quoted material.

opinion formation. Mill defines free speech as socially, politically, and legally unrestricted speech (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶42). He defines freedom of opinion as the capacity for independent opinion formation. The second part of free individual expression is characterized by free individual conduct. Mill defines free conduct as conduct that lacks social interference in matters that regard only the self and that have no consequences for others.

Mill characterizes freedom as that capacity which permits the independence of the individual. Freedom is the capacity for the independent pursuit of individual improvement, or the pursuit of "our own good in our own way" (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶13) without impeding others' same pursuit (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶13). Freedom adds to the developmental power of an individual without undermining the developmental power of others. Because it directs the developmental power maximization of everybody, freedom is a good that facilitates the expansion of individual developmental power; this expansion is individual progress. Freedom adds not only to the potential utility of an individual which is the individual's potential capacity to add to the common good, but also to potential societal utility which is the potential of society as a whole<sup>3</sup> to contribute to its common good; this potential is developmental power. Because it permits the exercise and advancement of developmental power, freedom adds knowledge and cultural and social improvements to the common good. In the ways discussed above, Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument posits that the freedoms of speech, opinion, and conduct are necessary for the maximization of utility. In short, Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument is that freedom of individual expression adds to the common good, and that, therefore, society should encourage this freedom.

Mill proposes a freedom-utilitarian project for the pursuit of utility maximization by means of free individual expression. Mill's treatment of the freedom of conduct is more consistent with the maximization of utility than his treatment of the freedom of opinion

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<sup>3</sup> For Mill, society is the sum of its individual members (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9). With society thus defined, since freedom adds to individual developmental power, freedom also adds to societal developmental power.



expression and opinion formation. My thesis argues that Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument provides inadequate consequentialist support for its freedom-utilitarian project, and is impractical for the maximization of utility. This thesis suggests some requirements for a practical freedom-utilitarian project.

Mill does not consider all the main likely consequences of his freedom-utilitarian project. That project is also a social epistemological one, for it is intended to advance knowledge at the social level by facilitating the expansion of individual developmental power which includes the capacity of individuals to obtain knowledge about self and others. This thesis will show how the practice of the freedom of speech and opinion formation that Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument calls for would be counterproductive to the expansion of individual developmental power. Thus, this thesis will argue that Mill's project would fail to optimize individual expression to the extent that he claims freedom can facilitate it. Since the maximization of utility depends on the optimization of individual developmental power, and Mill's freedom-utilitarian project would be unlikely to optimize individual developmental power, that project would likely fail to reach its utilitarian aims.

Mill's social and political philosophy is normally viewed as an equalitarian one. The present thesis identifies some ways in which Mill's social and political philosophy of freedom is not equalitarian. One of these ways is that elitism misguides Mill's claims about the personal requirements for the optimization of individual development, and the maximization of social utility. Elitist premises are argumentative assumptions that reward only or more highly certain social interests, and can unfairly have politically differential consequences for the various social groups. The thesis shows how the elitist premises of Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument are unacceptable. If followed to their final implications, it is evident that those elitist premises contradict Mill's conclusion that his freedom-utilitarian project would help maximize utility.

The elitist premises that only a few persons inherently have strong levels of individuality, and that the stronger individualities can developmentally benefit more from freedom of individual

expression imply that the capacity for developmental power varies among individuals and that so does the capacity to benefit from free individual expression.

Even worse for the capacity of the freedom-utilitarian project to help optimize freedom and thus maximize utility, what Mill considers freedom fails to meet the most important requirement for the optimization of cognitive freedom: the promotion of mental independence and open-mindedness. In this way, it lacks the capacity to enhance individual developmental power which includes the capacity of an individual to obtain knowledge. The elitist premises that only a few individuals can be impartial and that impartiality is necessary for the individual attainment of knowledge imply that the majority of individuals would not be able to obtain knowledge of self and others sufficient for self-determination. Thus, the social epistemology of Mill's freedom-utilitarian project impedes the capacity of individuals to add knowledge to the common good, that is increase epistemic utility, and thus the project cannot reach the maximization of epistemic utility for which it aims.

Another way in which Mill's freedom-utilitarian project is not equalitarian is that it implicitly supports the tyranny of the inherently strong and the politically privileged. Admittedly, Mill neither overtly supports the tyranny of the inherently strong nor does he seem to consciously intend to do so. Mill recognizes the need for the social discipline of strong individuals to prevent their exercise of their greater developmental power to acquire political power in socially harmful ways. Yet, we should be aware that, under what Mill considers socially and politically unrestricted speech and opinion formation, including opinions about which opinions are true, the politically and inherently strong are most likely to have rule over truth that would be tyrannical in at least two ways. First, it would be culturally imperialistic in that the culture of the elite social groups would have the most influence over what society accepts as truthful opinions. Second, the presumed rational justification of the elite's knowledge would depend on the maintenance of the majority's ignorance or false opinions. What Mill considers unrestricted expression is counterproductive even to the individual development of tyrants insofar as it hinders their

capacity to obtain social discipline and to obtain reliable knowledge about others. An even worse way in which Mill's view of free expression is counterproductive to utility maximization is how what Mill considers unrestricted expression actually restricts the individual expression of the politically and presumably developmentally normal or weak. "Unrestricted" expression not only impedes the exercise of their developmental power but hinders the expansion of that power, that is, their individual progress. Because what Mill considers a freedom-utilitarian project is practical for the power maximization of only the developmentally and politically powerful individuals, it is best understood as an elitist project.

The lack of equalitarianism of Mill's freedom-utilitarian project will be made yet further evident. I develop the term 'political egoism' to account for Mill's bias. An argument's premises are politically egoist if they rely on elitist assumptions concerning the group to which the arguer belongs. Another term that I use to account for Mill's bias is 'epistemic fairness,' and I develop a version of the concept 'epistemic fairness' that fits the utilitarian aims of Mill's arguments for freedom. Epistemic fairness is a characteristic of epistemological methods. In my view, epistemic fairness<sup>4</sup> is the degree to which these methods consider the number and the variety of epistemic agents who are the active and direct benefactors and beneficiaries to the pursuit, and the attainment, of knowledge.

This thesis constructively critiques the freedom-utilitarian project in the following two ways. For its critique, this thesis diagnostically applies the concepts 'political egoism' and 'epistemic fairness' to identify the ways in which Mill's freedom-utilitarian project lacks equalitarianism, its social epistemology is flawed, and its practices that Mill recommends for that project are inconsistent with the project's progressive aims. For its constructiveness, this thesis uses these concepts to suggest some general requirements for an adequate freedom-utilitarian project. The thesis suggests that utility maximization requires consideration of the variety and

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<sup>4</sup> Epistemic fairness is an idea "entailed by social empiricism" (Solomon, 2001, p. 12), which "evokes the social side of epistemology" (Solomon, 2001, p. 148).

number of epistemic agents who actively and directly participate in, and benefit from, the pursuit of knowledge of self and others, and of social and natural world.

Mill's freedom-utilitarian project at first glance appears to be for a developmental meritocracy in which there is fair competition over social worth, and which rewards individuals in proportion to their proved developmental power. However, the society that puts this project into practice sets up self-fulfilling prophecies against the developmental outcomes of the many individuals, if the project accepts unparsimonious assumptions about human nature which contribute to perceptions that utility is exclusive. Mill assumes that human beings vary in their degree of psychobiological developmental power and in their possession of the attributes that facilitate their capacity to improve their developmental power. This assumption is unparsimonious because we all belong to the same species. So, the simplest assumption sets the emphasis on commonality, not on difference. However, Mill emphasizes the inherent differences in human nature and implies variations in inherent developmental power.

Mill provides an inconsistent discussion of freedom with various implications for the strength of developmental power which freedom can foster, and for the extent to which freedom can contribute to utility. To show that Mill provides multiple treatments of freedom which vary in their consistency with utility, the thesis explores the causal relationships among developmental power, freedom, and utility.

The second chapter, entitled "Diversity for the Individual and Developmental Power," discusses Mill's treatment of freedom that is most consistent with the utilitarian aims of his social project. Under the treatment of freedom which is most consistent with utility maximization, Mill suggests that freedom applies only to actions that add to developmental power while the same actions do not hinder others' developmental power. For Mill, utility gains the most from social conditions that permit as much freedom as the optimization of developmental power requires. Society's capacity for progress gains from its members' free exercise of individuality and especially from the consequent expansion of their developmental power.

The second chapter reconstructs Mill's argument that freedom of individual expression and social diversity have developmentally and epistemically beneficial common consequences. It will examine Mill's politically egoistic argument that society would be wise to let the intellectually strong lead it. His premises for that argument make elitist and empirically unjustified claims; they require but lack relevant scientific support.

The second chapter shows how Mill causally connects individual development to utility. To show this connection, the chapter addresses the following questions: For Mill, what is individual development? What causes individual development, and what does it cause?

The second chapter begins an overview of Mill's thought on the nature, the causal factors, and the effects of individual development; the third chapter continues that overview. The second chapter argues that, for Mill, individual development depends on individuality which is the developmental power of self and society. Individuality has both a passive and an active form and its expression varies by degrees. In its active form, individuality consists of (1) inherent developmental power, (2) activity to follow or be led by the inherent power, (3) activity to cultivate the power, and (4) the consequent nature from the exercise of the power. In other words, active individuality can be described as having at least three dimensions: potential, action, and consequence. Active individuality requires the original exercise and/or free exercise of one's developmental power to intelligently follow one's nature, and thereby cultivate individual and social developmental power. In its passive form, individuality consists of (1) inherent developmental power, (2) neglect of the power, (3) the degradation of the power, and (4) the consequential inability to use the power. The type of individuality that one has depends on whether one actively exercises one's individuality or passively tries to conform one's individuality to socially desired ideals. As long as the individual maintains the active form of individuality, she can remake her nature.

The developmental power of everyone can be expanded by being effectually exercised for the cultivation of one's nature. However, according to Mill, a small proportion of individuals

have more inherent developmental power than others and, as long as their individuality remains active, their developmental power is more likely than that of others to cultivate a great nature. Others, on the other hand, are more likely to exercise passive individuality, and thus can lose their capacity to define and redefine their nature.

Mill recognizes that individuality has psychobiological and social bases. Mill emphasizes the psychobiological diversity of human beings over their commonalities, claiming that, to a large extent, every individual has a unique inherent psychological nature. From this nature is derived her inherent developmental power. There are constraints for an individual's capacity to expand her developmental power. First, the individual is capable of making her nature under the constraints of her unique inherent developmental power. There is a limited range within which her capacity for self-definition can operate. The individual can learn about her psychological developmental needs and capacities by means of self-education. Experiments of life are educative. In such experiments, the individual tries, and may invent, modes of life to find which one best suits her inherent nature for the facilitation of its growth. Paradoxically, for an individual to be able to *lead* her nature, a necessary precondition is that she must learn how to intelligently *follow* the inward tendencies of her nature. There are limits to the leadership that she can exercise over her nature. She cannot remove the inward tendencies, only discipline them. To some extent, following the inward tendencies of one's nature is inevitable.<sup>5</sup> Following those tendencies under *intelligent* exploration, however, to obtain sufficient self-knowledge to properly discipline them is a greater challenge.

Other constraints of an individual's capacity to expand her developmental power include two necessary conditions for the individual to actively exercise her individuality. These conditions include freedom and diversity. Particularly, Mill argues for socially, culturally, politically and legally unrestricted freedom to think independently, express one's opinions, and act in self-regarding matters, i.e. in matters that have no direct consequences for others.

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<sup>5</sup> See J. S. Mill's On Nature (1874).

Additionally, Mill argues for toleration of diversity of opinions, education, modes of life, and experiments of life. The greater the degree to which freedom and diversity are present in her society, the greater the likelihood that the individual will be able to expand her developmental power, and thus, that her individuality will be effectual. Another constraint for the expansion of developmental power is that the individual must exercise it, and if she does not exercise it, she risks not only its reduction, but also its loss.

A final constraint on the capacity of the individual to expand her developmental power is negative political power which is a suppressive form of power that socially restricts the conduct of individuals, and imposes limits upon their behavioural range. This exercise can impede the capacity of individuals to choose behaviours that would facilitate their growth. Mill is not completely opposed to the exercise of negative political power. What Mill argues against is the excessive exercise of negative political power over the individual. This exercise is excessive when it restricts freedom and diversity so much that it undermines active individuality.

The more freedom and diversity that one's social environment permits, the less likely that one will remain a passive and relatively under-developed individual. Thus, freedom and diversity serve protective functions for individual development, whereas their lack endangers active individuality, and thereby also endangers individual development.

So too, lack of freedom and lack of diversity undermine the capacity for social progress. For Mill, social progress requires significant increases in developmental power. At the personal level, the developmental power of individuality consists primarily of originality. At the social level, developmental power consists primarily of developed individuals and persons of genius whose contributions have proved to be socially effectual and beneficial. The capacity for social developmental power is protected by such individuals. Also, eccentrics and individuals who, at times, deviate from the social norms serve to protect the developmental power of their society. Simply put, the greater the number of these individuals in society, the greater the protection for the power.

Individuality by means of its favourable contributions to the capacity for individual development is of the utmost social utility. That is to say, individuality is the most likely to improve the common good, and individuality brings the greatest benefits to society, for individuality produces social progress. For Mill, social progress means social change with positive qualities, such as political improvements, especially increases in liberty and justice, moral, social, cultural, and intellectual improvements. Also, social progress can include the increased general psychological well-being of society's members. Individuality is crucial for the social attainment of happiness. For, according to Mill, the amount of social happiness<sup>6</sup> depends on the happiness of the members of society, and their happiness is facilitated by the satisfaction of their particular psychological and biological developmental needs and the consequential growth of their natures.

Mill gives an account of the interrelationship between freedom and power. Arguing that Mill gives both negative and positive accounts of freedom, Baum (1998) finds that

Mill's developmental view of individuality and autonomy leads him to articulate an indispensable account of the interrelationship between freedom and power. Freedom, he maintains, consists of both the absence of burdensome constraints on people's possible actions and the capacity of persons for self-determination and self-government. (p. 215)

Mill views the negative aspect of freedom as freedom from others' excessive exercise of political and social power over one's inner and outer conduct. He views the positive aspect of freedom as freedom to discover and make one's nature, articulate one's character, determine one's mode of life, and, ultimately, learn to identify the idiosyncratic requirements for one's happiness. In this way, he connects the positive aspect of freedom with developmental power. An examination of Mill's On Liberty suggests that *power over* is not the problem that he targets. 'Power over' can be exercised socially, interpersonally or intra-personally. Simply stated, developmental power is power *over* the development of one's nature and thus a capacity for free control over one's

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<sup>6</sup> It is beyond the scope of this thesis to detail Mill's understanding of happiness. For the purpose of this thesis, it is sufficient to note that Mill treats social happiness as the aggregate of individual happiness (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9), and that he views individual happiness as the active individual's long-term developmental outcome.



actions. The negative form of political power is the capacity to influence the behaviour of others, whereas the positive form of political power is the capacity to determine one's behaviour or to protect oneself from others' interference with one's behaviour. Developmental power, for Mill, is neither completely a negative form of political power, nor a problem. As well, individuals can exercise power over others in ways that assist other individuals to properly discipline their natures, i.e. beneficially exercise power over their natures, so that, for example, they cultivate their social sympathy. In this way, even power over others is not necessarily a corrupt form of power. Therefore, Mill does not suggest a clear cut distinction between negative and positive political power as many thinkers today construe it. Mill does not argue for the complete elimination of negative political power (power over) or its sources, e.g. customs. Rather, he argues against the inappropriate<sup>7</sup> use of negative political power and against *excessive*<sup>8</sup> conformity to custom. Negative political power works against utility when negative political power is used to impose unnecessary restrictions upon individuals. Developmental power (power over oneself) serves utility, for developmental power consists of abilities that when exercised by the individual can have progressive social consequences.

To explore how Mill assigns utility, the second chapter of this thesis will find support for the following five interpretive hypotheses regarding power which can affect the degrees of freedom and utility possible for various individuals. First, Mill treats developmental power more as a positive than a negative form of political power. He characterizes a psychobiological minority with higher levels of developmental power, and thereby also with a greater capacity to benefit others and themselves through their freedom. This is problematic because it implies that a small social group is more likely than other groups to serve the common good.

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<sup>7</sup> The use of negative political power is inappropriate when it interferes with matters that regard only the self. I will not discuss the problems with the claim that there are matters that regard only the self. it is sufficient to say that most matters, if not all, are not self-regarding matters.

<sup>8</sup> Conformity to custom is excessive when it results in despotic custom.

The second interpretive hypothesis is that Mill negatively correlates<sup>9</sup> the amount of negative political power that a person has with the amount of developmental power that she has. Mill emphasises the morally negative aspects of negative political power. He characterizes the masses of persons with higher levels of negative political power, and thereby with the lack of capacity to benefit others and themselves through their freedom. This is problematic because it implies that they lack the capacity to serve the common good. The third interpretive hypothesis is that Mill positively correlates original actions with progressive consequences. He attributes original actions to the developmental elite. This is problematic because it implies that the developmental elite have a utility advantage above others, since they are most likely to contribute to social progress. The fourth interpretive hypothesis is that Mill positively correlates conformist actions with regressive consequences. Mill causally attributes conformist actions to the societal majority. This is problematic because it implies that the majority of persons are the least likely to serve the common good. The first to fourth interpretive hypotheses will find support in the second and third chapters of this thesis.

Mill positively correlates the exercise of positive political power with improved psychological well-being and the attainment of individual happiness. The fifth interpretive hypothesis is that, in contrast to his favourable view of positive political power, for Mill, the informal exercise of negative political power includes mental coercion. As the first and second hypotheses discussed, Mill characterizes the developmental elite as having more positive political power than the masses of persons, and he characterizes the masses as having, and promoting, more negative political power than the developmental elite. This is problematic because it implies that the masses are to blame for lack of social happiness, whereas the developmental elite

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<sup>9</sup> For this thesis, whenever I say that Mill 'negatively correlates' or 'negatively relates' and 'positively correlates' or 'positively relates,' I am referring to particular claims Mill makes about the direction of an empirical relationship between two variables. When two variables are said to be positively related, what is meant is that as one variable increases, so does the other, or vice versa, when one variable decreases, so does the other. When two variables are said to be negatively correlated, what is meant is that as one variable increases, the other decreases, and vice versa.

are the most likely to contribute to social happiness. The fifth interpretive hypothesis will find support in the third chapter's part entitled "The Justice of Utilitarianism: Just for the Elite."

As mentioned in the discussion for the second hypothesis, Mill characterizes ordinary persons as having a greater likelihood for the exercise of the morally corrupt form of negative political power, and he characterizes intellectuals with the exercise of progressive positive political power. Because of his interest in the maximization of actions that have progressive consequences, Mill is concerned with the need to minimize the morally corrupt form of negative political power, and to maximize the developmental power of society. He calls upon people to tolerate diversity in order to reduce society's exercise of negative political power and permit individuals to exercise their developmental power. Mill aspires for society to assign greater political power to individuals with the most developmental power.

Mill claims that individuals who have the most developmental power in society tend to have the least political power. That claim is inconsistent with his other claim that the actions of developmentally powerful individuals are more likely to produce social progress than the actions of persons who have more negative political power. Since the capacity to add to, or effect, social progress depends on the capacity for politically and socially influential actions, it remains to be clarified what Mill means by the claim that individuals who are the most likely to bring about progressive consequences are less powerful.<sup>10</sup> The response to that question I provide in the second chapter is that Mill positively links the political and social influence of developmentally powerful individuals to the positive form of political power, of which he implies there is a deficiency. But he does not make such a link to the negative form, of which he claims that there is an excess. Thus, Mill thinks that the placement of more formal political power in the hands of

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<sup>10</sup> When those with higher levels of negative political power exercise influence over others it likely contributes to social regression, if to any change at all. By assuming that the societal majority have higher levels of negative political power than the developmental elite have formal political power, Mill implies that social regression and no social change are more likely than social progress. This can explain what Mill means by the claim that those who have more developmental power, and thereby more capacity to contribute to social progress, do not have more political power.

individuals who have greater levels of developmental power would foster positive political power and reduce negative political power.

The third thesis chapter, entitled "The Progress of the Elite," argues that Mill's developmental elitism, including moral, intellectual, and political elitist aspects, fosters political inequality. Also, the absolute notion of political equality that Mill accepts is counterproductive to the maximization of individual development. Mill's elitist claims about developmental differences and the nature of individual development, if accepted, would result in a greater likelihood that the elite would make self-fulfilling prophecies<sup>11</sup> against the societal majority's development maximization. In particular Mill denies the capacity of the least developable individuals to meaningfully be history makers.

Mill claims that the active exercise of individuality causes individual development, that individual development can cause progress, and that individual progress can cause history. Without individuality, there is no individual development, and without individual and social progress, there is no history. Mill claims that, more indirectly, individuality causes social progress and individual development causes history. Social progress depends on favourable moments in the struggle between individuality and despotic custom.<sup>12</sup> History involves the struggle of developmental power to overcome the excesses of negative political power and to reach greater levels of the expression of individuality and thereby human freedom. Thus, history is the purposive and political movement towards the individualization of humankind.

The second chapter's parts on experiments of life and the third chapter argue that Mill's social epistemological prescriptions for the advancement of developmental power by means of self-education promote the developmental power of the developmental elite, not the

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<sup>11</sup> An individual makes a self-fulfilling prophecy when s/he acts in ways that influence her own experiences or another individual's experiences to confirm the expectations that the individual had prior to making her actions (Aronson et al., 2004).

<sup>12</sup> A despotic custom is a common cultural practice that is exercised to an extent which undermines the social capacity for progress.

developmental power of the whole of society. The problem is that Mill's conception of individual development, upon which those prescriptions are based, makes some un-parsimonious or unnecessarily strong assumptions about human nature. In particular, Mill's assumptions about the inherent differences among the individual levels of developmental power are counterproductive to the pursuit of the maximization of the developmental power of every individual. His assumptions about individual inherent differences set limitations for the utility that is possible for most individuals. Specifically, the way that Mill assigns high utility to an exclusive set of mental attributes is counterproductive to the aim to maximize the utility of every member of society, or their capacity to serve the common good.

A serious problem with Mill's freedom-utilitarian conception of individual development is that its assignment of utility lacks impartiality; that assignment is both elitist and politically egoist. These biases lead the project to be inconsistent with its aim for political equality which according to Mill is the essence of justice. The project is based on the belief that society should accept certain practices because they will benefit society. The belief is incoherent because the consequentialist arguments that support it imply that those practices would directly benefit mainly the developmental elite who should rule society. Mill fails to see that, if their society gives them unequal levels of political power, the political interest conflicts between the developmentally powerful and the underdeveloped or the least developable would intensify. Society would conduct this differential assignment on the basis of the various levels of developmental power which the developmental elite presume the society's members have. However, Mill does not urge society to consider how this assignment would affect the capacity of the underdeveloped individuals to satisfy their various psychological developmental needs. Thus, Mill's conception of individual development promotes political inequality.

An additional sign of Mill's lack of impartiality is that his conception of individual development is also one-sided because of its political egoism. Mill accepts assumptions about human nature that are in line with the political interests of the intellectual minority group to

which he belongs. He assigns more value to the characteristics and causal attributes that reflect his individual nature. He fails to see the oppressive implications of his development maximization principles for persons whom the developmental elite treat as the underdeveloped or least developable. In short, Mill's project offers a politically biased assignment of utility.

The assignment is unnecessarily politically exclusive, because it is based on unparsimonious or unnecessarily strong assumptions about human nature; these were explained previously. Even worse, his consideration of differences is elitist, for he prefers the political power of individuals whom he considers have a greater capacity to effectively exercise such power because of their greater ability to obtain developmental power; he recommends that the developmental elite should rule. The problematic bias is Mill's failure to consider how the developmental elite's rule could undermine the capacity of the underdeveloped to meet their various developmental needs. That lack of consideration for developmental interests different from his own contributes to the politically egoistic nature of his argumentation. By accepting elitist and unparsimonious assumptions, he sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy against not only the developmental power, but, because developmental power affects utility, also the utility of most individuals. Consequently, the freedom-utilitarianism that Mill proposes is weak.

The fourth thesis chapter, entitled "Freedom of Expression and Cultural Imperialism over the Truth," argues that Mill's view of free speech misdirects his freedom-utilitarian project's social epistemology. What Mill considers socially unrestricted speech lacks the functions for the enhancement of epistemic and individual development that he claims it has.

Concerned with negative political power because its excess interferes with liberty, Mill makes recommendations to optimize liberty. Mill claims that the developmental elite's exercise of power, whether that power is negative or positive, is more likely to be virtuous than that of others, and would optimize positive freedom because it would optimize negative freedom, as the fourth chapter will explain. Mill thinks that greater positive freedom facilitates the exercise, and expansion, of individual developmental power, and thus also enhances the capacity of society for

progress.

Mill's prescriptions for epistemic progress hinder the freedom-utilitarian project's capacity to maximize utility through its promotion of the individual's exercise of freedom. Political egoism again misinforms the freedom-utilitarian project's social epistemological recommendations. Mill inadequately considers the likely consequences of the freedom-utilitarian project's recommended practices for freedom. That project prescribes the socially unrestricted practice of speech, but this practice conflicts with the maximization of utility. The recommendation for socially unrestricted speech is socially and cognitively incoherent, as the fourth chapter of this thesis will explain. Consequently, that project is unlikely to serve the social and epistemic utility which Mill claims that it can.

Unfortunately, Mill's treatment of free speech and opinion formation is inconsistent with the maximization of utility. Mill clearly demands "absolute freedom" for cognitive expression (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶12). He writes: "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign" (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶9). Further, Mill clearly states that it is "obvious that law and authority have no business with restraining" the overt expression of opinions (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶42). Thus, Mill makes clear his position on free speech: society should not politically or legally restrict speech.

My responses to Mill's freedom-utilitarian project are consistent with the aims of his project and with many of its claims. For instance, the most developable individuals, if there are such individuals, require social discipline to prevent them from impeding their personal development as well as others' development, according to Mill. So too, I add, for opinion formation and opinion expression to be free, there must be social regulations to optimize their freedom, to give society rational justification for the claim that opinion formation and opinion expression are free, and to prevent the tyranny of the politically strong.

That tyranny, as the fourth chapter of this thesis argues, is likely to occur under the condition of what Mill considers socially unrestricted speech and opinion formation. The

acquisition of the multi-sided truth which Mill seeks to promote is unlikely in a politically unequal context. The main point of the fourth chapter is that under "unrestricted" expression, which is invisibly restricted expression, the formation of truth would be elitist and thus inconsistent with the promotion of cultural diversity, the advancement of rationality and mental independence, and the synthesis of truth.



## **CHAPTER 2: DIVERSITY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL POWER**

### **I. Introduction**

Mill calls for toleration of social diversity because social diversity is a necessary condition for the expansion of individual developmental power. Social diversity facilitates the individual's capacity to developmentally and epistemically benefit from free individual expression. In turn, freedom of individual expression fosters social diversity. The second section of this chapter will focus on the central role of individuality in the expansion of developmental power, whereas the third section will focus on the instrumental role of social diversity in that expansion.

The position of this chapter is that political egoism weakens Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument that the freedom of individual expression helps to maximize utility. That argument's consequentialist considerations are elitist in politically egoistic ways that prevent the project from being adequately utilitarian. In particular, its one-sided premises emphasize that it is socially important to maximize the developmental capacities of the individuals whom Mill presumes are strong; these individuals belong to the same developmental group to which he belongs. He even argues that society should permit the rule of the developmental elite for the maximization of utility.

Mill claims that human nature is inherently diverse so much that the various individual natures have various needs for their development maximization. To take into account their various developmental needs, he recommends the social toleration of diverse cultures and opinions, and the free expression of individuality so that the inherently various individual natures may have a chance to develop themselves. The free expression of individuality includes not only choice of lifestyle but also free opinion formation and what Mill considers socially and politically unrestricted expression of one's opinions.

Since Mill's argument that free expression of individuality should be socially permitted is

utilitarian, its argumentative strength depends on the adequacy of its consequentialism, which is the approach to arguing for certain actions based on the consequences of those actions. For, utilitarianism considers the consequences of actions to understand their utility. I maintain that if it is to advance utilitarian aims, the strength of a consequentialist argument for certain social conditions requires that all or at least most individuals are (1) benefactors to the society by contributing to those social conditions and (2) the societal conditions' beneficiaries. Yet, Mill assumes that the characteristics that are most likely to contribute to the social conditions that he recommends are inherently rare or scarce, so much that only a few individuals could contribute to those social conditions. Thus, he expects only a societal minority to meaningfully add to the common good. Further, he expects that the minority of strong individuals are most likely to immediately and directly benefit from the social conditions, whereas he expects that the societal majority would benefit from the social conditions mainly in the long-term and indirectly.

This chapter explores Mill's elitist assumptions and claims about inherent differences among individual natures that reduce the strength of his main argument that free individual expression maximizes utility. This chapter will reconstruct the components of that argument, with focus on its premise that freedom of individual expression facilitates the expansion of individual developmental power. To reveal how individual developmental power affects the utility of one's actions, the chapter explores how Mill assigns utility to multiple categories of human beings based on the various degrees of developmental power of which he presumes they are capable.

Problematic bias is evident in Mill's lack of consideration for whether persons who are under-developed can obtain the same developmental and epistemic benefits as the developmental elite. He claims that the vast majority of persons who are under-developed lack the characteristics that he considers necessary for service to the common good, but does not consider whether this lack will adversely impact their developmental outcomes. Mill inadequately considers the consequences that the individual practices that he recommends most likely would

have for the development of those whom he presumes have normal or weak individual natures. Thus, his argumentation is one-sided; his arguments for free individual expression largely disregard the interests of persons whom he presumes their inherent nature excludes from the developmental elite.

This chapter finds support for the following four interpretive hypotheses regarding individual capacities for freedom, power, and progress which are relevant to an individual's capacity to add to utility. First, Mill positively correlates the innate capacity for individuality with the capacity to improve individual developmental power. The second interpretive hypothesis is that Mill negatively correlates the degree of negative political power with the degree of developmental power that the person possesses. He characterizes the underdeveloped or what he considers the least developable group with higher levels of negative political power. In other words, (1) the less negative political power persons actually have, the more they have developmental power, and vice versa, (2) the more negative political power persons have, the less they are capable of developmental power. Particularly, Mill claims that the masses of persons have more negative political power than intellectuals. He characterizes the masses with, and causally attributes to the masses, the exercise of negative political power over one another and especially over statistical deviants, and thereby the interference with, or the reduction of, the chances that individuals will cultivate, benefit from, and benefit others by means of their developmental power. Therefore, he does not assume only that the masses are less capable of individuality and thus of developmental power and social diversity. He also assumes that they are more likely to interfere with, and exercise negative power over, the developmental power of others than intellectuals are, because the masses, in his view, threaten social diversity and thereby endanger the availability of social opportunities that individuals need to expand their developmental power.

The third interpretive hypothesis is derived from the second way that Mill treats developmental power as a positive form of political power: Mill positively correlates the degree

of the developmental power of a person with the degree to which she likely will choose actions that have progressive consequences, that is, original actions. Mill causally attributes progressive consequences to the actions of persons whom he thinks have greater levels of developmental power.

The fourth interpretive hypothesis is that Mill negatively correlates the degree of the developmental power of a person with the degree to which she likely will commit conformist actions which result in mere social change, if any social change at all. He causally attributes a greater likelihood to promote conformist actions to the masses of persons than to the intellectual minority of persons. As opposed to progressive social change, he positively correlates the masses with social change that is either (1) the empty form of social change, i.e. social change without improvement, or change for change's sake, or (2) the regressive form of social change, i.e. change for the worse.

## **II. Individuality and Developmental Power**

For Mill, the individual characteristics and causal attributes that have high utility because they enhance an individual's developmental power include genius, active individuality, originality, intellectualism, impartiality, eccentricity, and emotional intensity. This section draws from On Liberty (1859) to explore how Mill assigns various levels of social utility to at least two kinds of individuality and to individual attributes based on their social consequences. Individuality has active and passive forms. In the first part of this section, entitled "Individual Developmental Power and Human Nature," I will discuss that the maintenance of active individuality is important because it adds to the satisfaction of one's idiosyncratic developmental needs, and thus contributes to the perfection of one's nature based on its own ideal. In contrast to active individuality, passive individuality can at most hope to satisfy social ideals of perfect human nature, and these ideals are not necessarily consistent with the satisfaction of one's individual psychological needs. The second part of this section, entitled "The Individual

Characteristics that Have High Utility," concerns how Mill assigns high levels of utility to presumably exclusive individual attributes. In the third part of this section, entitled "Mill's Argument that Society Should Grant the Developmentally Powerful Greater Political Power," I will evaluate Mill's argument that intellectuals and persons of genius deserve high levels of formal political power, and discuss its fallacies and unacceptable assumptions. Third, in this section, especially in the part entitled "Argument that the Free Expression of Individuality Adds to Progress," I will show how Mill claims that freedom affects individuality, and, in turn, individuality affects epistemic and cultural progress.

### **i) Individuality and Human Nature**

Here, I will show that Mill implicitly distinguishes between active and passive individuality, and he expects that individual natures vary in their likelihood to lead an active individuality. One type of individuality benefits from free expression and is most likely to benefit society through that expression. The other is the product of social restraint and lack of free exercise. Mill emphasizes that individuals can follow and make their nature only so long as they maintain their individuality active. Further, Mill suggests that passive individuality reaches a point in time at which it is no longer reversible. In light of these developmental limitations, I will discuss the implications for the developmental capacities of the individual who has either the active or passive form.

From the third chapter in On Liberty, entitled "Of Individuality, as one of the Elements of Well-being," it is evident that Mill is preoccupied with the adequate and proper cultivation of human nature. This cultivation requires a broad theory of life. He stresses that "human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the *tendency of the inward forces* which make it a living thing" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶4, emphasis added). Because the human nature of all cannot fit into the same ideal type, treatment of human nature as if it can conform to

the same model impedes its dynamic capacity for growth. Precisely because of this impediment, Mill criticizes the Calvinistic theory, according to which, "human nature being radically corrupt, there is no redemption for any one until human nature is killed within him" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶7). The Calvinistic theory promotes passive individuality, and represents a tendency towards a "narrow theory of life" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶8) under which society cannot recognize the dynamic capacity of individual development. Mill, however, prefers a broad theory of life, since only through the guidance of such a theory can the growth process of the individual be kept active.

Mill's use of the expressions "while mankind are imperfect" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶1), "ideal perfection of human nature" (CW, 18, Ch. 4, ¶5) "perfect human being" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5), and his criticism of Calvinistic theory combined with his belief that human error is "corrigible" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶7) show that Mill believes in some sort of human perfectibility,<sup>13</sup> not just improbability. For example, Mill writes: "Among the works of man, which human life is rightly employed in perfecting and beautifying, the first in importance surely is man himself" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶4). For another example, after he discusses that persons should be allowed to make errors in matters that regard only the self, Mill claims that, nevertheless, society should tolerate personal judgments about the qualities that regard only other selves. He writes:

I do not mean that the feelings with which a person is regarded by others ought not to be in any way affected by his self-regarding qualities or deficiencies. This is neither possible nor desirable. If he is eminent in any of the qualities which conduce to his own good, he is, so far, a proper object of admiration. He is so much the nearer to the *ideal perfection of human nature*. If he is grossly deficient in those qualities, a sentiment the opposite of admiration will follow. (CW, 18, Ch. 4, ¶5, emphasis added)

Mill considers the capacity of social criticism to be constructively useful to the criticized. He writes:

Though doing no worse to any one, a person may so act as to compel us to judge him, and feel him, as a fool, or as a being of an inferior order: and since this judgment and feeling are a fact

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<sup>13</sup> As it will be discussed in the next section of this chapter and in the third chapter of this thesis, Mill thinks that humans, to a large extent, differ in their psycho-biological natures. So, humans can perfect their natures observing their own inherent range of developmental possibilities and their idiosyncratic psychological needs and preferences. That is, the ideal state of the human nature of each is the main referent in her pursuit of perfectibility. Mill assumes that there is not enough commonality among human natures for there to be an ideal type of human nature.

which he would prefer to avoid, *it is doing him a service to warn him of it beforehand, as of any other disagreeable consequence to which he exposes himself.* (CW, 18, Ch. 4, ¶5, emphasis added)

If one is to benefit from such criticism, the criticism must be true, and it must be possible to modify one's nature in the proportion the criticism calls for. However, it is uncertain to what extent Mill thinks that one can modify one's nature. On the one hand, he writes that one can develop and modify the *expression* of one's nature through one's "own culture" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5). One's nature is one's work (CW, Ch. 3, ¶4, 18).

On the other hand, although he implies that one has a chance to contribute to the value of one's "comparative worth as a human being" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶4), Mill claims that personal worth depends not only on what one does (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶4). What one is also matters. The biologically inherent mental capacities with which one can make one's nature, in Mill's view, vary from person to person. Some developmental factors are beyond one's control. For example, "the *inherent* force of the human understanding" is unequal across human beings (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶7, emphasis added). According to Mill, only a few have a strong inherent capacity to understand, and even in their rare case it is only relatively greater than that of others.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, Mill suggests that some persons have more inherent potential than others, for example, to experience strong sentiments, which he claims add to their potential to develop a strong conscience, as the third section in the next chapter will discuss. This entails that Mill thinks that some persons have innate advantages in their moral perfectibility.

"The danger which threatens human nature is not the excess, but the deficiency, of personal impulses and preferences" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶6), warns Mill. Persons who presumably have a lower capacity for individual development pose a greater threat than those who have a higher capacity, because the former are most likely to suffer from this deficiency. The development of their individuality reduces the level of threat which they pose. Since they have a lower level of developmental power, they will always likely pose this threat more than the

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<sup>14</sup> For Mill, human beings have little potential for understanding, over all.

developmentally powerful.

Mill discusses that individual development requires one to follow and make one's nature; to follow one's nature, one must observe one's inherent potential, and to make one's nature, one must put effort towards one's individual development. Mill is often unclear in regards to the distinctions and connections that he draws between the two developmental requirements.

Nevertheless, it is clear that with the analogy of the growth of plants, Mill suggests that environmental constraints restrict inherent growth potential (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶14). In Mill's view, the inherent potential is not fixed, at least for being lowered. For example, the religious and cultural pressures of society can kill human nature.

Active individuality protects and fosters individual growth. The exercise of one's human capacities provides one's inherent nature with the nourishment that it needs. In contrast, passive individuality threatens the capacity for individual growth. Once one has not followed one's inherent potential for a long enough period of time, one has no nature left to follow, since one's human capacities have become "withered and starved" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶6). Therefore, evidently, Mill implies that human nature can degrade, that is, that it can become less human.

Mill does not follow his logic to its final implications. If one has no inherent human potential left to follow, it is not possible to have a human nature left to cultivate through one's efforts. If one lacks the capacity to understand oneself, one cannot intelligently follow one's nature and learn how to direct one's individual developmental efforts. Thus, Mill suggests that the individual cannot reverse the degradation of her inherent human potential.

That passivity can kill human nature holds implications for the developmental power possible for, and thereby the utility of, the dead natures. The dead natures would lack the capacity for individual development. Persons who live as passive individuals for a certain length of time, which Mill does not specify, lose the capacity to exercise active individuality. Mill does not consider whether dead human natures can rise again. If society cannot assist the rebirth of a dead human nature, there are worse implications than if it is only the individual who cannot



reverse her passive condition. For example, rehabilitation would not effectively direct older passive individuals away from criminal activities. Mill emphasizes self-development, not social intervention in support of individual development. Thus, it is unlikely that he considers the potential helpfulness of society to reverse the degradation of human nature that results from lack of use. Instead, he suggests that society is most useful when it does not interfere, in the first place, with individual development. Mill thinks that if persons were left alone to do what they think best suits their development, freed from social censorship, they could "grow and thrive" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶6). Therefore, to the question of whether individuality that has for long been passive can reactivate, Mill provides no direct and clear response, and, if anything, his work implies a response in the negative.

#### **ii) The Individual Characteristics that Have High Utility**

Mill assigns high utility to eccentricity, intellectualism, emotional intensity, individuality, originality, impartiality, and genius, but he claims that high levels of these are uncommon. Here, I will textually support this chapter's position that Mill assigns utility to various personal characteristics in elitist ways. The third chapter of this thesis will discuss Mill's claims about the innate scarcity of impartiality and emotional intensity, and provide additional textual and argumentative support for the claim of elitism. The current part of this chapter explores Mill's view of the causal connections among freedom, these attributes, the expansion of developmental power, and progress including improvements in freedom, and cultural and epistemic improvements.

Mill posits that freedom lets individuality be active, which, in turn, fosters individual progress. For Mill, progress is the "development of the capacity for self-direction" (Harris, 1956, p. 173). In this way, progress requires personal autonomy and increases in social freedom, i.e. freedom of the individual from society's interference. In Mill's view, the individual must be free from society to determine herself. Mill posits that individual development is a necessary causal

condition for social advancement, and suggests that if society were to recognize this link, "there would be no danger that liberty should be undervalued" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶2). Individual development increases the individual's social utility, for that development leads to individual happiness, and thereby also to social happiness. He writes:

It is not by wearing down into uniformity all that is individual in themselves, but by cultivating it, and calling it forth, within the limits imposed by the rights and interests of others, that human beings become a noble and beautiful object of contemplation; and as the works partake the character of those who do them, by the same process human life also becomes rich, diversified, and animating, furnishing more abundant aliment to high thoughts and elevating feelings, and strengthening the tie which binds every individual to the race, by making the race infinitely better worth belonging to. *In proportion to the development of his individuality, each person becomes more valuable to himself, and is therefore capable of being more valuable to others.* There is a greater fullness of life about his own existence, and when there is more life in the units there is more in the mass which is composed of them. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9, emphasis added)

Mill advises that society should foster the "free development of individuality" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶2), because it is "one of the leading essentials of well-being" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶2). Individual development directly contributes to "civilisation, instruction, education" and "culture" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶2).

As well, Mill expresses concern for the need to develop consideration for the good of others. He asserts that society should restrict the actions of individuals only to the extent that the socially imposed restraints will shape individuality to be in accordance with the good of others, and the social purpose of justice. Consider:

As much compression as is necessary to prevent the *stronger specimens of human nature* from encroaching on the rights of others, cannot be dispensed with; but for this there is ample compensation even in the point of view of human development. The means of development which the individual loses by being prevented from gratifying his inclinations to the injury of others, are chiefly obtained at the expense of the development of other people. And even to himself there is a full equivalent in the better development of the social part of his nature, rendered possible by the restraint upon the selfish part. *To be held to rigid rules of justice for the sake of others, develops the feelings and capacities which have the good of others for their object.* (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9, emphasis added)

His discussion about the wisdom of ordinary people who call upon individuals endowed with genius to govern also expresses the same concern for the need to develop consideration for the good of others. Mill writes that he is

not countenancing the sort of 'hero-worship' which applauds the strong man of genius for forcibly seizing on the government of the world and making it do his bidding in spite of itself. All he can

claim is, freedom to point out the way. The power of compelling others into it, is not only inconsistent with the freedom and development of all the rest, but corrupting to the strong man himself. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13)

He asserts that the spirit of improvement should not drive persons of genius to undermine the spirit of liberty, because to do so would undermine the freedom of others and corrupt the self.

It is clear, therefore, that Mill's ideas on individual development could not justify overt tyrannical actions of persons of genius. He aspires for an age in which the people would reach a stage of individual development sufficient for them to accept, appreciate and support the emergence of an "intellectual aristocracy" (Harris, 1956, p. 167). Nevertheless, to the extent that Mill promotes intellectual elitism in the distribution of social power, his position on innate differentials in developmental power supports subtle forms of the tyranny of persons that have genius, as I will argue in the third section of the third thesis chapter.

In Mill's view, the proper development of individuality is high in social utility. First, personal development requires the development of individuality. Once developed, the individual can contribute to the development of other individuals. Mill writes: "*Individuality is the same thing with development*, and that it is *only* the cultivation of individuality which produces, or can produce, well-developed human beings...these developed human beings are of some use to the undeveloped " (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶10, emphasis added). Thus, individual developmental power contributes to the capacity of society for progress.

The result of individuality is originality which also has social utility, for originality can add to epistemic and cultural progress. Mill writes:

It will not be denied by anybody, that originality is a valuable element in human affairs. There is always need of persons not only to discover new truths, and point out when what were once truths are true no longer, but also to commence new practices, and set the example of more enlightened conduct, and better taste and sense in human life. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11)

Mill criticizes people, however, because they tolerate originality on only abstract grounds, and do not actually accept or engage in its practice (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶12). He encourages them to accept originality in "thought and action," because they too could benefit from originality, first, by fully

"opening their eyes" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶12). Doing so would permit them the chance to be original themselves (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶12).

Further, Mill suggests that eccentricity serves a social purpose in that eccentricity demonstrates by example how to resist the tyranny of popular opinion. He writes:

In this age, the mere example of non-conformity, the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13)

Mill views lack of eccentricity as a sign of the tyranny of popular opinion; he says, "that so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of the time" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13). Mill positively correlates the "amount of eccentricity" present in a society with the "amount of genius" and with attributes that he thinks contribute to the development of genius such as "strength of character," "mental vigour," and "moral courage" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13).

A problem of how society affects individual development is that the common modes of thought hinder it. For instance, persons tend to resist the individual spontaneity which eccentric or uncommon modes of life express. For, persons tend to not have that spontaneity and it is not in their immediate political interest to recognize its worth. Mill writes:

the evil is, that individual spontaneity is hardly recognised by the common modes of thinking as having any *intrinsic worth, or deserving any regard on its own account*. The majority being satisfied with the ways of mankind as they now are (*for it is they who make them what they are*), cannot comprehend why those ways should not be good enough for everybody . . . [Spontaneity is] looked on with jealousy, as a troublesome and perhaps rebellious obstruction to the general acceptance of what [the majority of moral and social] reformers, in their own judgment, think would be best for mankind. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶2, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Mill implies that individual spontaneity positively correlates with eccentricity, and that individual spontaneity has both social utility and intrinsic worth. He observes that many persons are too vainly focused on the worth of their own way of life to recognize the worth of spontaneity.

Because Mill presumes persons of genius are the most likely individuals to possess superior potentials for originality, which, as we have seen, is a requirement for social progress, he recognizes that intellectualism is high in social utility. In his view, it is especially important for

society to permit intellectual and creative individuals as much freedom of expression as they need to adequately develop their superior social utility. For, it is the exceptionally intelligent and creative minority which is most capable of individuality, and, thus, this minority of individuals has greater potential for social utility. Mill views such individuals as inherently and developmentally superior to others, and warns against “reducing” (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11) their nature to that which is common. Mill writes:

Persons of genius, it is true, are, and are always likely to be, a small minority; but in order to have them, it is necessary to preserve the soil in which they grow. Genius can only breathe freely in an atmosphere of freedom. Persons of genius are . . . *more individual* than any other people -- *less capable, consequently, of fitting themselves, without hurtful compression,* into any of the small number of moulds which society provides in order to save its members the trouble of forming their own character. If from timidity they consent to be forced into one of these moulds, and to let all that part of themselves which cannot expand under the pressure remain unexpanded, society will be little the better for their genius. If they are of a strong character, and break their fetters, they become a mark for the society which has not succeeded in *reducing* them to commonplace. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11, emphasis added)

In the above way, Mill suggests that the availability of a few lifestyle options is far from sufficient for the development of the capacity for genius. The fewer options that there are, the more common are social practices. The exercise of choice among things that are commonly done is more a matter of conformity than individuality. But the activity level of individuality benefits from the exercise of choice among original and various things. Thus, there is no better alternative to have than many alternatives. The more life style alternatives that are available, the more that one can exercise one's individuality.

In sum, original individuals permit the creation of multiple life-style alternatives. Originality both adds benefits to, and benefits from, the development of individuality. Thus, there is a mutual, positive relationship between originality and individuality. Mill's discussion on the need to encourage eccentricity suggests that where there is originality, there is individuality. Also, it suggests that the more these two are present, the more there is eccentricity, but that where there is eccentricity, there is not necessarily genius. Eccentricity can serve some social utility, for eccentricity models a variety of ways of life. The more the originality serves social utility in terms of social progress, the more there is genius. The capacity for genius at least initially

requires eccentricity, but genius stands above it in terms of social utility. Thus, according to Mill, genius not being entirely innately, or in today's terms genetically, based depends on more than self-development; it also, importantly, depends on the social consequences of one's originality.

**iii) Mill's Argument that Society Should Grant the Developmentally Powerful Greater Political Power**

Here, I will reconstruct and evaluate Mill's argument that society should give persons of genius greater political power. That argument suffers from inconsistent premises. Additionally, the argument suffers from unacceptable elitist assumptions, and I will discuss two of those assumptions. One elitist assumption, which I will discuss here, is that high levels of individuality are inherently scarce. The second assumption is that the masses are less culturally diverse than intellectuals. Other elitist assumptions include that there is a developmental elite that has intellectual and moral developmental advantages, which result from their superior endowments of impartiality and emotional intensity, that most individuals do not have, and these are explored in the next chapter of this thesis.

For Mill, the societal majority, which not surprisingly consists of persons whose intellectual experiences and political interests are different from his own, are not capable of much social utility. So, persons who lack the capacity to serve social utility are most wise when they simply let the gifted few set the public policies. He writes:

No government by a democracy or a numerous aristocracy, either in its political acts or in the opinions, qualities, and tone of mind which it fosters, ever did or could rise above mediocrity, except in so far as the sovereign Many have let themselves be guided (which in their best times they always have done) by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few. The initiation of all wise or noble things comes and must come from individuals; generally at first from some one individual. The honour and glory of the *average* man is that he is capable of *following* that initiative; that he can respond internally to wise and noble things, and *be led to them* with his eyes open. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13, emphasis added)

An implication of such views is that they could serve many self-fulfilling prophecies, as the next chapter's third section, "The Elitist Assignment of Social Utility," discusses.

If one reads the passages, which the first part of this section provided, and in which Mill

discusses the social consequences of the exercise of individual characteristics that cause individual development, it is evident that he emphasizes the superior developmental characteristics of persons of genius. From this emphasis, one can quite easily get the impression that Mill's basic argument that society should assign greater social power to persons of genius rests on the claim that they have more developmental power. Mill supports the argument that the intellectual elite should be the political elite in at least two structurally problematic ways. In the first way, he seems to argue in a circle. Society's intellectual superiors have more individual developmental power, which is also a form of positive political power, because individual developmental power contributes to social developmental power and thereby to the common good. So, intellectuals deserve greater political power to maximize the common good. Additionally, individuals who can have more individuality, i.e., individuals who have greater developmental power which is a form of political power, can counteract the political power of persons who lack strong individuality. This capacity that Mill considers protective applies more when the developmentally and thus politically powerful are granted greater political power, for example, when society encourages them to express their greater individuality.

The second way that Mill supports the argument that society should grant the developmental elite greater political power suffers at the very least from inconsistent premises. For Mill, geniuses possess greater individual developmental power, but not greater political power. Mill states: "In sober truth, whatever homage may be professed, or even paid, to real or supposed mental superiority, the general tendency of things throughout the world is to render *mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind*" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13, emphasis added). Mill claims that power tends to be possessed by persons of mediocrity. He continues: "The only power deserving the name is that of masses, and of governments while they make themselves the organ of the tendencies and instincts of masses" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13). Popular opinion was to become the most powerful agency in his time. Mill writes:

*in bringing about a general similarity among mankind, is the complete establishment, in this and*

other free countries, of *the ascendancy of public opinion* in the State. As the various social eminences which enabled persons entrenched on them to disregard the *opinion of the multitude*, gradually become levelled; as the very idea of resisting the will of the public, when it is positively known that they have a will, disappears more and more from the minds of practical politicians; there ceases to be any social support for non-conformity--any substantive power in society, which, itself *opposed to the ascendancy of numbers*, is interested in taking *under its protection opinions and tendencies at variance with those of the public*. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶12, emphasis added)

While he does not fully acknowledge that the ascendancy of the multitude of persons itself results from increases in liberty and thus social progress, Mill speaks of the ascendancy as an ongoing change that is counterproductive to social progress. Thus, society should counteract the ascendancy, in his view. He stresses that his complaint is not with the fact that mediocrity controls itself, but rather with the fact that "the government of mediocrity" is "mediocre government" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13).

Mill suggests that the more that the masses of mediocrity gain control over society, the greater becomes the extent to which individuality can benefit society. He writes:

when the opinions of *masses of merely average* men are everywhere . . . becoming the dominant power, the counterpoise and corrective to that tendency would be the more and more pronounced individuality of those who stand on the *higher eminences of thought*. It is in these circumstances most especially, that *exceptional* individuals, instead of being deterred, should be encouraged in acting differently from the mass. (CW, 18, Ch. 13, ¶13, emphasis added)

In the above way, Mill asserts that to counteract the excessive power of mediocrity over society, people should encourage the individuality of intellectuals and persons of genius. Simply stated, the greater the excess of mediocre power, the greater the need to encourage the expression of the individuality of the exceptional members of society.<sup>15</sup>

However, it is difficult to be convinced by Mill's explicit claim that intellectuals do not constitute a powerful elite, for he clearly characterizes them as having greater developmental power with all the capacity to socially influence the direction of progress that it entails. Thus, he recognizes developmental power as a form of political power. Yet, he ignores this recognition when it is strategically advantageous for him to do so, in particular, when taking this into account

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<sup>15</sup> Mediocre persons are unaware of the worth of individuality, whether it is their own or that of others. So, they are unlikely to encourage the individuality of intellectuals. Thus, it is up to intellectuals to encourage their own individuality.



may not help to persuade society that its intellectual superiors should also be its political superiors.

Mill implicitly admits that the developmental power of persons of genius and intellectuals permits them positive political power with which to direct social progress. This includes the exercise of influence over the content of progress; for example, the developmental elite originate and diversify cultural practices, and have influence over what cultures remain available. Indeed, one reason that Mill gives for his observation that originality has utility is that originality makes possible social diversity, for original persons can invent new cultural practices by means of life experiments. Originality is a causal factor of the live, "social experiments" which prevent the degeneration of social life into only a state in which persons act out traditions, and which keep civilization alive. This experimental service, however, according to Mill, can be rendered only by a few individuals to whom I refer as the developmental elite; in the third chapter of this thesis, I will show that Mill suggests that intellectuals merit this designation, but I will argue that to give this designation to any one is unfair because society lacks reliable means to identify the persons who merit this designation. Mill writes:

It is true that this benefit is not capable of being rendered by everybody alike: there are but few persons, in comparison with the whole of mankind, whose *experiments*, if adopted by others, would be likely to be any improvement on established practice. But these few are the salt of the earth; without them, *human life* would become but a *stagnant* pool. Not only is it they who introduce good things which did not before exist; it is they who *keep the life in those which already existed*. If there were nothing new to be done, would human intellect cease to be necessary? Would it be a reason why those who do the old things should forget why they are done, and do them like cattle, not like human beings? There is only too great a tendency in the best beliefs and practices to *degenerate* into the mechanical; and unless there were a succession of persons whose ever-recurring originality prevents the grounds of those beliefs and practices from becoming merely traditional, such *dead* matter would not resist the smallest shock from anything really alive, and there would be no reason why civilization should not *die* out. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11, emphasis added)

In the above, Mill associates persons who supposedly cannot creatively and beneficially affect society with death, whereas he associates with life only the few who are the successful participants in their original experiments of life. Whereas the masses tend to conform to the existent cultural practices and add to social stagnation, the developmental elite are most likely to

reject certain practices and replace them with improved practices.

Mill's argument that society should grant exceptional intellectuals greater political power is based on some unproven and elitist assumptions. He assumes that the small number of individuals who are most capable of individuality serves a greater diversity function than the masses which he views as an increasingly homogeneous body. Thus, the masses "of *merely* average men" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13) are, by definition, "mediocre" and the main sources of developmental interference and diversity endangerment. "No government by a democracy or a numerous aristocracy...ever did or could rise above mediocrity," holds Mill (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶13). He does not expect that the self-education of the masses can reverse their mediocre and developmentally dangerous condition. Instead, he implies that the masses' epistemic capacities are so limited that they cannot obtain adequate self-knowledge because they cannot benefit from the social knowledge upon which self-knowledge largely depends, as I will show in this chapter's section, "Diversity and Developmental Power." I will further argue that the majority of individuals would not be able to meaningfully benefit from the knowledge that the developmental elite acquire, in the fourth chapter's response to Mill's argument that free speech facilitates the synthesis of truth. Also, in the fourth chapter, I will show the inconsistencies present in the endanger and protect associations, and the life and death associations that Mill makes in his discussion of the rationality of free speech, and in his claims that both truth and falsehood can add to the societal capacity to acquire truth.

As we have seen, Mill's claim that persons of genius have less political power than others conflicts with his claim that persons of genius have more developmental power than others. Additionally, Mill's claim that the masses of persons whom he considers mediocre do not have more developmental power than persons of genius conflicts with his claim that the "mediocre" masses are more politically powerful than persons of genius. Political power can enhance the capacity of an individual to develop her abilities, regardless of what those abilities may be. No where does Mill claim that the masses of persons have fewer abilities than the developmental

elite, although he rules out certain abilities for them.

Mill assumes that the masses lack the individual developmentally powerful abilities which are also the socially progressive abilities. It is plausible that Mill thinks that developmentally powerful individuals have more positive political power, i.e. the disproportionately low level of political power exercised in society. Yet, they do not have more negative political power, i.e. the disproportionately higher level of political power exercised in society. This explanation is consistent with this chapter's interpretive hypotheses on the empirical relationships which Mill assumes exist among intellectuals, the mediocre masses, power, and progress.

Mill's argument that society should allow the developmentally powerful to lead is weak. For, the validity of the argument depends on the empirical claims that he makes about inherent individual developmental capacities, but he cannot substantiate those claims. Mill implies that social progress already belongs to the developmentally powerful, and that their leadership would maximize their own utility. He also implies that social permission for the developmental elite to formally rule society would contribute little to the utility of others. For Mill says the rule of the developmental elite would lack direct, beneficial consequences for most members of society. As I will explain in the discussion of experiments of life, most persons would not benefit from social comparison enough to obtain adequate knowledge of self and others and the knowledge they could obtain would mainly be knowledge originally acquired by the developmental elite. Hence, the argument for the rule of the developmental elite is inadequately utilitarian.

#### **iv) Argument that the Free Expression of Individuality Adds to Progress**

Here, I will show that Mill posits that self-development by means of free individual expression adds to epistemic and cultural progress. Self-development favourably contributes to the acquisition of not only self-knowledge but also social knowledge. As well, self-development provides an individual culture that is more compatible with the satisfaction of the idiosyncratic,

individual developmental needs than the socially available culture. Thus, self-development favourably contributes to individuals' happiness and thereby to social happiness.

Mill proposes that free individual expression is crucial for self-development through experiments of life. Consider the passage below which clearly suggests the proposed experimentation and its aims. The proposition for developmental experimentation regards (1) diversity of opinions, (2) diversity of modes of life which are experiments of life whose worth must be practically proven, and (3) the free expression of individuality. For Mill, these conditions are necessary for progress so long as humankind remains imperfect. The former two states are the expression of the factor of individuality which is the most influential factor in individual and social progress. Mill writes:

*As it is useful that while mankind are imperfect there should be different opinions, so is it that there should be different experiments of living; that free scope should be given to varieties of character, short of injury to others; and that the worth of different modes of life should be proved practically, when any one thinks fit to try them. It is desirable, in short, that in things which do not primarily concern others, individuality should assert itself. Where, not the person's own character, but the traditions or customs of other people are the rule of conduct, there is wanting one of the principal ingredients of human happiness, and quite the chief ingredient of individual and social progress. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶1, emphasis added)*

Similarly, there are passages in which Mill claims that humankind must accept freedom of individual expression, opinions, and modes of conduct to optimize its intellectual advancement. For this end, Mill optimistically views the long-term importance of diversity of opinions. After he argues for free expression from the acquisition of truth and from the sustenance of the life of truth, Mill introduces his argument that free expression of opinions is necessary for the synthesis of truth,<sup>16</sup> in this way:

*It still remains to speak of one of the principal causes which make diversity of opinion advantageous, and will continue to do so until mankind shall have entered a stage of intellectual advancement which at present seems at an incalculable distance. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶33, emphasis added)*

For Mill, diversity of opinions is a necessary condition for the synthesis of truth. Mill expects

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<sup>16</sup> In the fourth chapter of this thesis, I will discuss Mill's argument that free expression is necessary for the synthesis of truth.

that in the distant future the partial truths<sup>17</sup> would be combined into the whole truth.

Because of the importance of individuality's expression through various modes of life for the purpose of individual development, Mill criticizes the excessive social restrictions imposed upon the expression of different modes of life. He writes:

In our times, from the highest class of society down to the lowest, every one lives under the eye of a hostile and dreaded censorship. Not only in what concerns others, but in what concerns only themselves, the individual or family do not ask themselves--what do I prefer? or, what would suit my character and disposition? or, what would allow the best and highest in me to have fair play and to enable it to grow and thrive. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶6)

The above passage claims that social restrictions of the modes of life and modes of conduct restrain the human capacity for growth, for the restrictions do not permit persons the opportunity to consider what would be best for their individual development.

With emphasis on the social utility of free expression, Mill argues that free expression is a necessary condition for individual development. Through the promotion of diversity, not only of diverse opinions but also of diverse modes of conduct, free expression facilitates individual development, and, in turn, social progress. For example, Mill writes: "To give any fair play to the nature of each, it is essential that different persons should be allowed to lead different lives. In proportion as this latitude has been exercised in any age, has that age been noteworthy to posterity" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9). Therefore, Mill views freedom as a necessary condition for the "fair play" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9) of the development of each.

For Mill, the freedom and diversity requirements for individual development are secondary to the more utilitarian requirement that human society should advance. He thinks that individual development is the main factor in social progress, and focuses on such development as the central factor in the progress of human society.

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<sup>17</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will use the term "partial truth" to refer to either propositions whose degree of accuracy is not complete, i.e. propositions that in one or multiple ways are partly true and partly false or to systems of belief that are based on both true and false propositions.

### **III. Diversity and Developmental Power**

This section draws from On Liberty (1859) to explore Mill's claims that social diversity is a necessary condition for individual development, and the expansion of developmental power. Particularly, Mill recognizes the development enhancement functions of diversity including diversity of opinion, education, modes of life, and of experiments of life. I will discuss diversity's development enhancement function in the first, third, and fourth parts of this section.

This section's second part, entitled "The Rise of Negative Political Power and the Descent of Developmental Power," finds support for this chapter's four interpretive hypotheses. These hypotheses can be listed simply: (1) the more one is capable of individuality, the more one is developmentally powerful; (2) the more one is developmentally powerful, the less one can exercise negative political power; (3) the more one is developmentally powerful, the more likely one commits actions that have progressive social consequences; and (4) the less one is developmentally powerful, the more likely one commits actions that result in mere social change or even regressive social change, if any social change at all.

Mill assumes that the developmental problem of the masses of persons whom he excludes from the category of developed individuals begins with their relatively lower levels of developmental power. And, he treats the masses of persons as problem people that interfere with the development of persons of genius. Mill characterizes the masses of persons with the greater likelihood to promote, and choose, actions that result in mere social change, if any change at all.

In response to Mill's claims on the empirical relationships among the individual capacities for freedom, power, and social progress, this section challenges the validity of Mill's claims on the empirical relationships between intellectuals and the masses, and the level of power and freedom which Mill assumes they have. The third part of this section, entitled "The Rise of Negative Political Power and the Descent of Developmental Power," shows the high questionability of Mill's following claims. He claims that the masses have lower levels of developmental and positive power, and higher levels of negative power, that they have less

diversity than intellectuals, and, hence, are unlikely to tolerate diversity, and thus that they hinder free individual expression.

### **i) Argument that Diversity Renders Benefits to Individual Development**

Mill argues that society should tolerate diversity because of the social benefits that diversity renders to the capacity for individual development. For one, Mill argues for diverse modes of life and modes of conduct, for such are necessary for human growth. He compares persons to plants, and holds that since persons have various inherent natures as the plants do, persons correspondingly, i.e. on the basis of their inherent potentials, also have various developmental needs for growth (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶14). Mill continues:

*The same things which are helps to one person towards the cultivation of his higher nature are hindrances to another. The same mode of life is a healthy excitement to one, keeping all his faculties of action and enjoyment in their best order, while to another it is a distracting burthen, which suspends or crushes all internal life. Such are the differences among human beings in their sources of pleasure, their susceptibilities of pain, and the operation on them of different physical and moral agencies, that unless there is a corresponding diversity in their modes of life, they neither obtain their fair share of happiness, nor grow up to the mental, moral, and aesthetic stature of which their nature is capable. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶14, emphasis added)*

As the above passage suggests, Mill's human growth argument for diversity of modes of life can be briefly stated: Because persons are psycho-biologically and socially different from each other, they must follow their own life paths, if they are to obtain their optimal developmental outcomes, and happiness.

Mill refers to Wilhelm von Humboldt's thought that originality contributes to the power and development of the individual, for originality gives incentive to (1) the free expression of individuality and permits (2) the availability of various situations. Citing von Humboldt, Mill writes:

*the object 'towards which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts, and on which especially those who design to influence their fellow-men must ever keep their eyes, is the individuality of power and development;' that for this there are two requisites, 'freedom, and variety of situations;' and that from the union of these arise 'individual vigour and manifold diversity,' which combine themselves in 'originality.' (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶2, emphasis added)*

The above suggests that the alteration of the degree to which the two necessary conditions are

present affects the strength of the individual developmental power which is possible under the circumstances. Mill recognizes that social circumstances can reduce the possible degree of individual developmental power. He comments that the second necessary condition for individual development, i.e., variety of situations is, unfortunately, "everyday diminishing" in England (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18).

Precisely because it denies a sufficient range of life mode options, Mill objects to the public's selective toleration of solely those preferences which are within the socially accepted range. Mill criticizes the discrepancy between the recognition that there are various preferences across human beings and the social rejection of the diverse expression of those preferences. Specifically, he criticizes the way that persons are deprecated for "doing 'what nobody does' " or for "not doing 'what everybody does' " (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶14).

## **ii) Diversity of Opinions and Diversity of Modes of Life**

Here, I will show that Mill expects that diversity of opinions will diminish in time, because of epistemic progress. But he is concerned that diversity of opinions will prematurely diminish because of the ascendance of the masses. Mill believes that diversity of opinion and diversity of modes of life diminish due to the ascendance of public opinion and what he considers "mediocre culture," as I will discuss in the next part of this chapter. Mill emphasizes the social utility of the free expression of diverse opinions and diverse modes of conduct, one for epistemic advancement, and the other for individual and social improvement.

Mill thinks that the "gradual narrowing of the bounds of diversity of opinion is necessary in both senses of the term, being at once inevitable and indispensable" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶31). He takes such narrowing as a sign of society's approach toward the truth. He claims that although the loss of diversity would be a significant drawback, that loss would not put a complete stop to our ability to sustain the life of truth. He writes:

The loss of so important an aid to the intelligent and living apprehension of a truth, as is afforded by the necessity of explaining it to, or defending it against, opponents, though not sufficient to



outweigh, is no trifling drawback from, the benefit of its universal recognition. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶31)

After actual diversity of opinion ceases, Mill suggests, we should substitute for actual diversity of opinion the attitude of acting-as-if persons remain who have not yet converted to the truth. He writes:

Where this advantage can no longer be had, I confess I should like to see the teachers of mankind endeavouring to provide a substitute for it; some contrivance for making the difficulties of the question as present to the learner's consciousness, as if they were pressed upon him by a dissentient champion, eager for his conversion. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶31)

Thus, Mill suggests that when society obtains the desired truth society should act as if it has not yet obtained it in order to sustain that outcome.

However, Mill does not expect that diverse self-knowledge will diminish in time. Since diverse modes of life facilitate the acquisition of self-knowledge, which, in turn, adds to individual happiness, it is reasonable to assume that Mill would agree diverse modes of life likely will remain after humankind obtains complete knowledge of the social and physical world. The thesis of On Liberty is that each person has "a unique range of potentialities, expressible in a relatively small range of possible lives," and "the actualization of these potentialities is indispensable" for any person's "greatest well-being," according to Gray (1991, p. 200). Social toleration of diverse modes of life is necessary so that persons may learn about their individual inborn tendencies through a process of self-experimentation. Since individuals vary in their inborn tendencies, they have various requirements to achieve happiness. Through the exploration of their own nature, they may identify those requirements. "Mill denies that any one can achieve happiness or the good life, unless he has his own conception of happiness; and the diversity of legitimate conceptions of happiness is grounded in the plurality of individual natures," writes Gray (1991, p. 203). Thus, evidently, for Mill, the various tendencies in psychological human nature make it impossible for one conception of happiness and the way to attain the "best" mode of life to apply to everybody. For the aim to optimize individual development, Mill calls upon people to tolerate the social diversity that such development requires, and he is concerned that

social diversity's premature diminishment has negative implications for the capacity of individuals to develop themselves. Mill characterizes the masses as lacking social diversity so much that they cannot help but be intolerant about social diversity, as I will discuss next.

### iii) The Rise of Negative Political Power and the Descent of Developmental Power

Mill claims that public opinion adds to the negative political power of society through the ascendance of the masses, and that by means of mentally coercive public opinion the masses cause developmental and cultural degradation, promote social conformity, and regressive social change. Mill opposes the ascendance of the masses, because he positively correlates losses in the cultural capacity to meet the developmental needs of society with the ascendance of the masses. His fears about the harms that the ascendance of the masses can cause stem from his assumption that the masses are less culturally diverse than intellectuals; I will challenge that assumption. Lastly, I will challenge the claim that the ascendance of the masses endangers individual and thereby social development power, and likely adds more to either social change without improvement or regressive social change than to progress.

Specifically, Mill claims that the ascendance of the masses contributes to cultural assimilation. He writes:

The circumstances which surround different classes and individuals, and shape their characters, are daily becoming more assimilated. *Formerly, different ranks, different neighbourhoods, different trades and professions, lived in what might be called different worlds; at present, to a great degree in the same.* Comparatively speaking, they now [read,] listen [to, and] see the same things, go to the same places, have their hopes and fears directed to the same objects, have the same rights and liberties, and the same means of asserting them. *Great as are the differences of position which remain, they are nothing to those which have ceased.* And the assimilation is still proceeding. All the political changes of the age promote it, since they tend to raise the low and to lower the high. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18, emphasis added)

In this way, Mill claims that increases in the social mobility open to persons from the various classes accompanies that the persons increasingly share common influences that shape their behaviour. Society used to subject the members of the same class to similar influences, and there were more class-based cultural differences among persons. Now it is all persons, regardless of class, who share common influences in the determination of their conduct. Therefore, as class

differences diminish so do the class-based cultural differences.

In the above passage, Mill believes that the process that diminishes class-based cultural differences, e.g. differences in rank and position, places persons who formerly lived in separate worlds into the same one. Mill would rather all existent cultural differences remain, and this includes the class-based cultural differences, and he would rather various persons be kept in "different worlds" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18). The price to raise the low is to lower the high, and that price is too high for it to be worth raising the low. Thus, Mill does not object to the raising of the low itself, but to the lowering of the high as a means to raise the low. Instead, he aspires for the raising of high culture as a means to raise the lower. He causally attributes to the ascendance of the masses the lowering of the high. Mill positively correlates heightened individual culture with the elevation of the low that does not negatively affect high culture. In his view, the ascendance of the high has more utility than the ascendance of the masses. Therefore, Mill prefers a cultural solution, i.e. cultural conditions that permit the free development of the individual's culture,<sup>18</sup> for a social structural problem, i.e. economic and political inequality.

Mill believes that the political ascendance of mediocre culture has adverse effects, for the ascendance reduces cultural diversity and originality, and thereby hinders social progress in the following ways. He does not consider the personal and social benefits of the advancement towards political equality, which result from the ascendance, and which, in turn, adds to social progress. He believes that public formal educational systems can facilitate cultural assimilation since "education brings people under common influences, and gives them access to the general stock of facts and sentiments" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18). He does not acknowledge that public educational systems can allow persons to share the cultural literacy necessary in order to stand a chance at levelling the political playing field in economic and social life, and thus have the potential to contribute to social progress.

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<sup>18</sup> See Verburg (2006) for a discussion on Mill's position on the primacy of individual moral development for the treatment of poverty.

When he claims that the ascendance of the masses interferes with cultural progress, Mill does not acknowledge any benefit from improvement in the means of communication such as educational opportunities. Rather, he complains that communicational improvement promotes cultural assimilation because the improvement brings "the inhabitants of distant places into personal contact, and [keeps] a rapid flow of changes of residence between one place and another" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18).

Mill additionally complains that the ascendance of mediocre culture inculcates overly selfish values, e.g. self-indulgence without regard for others, in his discussion that "the increase of commerce and manufactures" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18) promotes cultural assimilation. This increase diffuses "more widely the advantages of easy circumstances, and [opens] all objects of ambition, even the highest, to general competition, whereby the desire of rising becomes no longer the character of a particular class, but of all classes" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶18). In that context, Mill complains about the values that, he thinks, cultural assimilation brings the masses. He prefers that the masses not seek the privileges that have, in past times, belonged to the higher classes but are now more accessible to all than to aspire for the same conveniences, luxuries, and prestige that greater economic wealth may bring. Particularly, Mill opposes the aspiration of the masses to improve the economic and social terms of their lifestyle because this aspiration conflicts with the interests of others to maintain their lifestyles; he does not consider that the lifestyles that the masses could undermine may be over-privileged so that this conflict may not be an adequately reasonable concern. Mill focuses so much on whatever may undermine the individual development of a virtuous, unselfish, character, that he does not give nearly as much weight to the favourable progressive significance of the social conditions.

Mill thinks that the redistribution of power is made at the expense of, as mentioned earlier, the reduced extent to which individual developmental power is possible under circumstances that diminish cultural diversity. He spends much time in complaint about the adverse effects that the ascendance of the masses presumably have upon the degree of actualized

individuality and diversity present in society. In particular, he believes the ascendance interferes with the social experimentation, i.e. the live tests of the utility of various opinions and ways of life, and the practical way to produce the good society. Mill does not recognize the social utility in their ascendance, i.e. that their ascendance contributes not only to their personal progress, but, in noteworthy ways, also directly contributes to social progress.

It is important to carefully explore the consequences of the redistribution of power which is involved in the ascendance of the masses, not only the potentially negative consequences. The power redistribution, which is involved with the ascendance, facilitates the expression of the masses in ways which are, in fact, developmentally beneficial for them. Mill does not take into account that the power that the ascendance brings the masses is not only the negative sort of power - power over others. There is also positive power - power to do something for oneself or to do something with others, which includes individual developmental power and can add to (though also interfere with) the developmental power of others as well. Another aspect of the ascendance is the redistribution of both negative freedom, i.e., freedom from being overpowered by others, and positive freedom, i.e., freedom to exercise positive political power and developmental power. Thus, individual developmental power is not being undermined as much as Mill claims, and neither is freedom. The threat of the ascendance of the masses is not nearly as great as Mill claims. Rather, the developmental power which gains expression is likely to be different from that which was previously more dominantly expressed. The developmental power that gains expression is that of persons whose preferences have previously more likely fallen outside of the socially accepted range which the developmental needs of those in positions of power has shaped. The gained power is that of persons who those above them likely punished for their deviations from the social norms with political and economic exclusion. Thus, the ascendance actually gives the chance to develop their selves more freely to persons whose development or growth of individual developmental power other persons in positions of power undermined.

Power is not evenly distributed among the masses, and the power differentials among

them add to their diversity, but that does not mean that with fewer power differentials among them, they will be meaningfully less diverse. It is very telling that Mill assumes that the societal majority of persons are less diverse than an intellectual minority of individuals, when it is more reasonable to expect that the larger group has more diversity than the smaller group. Mill characterizes the masses of persons as less capable of individuality than the developmental elite, and, since diversity benefits from high levels of individuality, that characterization makes the masses by definition less diverse. The undeniable fact, however, is that the "mediocre masses," not only intellectuals, have always had diverse life styles and circumstances and thus various political interests. The fact that the masses of persons are culturally diverse makes Mill's claim that the masses constitute social forces against cultural diversity questionable. As well, his claim that the "mediocre masses" are less capable of individuality is unacceptable because of its negative political implications and unreliable means of justification. Persons who have not realized socially recognizable levels of individuality are neither necessarily unrealized due to, nor likely to remain unrealized due to, a psycho-biologically inferior capacity for individuality. Rather, social deprivation of developmental opportunities, such as opportunities for education, tends to undermine the capacity for self-development. Also, the lower levels of self-development may falsely appear to exist because society does not recognize the developmental achievements of persons whose life-styles are based on priorities that deviate from the norm. Mill recognizes that developmental opportunities are necessary for human growth. Unfortunately, his emphasis on the need to give such opportunities to intellectuals obstructs his outlook on the masses, and he misunderstands why the majority of persons are mediocre; the third section in the third chapter will explain this misunderstanding further. Next I will explain how Mill expects that social diversity by permitting experiments of life facilitates the acquisition of knowledge of self and others which is necessary for individual development.

#### **iv) Diversity of Education and Diversity of Experiments**

Mill connects freedom of individual expression, diversity, and education to experiments of life. Mill speaks of experiments, such as in his discussion that rare originality facilitates the effectuality of "experiments" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11), as discussed earlier in this chapter. And, Mill speaks of diversity of education as itself being one of the "competing experiments" (CW, 18, Ch. 5, ¶13). According to Mill, the experiments of life that he encourages are important aids to attain self-knowledge (Gray, 1991, p. 200) to inform one's self-development.

For Mill, diversity of experiments of life contributes to the satisfaction of diverse developmental needs through diversity of self-education and the consequent self-knowledge. Likewise, Mill advises that society should treat public education as one among many "competing experiments" (CW, 18, Ch. 5, ¶13) which contribute to social education, and the consequent social knowledge. For opinions and modes of life to be diverse, education needs to be diverse. Diverse modes of education advance the self-knowledge and social knowledge which the attainment of societal happiness requires.

Although Mill is ambivalent about the social utility of formal, public systems of education, because they can conform minds to one another, Mill thinks that public education can be a part of social experimentation. Formal education can serve as an aid to epistemic and social progress by being itself an experiment, an instance of diversity of education, which, when taken together with the other modes of education, promotes diversity of opinions and conduct.<sup>19</sup> Mill suggests further that public educational systems could counteract the movement towards mediocre culture and public opinion. For, formal, public education can exemplify and promote a certain high standard of human developmental achievement. Thus, Mill aspires for diversity of thought and conduct, for diversity of education, and even for diversity of what he considers life

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<sup>19</sup> Mill writes: "All that has been said of the importance of individuality of character, and diversity of opinions and modes of conduct, involves, as of the same unspeakable importance, diversity of education" (CW, 18, Ch. 5, ¶13). He continues: "An education established and controlled by the State 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" (CW, 18, Ch. 5, ¶13).

experiments.

### 1) The Roles of Social Comparison and Competitive Free Play in Self-Education and Experiments of Life

Mill claims that social comparison and competition have instrumental significance for self-education by means of experiments of life. Yet, it is questionable whether experiments of life could help all or most individuals to obtain knowledge of self and others, and to advance their capacity for individual expression. For instance, Gray (1991) comments:

Mill moves bewilderingly between the perspective of the practical agent and that of the detached observer. On some views of practical knowledge, it might seem that an experiment of living could yield knowledge only to the committed partisan, the agent actively involved in its undertakings. On other views, just the opposite would be true. (p. 202)

In the question of who benefits most from practical knowledge, if any one, as a result of engaging in experiments of life, it matters whether one tries to learn only from one's experiments or also from those of others. Experimenters can benefit from the social interaction of their experiments of life through social comparison and competitive free play. Individuals can observe the results, not only of their own experiments but also of the experiments of others. Thus, individuals can learn about themselves in relation to others.

In his criticism that the British do not value individuality and do not recognize that free individuality facilitates the capacity for individual development, Mill connects social comparison to individual development. He writes:

It is individuality that [they] war against: [they] should think [they] had done wonders if [they] had made [themselves] all alike; forgetting that the unlikeness of one person to another is generally the first thing which draws the attention of either to the *imperfection* of his own type, and the *superiority* of another, or the possibility, by combining the advantages of both, of producing something better than either. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17, emphasis added)

Mill recognizes the constructive significance of individuality when combined with social comparison, especially, as is evident in the above passage, to what today is termed 'upward social comparison,'<sup>20</sup> for individual development. That is to say, when persons are different from each other, they can compare themselves to one another in areas in which the referent person is more

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<sup>20</sup> Persons use upward social comparison as a strategy to enhance their capacity to develop their skills (Aronson et al., 2004, p. 169).



skilled. Such comparisons can show persons their relative weaknesses, and thus, guide their efforts for personal growth. Persons need to obtain estimates of their abilities relative to the abilities of others, and exercise their abilities in order to improve them. It can be added, individuals can serve as teachers by giving others the opportunity, even through downward social comparison,<sup>21</sup> to learn from the mistakes of others without having to repeat them.

For Mill, it is important that every person strives to increase her "comparative worth as a human being" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶4). A person can do so through the employment of all of her faculties in the appropriate situations in which each of those faculties is useful.

In Mill's view, experiments of life are also important in the determination of comparative personal worth and in the attainment of self-knowledge. The free play of individual natures has beneficial social consequences. Mill views individual natures as if they are in a constructive competition over the utility of their original products and the individualities that they bring forth in relation to their ability to contribute to social progress.

Mill's work in the third chapter of On Liberty suggests that he views social life as a process in which individuals learn about what is good, just and truthful by means of experimentation, trial and error, social comparison, and competition. I will provide answers to the questions that follow. What does Mill mean by the term 'experiments'? And how does he connect trial and error, social comparison and competition to these experiments? How reasonable is his claim that experiments of life are developmentally beneficial, because they are epistemically beneficial? I will argue that Mill suggests two kinds of experiments, and that neither is likely to prove much common developmental and epistemically beneficial consequences for society. The first kind of experiment of life can be called a meta-experiment of life; by "meta-experiment" what I mean to say is that it is an experiment within an experiment; it belongs at the individual level and is a subcomponent of the second kind of experiment which is a

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<sup>21</sup> Persons use downward social comparison as a strategy to identify their strong skills relative to the skills of others (Aronson et al, 2004, p. 168).

social experiment of life.

I will argue also that the kinds of experiments of life which Mill proposes would likely lead to politically biased knowledge about the self and others. I will provide an analysis of these experiments which shows that these are unlikely to contribute to epistemic and cultural progress.

To begin with, it should be noted that Mill calls himself an experimentalist. He does so, in part, to distinguish himself from other empiricists who, in his time, were not well-liked, thus to give his position more credibility. Also, it could be that he makes this distinction because of the experiments of life which he proposes. He argues that these experiments are useful for the individual to obtain self-knowledge and knowledge of others. His work suggests that he thinks that the historical stage is a setting of experimentation for the discovery of the psychological laws of individual natures and for their perfection.

A charitable reading of his use of the term 'experiment' sees that Mill uses this term loosely, that is, he proposes only informal experiments. I will discuss the kinds of informal<sup>22</sup> experiments which Mill proposes. Mill calls the modes of life "different experiments of living" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶1). He does not treat these as if they can be understood independently from each other. He means that there are multiple kinds of experiments. The experimental kinds all require diversity, but vary in their social scale. In one kind of experiment, an individual tries ways of life. Diversity is necessary for individuals to have multiple life style alternatives to try. Each individual can try only one way of life at a time to search for the one which is the most suitable for the actualization of her inherent potential. Mill thinks that human nature and inherent

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<sup>22</sup> The social experiment is informal for the following reasons. First, there is no overseeing researcher in charge of the social experiment. The experiment requires individuals to trial modes of life. These individuals are the only "researchers." Each individual is in charge of her life style trials only. The "researchers" are not organized for the purpose of the social experiment. Most likely, they do not even see the larger picture, and are unaware that their experiments of living are within the social experiment of living. They are meta-researchers in that the social experiment of living depends on their individual experiments of living. There is no one keeping records of the results of the social experiment. The results can be found in the outcomes of individual lives. No one is keeping track of all those outcomes and comparing them. Individuals can be aware of the results of their own trials. The social experiment does not yield a single set of results but rather continuously updated results. It is a historically ongoing experiment whose duration extends beyond each generation as various individuals test the ways of life.

potential vary across individuals, and thus the modes of life that could optimize their growth also vary.

Another kind of experiment of life that Mill uses refers to a social experiment. Mill recognizes that the epistemic and thus individual developmental practical value of the various ways of life can be understood relationally. This recognition supports the social experiment interpretation. The use of the phrase "competing experiments" (CW, 18, Ch. 5, ¶13) suggests a social experiment. The various opinions and modes of conduct, and the various social programs, of which he gives the example of public education, cannot properly compete only with themselves. If they are to compete, it is with each other. Additionally, recall that Mill claims that social comparison is beneficial for self-improvement (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). The experiment of life depends on competition and social comparison; it depends on social interaction among individuals who compare the results of their developmental trials or the fit between their individual natures and the capacity of various modes of life to satisfy their developmental needs. Thus, the experiment of life can be called not only an experiment for individual development but also an experiment for educative socialization. The test at a larger social scale of the various ways of life provides more information about the practical value of each way of life. In the experiment that occurs at a larger social scale, various individuals compare the outcomes of their ways of life with those of others, and thus permit the various ways of life to compete for being the most practical way of life for certain individual natures.

That Mill argues for diversity and free expression of individuality, diverse opinions, and actions for their epistemic instrumental significance supports the social experiment interpretation. These are the necessary conditions for the implementation of the social experiment. The aforementioned necessary conditions for the implementation of the social experiment permit the co-existence of multiple modes of life and the diversification of modes of life. As well, without the satisfaction of the necessary conditions, social comparison and competition, the instruments for the participants to apply in their social epistemological exploration would not be relevant.

That is, no one would be able to compare one's mode of life with those of others. For, cultural homogeneity would minimize the capacity for social comparison and competition. Thus, without free individual expression and diversity, the social experiment would not be capable of epistemic service. This social experiment is an irrelevant social epistemological method in a culturally homogenous social context.

Next I will argue that political inequality in a culturally diverse context can interfere with experimental output such that it erratically reflects the politically privileged cultural inputs more than others and thus yields roughly culturally homogenous outputs. The fourth chapter's response to Mill's argument that "unrestricted" speech helps to maximize the acquisition of truth will make it further evident that experiments of life do not necessarily demote the cultural assimilation of the truth; these can, indeed, facilitate cultural imperialism over the truth, which is inconsistent with the aim of Mill's social project to maximize the societal capacity to synthesize the truth.

## **2) The Epistemic Limitations of Experiments of Life**

Here, I argue that the informal social experiment is an irrelevant social epistemological method in a politically unequal social context. The proposed experiments of life can be understood, and the social experiment interpretation can be explained, in today's terms. The epistemic value of the live, social experiment which Mill proposes can be most accurately analyzed based on current knowledge about the likely consequences of judgements derived from social comparison cognitive processes and on how to conduct social experiments.

The necessary condition of diversity is easy to satisfy, for it simply requires the presence of multiple modes of life in the working context of the social experiment. Diversity can be considered one of the main independent variables of the social experiment. The working context of the social experiment has multiple experimental conditions. Each experimental condition tests a separate mode of life. Each mode of life can be considered an independent variable.

The social experiment's examination of the ways of life treats them as competitors for

their social utility. The higher in social utility, the more the ways of life facilitate the advancement of knowledge. The advancement of knowledge can be considered the secondary dependent variable of the social experiment. Self-knowledge is instrumental for the attainment of individual happiness and thus contributes to social happiness. The intensity and scope of social happiness can be considered the social experiment's primary dependent variable.

One important problem of the social experiment is that its working context does not satisfy the necessary condition of free individual expression. Mill views free opinion formation and expression of opinions as socially unrestricted expression. This view of free expression is incorrect, as I will argue in the fourth chapter. Here, I argue merely that the research instruments, namely, social comparison and competition, are incompatible with the working context of the social experiment. I base this argument on the following main reasons.

Social comparison is problematic when it occurs in a politically unequal context, because in that working context social comparison can interfere with the arrival at accurate judgments. The reasons for this interference is that one's social position influences one's judgment and thereby the assessment of one's abilities and opinions in comparison to those of others (Festinger, 1954). Mill overestimates the extent to which members of various groups benefit from the observed differences of others and can competitively yet constructively compare themselves with others. He expects persons to acknowledge the good qualities that others have which are different from their own, and even merge the diverse good qualities. Even a brief examination of social comparison processes shows us that this is unlikely, as we will see next.

The following cognitive tendencies bias one's social comparative judgments (Festinger, 1954), and thus impair the capacity for impartial judgments. The dominant groups tend to have the most influential power in social comparison processes. Persons tend to compare themselves with others who are most like themselves and thus to open themselves to influence from those who are most like themselves. Persons tend to conform more to the opinions of the perceived socially important referent groups. For example, consider:

When there is a range of opinion or ability in a group, the relative strength of the three manifestations of pressures toward uniformity will be different for those who are close to the mode of the group than for those who are distant from the mode. Specifically, those close to the mode of the group will have stronger tendencies to change the positions of others, relatively weaker tendencies to narrow the range of comparison and much weaker tendencies to change their own position compared to those who are distant from the mode of the group. (Festinger, 1954, p. 134-135)

Thus, social comparison is likely to result at best only in the integration of the aspects of like groups, and at worst in the assimilation of subdominant cultures into the main referent cultures.

Today's social research knowledge suggests three additional problems with the social experiment which contribute to the incompatibility between social comparison and competition among individuals on the one hand and the working context of life experimentation on the other. First, nothing is done to prevent the experimental conditions from being non-equivalents. Second and related, the extraneous or confounding variables, that is, the variables that interfere with the accuracy of the experimental results, are never considered as such. For instance, Mill does not view political inequality in the working context of life experimentation as a factor that interferes with an individual's capacity to obtain knowledge from personal experiences. But Mill expects that, as the social experiment yields its results, the social experiment will remove factors, such as political inequality. Third, the social experiment does not have a control condition; thus it is reasonable to expect the accuracy of its knowledge results to be weak. I do not deny that some knowledge is possible from informal social experimentation, but I deny the credibility of the knowledge persons may claim they obtained from personal and socialization experiences alone especially when reaching conclusions about how various individuals stand in comparison to each other.

The purpose of the social experiment is to facilitate the development of competitive experiments of life, that is, life styles which are practical for individual development. The social experiment requires epistemic and cultural success for the practicality of the life-styles that it initiates. The social experiment's epistemic success requires the satisfaction of the following condition: the research instruments, namely social comparison and competition, must facilitate

every participant's ability to correctly identify the available lifestyle which is the most practical for the maximization of her individual development. However, the research instruments cannot facilitate such identification, because they are incompatible with the working context of the experiment. For, political inequality is present in the experimental conditions. But, political inequality interferes with the accuracy of judgments drawn through social comparison. Thus, it also interferes with the identification of the most practical competitors. The research instruments unlikely enhance the capacity of the participants to identify the most practical available life style alternatives or invent ones which are more practical than the available ones. So, the social experiment's participants are unlikely to benefit epistemically from their experiments of life.

The social experiment's cultural success requires the satisfaction of the additional following conditions. The working context of the social experiment must be such that every participant is able to switch to the experimental condition in which her preferred lifestyle is the independent variable. This ensures that the participants can refuse to practice the modes of life which are impractical or less practical than the available life style alternatives for the maximization of their individual development.

The following two events would demonstrate that the requirements for the social experiment's epistemic and cultural success have been met. First, the experimental conditions which have impractical independent variables suffer from participant attrition. Both the individual developmental needs and the lifestyle preferences of the participants are thus in agreement with the acceptance or removal of certain experimental conditions. Second, the original participants introduce new experimental conditions. The participants invent new lifestyle alternatives which actually have more practical independent variables than the removed conditions. In a politically unequal context, these requirements for the social experiment's success ensure its failure.

The social experiment suffers from the following two problems. First, its research instruments are incompatible with the working context. Mill overestimates the extent to which

persons can developmentally and epistemically benefit from social comparison and cultural competition in a politically unequal social context. The informal social experiment would lead to politically biased knowledge about the self and others. The second problem from which the social experiment suffers is that it does not do much to satisfy the requirements for its cultural success; cultural progress is still possible under it, but it is likely to be elitist. Therefore, the social experiment would likely yield results in favour of the cultural preferences of the politically privileged; it would be an epistemically unreliable and politically confounded type of experiment.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Mill envisions a society in which the individuality of the inherently strong elite carries the unfortunate inherently weaker masses of persons who, even when they exercise their individuality, cannot join the strong in the high standing of social worth. In Mill's freedom-utilitarian world, happiness is, in principle, accessible by all, but, as I have argued, it is not well distributed in practice. Some individuals are able to benefit more from the intellectual pleasures, which Mill considers the higher pleasures, whereas others are not for the following three main reasons. First, some inherently have stronger capacities for feelings and impulses, according to Mill, as the next chapter will further show. Second, as lack of use leads to the degradation of persons' inherent potentials for human capacities, and thus there are persons who cannot experience or appreciate the higher intellectual pleasures. The third main reason for why individuals vary in their capacity to experience and benefit from the higher intellectual pleasures is related to the second aforementioned reason. The best society can do is prevent the degradation of persons; it can permit the individual to develop herself without censorship, and with a variety of socialization opportunities. Mill suggests that neither can individuals favourably alter the inherent nature of their developmental capacities, nor that society can do something to reverse the condition after the degradation of their inherent capacities.

Admittedly, the likelihood that one's actions will have high social utility does not entirely



depend on one's inherent developmental power. The strength of the social aspects of developmental power to a large extent depends on the consequences of the actions that involve the required characteristics. Consider originality. If an individual's original achievement proves to be of great practical worth and the achievement is thus socially beneficial, then the achievement proves the social strength of her originality. In this way, the consequences of one's actions influence the social value and strength of the developmental capacities which those actions exercise.

However, Mill expects that only the originality of a few through their modes of life can have practical worth proven by the effectuality of their experiments of life. Thus, only a few can influence culture through effective participation in the production of the lifestyle alternatives. Since the developmentally powerful are more likely to be original, their actions are more likely to be effectually original.

Furthermore, Mill's politically elitist aversion to the ascendance of the masses leads Mill to overlook the social utility of the masses' potential contribution to social progress. He speaks about the ascendance of the masses with emphasis on its negative aspects as if it is simply a matter of undesirable social change, and as if that ascendance involves no noteworthy social progress. Mill claims that "the permanent source of improvement is liberty, since by it there are as many possible independent centres of improvement as there are individuals" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). However, he speaks about the very masses being liberated as if they do not consist of individuals, and as if they cannot contribute to improvement and are unlikely to benefit from it. He does not recognize their liberation as such. Instead, he takes the signs that the masses experience gains in power, i.e. power which permits liberation, as simply signs of loss to the societal capacity for freedom.

In contrast to how he treats the masses, Mill focuses on the social utility of intellectuals, eccentrics, and persons of genius; in his view, they possess the characteristics which increase the likelihood that one will add to social improvement. Mill does not consider that the masses may

also have characteristics that can add to social improvement. He implies that the ascendance of the masses does not serve any meaningful social utility. He overstates the causal role of individual development in the production of social progress, and understates the significance of improved social conditions for social progress.

Additionally, Mill claims that the principle of social utility is not arbitrary and that, therefore, it can be impartially used, for example, to resolve conflicts between other moral principles (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶29). Yet, as I argued, Mill's considerations of the social utility of various cognitive attributes are problematically biased, namely elitist, and arbitrarily, overly individualistic: the more he associates a thing with individuality, the more social utility and value, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, that he assigns to it. He implies that individual spontaneity has intrinsic worth, though his arguments for the worth of individuality suggest only its extrinsic worth. He argues for individuality's worth because it facilitates human development, and, in turn, it adds to social progress, and, ultimately, to happiness. He claims that all eccentricity, which requires individuality, has at least extrinsic value. Of genius, he says that it is inherently capable of greater individuality, and he assigns genius high effectual social worth.

Mill considers the instrumental value of diversity for individual development, and claims that the ascendance of the masses of persons functions to endanger diversity. He claims that, even in the absence of the ascendance of the masses, diversity of opinions diminishes as society approaches truth. In contrast to this view of diverse opinions, he claims that there are multiple inherent human potentials, and correspondingly various needs for human growth. Thus, he suggests, because of their developmental function, various modes of conduct should remain.

Finally, the developmental functions that Mill attributes to diversity through its role in self-education and experiments of life are at best optimistic. As discussed in the final part of this chapter on the limitations of the experiments of life, these experiments are less likely to be beneficial than Mill expects. An implication of these limitations is that the overstatement of the utility of experiments of life can be harmful for the capacity to develop, for this overstatement

suggests that individuals are responsible for their developmental outcomes to an extent greater than they actually are. While he ignores the effects of differential political relations among diverse groups, Mill places the locus of developmental responsibility on the individual, and builds unjustified expectations about the extent to which self-development is possible for individuals. That locus of developmental responsibility and, as the next chapter will argue, the unjustified expectations, can, instead, hinder the desired individual development.

### **CHAPTER 3: THE PROGRESS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL ELITE**

#### **I. Introduction**

In this chapter, I will argue that the practices that Mill considers optimize individual progress are mainly likely to facilitate the developmental power, and thereby the progress of elite individuals. This chapter will support the interpretive hypotheses that Mill treats developmental power mainly as a positive form of political power, and that he expects that the developmental elite have the most capacity to exercise this power, and thus they also have the most capacity to progress as individuals in ways that add to utility.

Mill views individual development as the advancement towards the triumph of developmental power over negative political power. The power of individuality is the capacity to develop. Individual development is the effectual exercise of that power which forms the causal basis of history. That is to say, developmental power causes history, and the actions of the most developable individuals are most likely to have progressive significance. For Mill, history is purposive and its purpose is progress, not mere social change, but rather social improvements or increases in liberty. History concerns the consequences of individuality towards the triumph of good in its struggle against evil. The continuation of history requires that individuality be in a social state in which it has the capacity to win the struggle. Mill favourably views individual development, and he assumes that the outcomes of the individualization of self are inclined towards the good. For Mill, the main purpose of individual development is the attainment of individual and social happiness.

Mill thinks that individual development has crucial importance for the advancement of history. Mill's argument for his freedom-utilitarian project is politically egoistic, for whereas he recognizes the developmental elite as potential history makers, he excludes the underdeveloped or whom he presumes are less developable from this recognition. Thus, political egoism has implications that the developmental elite are unlikely to expect that persons who they presume are

developmentally below them to be history makers, and thus the developmental elite can set up a self-fulfilling prophecy against the social majority's capacity to add to utility.

The political egoism of Mill's argument for his freedom-utilitarian project is additionally evident in that he assumes that individuals from the developmental elite group to which he belongs have a greater capacity to serve as benefactors and beneficiaries. For example, Mill claims that only a few individuals can render the service of impartiality, and he connects impartiality to the exercise of justice. In this way, for him, only a few who we may call epistemic diplomats have the capacity both to comprehend the truth and to directly contribute to epistemic progress. The few have a greater capacity than the majority to developmentally benefit from their impartiality. For, the few are more likely than the majority to develop just characters, because the few have the developmental advantage of impartiality, and thus they are also more likely to efficaciously contribute to the administration and implementation of socially just practices.

Finally, this chapter provides a utilitarian critique of the developmental aspects of Mill's freedom-utilitarian project and, in particular, of the project's absolute notion of political equality: that it is counterproductive to the maximization of utility. Mill overestimates the extent to which mere developmental opportunities benefit society, even when he admits that there are important cases in which only the few will be able to benefit from such opportunities. He expects various outcomes from inherently diverse people in their responses to the developmental opportunities. For Mill, society should foster the exercise of the developmental power of everybody, but some inherently have more developmental power - they are more individual than others and thus they have more of the energy that drives progress. He calls such individuals "the stronger specimens of human nature" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9). These few have greater capacities than the majority to benefit from social environmental factors, such as the opportunity for free expression, and from their own development. This chapter will explore the preceding claims and discuss their implications for the capacity of society to facilitate individual development and social progress.

## **II. Social Progress:**

This section supports the interpretive hypotheses that individuality and conformity differentially influence the type of social change that is possible in certain situations. Mill thinks that since the developmental elite are more likely to choose original actions than developmentally normal or weak persons, they are also more likely to contribute to social and cultural progress. By contrast, Mill thinks that since the developmentally normal or weak are more likely to commit conformist actions, they are also more likely to contribute to situations in which only non-progressive or even regressive social change is possible.

Mill claims that the masses of persons are most likely to practice informal negative political power in the form of mental coercion, and accepts an absolute notion of political equality. I argue that absolute political equality is problematic because it facilitates the mental coercion which Mill recognizes as counterproductive to the cultivation of the individual's progressive capacities. Mentally coercive processes can make self-fulfilling prophecies. Even if society would practice what Mill considers absolute political equality, and even if the developmental elite were also the political elite, mental coercion would still be likely and developmentally unfavourable self-fulfilling prophecies would lead to the violation of equality of the masses of persons, and thus also to injustice. The notion of absolute political equality is inadequately utilitarian and, therefore, is inconsistent with Mill's freedom-utilitarian project.

### **i) Individual Development and History**

There is a parallel between Mill's view of individual development as the articulation of individuality and his view that individual and social progress make history happen. Mill has a favourable view of individual development; he claims that as long as persons individualize their choices, in matters that regard only their selves, whatever life outcomes they have are good for society because the individualization of choice increases liberty. He thinks that if one follows individuality, one's orientation inclines, though not necessarily moves, towards the good. He

excessively trusts the worth of individuality and individuals whom he deems possess greater capacity for individuality. For example, he claims that society is better off when persons individualize their choices and their individualized actions have negative outcomes for themselves than when they conform to legitimate modes of conduct which are beneficial to their society. For Mill, although persons in the former situation inflict a "constructive injury" (CW, 18, Ch. 4, ¶11) on society, it is a bearable one that adds to "the greater good of human freedom" (CW, 18, Ch. 4, ¶11).

Similarly, Mill flatters the nature of individuality insofar as he claims that history, not only *should* involve, but *actually* depends on the development of individuality. For Mill, history concerns more than events that influence social changes. History regards a special kind of social change, namely progress. For Mill, progress means increases in the capacity of individuals to articulate their natures to the effect that they contribute to social, cultural, intellectual and/or moral improvement. History requires individuality's gradual attainment of social improvement and liberty. History's continuation depends on the struggle between individuality and despotic custom.<sup>23</sup> As long as individuality is in a social state in which it can win in its struggle with despotic custom, history continues. An exploration of Mill's definition of progress will show that, Mill thinks, as soon as custom triumphs over individuality, history ceases.

Mill claims that history depends on progress, not on mere social change. In his view, a high degree of conformity to custom is incompatible with progress, but compatible with mere social change. Conformity is a necessary condition for custom, and contributes to the despotism of custom. Conformity to custom hinders individuality which is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for social progress. For Mill, progress, in terms of liberty and social improvement, and a despotic degree of conformity to custom are rivals on the stage of history. He writes:

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<sup>23</sup> A custom is a common cultural practice. A despotic custom is a cultural practice that is exercised so commonly that it undermines the social capacity for progress. The despotism of custom occurs when custom exercises more than a "divided rule with liberty and progress" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17).

The despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement, being in unceasing antagonism to that disposition to aim at something better than customary, which is called, according to circumstances, the spirit of liberty, or that of progress or improvement . . . the contest between the two constitutes the chief interest of the history of mankind. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17)

As well, improvement and liberty can become rivals in those times in which improvement is forced upon a people, but liberty is, normally, the best friend of improvement (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17).

According to Mill, history can come to an end by either the cessation of social progress or the rejection of individuality, especially as a result of despotic custom. In fact, Mill claims: "The greater part of the world has, properly speaking, *no history*, because the despotism of Custom is complete" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17, emphasis added). If there is no more social progress, history ceases. If history ceases, social change without progress or what can be called the empty form of social change may still be possible. For, the empty form of social change does not require individuality. Mill recognizes that social change can occur as a result of conformity. In particular, he claims that conformity en masse can cause social change. For example, he contrasts the form of despotic custom of the East with the form of despotic custom which could occur in Europe. The despotism of custom which threatens the European nations "does not preclude change, provided all change together" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). Whereas the East's despotism of custom led to lack of social change, Mill predicts that in Europe despotic custom would lead to lack of social progress. Thus, in his comparison of the forms of Eastern and Western despotic custom, Mill distinguishes between social progress and mere social change.

Mill elaborates the distinction between social progress and mere social change, in his discussion of the progressiveness of Europeans in at least three ways. First, Mill describes Europeans as "progressive as well as changeable" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). Second, Mill implies that progress and social change do not necessarily occur at the same time when he warns against change for change's sake without any greater idea such as that of beauty to guide it (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). Third, Mill warns about vain, counterproductive presumptions that guide European



improvement. For example, he criticizes the European idea of moral improvement. This idea holds Europeans as good and demands that others should be as good as Europeans (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). Mill objects to that idea because it goes against the maintenance of diversity which protects society from despotic custom, and thus secures the social capacity for progress.

Mill claims that individuality causes progress. He writes: "A people, it appears, may be progressive for a certain length of time, and then stop: when does it stop? When it ceases to possess individuality" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). Thus, Mill claims that the works of individuality sustain social progress, in his discussion that Europeans pretentiously claim that they are progressive but lack the individuality that would make their claim true.

Therefore, according to Mill, social change can be subdivided into the empty form of social change and progress. These two forms have distinct causes. Causes of the empty form of social change include conformity en masse, the initiation of change for the sake of change, or the social acceptance of a notion of improvement that is false or counterproductive. The widespread adoption of a new cultural practice can be an example of the empty form of social change. Conformity contributes to the creation, maintenance, and despotism of customs. Individual development is the main cause of progress, and thus promotes the advancement of history. The despotism of custom, which occurs when the proportion of the presence of conformity to custom is greater than the proportions of progress and liberty, signals history's end.

#### **ii) The Relationship between Progress and Custom**

Mill often treats progress and conformity to custom as if they are mutually exclusive in action when Mill claims that actions committed in conformity to custom cannot be progressive. If people accept this claim as true, there are implications for the progressive capacities of the majority of persons whom Mill views as the most likely to commit conformist actions, because of their lack of individuality.

We can see how Mill regards progress as independent from custom when he writes: "the

progressive principle . . . in either shape, whether as the love of liberty or of improvement, is antagonistic to the sway of Custom, involving at least emancipation from that yoke" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶17). The availability of customs is insufficient for the development of the individuality which is necessary for progress. For, individuality requires the exercise of choice among things not commonly done (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶6).

Admittedly, Mill seems to aspire for the spirit of progress to be customarily or widely accepted<sup>24</sup> by means of greater toleration of originality and diversity in practice; this is evident in two ways. First, Mill criticizes persons who lack the custom to tolerate originality, and who do not see any need for progress; he claims that such persons are the ones who most need the originality which is necessary for progressive action (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶12). Second, Mill implicitly suggests that society should become accustomed to the sight of diversity, because diversity is necessary for progress. He warns: "mankind speedily become unable to conceive diversity, when they have been for some time *unaccustomed* to see it" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶19, emphasis added). Thus, Mill treats the state of being unaccustomed to the sight of cultural diversity as a problem, and he suggests that custom can be used to promote or at least secure cultural diversity.

However, the customary or wide acceptance of the spirit of progress has a conformity requirement; that it should be the cultural practice to tolerate individuality, originality and diversity so as to allow the social promotion and maintenance of diversity. This conformity requirement has much more limited causal importance than the requirement for the personal exercise of active individuality because individuality has the diversity function. The cultural

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<sup>24</sup> I use the terms 'customarily' and 'widely accepted' as if they are interchangeable. I do not use the term customarily to refer to only the mindless following of custom. For, Mill recognizes that conformity to a custom does not necessarily entail, though it generally entails, uncritical acceptance. He admits that mindful conformity to custom is also possible. For example, he advises that "*an intelligent following of custom, or even occasionally an intelligent deviation from custom, is better than a blind and simply mechanical adhesion to it*" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5, emphasis added). Thus, I think that it would be an overstatement to claim that Mill defines 'customary acceptance' as uncritical conformity to custom.

practice of toleration for individuality and experiments of life would empower only individuals who have the capacities for individuality and originality, and Mill expects the developmental elite have greater levels of these capacities.

Although Mill recognizes that there can be, and at times has been, too much individuality, he does not explain how individuality can become excessive. The current problem, Mill identifies, is that "society has now fairly got the better of individuality; and the danger which threatens human nature is not the excess, but the deficiency, of personal impulses and preferences" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶6). For Mill, although custom is necessary to discipline persons so that they may behave in accordance with the common good, too much custom is a hindrance to the advancement of the common good. As despotic custom impedes the free exploration of one's nature, despotic custom also impedes the original articulation of individuality, and thereby prevents the expression of human freedom, and the societal capacity for progress.

Finally, this discussion on the relationship between progress and custom adds support to the fourth interpretive hypothesis that Mill negatively correlates conformist actions with progressive consequences. This hypothesis was previously supported in the second chapter as well as in this chapter's part, "Human Development and History." Mill views conformity to custom as largely incompatible with progress. That view holds the implication that the societal majority who lack the capacities for original actions and strong individuality, thus lack progressive capacities.

### **iii) The Justice of Utilitarianism: Just for the Elite?**

Here, I will argue that the absolute notion of political equality is inconsistent with the goal of Mill's freedom-utilitarian project to add to common beneficial developmental consequences for society's members and thus do developmental justice. Mill's views that the essence of justice is political equality and that we should reject mental coercion are inconsistent with his claim that we should accept absolute political equality. This inconsistency is evident in

that what Mill considers absolute political equality permits mental coercion and thus undermines political equality and thereby also justice. I will argue that absolute political equality facilitates mental coercion and is thus unjust. I will limit that discussion to what would be viewed as unjust based on the general views on injustice that Mill discusses in the fifth chapter of his book Utilitarianism (1863), and to what is recognizable as unjust from a freedom-utilitarian perspective. This perspective would regard as important whether mental coercion impedes individual expression and hinders the capacity of an individual to expand her developmental power, and thereby undermines the utility of her individual characteristics. For the constructive part of my critique in this section, I will show that a freedom-utilitarian, consequentialist perspective helps to compensate for the inadequacies of the general views on injustice. I will elaborate on Mill's view that mental coercion is an unjust form of negative political power. In contemporary terms, mental coercion includes psychological oppression. I will show the applicability of the general views on justice to psychological oppression. Psychological oppression interferes with the individual's capacity for free opinion expression, independent opinion formation, and free action.

A rise in social awareness about what is unjust is a meaningful social improvement. Mill's distinction between mere social change and social progress rests on whether social improvement is involved, as the previous parts of this chapter discussed. Whereas social change does not necessarily have good qualities, such as increases in justice, social progress does because it is a matter of greater liberty or of social improvement. Mill's most insightful comment on social improvement in Utilitarianism (1863) reads:

The entire history of social improvement has been a series of transitions, by which one custom or institution after another, from being a supposed primary necessity of social existence, has passed into the rank of a universally stigmatized injustice and tyranny. So it has been with the distinctions of slaves and freemen, nobles and serfs, patricians and plebeians; and so it will be, and in part already is, with the aristocracies of colour, race, and sex. (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35)

Thus, he views increased recognition of injustice and inequality as an important characteristic of social improvement.

According to Mill, knowledge of injustice is practical for knowledge of justice. Mill writes that to understand justice it is most useful to understand its opposite (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶3). He addresses the commonly held views that it is unjust (1) to violate legal rights unless they be forfeited or undeserved (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶4); or (2) to violate moral rights (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶5); it is unjust to (3) give more or less, whether punishment or reward, than others deserve (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶6); or (4) to dishonestly and deliberately express or build expectations of oneself and then violate them (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶7); or (5) to be partial in improper situations (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶8); or what I take to be Mill's sixth view, though he does not number it, that it is unjust to violate equality, which he holds to be the "essence" of justice (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶9), although under the general view society may restrict equality by considerations of social expediency (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶9).

Mill considers "the justice which is grounded on utility to be the chief part, and incomparably the most sacred and binding part, of all morality" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶31). Thus, that which impedes utility is both unjust and immoral. Indeed, Mill understands justice in terms of moral principles which when taken as a whole are high in utility (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶36). These principles facilitate the resolution among whatever existing principles of justice there are (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶36-37). Thus, moral principles can support Mill's position that utilitarianism is practical.<sup>25</sup> Mill writes: "particular cases may occur in which some other social duty is so important, as to overrule any one of the general maxims of justice" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶36). These

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<sup>25</sup> Another reason for why Mill argues that utilitarianism is practical is because utilitarianism draws from and puts to use the natural human attributes of sociality, the sentiments of social sympathy, and the attribute of human intelligence. The idea of justice consistent with utilitarianism is not ethically egoistic. That is to say, utilitarianism does not claim that persons ought to do what they think is best for themselves. Rather, Mill writes that we should not resent hurts to ourselves unless the hurts are of the sort which society is also interested in repressing (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶20). It is moral to exclusively subordinate the sentiment of justice, an element of which is the "natural feeling of retaliation or vengeance" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶20), to the "social sympathies" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶20). Doing so allows us to be just persons, that is, persons who resent a hurt to society, and thus, whose sentiment of justice "acts in directions conformable to the general good" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶20). Our highly developed human intelligence allows us to have a wider range of sympathy (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶19). If we were not to subordinate the sentiment of justice to social feeling, we would be led by it to resent selfishly or to "resent indiscriminately whatever anyone does that is disagreeable to us" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶20).

principles are to be prioritized, though not without exceptions (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶36).

Because it ranks the principle priorities, that would not otherwise be ranked,<sup>26</sup> Mill argues that utilitarianism has a practical role in its service to justice. However, his elitist assumptions about human nature undermine the practicality of his freedom-utilitarian project. Mill claims that impartiality, which is an attribute required for justice, is innately scarce. Mill connects impartiality to justice; being impartial is of both primary and secondary significance for it. Not only is impartiality important for the fulfillment of other obligations of justice, such as impartial judgement of the legality of the conduct of the accused, but it is also included by the most ordinary and enlightened alike as a maxim among the precepts of justice. Impartial persons make practical the greatest happiness principle<sup>27</sup> by respecting the maxim of equality, for they can regard the happiness of all with numerical equality, so that one person's happiness is "counted for exactly as much as another's" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35). Thus, impartiality is "involved in the very meaning of Utility, or the Greatest-Happiness Principle" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35).

Unfortunately, for Mill, only the few can render the service of impartiality – the epistemic diplomats who thus have an essential role to play for the reconciliation of the partial truths, and thus for the acquisition of the truth, as the fourth thesis chapter discusses. The consideration of the view that only a few can be impartial, and the view that impartiality is important for justice holds implications for the differential moral developmental capacities of various individuals. The impartial few have certain advantages in the development of just and moral characters, whereas the partial majority has the inherent misfortune that it lacks these developmental advantages.

Furthermore, elitist perceptions about various inherent abilities can violate justice by means of mentally coercive processes. The five general views about what is unjust that Mill

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<sup>26</sup> Mill argues that the various existent principles of what is unjust, such as the five that he identifies, show that natural justice is ambiguous. Natural justice can be used to justify various views (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶9). Thus, it cannot provide a ranking system for moral principles.

<sup>27</sup> The greatest happiness principle states that individual actions and social practices that contribute the most to social happiness are the most utilitarian.

mentions in his discussion on justice, in addition to Mill's claim that the essence of justice is equality, can help us to understand how mental coercion is unjust. I will focus on psychological oppression which is a type of mental coercion. The general views, to be consistent with their nature and with each other, can and should be applied to the case of psychological oppression. Psychological oppression consists of the internalization of stereotypes and social perceptions. When persons internalize the negative views others express of them, they forcefully become not only oppressed by others but also self-oppressors (Bartky, 2005, p. 105). Contemporary societies regularly commit psychologically oppressive practices, but societies tend to ignore the implications of those practices for the oppressed individuals' capacity for freedom; I will examine these implications especially for how society violates the psychologically oppressed individual's political equality and freedom. The severity of the injustice of psychological oppression becomes more apparent by the number of the general views of injustice, listed above, that can apply to it. But recognition of the injustice of psychological oppression does not require that the general views directly apply to it.

In some important ways, the general views are inadequately applicable to psychological oppression. The general views give too much weight to the internal dispositions of the individual and, in particular, to whether the individual is aware that she is doing wrong. For instance, the fourth general view of injustice claims that it is unjust to *deliberately* develop false expectations about *one self*. Under this view, intention matters. However, to the advantage of a utilitarian perspective, it regards the consequences as important to understand whether a particular action is unjust.

The fourth principle recognizes that it is unjust for individuals to build false expectations about themselves, because doing so places others at a disadvantage in their relation with the individual. In a social world, it is recognizable that it is unjust to build false expectations about other individuals, because this places the individuals at a disadvantage in their relation with others. Therefore, in contemporary society, we should recognize that it is unjust to dishonestly

express or develop untrue expectations of others especially when they are thus forced to build false expectations about themselves. This is even more remarkable when persons treat others in such a way that they render others unable to violate the untrue expectations. Persons express one of the most deeply unjust forms of dishonesty when they set self-fulfilling prophecies to work to turn falsehood into truth.

Furthermore, the imposition of one's opinions of others upon them to dictate others' self-image is a violation of their legal and moral right to have freedom of opinion formation and opinion expression. This illustrates that psychological oppression can also involve punishment that is undeserved and thus violates principle three. The imposition of the opinions one holds of others upon them punishes others for not being whom one wants them to be, and compels them to conform to one's expectations and perceptions of the type of persons that they are.

When one forces upon others what they think of themselves, one does not treat them as one ought to treat equals, and thus violates their equality. One takes away their capacity to choose their identity. Instead, one chooses for them in self-regarding matters. Thus, one interferes with the active exercise of their individuality, and thereby undermines their developmental power.

If it is unjust to build false expectations about oneself, then it is unjust, whether deliberately or inadvertently, to force others to, unknowingly, build false expectations about themselves. This is especially the case when persons expect others to express that they are treated more equally than they actually are or that they are unequal in regards to some important characteristics and socially beneficial causal attributes. For, the advancement of knowledge and the expansion of individual developmental power add to utility, not the advancement of ignorance and the hindrance of individual progress. This treatment both violates their equality and increases the likelihood that their equality will be further violated as a consequence of the false expectations. Socially marginalized groups regularly receive such treatment in patriarchal systems of whiteness (Henry & Tator, 2006). That is to say, the practice is common in social



systems that treat white skin colour and masculinity and the individual attributes that are associated with being white or being male as the standard of comparison for members of groups viewed as deviant. Although the expressed or internalized expectations are untrue, they serve many self-fulfilling prophecies. Thus, the expectations have real social consequences. This type of injustice is one of the expenses<sup>28</sup> of so-called free expression.

Mental coercion includes what is presently understood as 'psychological oppression.' For Mill, mental coercion is an expression of negative political power. Those who have negative political power can practice mental coercion. Mill views mental coercion as that which compels persons to conform to the socially legitimate opinions and thought patterns. Mill writes that persons need protection from how public opinion interferes with their individual development and opinion formation. Consider this well-known passage:

Protection . . . [is needed] against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and, if possible, prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence: and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs, as protection against political despotism. (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶5)

In the above passage, Mill asserts that the importance of the need to eliminate social and cultural psychological coercion is as great as that of political despotism.

Yet, Mill accepts the absolute notion of equality, which, when socially applied, not only facilitates mental coercion, but also limits the variety of developmental opportunities for individuals, as I will now argue. Mill's acceptance of the absolute notion of political equality is inconsistent with the pursuit of the maximization of individual development, because absolute political equality facilitates the capacity of the elite to mentally coerce others and to influence the kinds of developmental opportunities that are most commonly available in society. We can understand this inconsistency in light of Mill's emphasis on the psychobiological differences among individual natures, and his claim that their developmental needs vary. Because the

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<sup>28</sup> In the fourth chapter, I will discuss how what Mill considers free speech as socially expensive.

individual natures of the developmental and political elite do not have exactly the same developmental needs as everyone else, the reinforcement of elitist perceptions about what is the best way to satisfy individual needs hinders the satisfaction of needs that the elite does not experience. When various individuals are coerced by the elite's perceptions, for example, through psychologically oppressive processes, to view their natures, not as they actually are, but as the elite views them, it is more difficult for individuals to recognize and adequately satisfy their actual developmental needs. Thus, the elite do not treat the natures of others as distinct, and the elite violate others' political equality because they interfere with others' capacity to independently form their identities including their opinions about themselves.

In regards to the violation of equality, Mill insightfully and rightfully writes:

all social inequalities which have ceased to be considered expedient, assume the character not of simple inexpediency, but of injustice, and appear so tyrannical, that people are apt to wonder how they ever could have been tolerated; forgetful that they themselves perhaps tolerate other inequalities under an equally mistaken notion of expediency, the correction of which would make that which they approve seem quite as monstrous as what they have at last learned to condemn. (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35)

In the above passage, Mill connects mistaken notions of expediency to the violation of equality. Additionally, Mill recognizes that the approach to equality is in certain cases itself mistaken. He comments that "the justice of giving equal protection to the rights of all, is maintained by those who support the most outrageous inequality in the rights themselves" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶9). In this section I limit my discussion to the mistaken notion of absolute equality, and I will argue that the social application of this notion of equality leads to the violation of equality.

Society should support the worth of social policies with their practical effects, not merely their ideal effects. If Mill's freedom-utilitarian project is to be practical, as Mill claims that it is, it must be concerned with more than the intentions behind actions; undeniably, any utilitarian project needs to be consequentialist. Thus, from a utilitarian perspective, it is important to determine whether the real consequences of social policies are good and meet the objectives of the policies. Yet, an absolute notion of political equality does not suffice for utilitarian purposes,

because what is considered absolute equality serves mainly the progress of the political elite.

Unfortunately, Mill supports what he considers an absolute notion of political equality. He endorses the "highest abstract standard of social and distributive justice" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35), for which, he asserts, "all institutions, and the efforts of all virtuous citizens," should aspire (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35). He states that "we should treat all equally well (when no higher duty forbids) who have deserved equally well of us" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35). He asserts that "society should treat all equally well who have deserved equally well of it, that is, who have deserved equally well *absolutely*" (CW, 10, Ch. 5, ¶35, emphasis added). Thus, he accepts a notion of political equality that offers a highly abstract standard, and an absolute one, for how society treats its members that deserve equal treatment. That standard is impractical for the purposes of the freedom-utilitarian project, because that standard is inconsistent with the aim for development maximization.

Political equality based on what some consider absolute terms is not necessarily absolute political equality. What Mill considers absolute political equality is based on an illusion of absoluteness, as society tends to support its members in merely legally, not practically, absolute equal terms. Development maximization benefits from society's sensitivity to diverse developmental needs. Yet, what is considered absolute political equality is insensitive to diverse developmental needs, and thus it is inconsistent with their satisfaction.

Absolute political equality pertains to systematic equality. The elimination of systematic (formal) inequality is insufficient, for systematic inequality is not the only type of inequality. Systemic (informal) social inequality is more difficult to identify and eliminate than systematic inequality. Power differentials among groups affect the social system, and produce systemic political inequality. The consequences of those differentials conflict with the desired effect of political equality. It is systemic inequality that makes possible mental coercion.

The "absolute" notion of political equality does not protect society from adopting biased developmental standards and biased recommendations for the satisfaction of developmental needs. People can treat each other in accordance with the dominant standard/s that are based on

what the political elite consider the important needs, and the considered needs are not only the developmental ones. The political elite influence society to practice what the elite considers the best ways to satisfy those needs. The social supports are more compatible with the needs of the socially privileged than with the needs of the socially disadvantaged. The socially available developmental supports are incompatible with the satisfaction of diverse needs. Thus, the treatment of persons is not in accordance to the actual needs of everyone. When political equality is thus defined, the treatment of persons corresponds with the experiences and the things that matter the most to the dominant group/s.

The "absolute" notion of political equality ignores how equal treatment can contribute to political inequality. Political equality based on "absolute" terms mistakenly equates political equality with equality of treatment. Although persons, at least in principle, have access to the same supports, they do not all have access to precisely the ones they need, in practice. With its emphasis on sameness and the same treatment, the absolute notion of political equality simply refuses to take differences into account, as if doing so necessarily runs counter to politically equal treatment. Ironically, its "political equality" does not extend to diverse groups. It makes political equality a thing that roughly exists only within the dominant group, and a myth when used to describe the whole of society. Political equality based on absolute terms cannot foster equal relations, for it lacks the flexibility required for equal relations. Consequently, on the basis of absolute political equality, society cannot equally support the developmental needs of everyone.

The absolute notion of political equality does not ensure equal opportunities. Mill's focus on competition among individual experiments of life corresponds with a notion of political equality that is based on equal opportunities. Mill claims that society should give all individuals the opportunity to develop themselves through experiments of life, but he expects that only a few will create progressively effectual experiments of life, as I discussed in the second chapter.

Opportunities cannot be equal when persons do not stand an equal chance to successfully pursue them. In contemporary society, there are many progressives who prefer an equity

approach, because when the competition is unfair, "equal opportunities" can only be an ideal. Opportunities must have a significant likelihood of realizability in order to provide a basis for equality. The greater is the likelihood that some persons stand to realize opportunities above others, the lower is the equality of their opportunities. For those persons who are unlikely to successfully pursue the opportunities, the "opportunities" can be nothing more than pseudo-opportunities.

The notion of absolute political equality conforms to the social aversions of the time, in particular, today's aversion towards "unequal treatment." Absolute political equality denies more than recognizes individual differences. The popularly held, "absolute" notion of political equality is a reaction to the historical reality that the differential treatment of diverse people has been linked to political inequality. Yet, the aversion against unequal treatment ensures unequal developmental results. Because of the aversion, society treats certain persons in ways that are practical for the satisfaction of their needs, while it deprives others, who are presumably also being treated as equals, of the developmental opportunities that foster the cultivation of their particular natures.

For opportunities to be equally available for everybody, society has to be sensitive to the various needs and circumstances among politically unequal persons. It is not the same opportunities that have to be available to everyone; it is the ones they need. Absolutely equal treatment, in legal principle, can mean politically unequal treatment, in practice (Fleras and Elliott, 2003, p. 133). Not even the condition of "equal opportunities" as the same opportunities was met in Mill's time, nor is it being met today. Neither is the relative condition of equal opportunities, which I suggest is the availability of the particular opportunities required for one's development.

The equal opportunities approach to political equality is inappropriate because it ignores that social resources influence the variety of opportunities that people have. Equality of the developmentally crucial resources that people have, such as formal education, permits persons

certain kinds of developmental opportunities. When the competition is unfair, society should focus on the improvement of access to the various developmentally crucial resources and on the achievement of equal levels of developmental realization, which does not necessarily mean the same material and life-style outcomes. Individuals who have the freedom to develop themselves according to their preferences, psychological needs, and interests will unlikely have the same outcomes, since their outcomes will express the various preferences and interests they followed which were not the same.

Development maximization would benefit from a notion of political equality that is practical in that it optimizes the likelihood that people will achieve their potentials, whatever those potentials may be. To understand development maximization, it is useful to distinguish between (1) the likely degree to which one will achieve one's potential and (2) how much potential one has to achieve. In the regards to the first of these, some persons have advantages for the achievement of their potential, such as fast rates of intellectual,<sup>29</sup> emotional, and moral progress and privileged social conditions that allow them access to a good education. These are factors that aid the realization of their biological capacities. Other persons have more social and personal obstacles to overcome while they strive for individual development. To take into account these types of personal differences in development maximization project plans, society should give relatively equal developmental supports to its members, that is, the supports should be compatible with the various needs of persons. Society should support the development of its members in proportion to and in ways appropriate to their developmental needs. Yet, with an absolute notion of political equality, this sufficiently flexible support is not possible. The next section of this chapter discusses a fallacy that Mill makes in his assumptions that there are various potentials for intellectual, moral, and political achievement, and reveals further how Mill's

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<sup>29</sup> I am not saying that a fast intellectual progress rate is always an advantage. Whether it is an advantage depends on the social circumstances of the learner including whether the formal educational system has a curriculums and educational programs which are flexible enough to facilitate the intellectual progress of students with various needs.

freedom-utilitarian project is practical for only a few individuals.

### **III. The Elitist Assignment of Utility to Human Natures**

Elitist expectations can spoil the chances for human nature's progress and utilitarian developmental powers. With its hidden expectations, which are counter-productive to the development of the majority of individuals, the society would undermine the very developmental power that it sought to maximize, and along with it, its project's capacity for the maximization of utility.

When the leaders and benefactors to society share in common similar personal characteristics that permit them to constitute an elite category that consider themselves as most capable to serve the common good, and base on their elitist and one-sided assumptions practices that benefit only or mainly themselves, those people can be called politically egoistic. The presence of political egoism in a social project is inconsistent with the aim for political equality. The successful application of Mill's freedom-utilitarian project largely depends on individual characteristics and causal attributes including the capacities for genius, effectual originality, and impartiality, which he expects only a few individuals possess. This claim that the individual characteristics that have high utility are scarce makes it seem impractical for most of society's members to participate in the freedom-utilitarian project, and thus excludes not only their characteristics but also their achievements from utility. An exclusive utilitarianism is impractical because it cannot benefit from the whole social body, and denies a large social segment the opportunities that they could obtain only through work as benefactors.<sup>30</sup>

#### **i) Moral and Intellectual Elitism and Self-fulfilling Prophecies**

Mill's freedom-utilitarian project sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy against the moral and intellectual developmental progress of the societal majority. The project promotes elitist

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<sup>30</sup> Benefactors are more likely to obtain direct and immediate benefits from their contributions to society, as the fourth chapter will show in regards to knowledge.

assumptions about differential inherent developmental capacities; these assumptions place the majority of individuals at a developmental disadvantage, and thus hinder their capacity to add to utility.

Kendall and Carey (1968) find that Mill is a precursor of contemporary elitism. They claim that Mill's elitism does not consist of separate components – intellectual and moral – but rather combines these into one form of elitism based on intellectual excellence. Mill assumes that individuals who have the most intellectual worth also have the most moral worth and vice versa. For Kendall and Carey (1968), Mill's elitist mindset begins with the following proposition:

The "intellectual and "moral" resources (that is, "worth") of the citizenry of the democratic state, which must be "organized" for purposes of government, is, like it or not, to be found in the Few, not the Many, above the roster's Great Divide, not above and below it. (Kendall & Carey, 1968, p. 38)

Mill proceeds to absorb moral worth into intellectual worth, as he posits that individuals who have more knowledge or those endowed with intellectual superiority should have the power to guide the conduct of government.

Mill expects that certain individuals have the inherent capacity to serve the common good more than others. Mill claims that only the originality of a few would prove to have utility, as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. Also, Mill argues that few individuals benefit from free individual expression more than others. Particularly, when it comes to natural "heroes," society "knows not how to make them" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5) and the best that it can do for them is allow them the freedom to make themselves, and respect that they cannot be socially-engineered.

For Mill, especially the gifted few who happen to inherently possess more of the "raw material of human nature" and a more "energetic nature" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5), in other words, more human potential, and thus, who can access a larger portion of human nature, suffer, if they are not allowed to freely develop. In turn, society suffers the consequences when society does not allow them to fully actualize their presumably greater potential for good. Consider Mill's claims in the following passage, and follow them to their final implications:



To say that one person's desires and feelings are *stronger and more various* than those of another, is merely to say that he has more *of the raw material of human nature*, and is therefore *capable, perhaps of more evil, but certainly of more good*. Strong impulses are but another name for energy. *Energy may be turned to bad uses; but more good may always be made of an energetic nature, than of an indolent and impassive one.* (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5, emphasis added)

Thus, members of the developmental elite are capable of more evil as well as of more good compared to those whom Mill considers the less developable. However, Mill assumes that if members of the developmental elite are given liberty, then they are more likely to contribute to social improvement than to social regression in terms of added injustice and falsehood.

Mill claims not only individuals who have achieved greater levels of moral maturity deserve greater social privileges, but he also claims that some individuals have greater inherent potential for greater moral privileges than others. Also, in today's terms, they benefit from psycho- and socio-biological developmental privileges. Mill predicts that such individuals naturally will acquire a greater morality, if given developmentally hospitable social circumstances. First, while Mill recognizes that strong feelings and emotions are not necessarily corrupt, Mill claims that those who have more of these qualities can develop a greater conscience compared to those who have lower levels. He writes: "it is not because men's desires are strong that they act ill; it is because their consciences are weak" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5). He continues: "there is no *natural* connexion between strong impulses and a weak conscience. The *natural* connexion is the other way" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5, emphasis added). The connection between impulses and a weak conscience applies for those with inherently weak impulses but not for those with strong impulses. For Mill, how some persons develop conscience suffers from their deficient energies, but how other persons develop conscience suffers from the improper balance of their strong energies. He writes:

desires and impulses are as much a part of a perfect human being, as beliefs and restraints: and strong impulses are only perilous when not properly balanced; when one set of aims and inclinations is developed into strength, while others, which ought to co-exist with them, remain weak and inactive. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5)

For an energetic character, one must develop a strong will to govern strong impulses (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5).

The moral dimension of Mill's developmental elitism depends on the assumption that the very attributes which he deems important in moral development are naturally scarce. As mentioned in the previous section, Mill suggests that impartiality is a helpful attribute for the development of a just character. He claims that only a few are capable of impartiality, thus he designates this important developmental attribute as a naturally scarce one.

Further, Mill's developmental elitism consists of natural scarcity claims including that there are individuals who naturally have stronger passions and thus have more with which to work in their development of other assets such as virtue and self-discipline which are also required for a strong moral character. He writes:

*Those who have most natural feeling, are always those whose cultivated feelings may be made the strongest. The same strong susceptibilities which make the personal impulses vivid and powerful, are also the source from whence are generated the most passionate love of virtue, and the sternest self-control. It is through the cultivation of these, that society both does its duty and protects its interests. (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶5, emphasis added)*

Mill emphasizes the potential of the members of the developmental elite for good, and that society should let them cultivate their greater developmental potential. He adds that these "stronger specimens of human nature" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9) should have their freedom of action restricted only from "encroaching on the rights of others" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9). Therefore, Mill holds a moral psycho- and socio-biological developmental form of elitism but, as the previous quotation shows, he prefers that they should not impede anyone's development. The recommendation that Mill makes for the prevention of the interference of the most developable with the growth of the least developable is inadequate for the development maximization of both groups.

Mill's elitist emphasis on the development of individuals whom he considers mentally gifted is at the expense of full appreciation for the human potential of persons whom he supposes do not inherently possess energetic natures, and have less access to portions of human nature. Mill underestimates not only the intellectual but also the emotional, and even the moral potential of those persons. Mill's view that development is possible for everyone means little next to his

view that the degree of developmental potential varies by person. He excessively focuses on what the mentally gifted can contribute to social progress. He ignores not only that those whose abilities look ordinary are also capable of great growth, that they are not necessarily doomed by their nature to mediocrity, but also especially that they, too, have much to contribute to social progress. They can favourably influence the developmental power of others, as discussed in chapter two.

Mill's position on the various inherent potentials of human natures also suffers from moral elitism, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Mill's morally elitist claims have biological, social and psychological developmental dimensions. In his view, free expression is crucial especially for the development of persons who have more potential than others to develop a good conscience, virtue, self-discipline, and impartiality.

Mill claims that the developmental elite both developmentally and epistemically benefit from free expression more than others. They can both earn more developmental power and learn more through its exercise. For Mill, persons of genius can serve as benefactors to social freedom and can benefit from that freedom more than others can. Persons of genius are "*more* individual" than others (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11). If they receive the social freedom which permits self-expression, then more individual growth can accrue to persons of genius than to persons who are presumably less capable of individuality. The assumed greater capacity to exercise active individuality permits persons of genius a greater likelihood that they will improve the social freedom that fosters their individual growth.

Mill's view that certain individuals have greater potential to benefit from free expression functions as a self-fulfilling prophecy to the effect that society could permit some individuals more freedom of expression on the basis of the expectation that they can benefit more from freedom. Thus, society would fulfill the prophecy that some individuals benefit the most from free expression. If some individuals receive the most opportunities to benefit, then they are likely to experience the most benefit.

Also, individuals whom society perceives as capable of producing greater utility, such as for improving social freedom, could, on the basis of their perceived greater social utility, be granted more privileges, for example, participation in the social policy making process. And their greater social privileges would empower their developmental capacities, and they would likely prove to have more social utility. Because "the moral worth of actions is to be judged in terms of the consequences of those actions,"<sup>31</sup> the actions of many persons comparatively turn out not only to have lower social worth but also lower moral worth.

Mill's developmental elitism has social developmental dimensions in addition to the psycho-biological dimension discussed earlier in this section. The social developmental dimension is evident, for instance, in Mill's considerations of how society can facilitate or impede intellectual progress.

#### **ii) The Fallacy of Innate Mental Giftedness**

The fallacy of innate mental giftedness results from the overstatement of the connection between a faster or "more energetic" intellectual developmental rate and intellectual potential. Practices based on this fallacy interfere with society's capacity to satisfy the various individual developmental needs. Here, I explain how some views of mental giftedness are problematic, and make some recommendations for the optimization of individual development. First, 'genius' is a socially constructed category.<sup>32</sup> The dominant cognitive values of society selectively pick and choose the elements of genius, and they provide the basis for standards by which society judges the 'genius' of individuals. Second, the development of most, if not all, persons who initially appear to have ordinary intellectual abilities is not limited to the cultivation of their ability to appreciate the extraordinary abilities of persons of genius enough to accept them as their leaders. They can develop extraordinary abilities, if given sufficient opportunities to do so and a social

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<sup>31</sup> Wilson (2007).

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the problems with understanding intellectual abilities see Stephen Jay Gould's Mismeasure of Man (1981).

environment which supports human growth in practical ways. Third, understanding the social problems posed by views that the mentally gifted belong to a minority would help us to maximize society's capacity to fully benefit from its members' cognitive abilities.

Although Mill claims that there are inherently diverse individual natures, he does not acknowledge the possibility that the social conditions which optimize the intellectual capacities of one developmental group may undermine the development of intellectual capacities for another developmental group. For example, Mill claims that persons of genius intellectually and developmentally benefit the most from the unrestricted expression and formation of opinions. However, he does not consider whether this practice is sometimes harmful for the intellectual developmental capacities of others.

Mill underestimates the extent to which socially valued individual attributes such as rationality, intelligence and genius are socially constructed, arbitrarily constituted and demarcated, and subject to being enhanced or limited by social constraints. The assumption that persons of genius are born more than made will keep persons of genius in the elite and minority category in which Mill expects that they will remain: "Persons of genius, it is true, are, and are always likely to be, a small minority" (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶11). However, the assumption of the scarcity of genius is not in the interest of development maximization because it sets up a self-fulfilling prophecy against the high prevalence of genius.

Mill's assumption that there are various human intellectual, creative, and moral potentials results from a common fallacy of innate mental giftedness. It regards the growth potential of the mentally gifted as superior to the growth potential of persons who mature at average rates, because it takes innate speed as being indicative of innate mental capacity. Under this fallacy, the faster rate of intellectual progress among individuals who society considers as exceptionally, intellectually gifted, to use today's term, is taken as a sign of their greater potential to achieve more than persons who progress more slowly. Although many people accept this sort of evaluation of intellectual potential, the fact that some mature at an earlier age is not of much

relevance to their amount of potential for growth that remains. It is possible that one can assume the opposite, i.e. the fact that a person has already reached a high level of intellectual maturity can indicate that she has less growth to experience, since she has already "grown up." To consider another way to connect intellectual maturation rate to the unactualized potential that remains, it is useful to compare persons who inherit faster psychological maturation rates with persons who inherit privileged social circumstances. In proportion to the height of their social ascription, society recognizes that persons do not have the potential for much more social ascendance. For example, society does not expect a person born into a billionaire family to have the potential to experience much more upward social mobility. Yet, if a person demonstrates a faster rate of intellectual progress, people normally expect that the person has much more growth to achieve compared to persons who progress at an average rate. People tend to infer a person's full mental potential from the amount of potential that the person has realized. For example, people tend to take that women have not achieved as many considered great works of philosophy as men have as a sign of women's inferior intellectual potential. The expectation that what can be realized follows from what has been realized is especially dubious when people judge what has been realized in a politically unequal social context where some persons have greater developmental opportunities than others, and thus a greater likelihood that they will achieve more than others.

Yet, I suggest that no inference at all about potential can be based on past individual development. Only what has been actualized can be reliably measured. Mental potential, or inherent mental capacity, is an illusory idea that has long been used to exclude certain human beings from socially valued categories, even from the category of human being itself. Mental attributes, such as 'intelligence,' are largely, but not entirely, socially constructed. It is uncertain and cannot be made certain whether human potential varies by person. My point is that no measurement of arbitrarily constituted and arbitrarily demarcated constructs can be reliable, even if there are (and there must be some) innate mental differences. Thus, Mill's assumption that there are various inherent differences among the mental capacities across human beings that

restrict their individual range of mental possibilities is not only unparsimonious or unnecessarily strong, but even more so it is impractical for the purposes of utility maximization.

The acceptance, instead, of the simple assumption that the potential of all human beings is immeasurably great can help to maximize individual development. For, we all have the capacity to become persons of genius, if given a nurturing social environment with adequate and appropriate supports and opportunities for individual growth. This assumption would prove to have greater utility than the unparsimonious one that Mill accepts, and which continues to be popularly held in the present day. What *can be* realized just does not follow from what *has been* realized.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

I brought attention to Mill's claims that there are inherent differences among individual potentials for intelligence, emotion, and morality. I disagreed with those claims and objected to the notions of innate mental giftedness and innate mental scarcity which those claims contain. Since Mill assumes that there is a positive correlation between intelligence and morality, his intellectual elitism is doubly problematic.

Mill assumes that there are natural losers and natural winners. For Mill, the individual can expand her developmental power within a limited range of possibilities that is unique to the individual. Some individuals have a wider inherent range of developmental possibilities. For example, they are more capable of great evil but also of great good, and the direction of their development is inclined towards the good. Also, the strength of the inherent developmental power varies by individual. Individuals can work within the range of their developmental possibilities to affect the social expression of their developmental capacities, and realize themselves.

Unfortunately, for Mill, individuals cannot favourably alter the inherent value of the strength of their developmental capacities. The inherent strength of particular traits is positively

correlated with the social strength of those traits. It follows from Mill's assumptions that individuals who have a more narrow range of developmental possibilities are unlikely to escape their disadvantaged condition because they have relatively lower inherent developmental power. And since greater levels of developmental power increase the capacity for social utility, there are unfair implications for the social worth which certain individuals can attain.

Because of the influential role of expectations upon behaviour, the views that some persons have greater intellectual and moral biological potentials than others have real social consequences. This is the case no matter how untrue the evaluations are. The evaluations are problematic because they disregard the socially constructed aspects of the mental attributes under consideration, such as intelligence and genius. Also, the evaluations disregard the genetic-environmental interaction aspects of the mentioned attributes.

I am concerned that Mill's views that some persons can developmentally benefit more from important social environmental factors, such as freedom of expression, also have real social implications, regardless of whether they are truthful or not. One of the social developmental implications of Mill's thought on the developmental elite is that political inequality interferes with the adequate cultivation of human developmental capacities. Political inequality influences the characterization of what is considered mental giftedness, and recognition of human psychological developmental needs, and of the practices adequate for their satisfaction.



## **CHAPTER 4: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND CULTURAL IMPERIALISM OVER THE TRUTH**

### **I. Introduction**

This chapter argues that what Mill considers socially unrestricted speech is unlikely to help much in the advancement of multi-sided knowledge, and is inconsistent with the promotion of the independent thought mode, human rationality, and cultural diversity. I will explore the utilitarian and consequentialist basis for Mill's main argument that free individual expression, including free speech, independent thought, and free self-regarding action, add to common epistemically beneficial social consequences. The main argument for freedom of individual expression is that it permits independent thinking, diversity of opinion and conduct, diversity of education and experiments of life. These social conditions each serve utility by contributing to individual development, rationality, and epistemic and social progress.

Mill argues for socially unrestricted speech because he is concerned that society's practice of censorship does not encourage the independent thought mode. He recognizes that society practices mental coercion and pressures persons to think along common lines of opinion, as I discussed in the second chapter. Mill admits that protection is needed "against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling" (CW, 18, Ch. 1, ¶9), but he asserts that restricting expression is not the appropriate way to obtain this protection. On the one hand, Mill recognizes that "unmeasured vituperation employed on the side of prevailing opinion, really does deter people from professing contrary opinions, and from listening to those who profess them" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶42). As well, he concedes that "for the interest...of truth and justice, it is far more important to restrain this employment of vituperative language" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶42). On the other hand, he states that it is "obvious that law and authority have no business with restraining" it (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶42). Thus, Mill makes his position clear on freedom of speech: it should not be legally or politically restricted.

Mill provides arguments for freedom of individual expression, not from the natural rights

of human beings, but rather from the utility of free expression. Mill's arguments for liberty emphasize the utility of liberty. "If, somehow, the principles of liberty and utility were to conflict, Mill would assert that the principle of utility must be upheld," writes Strasser (1984, p. 68). Although utility could be used, for example, by referring to the no harm principle to support censorship, in practice utility cannot support censorship on the basis of avoiding harm;<sup>33</sup> for example, the selection of the most appropriate censors and ideas on what constitutes harm are not infallible.

Whereas conflicts between utility and liberty may not be real, what Mill considers free speech does conflict with his freedom-utilitarian project's aim to maximize utility. Mill's "genius lay in showing why apparent conflicts between utility and liberty were not real. His greatness as a defender of liberty is precisely due to his ability to show why liberty must be protected *on utilitarian grounds*," according to Strasser (1984, p. 68). This chapter will argue that the maximization of utility conflicts with the socially unrestricted practice of free speech which Mill proposes on the basis of a faulty view of liberty, although not precisely with liberty.

The second section of this chapter, entitled, "Mill's Main Argument from Beneficial Consequences for Freedom of Expression," reconstructs Mill's utilitarian arguments for what he considers free speech and opinion formation. The third section of this chapter, entitled "Utilitarian Problems with the Use of 'Unrestricted' Expression for the Pursuit of Truth," provides a utilitarian constructive critique of those arguments. It uses the concepts 'political egoism' and 'epistemic fairness' to describe the problems of Mill's social epistemology and to suggest revisions for an improved freedom-utilitarian project. The third section's fourth part, entitled "Response to the Argument from Rationality for 'Unrestricted' Expression," suggests a notion of free speech as the social transmitter of cognitive independence that is more consistent with the utilitarian aims of Mill's freedom project for the pursuit of mental independence, open-mindedness, and self-knowledge and social knowledge than the notion of unrestricted speech.

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<sup>33</sup> See Doyle (2001).

## **II. Mill's Main Argument that Freedom of Expression has Beneficial Consequences for Society**

In this section, I will explore how Mill approaches free speech, and I will reconstruct the various components of Mill's argument that free speech has epistemic and developmental beneficial consequences for society's members.

Today "free" expression is accepted in many countries, especially first world governments and the United Nations. For instance, article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations, 1948). But societies approach such statements in culture-bound ways. No power has bothered to rigorously define the terms of 'free expression.' Generally, these are assumed to have laissez-faire meaning. Thus defined, being free from social restrictions imposed upon one's communicational activities is indicative of having freedom to communicate and freedom to form one's opinions.

Mill's On Liberty (1859) is popularly credited for the laissez-faire approach to free speech. Mill's position for free expression can be subdivided into the arguments from the benefits of independent thinking, from fallibility, from rationality and from the synthesis of truth.

### **i) Free Opinion Formation**

Here, I will discuss some of Mill's claims on the beneficial relationship between free expression and individual development, and his concerns with the capacity of social restrictions to undermine individual development. Mill thinks that free expression contributes to individual development. For instance, free expression facilitates independent thinking, for free expression fosters the open-mindedness which independent thinking requires. Mill's concern is that restricting expression beyond considerations regarding the good of society would not permit individuals to develop to their full potential. Restricted expression could at best make strong

individuals become resistant to the excessive demands of restraint (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶9). In other words, unnecessary social restrictions not only impede the developmental need satisfaction of stronger individuals but also promote their social deviance.

Mill also stresses the need to foster the development of independent thinkers. He goes so far as to credit the advancement of truth more to wrong opinions that result from the independent thought mode than to true opinions that the thinker does not hold rationally. He writes: "Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶20).

Furthermore, as Mill puts it, "no one can be a great thinker who does not recognize, that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶20). Mill assumes that the independent thinker values truth and is open-minded, that is, has the attitude of willingness to be persuaded to any opinions, regardless of what they may be, so long as they are true; the open-minded individual chooses to make as many modifications or changes to her opinions as are necessary to make those opinions more truthful. The open-minded search for the truth is necessary for developing good judgment and, thus, epistemically rightful or rationally justified confidence in one's practices (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶7). Hence, for Mill, the function of open-mindedness is the individual development of knowledge, good judgement, and virtue; free expression permits the independent thinker to obtain these.

#### **ii) Free Expression of Held Opinions:**

Here, I will provide a summary of Mill's main arguments for free expression of personal opinions. These include arguments from human fallibility, rationality, and truth synthesis. Lastly, I will discuss Mill's claims on the mutually beneficial relationship between free expression and individual development.

### 1) Argument from Fallibility

Mill argues from the fact that human beings are not infallible. He asserts that we should not allow assumptions of certainty in matters in which we cannot have absolute certainty to be used to restrict expression. Since it is possible that we can make mistakes even in matters of which we feel the most certain, we should always permit the opportunity for the correction of our mistaken beliefs. Society should not deny that opportunity to anyone. Mill writes: "if all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶1). Mill continues with the claim that to silence the opinions of no matter how small a number is a public offence because the benefits of free expression are not only private. That is to say, those benefits are not limited to the persons who express themselves. Thus, from the start of his fallibility argument for free expression, Mill proceeds to further develop a general argument that individual opportunities for free expression benefit society.

### 2) Argument from Rationality

The argument from the rationality of free expression consists of two main components. Mill argues that free expression has a crucial role to play in the rational (1) acquisition of the truth and (2) sustenance of the truth.

For Mill, the acquisition of the truth gains from knowledge about what is truthful as well as about what is false. Consider:

the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is *almost as great a benefit*, the clearer perception and *livelier* impression of truth, produced by its collision with error. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶1, emphasis added)

In the above passage, Mill claims that to learn the truth of why something is false is almost as useful as to learn the truth of why something is true. Mill connects the acquisition of truth with

the recognition of falsehood so much that, he thinks, knowledge of why something is true nearly half depends on knowledge of why something is false. That is to say, knowledge of falsehood is part of knowledge of the truth; the truth of falsehood and the truth of the truth are parts of the whole truth. The rational acquisition of knowledge requires that one should explore both truths and falsehoods *while one responds to objections*, as I will discuss next.

### **2.1) The Rationality of Responding to Objections**

Mill thinks that the truth is multi-sided, and that responding to objections facilitates an individual's capacity to identify the various sides of the truth. As well, he thinks that one should respond to objections in order to have a justified claim to the truth. He writes:

He who knows only his own side, knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. 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. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶22)

To develop rational opinions, one must not only understand the premises for one's side but also defend one's position against objections. Consider that doctrines are "never really known, but to those who have attended equally and impartially to both sides, and endeavoured to see the reasons of both in the strongest light" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶22).

Mill assumes that free expression promotes diversity of opinions, which, in turn, is necessary for the acquisition of truth. He writes: "only through diversity of opinion is there, in the existing state of human intellect, a *chance of fair play to all sides of the truth*" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35, emphasis added). The promotion of diversity increases the availability of opinions; this availability permits the opportunity for persons to work with all the available opinions, not only with the ones with which they agree. Given diverse opinions, free expression allows persons to consider equally the various opinions and their objections.

### **2.2) The Satisfaction of the Necessary Conditions for Liveliness of Truthful Beliefs**

The second component of Mill's argument from rationality primarily consists of the claim

that liveliness of belief is a necessary condition for knowledge. In turn, the necessary conditions for liveliness of belief include that the believer should arrive at and search for opinions to constantly challenge her beliefs, and resolve the challenged beliefs through an independent thought process. Discussion helps beliefs to satisfy the knowledge requirement, for it exposes beliefs to challenges. Mill warns about "the mischievous operation of the absence of free discussion" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶25). Not only one's knowledge of the premises for one's beliefs but also one's grasp of the meaning of truthful beliefs diminishes through the passage of time, if one does not discuss those opinions with others who do not hold them (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶25-26). Thus, for truthful beliefs to be known, the believer must obtain and sustain them in a rational manner, that is, through discussion.

Although Mill does not provide an explicit definition of free discussion, his claims about the functions of free discussion, the "mischievous operation of the absence of free discussion," and the consequences of its absence suggest how he defines free discussion. It is an intellectual and communicational "struggle" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶26) among opposing opinions that sustains not only the grounds of each true opinion, but "the meaning of the opinion itself" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶25). Mill strongly asserts that knowledgeable beliefs must be challenged to be lively so much that he describes discussion in terms that contradict each other; his view of 'discussion' is comparable to the phrase 'peace is war.' He writes: "[the meaning of ethical doctrines and religious creeds] continues to be felt in undiminished strength, and is perhaps brought out into even fuller consciousness, *so long as the struggle lasts* to give the doctrine or creed an *ascendancy over other creeds*" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶26, emphasis added). Thus, Mill describes 'discussion,' which is a word that suggests "a pacific attitude towards argumentation" (Hansen, 2006, p. 2), negotiation and diplomacy, as a matter of doctrines or creeds struggling to keep the strength of the life of their meaning, and even to gain greater strength in their dominance over others (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶26). Discussion is a rational requirement to sustain the "*living power of the doctrine,*" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶26, emphasis added) and to retain the full meaning of the original

opinions (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶25). Later in this chapter, I will show how Mill's treatment of discussion contributes to the incoherence of his argument that free expression facilitates the advancement of rationality.

### 3) Argument from the Synthesis of Truth: Epistemic Diplomats

Another of Mill's arguments for freedom of expression is from the synthesis of truth in which he claims that epistemic diplomats play a central role. "Truth has no chance but in proportion as every side of it, *every opinion which embodies any fraction of the truth*, not only finds advocates, but is so advocated as to be listened to" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38, emphasis added), writes Mill. The synthesis of truth requires the bold expression of multiple opinions on the same issues. Mill expects that the over all free play of expression is multi-sided and reveals various stories and perspectives. In this way, one can know not only one's position but also others' positions. The awareness of the various views allows one to be responsive to others' objections, and thereby inform one's position. Thus, free expression has the additional practical benefit that it permits not only toleration of the co-existence of diverse views, but the various views to interact, and hence the benefit of discourse. From Mill's viewpoint, free expression is a process by which the diverse partial truths gradually merge into opinion clusters of larger and more integrated truths, until eventually there is only one cluster of whole truthful opinions.

Mill recognizes that controversy can raise "*even* persons of the most ordinary intellect *to something of the dignity of thinking beings*" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶20, emphasis added). Yet, he expects "persons of the most ordinary intellect" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶20) neither to play an active role in the synthesis of truth nor to immediately acquire knowledge of society. In the truth synthesizing process, epistemic diplomats would have the central role in the reconciliation of the one-sided and disputed truths or, in other words, in the aggregation of truths. Epistemic diplomats are individuals who benefit from the possession of the main characteristic, namely impartiality, which the synthesis of truth requires, who epistemically gain the most from free



discussion, and who negotiate the synthesised truth. For Mill, the capacity for impartial judgement is rare. Mill writes: "there are few mental attributes more rare than that judicial faculty which can sit in intelligent judgement between two sides of a question, of which only one is represented by an advocate before it" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38). Mill's political egoism begins with his restriction of the number of social epistemic agents to the developmental elite group to which he belongs.

While Mill deems impartiality necessary to advance the comprehension of the truth, he expects that impartiality benefits only a few individuals, and suggests that most individuals neither can help much advance knowledge nor can they gain much rationality. Mill writes: "truth, in the great practical concerns of life, is so much a question of the reconciling and combining of opposites, that very few have minds sufficiently capacious and impartial to make the adjustment with an approach to correctness" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35). So, epistemic diplomacy is the inherent duty of the few. Mill suggests that the advancement of rationality of the few is made at expense to the rationality of the majority of individuals. For Mill, the danger that free expression poses for the views of the majority is epistemically acceptable because it benefits the rational few who act as epistemic diplomats. Mill writes:

I do not pretend that the most unlimited use of the freedom of enunciating all possible opinions would put an end to the evils of religious or philosophical sectarianism. *Every truth which men of narrow capacity are in earnest about*, is sure to be asserted, inculcated, and in many ways even acted on, as if no other truth existed in the world, or at all events none that could limit or qualify the first. I acknowledge that the tendency of all opinions to become sectarian is *not cured by the freest discussion, but is often heightened and exacerbated thereby*; the truth which ought to have been, but was not, seen, being rejected all the more violently because proclaimed by persons regarded as opponents. But it is not on the impassioned partisan, it is on the calmer and more disinterested bystander, that this collision of opinions works its salutary effect. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38, emphasis added)

It is the epistemic diplomats who are capable of advancing social knowledge, not the narrow minded societal majority. Thus, the risked loss to the majority's already small capacity for knowledge and the risked reinforcement of the majority's ignorance do not count in Mill's social knowledge acquisition equation.

### 5) The Equal Treatment of Falsehood and Truth

Here, I will draw from Mill's arguments that human fallibility, the rationality of responding to objections, and the epistemic need to attend to extreme opinions entail a need for free expression.<sup>34</sup> First, we are fallible. For example, we are not certain about which of the available opinions is the most truthful.<sup>35</sup> Second, false opinions can inform truthful opinions as much or nearly as much as truthful opinions can inform false ones. Third, the consideration of extreme opinions can inform our development of multi-sided opinions. Therefore, we should treat all opinions as if they have equal potentials for being the most truthful or the most false, and as if they can equally inform our opinions.

For Mill, "the truth of an opinion is part of its utility" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶10). The other part is its falsity. An earlier part of this chapter examined a passage which claims that falsehood enhances the life of the truth, for falsehood shows the truth about what is false, not only about what is true. Opinions that are partly true are also partly false, and so are their opposites, but the false and true parts that the opposite opinions have are different from each other. Opinions that are entirely true have their true content entirely missing from their opposite opinions which are entirely false. Identification of the truths and falsehoods that one's opinion lacks undoubtedly adds to one's capacity to respond to the objections of others as well as to one's capacity to construct more persuasive positions. Mill gives the example that thought in terms of progress or reform informs thought in terms of order or stability, and vice versa (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35). When one tries to reconcile both thought modes or observes the opinions of others who operate the various thought modes, these modes can provide useful input to one's position, whether they belong to oneself or not. Mill lists other pairs of opposites or antagonisms in social life including

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<sup>34</sup> The connection that I draw here can reveal the unacceptable implications of Mill's argument from rationality for the equal treatment of falsehood and truth. The next section of this chapter explores those implications.

<sup>35</sup> I use 'opinion' to refer to a belief consisting of at least one proposition. If an opinion consists of multiple propositions, some of its propositions can be false while others can be true. Thus, opinions can have both true and false contents, and vary in their degree of accuracy and falsity.

democracy and aristocracy, property and equality, co-operation and competition, luxury and abstinence, sociality and individuality, and liberty and discipline. Both elements in each pair are useful, and, therefore, should be "enforced and defended with *equal* talent and energy" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35, emphasis added). Thus, Mill argues that we should equally treat truths, falsehoods, and extreme modes of thought.

### **III. Utilitarian Problems with the Use of 'Unrestricted' Expression for the Pursuit of Truth**

Here, I will provide responses to Mill's arguments that truth synthesis and rationality require no social restriction on expression. I will provide a response to Mill's argument for the epistemically equal treatment of falsehood and truth; that argument includes an evaluation of claims that Mill makes in his fallibility, rationality, and truth synthesis arguments. Mill neither epistemically justifies nor ethically justifies his social epistemology, and it cannot be justified, for it lacks epistemic fairness. For the individual to justify her knowledge, she needs to give more than reasons for her beliefs. For the individual to rationally<sup>36</sup> hold her reasons, she needs to obtain them through epistemically fair means, as I will discuss next.

I will suggest what can be considered a utilitarian, and thus consequentialist notion of epistemic fairness, and argue that Mill's freedom-utilitarian project does not pass the epistemic fairness test. Under my proposal, the examination for epistemic fairness must consider the number of epistemic agents who are the benefactors and beneficiaries to the pursuit and the attainment of knowledge. One criterion for epistemic fairness would consider the social means by which individuals obtain knowledge. The means are epistemically fairer, the greater the number of epistemic agents whose knowledge benefits from their own and others' pursuit of knowledge. Another important criterion for epistemic fairness would consider the results or likely results of particular epistemic pursuits. The results are fairer, the greater the number of epistemic agents who actively and immediately benefit from the acquisition of knowledge. In

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<sup>36</sup> The examination of the individual's rationality requires also an evaluation of the social rationality of the individual's actions.

short, the more the means and ends of the utilitarian society's freedom project contribute to the equalization of the distribution of the benefits and harms from the acquisition of knowledge, the fairer that those means and ends are.

In particular, two main conditions affect the extent of epistemic fairness of cases of knowledge pursuit and attainment. First, the utilitarian society must maximize the number of epistemic agents whose social and cognitive development benefits from the pursuit and the attainment of social and self-knowledge. Second, the utilitarian society must minimize or reduce the number of epistemic agents whose social and cognitive development is undermined by their own and others' pursuit and attainment of social and self-knowledge.

For Mill, the obtained knowledge would be ethically justified because under the free expression of opinions, at least in principle, all have their chance to be heard. Mill is concerned that society's interference with liberty is more likely to have harmful than good consequences (Strasser, 1984, p. 65). As an example of an unfavourable consequence of restricting the expression of opinions, society persecutes the benefactors to the truth and thus endangers the emergence of new truths (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶16-17). Mill argues that, therefore, society should not impair the utilitarian capacities of expression through political and legal restrictions, and suggests a marketplace of ideas<sup>37</sup> which does not ban the sale of any deemed falsehood or unpopular truth.

However, historically, what Mill calls free expression has been more ideal than real (McMurtry, 1998, p. 192), and the reality of its absence overpowers the ideal of its presence, while the ideal that it is present makes it difficult for society to recognize the reality that it is absent. "Society always has, and constantly exercises, the power to silence," as Kendall (1960) puts the social incapacity for unrestricted expression (p. 979). In light of this problem, this section asks, 'What will secure us from corrupt or tyrannical media?' When society views the institution of the media as possessing liberty of the press, this view serves to legitimize the

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<sup>37</sup> Although Mill does not explicitly use the metaphor of marketplace of ideas (Hansen, 2006, p. 5), his argument that society should not restrain the expression of opinions is consistent with the use of such a metaphor to convey Mill's treatment of the free expression of opinions.

media's practices, even when those practices are not free from harmful political influence. Without appropriate and adequate censorship the news media, for example, cannot ethically report the news. Slanted news stories about war and violence promote the mistreatment of members of badly portrayed social groups, and inaccurately represent the nature of the human population and its diverse interests. Just because society gives the various sources of the media the opportunity to consider diverse political interests and, in principle, media sources claim to do so, does not mean that they will, over all, do so in a politically balanced, honest, multi-sided manner in practice.

The press is inevitably restricted; it cannot escape censorship, whether externally by the government or internally by its owners and by those who have the power to influence it. Since the press is inevitably subjected to social restrictions, the social restrictions placed upon it should be transparent and decided in a fair, equitable, and cooperative manner. This section advises that we should understand freedom of expression not simply as a negative epistemic and developmental right of the individual for socially unimpeded cognitive expression but rather primarily as a positive right to think and choose actions independently. As well, this section brings attention to society's responsibility for the promotion of freedom of expression; society has the ethical obligation to facilitate its members' independent thought mode and independent choice of actions. Only thus, can freedom of expression do justice to the truth.

**i) Response to the Argument from the Rational Sustenance of the Life of Truth for "Unrestricted" Expression**

Here, I will raise some objections to Mill's argument that rationality helps to sustain the liveliness of truth, in light of the following passage. Mill writes:

If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶1)

The premises in the above passage are one-sided in at least two ways. First, Mill emphasizes the benefits of free expression to human society in the acquisition of rationally justified knowledge.

He emphasizes the expenses to the society that does not permit the expression of all opinions in terms of loss of opportunities to enliven or uplift the rationality of its members' opinions.

The second way in which the above passage reveals one-sided premises is that Mill implicitly claims that falsehood enhances the life of the truth because exposure to falsehood gives us the opportunity to understand why something is false. The validity of that claim depends on whether persons tend to benefit from that opportunity, and whether the personal benefits obtained from that opportunity outweigh the personal harms. However, the validity of that claim is questionable: Mill expects that mainly the developmental elite group to which he belongs will experience the benefits of exposure to beliefs that are based on falsehoods; thus the one-sidedness of his claim is also politically egoistic.

The presence and awareness of opportunities do not necessarily have beneficial consequences over all or even at all. For instance, some persons use the presence and awareness of economic and communicational opportunities to justify unequal economic and communicational outcomes. In Canada, members of privileged social groups are much more likely to successfully pursue economic opportunities to obtain influential positions in the media (Fleras & Elliott, 2003). Thus, the same opportunity can vary by its degree of likelihood to have beneficial consequences depending on the person who pursues it. Also, persons can successfully pursue opportunities to the benefit of the promotion of the opinions of certain social groups, and the persons can, in turn, create other opportunities to harm the image of persons with rival opinions. For example, persons can use their expression to poison the well for the expression of others. Opportunities for expression do not necessarily, whether directly or indirectly, have good outcomes for society.

By assuming that opportunities for expression will have beneficial consequences over all, Mill overstates the reality of the benefits that "unrestricted" expression render to society. For instance, in the last sentence of the previous quotation, the assumption is that the persons being exposed to falsehood would recognize it as such, that is to say, that they would benefit from the

opportunity to detect falsehoods. The argument that rationality requires "unrestricted" expression rests on the validity of the assumption. Mill claims that everyone can benefit from "unrestricted" expression. However, he predicts that only a rational few, at a time, will epistemically benefit from expression. He does not explain how social knowledge, in the long-term, will become more rational. Another opportunity that "unrestricted" expression brings is for the elimination of prejudice. Prejudice, for Mill, is "not the way in which truth ought to be held by a rational being" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶21). This opportunity has to be realized to be a true benefit, and, in line with utilitarianism, the greater the number of persons who realize the opportunity, the greater the benefit to society.

However, Mill predicts that the majority is too one-sided<sup>38</sup> to benefit from the opportunity. If one considers that dismal prediction, the acceptability of the argument from rationality that favours "unrestricted" expression is highly questionable. We should give weight to Mill's argument from rationality only to the extent that "unrestricted" expression provides the benefits that he claims it does. As we have seen so far, this is unlikely.

#### **ii) Response to the Rationalization of the Equal Treatment of Falsehood and Truth**

I will discuss the political implications of the epistemically equal treatment of falsehood and truth, which support my argument against Mill's claim that "unrestricted" expression has utility. This discussion will show how Mill rationalizes the epistemically equal treatment of the expression of falsehood and truth. Mill goes too far when he overstates the epistemic and social utility of falsehood by encouraging that it be treated as equal to that of the truth. I will argue that Mill's claim that the equal treatment of falsehood and truth facilitates the advancement of rationality is another reason for why Mill's social epistemology is inadequately utilitarian. Mill

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<sup>38</sup> Mill writes that the "generality of the world" is one-sided in that it leans towards the side to which it "feels most inclination" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶22). I use the term 'one-sidedness' to refer either to this inclination or the expression of opinions that consider only or mainly one side of an issue, and I use the term 'one-sided' to describe those opinions.

holds the unrealistic expectation that the epistemically equal treatment of falsehood and truth would add to the politically equal treatment of persons who hold the ignorant or knowledgeable opinions. Yet, the equal treatment of false opinions and truthful ones does not entail the politically equal treatment of the human beings who hold those opinions. The epistemically equal treatment of falsehood and truth facilitates the advancement of the rationality of the few at the expense of the rationality of the many, and thus it offers an elitist treatment of society.

Mill takes the perspective of the epistemic diplomat who tries to integrate the various truths, and treats the ignorance of others as a tolerable part of the means to the end of knowledge. Mill's argument for the equal treatment of falsehood and truth demonstrates one-sided thinking, for Mill does not consider that this exposure endangers others' knowledge capacities. Also, this treatment is politically egoistic because Mill recommends this treatment as beneficial for the developmental elite group to which he belongs, and the epistemic diplomat in particular. Mill considers only the positive consequences of the treatment of the expressions of falsehood and truth as epistemic developmental equals, because he attends only to the positive consequences that it has for epistemic diplomats. Yet, he ignores that this treatment may have negative epistemic developmental consequences for the partisans. The availability of extreme opinions presents social opportunities for the rational development of epistemic diplomats, and potential intellectual rewards. These opportunities are unlikely to bring rewards to the partisans, but rather make the partisans likely to incur expenses from being the ones to make available the extreme opinions. The implications of this elitist bias in Mill's considerations of the social capacity for knowledge will be further discussed in my response to Mill's argument that "unrestricted" expression makes possible the synthesis of truth.

I question the capacities of "unrestricted" expression and ignorance to add knowledge to the common good, that is, their epistemic utility. Mill treats the ignorance of the extreme thinkers as a means to the end of knowledge for society. Since he finds epistemic utility in the expression of ignorance, Mill argues that society should treat the expression of falsehood as equal to that of



truth. We are ignorant about which opinions are the most truthful opinions. And, even ignorant opinions can serve epistemic utility. Not only can persons who hold untruthful opinions be more knowledgeable because of those opinions than persons who hold more truthful opinions, they can epistemically benefit from the ignorant or untruthful opinions of others. So, for Mill, we should treat ignorant or untruthful opinions as the epistemic equals of knowledgeable opinions.

The use of ignorance as a means to knowledge is unlikely to adequately permit the attainment of knowledge for all members of society. Encouragement of ignorance contradicts the aim to obtain knowledge about, and of, society. Mill's argument implies that the societal majority's ignorance must be exploited for the knowledge of the social few. The epistemic diplomatic pursuit of knowledge takes into account what extreme thinkers have to say in hope that society will obtain the desired multi-sided knowledge. However, the obtained knowledge lacks multi-sidedness and is epistemically unfair, as I will argue next.

Mill's consequentialism does not satisfy the first condition for epistemic fairness, since, he expects, only a small number of individuals are the active benefactors and the immediate beneficiaries to the pursuit of knowledge. Neither does his consequentialism satisfy the second condition for epistemic fairness. The epistemic diplomats obtain knowledge at the risk to the knowledge capacities of the many. Mill's freedom-utilitarian project encourages the extreme thinkers, whose beliefs benefit the diplomats, to hold on to false or ignorant views. That the expression of extreme versions of beliefs permits the epistemic diplomats to work to reconcile those beliefs is not sufficient for the epistemic fairness of the knowledge that they obtain from their investigation of the extreme beliefs. For, the epistemic diplomats cannot develop adequately reconciled beliefs, and they should not try to do so, at the expense to maintain others' ignorant beliefs especially the higher their number. That the ignorant or false and extreme views of the many facilitate the knowledge acquisition of the few does not permit the satisfaction of the utility requirement for epistemic fairness.

Furthermore, that, in principle, an "all-questions-are-open questions society" cannot value

the truth more than falsehood makes that society's capacity to acquire knowledge questionable (Kendall, 1960). "Unrestricted" expression makes such a society more closed than the impression its ideal gives. An "all-questions-are-open questions society," in practice, restricts the questions that its members can pose (Kendall, 1960). As the society disperses into different directions of opinions, it is likely to lose public consensus on fundamental truths. The public's toleration of both falsehood and truth makes it difficult or impossible for society to rectify extreme social movements that falsehood drives. Thus, so long as the persons pose or attend to one-sided questions the answers they find will unlikely be multi-sided.

Mill's ideal of a discursively open society, in practice, restricts what society's members can say, and, as Kendall (1960) argues, in such a society "the ultimate loser is the pursuit of truth" (p. 978). The equal treatment of falsehood and truth is epistemically and ethically unjustified. For, when falsehood is tolerated so are, inevitably, the very things to which its presence contributes including ignorance, and, in turn, injustice including oppression. False beliefs are more likely than true beliefs to have unjust implications.<sup>39</sup> Proponents of political opinions that happen to be false are comparatively less likely interested in the politically equal treatment of persons who are different from themselves, for they are less likely to accept the true claim that political equality is ethical. And, the society that treats the proponents of falsehoods and the proponents of truth as equal epistemic champions is most likely to fall into increasingly deeper extremes and oppositions that lead to increased political inequality between its members. Thus, the society suffers from severe discrepancies between its social principles and its practices.

In short, persons can exploit society's treatment of falsehood as the epistemic developmental equal of the truth to restrict discussion in ways that demote its freedom, and thus falsehood cannot appropriately serve as the epistemic ally of truth. In light of my discussion, Mill's claim that open discussion has utility is inconsistent with his call for the epistemically

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<sup>39</sup> Here, I accept the assumption that the good positively correlates with the truthful; this assumption is evident in the works of ancient Greek philosophers, such as Plato.

equal treatment of the expression of falsehood and truth.

### **iii) Response to the Synthesis of Truth Argument**

For Mill's truth synthesis argument that "unrestricted" expression has epistemic utility to be valid, the truths must be able to become adequately integrated. I will argue that such integration is unlikely, and, therefore, that Mill's social epistemology is inadequately utilitarian for the following three main reasons. First, political inequality facilitates cultural imperialism over truth, and makes unlikely the integration of the truths of all cultures. Since political inequality interferes with the societal capacity for unrestricted expression, the synthesis of truths of all cultures remains unlikely. Mill ignores that the societal majority's lack of participation in the pursuit of knowledge interferes with the synthesis of truth. Second, if most persons cannot or do not sufficiently participate and acquire knowledge, participation in the pursuit of knowledge is exclusive, and can interfere with society's acquisition of multi-sided knowledge. This under-participation of society in that pursuit does not permit meaningful additions to common beneficial epistemic consequences. Mill ignores that socially limited participation in the pursuit of knowledge and socially limited acquisition of knowledge lacks utility. If the incapacity of the majority of individuals to participate in the pursuit of knowledge or their lack of participation in that pursuit interferes with their capacity to acquire knowledge, the few individuals who can and do sufficiently participate in the pursuit of knowledge can add only little knowledge to the common good. Greater participation in the pursuit of knowledge leads to more multi-sided knowledge with which to work in the further pursuit of knowledge. So, if most persons would participate in the pursuit of knowledge, each person would have greater potential to add more knowledge to the common good than if only a few participate. Yet, Mill suggests that the majority of individuals are likely neither to be able to sufficiently participate in the pursuit of knowledge nor to acquire knowledge sufficient for meaningful increases in their capacity to freely develop themselves. Third, Mill's claims about the nature of the human mind are

inconsistent with the claim that the practices that he recommends for the synthesis of truth have utility. Mill views the human mind as typically incapable of impartiality. Yet, he suggests a notion of open-mindedness that is a form of scepticism akin to truth agnosticism, thus he also suggests that open-mindedness requires a high level of impartiality. Also, Mill views the human mind as inherently one-sided, and he encourages the expression of one-sided opinions. Yet, he also encourages the acquisition of multi-sided opinions. The practices that Mill recommends for the synthesis of truth, would exclude the majority of individuals from participation in the pursuit of knowledge, and hinder their knowledge acquisition. Therefore, especially but not only if Mill's claims about the nature of the human mind are true, the practices that Mill recommends for the synthesis of truth would be more harmful than beneficial to the social acquisition of knowledge, and thus lack utility.

Consider that the relations among social groups have never been, and are not, politically equal, and are unlikely to become so anytime soon. From this consideration, one can see that the truth which Mill calls integrated is most likely to remain biased in favour of the values, preferences, political interests, and worldviews of the dominant group/s for an indefinite period of time. Although the ideals of cultural integration are different from those of assimilation, "in practice, however, the outcomes of either may be indistinguishable" (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 16). Since the powerful benefit the most from "unrestricted" expression, they can use it for assimilationist purposes. Based on the popular idea that the mainstream can safely "integrate" minorities while it adds to itself some of the elements of the minority cultures, the integration approach has not proven to be effective. Persons who the mainstream cultures incorporate normally are unable to keep much of significance from their original cultures.<sup>40</sup> Thus, dominant cultures ensure their own survival at the expense of the loss of the cultural integrity of

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<sup>40</sup> "For example, although immigrants in the United States are expected to melt into the American pot, this cauldron remains irrefutably white, male, English-speaking, and middle class in orientation," write Fleras and Elliott (2003, p. 16). In the United States, the pot has served a rather "monocultural stew" (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 16). Unfortunately, Canada too is shifting towards the "integration" approach (Fleras & Elliott, 2003, p. 16).

subdominant cultures. Similarly, the pursuit of the integration of truth occurs within a cultural context. The limitations that apply for cultural integration influence the integration of truth as well.

The claim that society can adequately integrate all truths is for related reasons both ethically and epistemically unjustified under circumstances in which there is political inequality in the pursuit and attainment of knowledge. For the general consequentialist argument in favour of what Mill considers unrestricted expression to be adequately utilitarian, the expenses that society incurs as a result of the "unrestricted" expression must be acceptable. That is, the expenses must not be higher than the benefits, and they must not support the tyranny of the minority. Yet, this is not the case, as I argued previously. The "unrestricted" expression of extreme opinions reinforces the majority's ignorance and thus hinders the majority's knowledge acquisition. It is the epistemic diplomats who are supposed to be the active benefactors and immediate beneficiaries to social knowledge, under Mill's freedom-utilitarian project. Therefore, it is the epistemic elite whose truths social knowledge reflects, and hence the social knowledge does not reflect adequately integrated social truths.

Indeed, for Mill, knowledge is the outcome of violent competition, and, in my view, it is unlikely that violent competition can yield adequately integrated truth. Mill claims that the nature of the one-sidedness of the human mind makes it impossible for society to peaceably uncover the truth. Due to the scarcity of epistemic diplomatic capacities, "the rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35) adjusts our conception of the truth. In fact, Mill goes as far as the claim that,

Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil; there is always hope when people are *forced to listen to both sides*; it is when they attend only to one that errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth, by being exaggerated into falsehood. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38, emphasis added)

In response to the preceding claim, however, we should acknowledge that "unrestricted" expression itself does not and cannot *force* people to listen to all sides. What matters is whether

the expression actually is free. The "unrestricted" practice of expression can bring some persons opportunities for development, not necessarily developmental results. Individuals choose what they do with developmental opportunities including whether they recognize their developmental worth.

Contrary to Mill's claim that "unrestricted" expression forces people to listen to all sides, the "unrestricted" practice of expression promotes one-sided cognitive modes. "Unrestricted" expression can be used to reinforce existent prejudice. Indeed, the majority takes what today is considered free expression as simply an opportunity to search for opinions and facts that support one's version of the truth. Confirmation bias is the cognitive tendency to select or attend to information that supports one's beliefs and to omit or ignore information that contributes to their disconfirmation.<sup>41</sup> Mill's assertions that "the generality of the world" leans to the side to which it "feels most inclination" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶22), and that free discussion likely reinforces the "sectarian views" of "impassioned partisans" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38) suggests his implicit awareness of confirmation bias. And so does his assertion that "in the human mind, one-sidedness has always been the rule, and many-sidedness the exception" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶33), and his denial of the capacity of the societal majority for impartial thought (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38). These claims suggest that Mill has at least an implicit notion of confirmation bias. In his view, the human tendency to be one-sided interferes with the majority's capacity to benefit from expression. Mill's freedom-utilitarian project hopes to maximize the individual capacity to cognitively benefit from expression. Yet, his project's recommendation for socially unguided cognitive expression are inconsistent with his views about the biased nature of human cognition, for the views suggest that the individual cannot adequately guide her own thoughts towards knowledge. That he ignores the implications of his own psychological assertions when he argues for "unrestricted" expression further suggests that Mill argues one-sidedly for that expression and that his own one-sidedness may itself be the result of confirmation bias.

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<sup>41</sup> See Nickerson (1998).

Many-sidedness cannot have the force to guide without appropriate social facilitation of cognitive free expression, if one-sidedness is the cognitive default and thus more inherently forceful. Mill's expectation that epistemic advancement is slow but possible under the guidance of those who accept "many-sidedness"<sup>42</sup> is unjustified given his own claims about one-sidedness. He recognizes that one-sidedness is the cognitive default. Even worse, Mill's expectation that multi-sided truths can compete with one-sided truths is inconsistent with his claim that one-sided truths have more force. Mill claims that

so long as popular truth is onesided, it is more desirable than otherwise that unpopular truth should have *one-sided assertors* too; such being usually the most energetic, and the *most likely to compel* reluctant attention to the fragment of wisdom which they proclaim as if it were the whole. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶33, emphasis, added)

Apparently, for Mill, the forceful assertion of one-sided truth is epistemically justified. For example, he considers exposure to falsehood, which one-sided truth is more likely to reflect than multi-sided truth, as epistemically beneficial. Mill expects that "wrong opinions and practices [will] gradually yield to fact and argument" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶7). Yet, Mill recognizes, "very few facts are able to tell their own story, without comments to bring out their meaning" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶7). It is questionable whether the rhetoric which often accompanies the story telling of perspectives would be able to escape one-sidedness, for rhetorical comments tend to be politically biased.

Mill's claim that social questions deserve, wherever warranted, "this and that" responses, and should not be taken as being "either-or" questions is rational. However, he selectively targets this advice, apparently giving it only to the epistemic diplomats and intellectuals. For, the mode of extreme thought, which he encourages for partisans because he views the observation of opinions obtained through that mode as epistemically beneficial for the epistemic diplomats, happens to positively correlate with the either-or cognitive mode. This mode of thought is inconsistent with the aim to obtain social knowledge that reflects adequately integrated truth.

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<sup>42</sup> I use the terms "many-sidedness" as the expression of, or the capacity to understand multiple perspectives and "multi-sided" as the expression of that capacity.

Mill recommends that to synthesize the truth the epistemic diplomats must reconcile the apparent antagonisms and dualisms. However, it is unlikely that this reconciliation will happen, for the cognitive modes which Mill claims society should practice impede the epistemic diplomats' capacity to obtain knowledge that reflects adequately integrated truths.

It merits notice that the claim that society should treat the elements in each pair of opposites and social antagonisms as equals is questionable, for they unlikely have equal epistemic and ethical importance. For example, property and political equality are unlikely to be of equal benefit to society. The elements of property and equality are fundamentally incompatible. In capitalist systems, in particular, private property tends to undermine equality.<sup>43</sup>

For Mill, the opposites, when *combined*, keep each other within the "limits of reason and sanity" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35). The reason of the epistemic diplomats combines opposites, and thus integrates truth and permits sanity. Further, one could expect that as the diplomats' knowledge spreads throughout society the extreme thinkers should become less extreme.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, at the very best, there is a time lag in the social distribution of the rewards that result from the extreme thought mode. This time lag in the distribution of knowledge from epistemic diplomats to the extreme thinkers merits attention. Next I will explore some implications of this knowledge distribution time lag.

This time lag weakens Mill's freedom-utilitarian argument, because the knowledge benefits are not socially distributed in a way that maximizes the epistemic utility of the majority of society's members. As we have seen, the impartial epistemic diplomats would obtain the primary rational, developmental advantage from their investigation of one-sided beliefs. By contrast, those who hold the extreme beliefs have their rational development hindered by those beliefs. The intellectual elite's epistemic cultural transformations are supposed to assist indirectly

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<sup>43</sup> For an account of how Mill's acceptance of private property rights stands at odds with his ideal of gender equality, see, for example, Hughes (1979).

<sup>44</sup> Mill does not make this expectation clear and he does not explain how this could happen.



and in the long-term the rational development of the partisans. The partisans cannot personally benefit from their own extreme views, but rather they benefit as a social group from the extreme views of previous generations of extreme thinkers.

For Mill, the intellectual elite are most capable of being active epistemic agents, whereas non-intellectuals can be the passive recipients of knowledge that intellectuals find. Only intellectuals can obtain social knowledge on their own, and thus they are active epistemic agents. There is no active role partisans can play for the intellectual advancement of their society. The societal majority can obtain mainly second-hand social knowledge - i.e. knowledge that they did not originally acquire, and thus most persons are passive social epistemic agents.

The multiple kinds of knowledge cannot be equally found by various persons. Anyone can obtain self-knowledge through experiments of life. However, even for the acquisition of self-knowledge, the partisan is remarkably, epistemically disadvantaged compared to the diplomat in two related ways. First, self-knowledge depends on social comparisons and thus on knowledge not only of oneself but also of others. However, the epistemic diplomat can appreciate others' perspectives more than the partisan can. The epistemic diplomats are not only supposed to be the active benefactors but also immediate beneficiaries to synthesized truth. Society in general only benefits in the long-term. Second, self-knowledge depends on social knowledge or knowledge originally acquired by others, whether it is knowledge that others have found about themselves or about their social and natural world.

The fact that self-knowledge to some extent depends on knowledge about others is relevant not only to the partisan's capacity to obtain self-knowledge but also to that of the epistemic diplomat. For, if the social knowledge that epistemic diplomats obtain does not reflect adequately integrated truths, the social knowledge does not permit the epistemic diplomats to understand others enough to optimize their own self-knowledge.

Mill encourages the continuation of one-sidedness in the unpopular opinions so long as there is one-sidedness in the popular opinions (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶33). Contrary to Mill's claim that

the forceful assertion of one-sidedness can be epistemically beneficial, the assertion of one-sidedness is neither more forceful nor more epistemically beneficial when the popular opinions are one-sided. One-sided expression likely demotes open-mindedness in the society that lacks multi-sided expression. Mill claims that an attitude of open-mindedness is required for the development of flexible and multi-sided thought. Moreover, for Mill, the attitude of open-mindedness upon which the pursuit of synthesized truth depends is akin to truth-agnostic scepticism: the open-minded person must be equally open to all opinions but, to avoid the assumption of infallibility, closed to the conviction of any belief. That attitude is meant to guard one from being "lost in one's mind," i.e. able to see only from one's perspective, as the partisan supposedly is. But, this open-mindedness, instead, makes the way for one to "lose one's mind," i.e. lose the progressive cognitive capacity to form new perspectives, because the attitude requires the suspension of judgment. In my view, the attitude which Mill views as open-mindedness is more a matter of closed mindedness, that is, no new perspective taking, than open-mindedness which requires the individual to understand, and form, multiple perspectives. Thus, the acceptance of the condition of truth-agnostic scepticism as necessary for the pursuit of truth cripples, if not paralyzes, the epistemic endeavour.

Therefore, one-sidedness is inconsistent with the pursuit of multi-sidedness carried on by the same person and the same society. The truth-agnostic, sceptical type of open-minded attitude avoids claims of certainty and hence conviction of belief. Thus, this attitude is incompatible with the epistemic capacities of the societal majority who, according to Mill, are not capable of impartiality, and much less are they capable of this kind of "open-mindedness," which requires an extremely high level of impartiality. This attitude is also incompatible with the reconciliatory aims of the epistemic diplomats who are supposed to judge the truths of claims; with this attitude's extreme approach to open-mindedness, they are also supposed to be non-judgemental.

Because of its social and cognitive incoherence, the truth synthesis argument for "unrestricted" expression is weak and unacceptable. The expected gradual movement towards

many-sidedness seems infinite in duration since it is dysfunctional. By Mill's admission, the opportunity for "unrestricted" expression would unlikely affect the majority's prejudice. Their cognitive tendencies severely limit the extent to which the majority could benefit from their cognitive expression and the chances that they can develop multi-sided beliefs. Even worse for the prospects of the effectiveness of Mill's project, according to Mill, the movement towards many-sidedness requires the strong assertion of one-sidedness, which would likely reinforce the existent prejudice. As I argued, the requirement for the forceful assertion of one-sidedness is inconsistent with the requirement for open-mindedness, and with the pursuit of multi-sided truth.

#### **iv) Response to the Argument from Rationality for "Unrestricted" Expression**

For the advancement of human rationality, the practical thing to do is to socially regulate the expression of opinions in ways that will optimally facilitate free cognitive expression, that is, the independent and open-minded formation of opinions and the expression of multi-sided opinions. I will argue that what Mill considers socially unrestricted speech is inconsistent with the aim to optimize free individual expression, and the exercise of the independent thought mode in particular. Here, I outline the arguments that I will make in the next parts of this chapter.

I will provide a consequentialist critique of socially unrestricted speech. I maintain that intentions have little importance in social reality where what matters are the implications and consequences of our opinions and actions. From a consequentialist perspective, the meaning conveyed is more important than the intentions of the speakers or writers, because the meaning that their messages convey is more likely than the intentions to influence the actions of the listeners or readers. Put another way, because it is more difficult to recognize the intentions than the meaning conveyed, it is unlikely that they will influence one's actions. Similarly, I maintain that principles provide insufficient guidance for cognitive developmental and communicational activities. Principles neither guarantee nor optimize the chances that persons will act in ways that have favourable consequences for the expression of society's members. Informed and

institutionalized practices can optimize freedom of expression.

I accept Mill's claim that freedom of expression makes societal progress towards justice possible, but I reject his definition of free opinion expression and opinion formation. I will discuss two general types of expression, one which reinforces the status quo and the other which contributes to social progress. The relationship between the "unrestricted" expression that some societies view as free expression and societal progress is incompatible, for that expression charges expenses to, and in some important ways hinders, societal progress. The problem is that contemporary societies that claim they permit free expression do not distinguish between these two types of expression, because they overestimate the freedom of their expression. I maintain that freedom of expression both benefits from social and epistemic justice and contributes to justice. While free expression is a necessary condition for justice, justice is also a necessary condition for free expression.

I will argue that it is a myth that "unrestricted" expression is more conducive to social justice than regulated expression. "Unrestricted" expression is politically impossible in politically unequal social contexts. The laissez-faire approach to expression simply allows those who hold the most power over the communicative situation, namely the owners of the press and the like, to invisibly set the restrictions upon the expression. The invisibility of the restrictions of expression makes it difficult for society to recognize what is unjust about the expression, and thus hinders attempts to improve its freedom. I will show that the laissez-faire practice of free expression increases the likelihood that expression will be socially expensive, that is, harmful for disadvantaged groups. For, the laissez-faire practice of expression tends to benefit those who have power and it disproportionately harms those who do not. "Unrestricted" expression is socially expensive in that it facilitates the political elite's capacity to restrict the communicational and social opportunities of the politically disadvantaged. Thus, it is developmentally harmful for the elite because it undermines their social discipline and capacity for unbiased knowledge but especially more for the disadvantaged.

I will show that regulated expression can be free. Individuals who aspire for positive freedom are misdirected, if they take the indirect route of negative freedom. The methods for positive freedom of expression require that society should set and implement regulations to optimize that freedom. Liberal thinkers may worry that expression can become excessively restricted. They need a reminder that negative freedom, too, can become excessive and, in its extreme form, it is incompatible with positive freedom. Society can and should ensure freedom by regulating expression in ways that optimize the individual capacity for open-mindedness and the individual exercise of the independent thought mode. Thus, by means of the regulation of expression, society can accomplish the following epistemically and developmentally beneficial tasks. Society can provide rational justification for its claim that it actually practices free expression. Society can optimize positive freedom in ways that also promote negative freedom. Regulations on the media's expression can ensure that the media covers a wide range and depth of issues sufficient for society to render meaningful epistemic and developmental opportunities, while these regulations also counteract the societal capacity for mentally coercive practices. In these ways, society can facilitate the expansion of individual developmental power. For the laissez-faire liberal thinker, the idea that government can optimize freedom may seem paradoxical. After all, the "unrestricted" expression which they assume is free expression corresponds with the negative sort of right and with negative freedom. I will emphasize the need for positive freedom of expression while I will also recognize the need for negative freedom. And, I will emphasize freedom as a positive right, while also recognizing that freedom is a negative right as well.

I will discuss that "unrestricted" expression of opinion formation and the held opinions does not generally favour societal progress towards justice over increasing societal injustice. Likewise, "unrestricted" expression does not necessarily favour the acquisition of truth over the acquisition of falsehood. I will show that "unrestricted" expression is fit for the reinforcement of the socially held falsehoods and the production of additional social falsehoods.

Expression is free in proportion to the justice of the society in which it occurs. That is to say, there is a positive relationship between the freedom of expression and the degree of justice present in the society that practices freedom of expression. I will suggest that the capacity of expression to promote and contribute to justice and truth depends, in part, on how transparent its social restrictions are. Only an equitable kind of expression that is more concerned with communicational outcomes than with mere communicational opportunities can do justice to the pursuit of truth and social progress. The communicational outcomes need not be the same to equally satisfy the various individual needs.

### **1) Free for Whom? 'Unrestricted' Expression: A Restricted Form of Expression**

Here, I will argue that "unrestricted" expression as a form of free expression is, ultimately, restricted and socially expensive expression; it is socially and politically restricted and epistemically and ethically costly. My critique on the laissez-faire practice of expression will focus on how the media invisibly politically restricts speech with consequences that are inconsistent with independent opinion formation, the promotion of open-mindedness, and the acquisition of knowledge.

Mill does not substantiate that "unrestricted" expression is politically possible. He overlooks the role of political inequality, and thus he ignores questions such as 'Who gets to communicate?' Mill holds an implicit notion of confirmation bias, as discussed in my response to Mill's argument that "unrestricted" expression maximizes the societal capacity to synthesize the truth. However, he does not consider the political effects of the fact that generally persons are more likely to listen to other persons similar to themselves than to persons who are different from themselves. He does not consider that some persons benefit more politically not only epistemically from the opportunity for expression. Such beneficiaries are normally those who already have the power. He does not give serious coverage to the harms that society may incur as a result of "unrestricted" expression. Contrary to his assumptions, expression is not free simply

because one is, in principle, permitted to communicate with others. In fact, certain persons can afford to express themselves more than others. The one-sided opinions of socially privileged persons are more likely to be vocal and more advocated in public than the one-sided opinions of the socially disadvantaged.

Mill naively advocates "unrestricted" expression. Similarly, he also naively advocates what is popularly considered free trade. He advocates "the doctrine of international free trade...as the means whereby all countries [can] secure the benefits of international specialization" (Harris, 1956, p. 70). Mill sees "no necessary connection between the international free trade movement and imperialism" (Harris, 1956, p. 70). For example, he overlooks the fact that certain countries have their specializations forced upon them by, and according to the interests of, the dominant countries. "Free" trade is comparable to "unrestricted" expression in its negative implications for the individual capacity to independently cognitively develop, and the question 'Free for whom?' applies to both. What is popularly considered free expression is not necessarily free. The extent to which expression is free significantly depends on the amount of power that is held by the communicative agents.

Mill misunderstands the issue of the exercise of power in social relations (Harris, 1956, p. 172). His lack of consideration for the role of power in social relations is evident in the fact that he does not recognize that "the market of ideas," which to him means the process of free discussion, can convert into "an arena of competitive salesmanship" (Harris, 1956, p. 172-173). In short, to speak in capitalist terms, in the market place of ideas some can afford to advertise their products more than others. This fact holds implications for the individual's capacity to pursue knowledge through "unrestricted" or invisibly restricted social expression; this form of expression is often based on the capitalist and laissez-faire notions of the business of the press. This form of expression can propagate falsehoods and can result in social distress, and the reinforcement of old, and creation of new, injustices. As we will see next, these forms of expression inevitably suffer from internal censorship of the press, that is, the owners of the press

control its censorship according to their ideological interests.

The lack of freedom of the market and freedom of the press are mutually reinforcing (McMurtry, 1998). The rules of the market hinder the freedom of the press. Those who have wealth and power can control the press and have an interest in, as well as the ability to, impede as much as they desire expression opposed to the market. McMurtry (1998) argues that "the degree of exclusion of oppositional representations and views in a market (or other) society is proportionate to how clearly such representations or views contradict its pattern of rule" (p. 204), or the basic social structural fact that capitalist corporations dominate the media. The operations of exclusion choose what is to be "ruled out as unspeakable," "omitted," "selected out," and "marginalized" (McMurtry, 1998, p. 202).

The ideal of the free press does not reflect reality,<sup>45</sup> regardless of the claims of the press that it does. Consider:

In the venerable ideal of "a marketplace of ideas," the "freedom of the press" is the jewel in the crown. It promises a vital congress of contesting voices and views, a debate of the public good in which all who come to the meeting place of fellow citizens can be heard by and argue with peers. (McMurtry, 1998, p. 192)

By stigmatizing and mentally coercing individuals who dare question its freedom, the press maintains the appearance that it is free. Consider:

Because of its resonance as a social ideal, "the free press" is still expounded as a sacred value, indeed as the ultimate expression of the "free market." This, in turn, is conceived as synonymous to a "free society" or to "the Free World." Anyone who ever doubts the freedom of 'the free press' risks being condemned as hostile to society's most basic liberties. (McMurtry, 1998, p. 195)

Because it violates free cognitive expression, mental coercion is inconsistent with free expression, as the previous chapter explained. The press is free insofar as it can express what it wants, but this capacity does not suffice for free expression. The press can "condition the conscious and

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<sup>45</sup> The conditions for a free press are not fulfilled now, and they have never been fulfilled. "Certain conditions for a free press were more in evidence in North America in the second half of the nineteenth century," notes McMurtry (1998, p. 192). Although not in the same region of the world, that was around the time that On Liberty (1859) was published, and before corporate interests had taken over the press. However, at that time, another form of censorship affected the press, namely, religious censorship. The second chapter of On Liberty is largely a reaction to that censorship.



unconscious lives of masses across the globe" (McMurtry, 1998, p. 195). Thus, the press hinders the masses' free cognitive expression because it impedes their exercise of the independent thought mode. These consequences for the minds of the masses of the press's expression do not permit the press freedom of expression.

Another way by which the press, under the influence of the economic market, hinders independent thought formation is that it narrows the range of knowledge that it expresses. Knowledge promotes independent thought formation because knowledge permits the thinker a greater number of cognitive opportunities to make considerations and choices over beliefs. However, the requirements of operations of the market contradict the requirements of knowledge.

Consider:

the concepts of "rationality" and "knowledge" come to be absurd expressions. What knowledge requires, the "knowledge-based economy" rules out. What wider comprehension and impartiality demand, the "rationality" of profit-maximization blinkers from view. When we examine the assertion of the 'new knowledge-based economy' more closely, we come to realize that it selects against whatever does not conform to its demand structures. It is, in this way, more properly designated as "an ignorance-based economy." (McMurtry, 1998, p. 187)

The operations of the market are incompatible with the maximization of knowledge, rationality, and impartiality.

Not surprisingly, the capitalist press is an inadequate educational resource, because it does not express an adequate range and depth of opinions. The inconsistent standards between the market and education can explain this inadequacy. In particular, the motivations, methods and the standards of excellence of the market contradict the motivations, methods and the standards of education. For instance, two standards of excellence in education include "how inclusively it takes into account others' interests and avoids one-sided biases," and "how deep and broad the problems it poses are to one who has it" (McMurtry, 1998, p. 188). In contrast to the former educational standards, the standards for the economic market include "how *one-sidedly* its own product is made to sell," and "how problem-free the product is and remains for its buyer" (McMurtry, 1998, p. 188, emphasis added).

Consequently, "unrestricted" expression permits the tyranny of one-sided views, and the tyranny of the economically privileged people who hold them. For example, invisibly restricted expression facilitates indoctrination. Consider:

Propaganda and indoctrination are identifiable by repetition of a one-sided view that is not open to counterevidence or argument, by closure to opposing voices and facts, and by incessant repetition of a received doctrine. With the media as with other capitalist enterprises, private owners and their advertiser patrons have the legal right to select and exclude as they choose. . . "Freedom of the press" belongs, by the rules of the market itself, only to those who own one. (McMurtry, 1998, p. 200)

The owners of the press can be as one-sided as they wish, able to spread propaganda and indoctrinate their viewers, readers, and listeners, with the power to select and exclude the expression of whomever they choose. Thus, expression, in public places, can be exercised mainly by members of groups who already hold more than their fair share of power. They have more opportunities to do so. It is in their political interest to practice censorship. So too, consider that the media "creates a condition for controlling thought without our awareness of what is happening," that "propaganda is the inevitable consequence of creating messages that support one point of view to the exclusion of others," and that "[reflect] the interests of those who own or control the media" (Fleras and Elliott, 2003, p. 331). Thus, with its expression under the guise of being "unrestricted" expression, the media can interfere with the open-mindedness and independent thought formation of its viewers.

Therefore, the myth that there is "unrestricted" expression facilitates power-driven expression's capacity to maintain the existing societal structure. For, when unrecognized as restricted, expression can constrict thought and compel opinions to form toward the side of the economically and politically privileged.

Society unevenly distributes the benefits of democracy and of its principles, including freedom of expression, and, so long as society continues to do this, it will continue to be unable to maximize the acquisition and expression of knowledge. For example, racialized groups, that is, groups of persons whom society considers as having a visible minority status, benefit the least

from what society largely considers democratic and free expression (Henry and Tator, 2006).<sup>46</sup>

The media simply dismiss the concerns of racialized groups with claims that the groups are opposed to freedom of expression. Consider:

There exists in the media a significant resistance to altering the power of the dominant culture. Attempts by racial minorities to protest and resist racist images and discourse in the media are frequently challenged by the media. These protests are seen by the corporate elite as attempts to suppress freedom of expression and are equated with censorship. (Henry and Tator, 2006, p. 272)

Ironically, the media does not recognize that racialized minority groups concerned with the media may regard White-dominated expression as tyrannical because it impedes their own freedom of expression. Society connects the way the marketplace operates without constraint to the championed freedom of expression (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 272). Terribly, free speech refers to only "the rights and privileges that *very few groups* in . . . society possess, in terms of their access to the media" (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 273, emphasis added).

Furthermore, when members of disadvantaged groups express themselves in public, society expects them to be polite to the interests of the dominant groups. Disadvantaged persons are coerced by social expectations to make overly generous concessions and deny the extent to which society discriminates, exploits, marginalizes or oppresses them. Take the example of first generation racialized immigrants and their children who may be citizens by birth, all of whom may state in public their actual social experiences in an effort to raise awareness of the true extent to which they are socially devalued and subordinated. When they do so, society tends to perceive them as outrageous and ungrateful to the kindness that has been given to them by their great, "host" country. Terribly thus, some persons simply can afford to express themselves truthfully more than others, whereas covert demands for dishonesty are systemically imposed upon some in ways that are inconsistent with the promotion of their political equality.

In terms of consequences for the freedom of the involved parties, the social and mental

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<sup>46</sup> The media are not democratic in their portrayals of racialized groups because the "norms, values, and assumptions of White, male-dominated institutions continue to prevent the mass media from fairly and accurately reflecting and representing the multiracial reality of Canadian society" (Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 273).

coercion to express things about oneself, and to adopt opinions, that favour the politically privileged interests is comparable to the coercion against the "least developed" and "developing" states in international liberalization. I discussed psychological oppression's interference with the free formation of opinions including the opinions that persons hold about themselves, in the previous chapter. Now I will briefly mention how international "liberalization" interferes with the self-determination of economically disadvantaged societies, and thus with the free social and cultural expression of its members. In international trade, the largely unregulated exchange of goods benefits the "first" world more than the "third" world. Some countries can afford to participate in those exchanges more freely than others. In fact, "free" trade, not only is accompanied by international agreements on regulations for trade conduct, but is actually forced upon some societies. In principle, free trade is meant to be free for whomever is willing to sell and buy. In practice, there are regulations that in effect force some unfortunate societies to participate in those exchanges, even when participation goes against their economic interests. For example, coerced by the international bank institutions, some countries are forced to adopt programs to restructure their domestic economies, even when these programs are against the interests of their civil life (Madeley, 2000, p. 58). The World Trade Organization falsely presents "itself as a forum for members to negotiate over trade liberalization" (p. 60), writes Madeley (2000). He continues:

In practice the organization is a trade liberalization juggernaut which has been ceded enormous power by its members. It uses that position to further the cause of liberalization, to the chief benefit of those who stand to gain the most: in practice, the transnational corporations. (Madeley, 2000, p. 60)

The interests of transnational corporations monopolize how societies practice liberalization.

Lastly, there are what can be considered cultural monopolies in the context of "unrestricted" expression and "negotiable" truths. And there are cultural monopolies that do not permit free competition over the "best buy" culture. When the standards to measure the worth of a culture are determined by the dominant culture, it is of no surprise that the culture most likely to

be viewed favourably by those standards is the dominant culture. In practice, through the control of the press by capitalist interests, the free market serves in the assimilation of culture. The dominant cultures are able to cast the most influence in the assimilation of the subordinate cultures into the dominant, "market-friendly" culture. The final part of this chapter will return to this point.

## **2) Free Speech as a Social Transmitter of Cognitive Independence**

Here, I will focus on the pursuit of free speech and independent opinion formation. I will argue that the freedom of speech depends on the extent to which independent thought motivates the speech, and the extent to which the speech promotes others' independent thought mode. Independent thought both benefits from knowledge and contributes to knowledge. As well, the capacity for open-mindedness benefits from freedom and it contributes to freedom. Hence, freedom of speech has to be positively supported by educational and social resources that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, and by adequate opportunities for public expression. Independent thought should be informed enough to be able to properly, wisely, and freely direct speech toward the truth and justice, because doing so will increase the likelihood of the speech's promotion of further independent thought.

Free speech cannot be limited to self-talk, nor can free thinking be limited to introspection. Free expression is a social activity, and as such an internal disposition-focused definition of, and approach to, it is inappropriate. To adequately understand free expression, society needs knowledge of how social situations affect the internal dispositions that contribute to the freedom of opinion formation and an individual's motivation to communicate her opinions. Free expression can be socially facilitated by practices that are informed by relevant social, cognitive, and behavioural scientific knowledge on how to socially promote the independent thought mode. The freedom of speech is positively influenced when it is directed from within by independent, informed, and principled thought modes, and from without by fair policies and

programs set by the government and by media organizations designed to facilitate independent thought formation.

Invisibly restricted speech is not necessarily guided by the love of the truth and justice, and thus, there is no reason to believe, as Mill does, that it will result in the acquisition of either. Undeniably, when society allows persons to say whatever they want they can use their "unrestricted" speech, for example, to express lies, to disregard the truth, or to be neutral to the truth. The point is that "unrestricted" expression is not necessarily a better friend of justice and truth than transparent, socially regulated expression. Certain conditions have to be met for expression to come to be an ally of the just and truthful, and a companion of freedom.

Regulated expression can be consistent with free cognitive expression so long as its restrictions facilitate the exercise of the independent thought mode. Counterproductive to the promotion of the independent thought mode, the politically privileged persons can politically and unfairly benefit from the illusion of unrestricted expression and its constriction of human thought. And, they can unnecessarily limit what can be expressed to the political advantage of the politically privileged themselves. Thus, expression disempowers the growth capacities of individuals, for it limits their cognitive and social developmental opportunities.

For Mill, if it is to be free, thinking must be independent, as the previous section of this chapter discussed. The requirement of independent thought for freedom which Mill accepts is inconsistent with his acceptance of "unrestricted" cognitive expression and social communication. It is also inconsistent with his implicit encouragement of the majority's ignorance for the sake of the epistemic diplomats' knowledge advancement. Knowledge fosters mental independence, so the acquisition of knowledge is inconsistent with invisibly, politically restricted expression, which facilitates mental coercion and the promotion of one-sided views. As well, unrestricted thought is led only by the default of human cognition, and independent thought is not one of those inherent cognitive defaults. Rather, independent thought requires social and cognitive discipline. Standards of logic can guide independent thought so that it may avoid fallacious thought modes.

As well, it benefits from the guidance of social cognitive knowledge identified by the social sciences. Mill would agree with the claim that independent thought must be guided by rational principles so long as these are not socially imposed. While an agent is free who gets to think or say in such and such a way, such and such a thing, this freedom can be developmentally expensive for both the recipients and the agent herself. For example, human beings tend to think in heuristic ways, using schemata acquired by social learning (Aronson, Wilson, Akert & Beverly, 2004, p. 76), and they tend to select only the information that fits into those schemes and ignore other information (Nickerson, 1998). For that reason, when human beings are left alone to think in an undisciplined way, they may make foolish decisions, some of which result in social costs both to others and to themselves. If the schemes they hold are false, and unjust, no one benefits from their thoughts no matter how unrestricted their faulty thought mode is considered to be. Their thinking thus can, in fact, be expensive in terms of eliminating opportunities to develop more sophisticated thinking habits and thereby good judgement. Also, their unrestricted thought mode could be expensive in that it leads them to close themselves to being persuaded to the contrary opinion with the result that they are unjust to others. For instance, negative stereotypes influence persons to unjustly expect the worst from certain others, and, in many cases, lead persons to treat others according to the held stereotypes. Thinkers who stereotype the most severely are unlikely to choose to give the discriminated persons the opportunity to be perceived in a more positive light.

Therefore, expression may be free insofar as it tolerates the opinions of existent independent thinkers, but to the extent that it hinders the formation of new independent thinkers, it may, indeed, lack freedom and be socially and developmentally expensive. "Unrestricted" expression of thought can be counterproductive to the aim for individual development, as evident, for example, when persons act in accordance with gender and racial stereotypes to deny developmental opportunities to others. Individual thought requires a good education, whether formal or informal, to develop the critical and creative skills, habits and attitudes, and knowledge

bases with which to proceed from and towards free thought. Independent thought cannot occur when one proceeds from ignorance and an undisciplined mind. Individual thought needs to be provided with certain cognitive and social supports for it to develop the independence which is necessary for its freedom. That is why education should be treated as a positive right. The independent thought modes are unlikely to be exercised by under- or mal-educated minds.

Mill overemphasizes the beneficial contributions that "unrestricted" expression supposedly renders to social progress. He does not do justice to the social distress, the social expenses incurred as a result of "unrestricted" expression. He does not acknowledge the fact that "unrestricted" expression can be a hindrance to social progress. For instance, Mill unfairly challenges persons who, as he says, may be ill thought of, and ill spoken of, or persons whom what he considers "free" speech may victimize, to simply learn to cope with it. He writes:

Those whose bread is already secured, and who desire no favours from men in power, or from bodies of men, or from the public, have nothing to fear from the open avowal of any opinions, but to be *ill-thought of and ill-spoken of*, and this it ought not to require a very heroic mould to enable them to bear. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶19)

Thus questioning the intentions and dispositions of persons who others may adversely target through their speech, he turns the issue into a personal one for any of those to whom the comment may apply, not only for the intended group.

In the previous quotation, Mill ignores the fact that private issues can also be public ones, that what affects persons can also have significance for the groups to which the persons belong. He does not seriously consider the fact that marginalized social groups can be disempowered by what he considers free speech when they are unfavourably targeted by it. Admittedly, Mill recognizes that in regards to the resolution of the various beliefs on the truth,

if either of the two opinions has a better claim than the other, not merely to be tolerated, but to be encouraged and countenanced, it is the one which happens at the particular time and place to be in a minority. That is the opinion which, for the time being, represents the neglected interests, the side of human well-being which is in danger of obtaining less than its share. (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶35)

However, the preceding comment gives empty advice. Mill expects that there should not be any institutional practices to optimize adherence to principles such as that persons should act to



minimize harm through speech, because such practices would have the "undesirable" consequence that they restrict expression. But, institutional practices can promote independent thought, and facilitate free cognitive expression through their maximization of favourable, developmental opportunities to increase the likelihood of rational cognitive outcomes. For example, imagine a society that regulates the way that hateful books can be sold and signed out of libraries. The society legally requires that hateful books be sold or signed out in pairs or multiples such that the buyer or library patron must purchase or borrow at least two books with opposing perspectives, one hateful, and the other or others informed by ethics, philosophy and the social sciences. That society would maximize the opportunity for the buyers of books to read the counter-perspective books. Although this opportunity would not necessarily prove beneficial, it would increase the likelihood that the readers consider the more informed, counter-perspectives instead of simply accepting the messages of the hateful book. This practice, which I proposed above, would encourage the individual exercise of the independent thought mode and would actually demote the extreme form of censorship of banning books. Thus, the practice is consistent with Mill's argument that society should encourage the development of independent thinkers and with his criticism against silencing controversial voices. Mill considers that ideally individuals should listen to the lowest voices, but that is as far as he goes. He does not consider that without endorsing the necessary practical institutional changes, given the political imbalances in communication, such advice lacks seriousness and is devoid of substance. What I brought attention to in the previous parts of this section are the differences between Mill's ideal of free speech and the requirements for the practice of free speech.

### **3) The Pursuit of Truth through Laissez-faire Freedom and Social Darwinism**

Here, I will explore whether the freedom-utilitarian project's argument from rationality promotes violence and has social Darwinist implications. I will argue that, ironically, the argument from rationality is willing to sacrifice the rationality of many individuals for the sake of

the rationality of a few individuals. The argument from rationality promotes not only symbolic violence, but also human physical violence over the truth, and has some social Darwinistic implications for members of cultures whose truths the privileged do not select. Mill's freedom-social epistemological project is incompatible with the pursuit of epistemic and cultural progress.

Mill recognizes that "unrestricted" expression can do disservice to justice (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶37). However, Mill sees some injustices as "necessary" or permissible evils for the ultimate end of the justice which he thinks will result from knowledge of the whole truth.

Mill argues for "unrestricted" expression because of the developmental service that it does for the rational acquisition of truth, although it does so through militancy. "Unrestricted" expression performs a militant service for the truth, since keeping the truth lively requires the sacrifice of life. For true opinions to be rationally held, violence is permissible. Reconsider Mill's claim that "not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶38). Mill suggests that to keep the life of the truth is more important than to safeguard human life. Partial truths are embodied in those who hold them, including those who are willing to fight for them, and are loyal to them to the death.

Mill associates the rational acquisition of the whole truth with violence which may be deadly, by associating its parts with engagement in violent conflict that would have the distant, but eventual consequence of arrival at the whole truth. So, while Mill associates the truth with life and falsehood with death, he also, whether intentionally or not, associates the truth with death and falsehood with life. The quality of the life of the truth benefits from keeping falsehood alive as well. Mill's argument that "unrestricted" expression advances rationality promotes not only symbolic violence among partial truths but, while it promotes that symbolic violence, it also promotes physical violence among the persons who hold those partial truths. Mill's argument that there are utilitarian benefits to "unrestricted" expression inadequately accounts for the fact that human social conflicts can result from persons' aggressive demands that others should accept the truths of the demanding party. Mill's argument from rationality implicitly claims that the

majority's ignorance should be tolerated so that the knowledgeable few may work with the ignorant, partially true, extreme beliefs of others to rationally uncover larger truths. Thus, that argument accepts the uneven social distribution of knowledge, without considering how that maldistribution can impede certain people from achieving the benefits of social knowledge and from benefiting society through the informed choosing of actions.

Next, I will consider the connection from the freedom-utilitarian project's social epistemology to social Darwinism. Mill assumes that the truth is to a large extent invincible. He says:

"when an opinion is true, it may be extinguished once, twice, or many times, but in the course of ages there will generally be found persons to rediscover it, until some one of its reappearances falls on a time when from favourable circumstances it escapes persecution until it has made such head as to withstand all subsequent attempts to suppress it" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶17).

However, humankind has neither ever witnessed, nor is it witnessing right now, a historical stage in which political inequality has been absent, and thus political inequality has so far proven that it reproduces itself throughout the ages. And, so long as political inequality is not directly treated, Mill's prediction that the most truthful stories will become immortal, while the false ones will die out is not justified. Neither is the expectation that the most just and beautiful ideas and cultures will persevere, while the ugly and unjust ones will be chased out of what some presume is the naturally good order of the world. Social Darwinists, and the like, make the preceding presumption. They locate the defects to lie within the dispositions and cultures of marginalized groups for their apparent lack of adaptability, and fail to see the defects in the social environment. Thus, they fail to take into account that not only good and truthful things are demanded from persons by their society as requirements for their social fitness. Social Darwinists assume that everyone is socially given a fair chance to satisfy those demands or that the unfairness is the result of inherent differences. At the very least, social Darwinists do not recognize the epistemic need to consider whether the demands the social environment makes are fair for the identification of good cultures. Since the order of the social world is mainly socially constructed, and those

social constructions do not necessarily correspond with the truth of anything, there is no reason for why we should expect that the 'whole' truth, if there is such a thing, would fit the best into our social world.

In great irony, the connection between market theory and social Darwinism is noteworthy. Social Darwinist ideology, which holds that the socially fittest survive, impedes capitalists from seeing the defects of their theory. The proponents of market theory assume that their theory is infallible:

Market theory introduces the logic of social Darwinism before Darwin. Darwin reproduced the struggle for survival, in which masses of the species die as a matter of course, to the non-human realm, in which selection is not by man-made design. The market theory has not developed such a distinction between realms . . . It did not occur to Smith or Ricardo that starvation, even mass starvation, could count as an argument against the truth or beneficence of the invisible hand of the market. On the contrary, they saw it as the effective mechanism whereby market laws of supply and demand worked with the labour factor of production. They did not much concern themselves with the death or life of the "inferior classes." Like the Social Darwinists they preceded by a century, they thought this to be a "natural law" . . . The certitude and the dominance of market doctrine have increased in intensity as crises become more acute . . . An intense certitude and demand for absolute rule in accordance with perceived divine design are characteristics of fundamentalist faiths, particularly in dark times. Of note here, however, is the closure of the market doctrine at its most "scientific" and "rigorous" levels of advocacy and defence to any possible disproof of its principles. If a theory rules out any possibility of factual disconfirmation, it is not a scientific or even rational theory, but a closed dogma. But which basic principle of the market doctrine is now open to evidence or argument that could show it to be mistaken? What extreme accumulation of wealth at the top of society, or destitution and misery for the majority of society, can indicate to this system of thought that something is wrong with its invisible hand of distribution? (McMurtry, 1998, p. 76-77)

The deaths of persons whose needs have not been met are obvious signals that political inequality interferes with the proper function of the market laws of supply and demand. Capitalists ignore these signals. Capitalists cannot recognize the unreliability of the laws of supply and demand because, under the spell of perceived infallibility, they are irreversibly confident about these laws. No social observation, no matter how severe, could stop the capitalists continued following of these laws. These optimists dogmatically expect that eventually the laws of supply and demand will prove to be the rational mechanisms for the distribution of goods, even though there are no indications that it is rational to expect this.

With capitalists' overwhelming control over it, the "free press" excludes knowledge in

proportion to how much the knowledge goes against capitalist interests. Ironically, it turns out that market theory, as discussed in the previous quotation, and upon which Mill naively places his faith, has made the very assumption of infallibility which Mill warns against. The proponents of the "free" market deny the public the opportunity to refute market theory. Mill never anticipates that the "market place of ideas," as a result of "free trade," could suffer this fate.

So, how does the social Darwinism present in the capitalist treatment of the economic market compare to Mill's freedom-utilitarian social epistemological treatment of the market place of ideas and the market place of life styles? Mill does not concern himself with the life or death of cultures which are "proven" to be unsuitable for individual development by the cultural preferences which individuals freely express. The market laws of supply and demand are applicable to the "unrestricted" selection of the most developmentally appropriate cultures. Invisibly restricted freedom permits the demand for the "fittest" cultures, while diversity permits the various cultural supply. The developmental elite get to select the "fittest" truths. Mill writes: "Progress, which ought to superadd, for the most part only substitutes, one partial and incomplete truth for another, improvement consisting chiefly in this, that the new fragment of truth is more wanted, *more adapted to the needs of the time*, than that which it displaces" (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶33, emphasis added). The truths that are selected mainly depend on the preferences and social and individual needs of the persons who have a say in the selection. The same main problems are present in both the capitalist market and the market place of ideas and lifestyles. Political inequality hinders the capacity of demand to accurately reflect the preferences and developmental needs of all persons. The social and cultural supplies are not distributed among all persons who actually need and prefer them.

The important distinction between the social Darwinist principle for the identification of the "best" products in the capitalist market and freedom, as a social epistemological principle for the pursuit of truth and the most developmentally supportive cultures, is that the utilitarian nature of the freedom project can guard it from the assumption of infallibility. The freedom social

epistemological project which Mill proposes can be judged based on the most important utilitarian standard, namely, utility. This thesis has sought to understand the utility of Mill's freedom-utilitarian project including that of the project's developmental and social epistemological features through an investigation of the project's consequences for the various members of society. This investigation has included a careful examination of the features of the freedom-utilitarian project plan with the aim to predict the project's likely consequences for various social groups based on philosophical reflection, current social scientific knowledge, and interdisciplinary insight.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

This thesis chapter finds that Mill's ill-defined freedom misdirects his social epistemological project. The laissez-faire freedom principle does not take into account political inequality. Instead, the principle hinders awareness of the influence of political inequality on the expression of individuality and on efforts to develop one's various capacities. Optimistically, Mill expects gains in political equality will result from the freedom-utilitarian project's cultural and epistemic improvement functions. The practice of laissez faire freedom for the freedom-utilitarian project's pursuit of individual development maximization is doubly problematic and inappropriate. For, this practice both adds to the project's limitations and makes those limitations difficult to identify.

The confounding effects of political inequality undermine not only the epistemic capacities of politically disadvantaged persons. The epistemic capacities of the politically privileged are undermined as well, although not as severely as those of the disadvantaged. Recall that, for Mill, the kinds of knowledge which persons can find depend on their capacity for impartial judgement and on the nature of the opinions which they hold. The epistemic diplomat can obtain both knowledge of self and social and natural world, whereas extreme thinkers can obtain mainly self-knowledge. Persons can obtain self-knowledge through "experiments" of life.

The epistemic diplomat has the advantage, above extreme or partial thinkers, of the capacity to obtain other kinds of knowledge that are useful to make informed social comparisons. However, due to the influence of political inequality on our capacity to make accurate social comparisons, even the epistemic diplomat's capacity to obtain self-knowledge is social and psychologically hindered.

The approach to free speech that condemns social restrictions upon it throws Mill's freedom- utilitarian social project into error. This approach treats free speech as apolitical, but free speech cannot be properly depoliticized. "Unrestricted" expression is not politically possible in a social context of political inequality. Mill's argument for "unrestricted" expression from truth synthesis is weak. The main reason for this is that "unrestricted" expression facilitates cultural assimilation, and thus it politically biases the expression of the obtained "integrated" truths. "Unrestricted" expression conflicts with the adequate distribution of opportunities for free expression. If society always restricts expression at least invisibly, it is best to regulate the expression transparently. Therefore, the most reasonable option to maximize social freedom is to properly regulate expression.

As it turns out, because it lacks consideration of how political inequality interferes with the utility maximization of society, Mill's "freedom-utilitarian" project is inadequately utilitarian, because the project's consequentialist assessment of the utility of free expression is politically egoistic. The freedom-utilitarian arguments for "unrestricted" expression make considerations from its favourable consequences for individuals who, because of their social circumstances and presumed inherent superior endowments, are the most capable of being the benefactors to, as well as benefiting from, such expression. Those arguments do not consider the harmful consequences for anyone. Mill's politically egoistic social project primarily considers the individual development and the benefits of political and individual expression for the few developmentally strong individuals. The developmental and political gains of the few are promoted at expense to the gains of the under-developed and even the presumably less developable. Last but not least,

the project permits a greater likelihood of social harm for the politically under-privileged who have less social permission to express themselves and are thus unlikely to developmentally benefit from that expression.



## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

Mill's utilitarian argument for the free expression of individuality is weak. Mill's politically egoistic assumptions and claims about human nature recommend social attitudes and practices that could help optimize the developmental power of only a minority of individuals. The societal majority will be excluded from being the benefactors to, and the active and direct beneficiaries of, the practices that Mill recommends. From a utilitarian perspective, lack of consideration for the societal majority's utility is a profound weakness: the majority would either be unlikely to benefit developmentally or not benefit as much as the elite from the practices that the freedom-utilitarian argument claims are beneficial to society.

Mill's assumptions about inherent developmental power differentials encourage a social condition of unequal benefactors and beneficiaries, in light of the causal interdependence of individual developmental power and utility. In Mill's view, some individuals have inherent strengths across the attributes which he considers serve social utility, and which, when used, allow such individuals a greater likelihood of being the benefactors to social progress. As well, when these individuals have these attributes, they are likely to be the beneficiaries of social environmental factors that foster individual development.

Mill holds several forms of elitism: intellectual, moral and political elitism. Taken together, these constitute a broader form of elitism, namely, developmental elitism. Mill presumes that the developmental elite consist of rare individuals. If accepted, the ideal of developmental elitism would rationalize the deprivation of most persons' opportunities for individual development. Thus, developmental elitism would waste the developmental resources of most persons. So, I am concerned with Mill's view that society should grant intellectuals more political power. What warrants concern about his form of intellectual elitism are its unwarranted psycho-biological and social developmental assumptions.

Mill's intellectual elitism constitutes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The social expectation

that certain persons, in this case those among the majority, who have developed their abilities to ordinary levels, cannot much serve society in socially important practices such as public administration has developmentally unfavourable implications for such persons. This social expectation could lead them to not receive the opportunity to further their abilities. Deprived of adequate developmental opportunities, the majority of individuals would, consequently, most likely provide little utility. Thus, such persons would be set up to have less social worth.

Mill emphasises individual responsibility for self-development, and for the improvement of one's social and personal worth. Mill is concerned with the responsibility of society mainly when it comes to society's duty to let persons develop themselves as it suits each one. He thinks that this permission for their developmental independence would leave them a sufficient range of choices to improve their "comparative worth" as human beings (CW, 18, Ch. 3, ¶4).

Mill places the locus of developmental responsibility on the individual who is supposed to exercise and expand her developmental power in ways that produce not only individual but also social progress. He recognizes that individual expression has not only personal consequences, but social consequences as well for the pursuit of knowledge. He recognizes that the pursuit of knowledge is both an individual and social pursuit.

However, Mill's recommendations for approaching individual and social freedom and for the pursuit of knowledge focus on an individual's dispositions and pay little attention to the social situations which contribute to the maximization of individual development. Mill's position that the individual can use "unrestricted" expression to learn the truth about her psychological nature removes the recommended "experiments" of life from their social context. Mill's arguments do not account for the effects of the existing social and power differentials on the degree of accuracy possible for the experimental results.

Mill's freedom-utilitarian project does not account for political inequality, an interfering factor in both self-education and the advancement of knowledge of others and world. Rather, he naively expects that self-education and social epistemic advancement will remedy political

inequality. Consequently, Mill inadequately explores society's duties for the maximization of individual development. He ignores the social responsibility required for the maximization of the freedom of every individual's expression and opinion formation.

Political egoism is a form of argumentative bias under which an arguer recommends certain practices based on the claim that those practices will benefit society, yet the arguer suggests that the benefit will apply only or mainly for an elite to which she belongs. Politically egoistic arguments hold political implications that an exclusive social group will benefit from certain recommended practices while other social groups will be either unaffected or harmed by those practices.

For a strong freedom-utilitarian project, the freedom of expression and its benefits should be widely distributed, as the fourth chapter explained. Yet, political egoism in Mill's considerations prevents a distribution of benefits wide enough for meaningful additions to the common good, and thus political egoism prevents an epistemically fair project.

This thesis identifies the main problem with Mill's freedom-utilitarian project is that it is to be pursued in profound contradiction to its aim to maximize utility. Over all, "unrestricted" expression is an epistemically and ethically unjustified way to pursue the truth. Mill does not carefully examine the consequences of "unrestricted" expression; he ignores how the means that he recommends for the advancement of knowledge contradict the ends. Mill does not recognize the cognitive and social incoherence present between each of the following pairs of ideals and practices. First, he promotes a culture of individualism for the sake of cultural pluralism, but, in turn, for the sake of the arrival at the one "perfect" culture of knowledge. Second; he promotes diversity toleration for the expression of personal one-sidedness, but also for the sake of the advancement towards impersonal multi-sidedness. Third, he encourages the competition among the "sales people in the market place of ideas" over the promotion and sale of their one-sided truths, but for the sake of the cooperative production of multi-sided truths. Fourth, Mill encourages cultural diversity and declares opposition to cultural assimilation, but disregards the

suggested cultural assimilation's de facto cultural genocide of the deemed falsehoods that can occur, even when what is pursued is the de jure "integration" of the deemed truths. Thus, at best, it is possible to integrate the truths of the privileged cultures while denying the truths of subdominant cultures. Fifth, Mill encourages the assertion of personal opinions that are one-sided and thus largely ignorant because they lack multi-sided truth, for the sake of opinions that are multi-sided and thus knowledgeable because they include reconciled one-sided truths. Out of one-sided opinions, the impartial few may develop multi-sided truthful opinions which the one-sided opinion possessors may never know. Thus, the ignorance of the partial many is the means to the knowledge of the impartial few. Sixth, Mill encourages the expression of one-sided opinions, which he deems are most compelling, for the sake of the promotion of open-mindedness, which requires the acquisition of multi-sided opinions, but if one-sided opinions actually are more compelling, then it is most likely that they would demote open-mindedness. Seventh, Mill neglects the irrational world that would be dying over falsehood for the sake of a rational few living with the truth. Mill encourages the blood sport in which the contestants must fight over partial truths for the sake of the impartial reconciliation of truths by the more epistemically worthy spectators. Mill disregards the loss of human life that can result from the pursuit of the enlivenment of the truth, and he disregards that it is socially harmful to tolerate the irrationality of the majority of individuals for the sake of the rationality of the few.

Mill explicitly denies support for the tyranny of the developmentally strong minority, but this is only his intention. While it tries to avoid the tyranny of the majority, the freedom-utilitarian project plan expresses political egoism that promotes the tyranny of the minority in practice through the promotion of the developmental elite's rule over social progress. This tyranny may seem paradoxical because progress proceeds under it. However, the progress is based on the satisfaction of the elite's developmental needs, and the advancement of their political interests and various preferences. This is not progress that considers the needs of all society's members. This is just politically egoistic progress under which the developmentally strong

individuals are the main possessors of their social world. History belongs to the developmentally strong. They are the progressive ones who continue it. Culture belongs to them. They are the ones who originate and diversify its cultural practices. The truth belongs to them. They are the ones who find its whole. Freedom belongs to them. They are the ones whose individualities are strong enough to permit them to contribute the most to, and benefit the most from, freedom's improvement. Society belongs to them. They are the ones deemed fit to lead it. For Mill, the societal majority is most wise when it simply follows.

Mill optimistically looks forward to a time in the distant future, when there would be one culture of knowledge, but as many ways of life as there are individual natures. I submit, even then, society under the influence of the developmental elite would assign the various individual natures differential levels of social utility, but no longer on the basis of their advancement of social progress. This differential assignment would likely be based on their capacity to sustain the achieved state of social progress. Since, for Mill, the social worth of the consequences of one's actions determines their moral worth, and he expects that only a small number of individuals will take such effectual actions, high levels of moral worth would continue to belong to the few.

While he argues for "unrestricted" speech from the need to sustain the life of the truth, Mill misses the wide, concrete picture. The "market place of ideas" is located on the earth. Disputes within it are part of an ongoing battle upon the stage of human history with real social consequences, real social distress, as humankind is forced to confront life and death issues, not only epistemic issues. The loss of life that occurs in battles over some perceived truth is not only the loss of the liveliness of the truths present in one's opinions. The life risked does not only belong to the ideas in a contest between the "sales persons" in the "marketplace of ideas." The loss of the life of the deemed truth does not only result in the academic distress of thinkers whose opinions have been refuted, or in the loss of rationality for those who, unable to discuss their beliefs, have lost a rationally justified claim to them. The issues humankind confronts have to do

with the survival of the rational aspects of our cognitive and social life and the potential for civilizational extinction, both materially and socially.

Cultural imperialism over the truth has implications for the ways of life that society deems acceptable or rejects. The political and social environment between and within all nations of the world sets the specific demands or the criteria for the adaptability of nations. So long as in the world environment, the dominant cultures continue to set their politically egoistic, self-interested demands on diverse people, the cultures that survive the longest are not going to be the most adapted to the truth or the good. Instead, it is cultures that are the most compatibly self-centered which will be the fittest in it, that is, so long as society does not destroy itself through its own corruption of "rationality," "truth," and the "good."

Some cultures are destined to die away because they cannot adapt to the demands of the corrupt world historical environment. Regardless of their truths, some beliefs are destined to die with their cultures because they lack compatibility with the dominant cultures. The political and social environment of the extinct culture was likely structured largely by its dominant groups and in accordance to their own political interests and their own versions of the truth and justice, which do not necessarily reflect the truthful and just. In fact, dominant versions of truth and justice tend to be based on the opposite, that is, falsehoods and oppressive ideologies. Bluntly put, when one's social environment demands one's acceptance of falsehoods, one is not going to survive in it by telling the truth. Thus, the truths which are the most dominant are neither necessarily nor potentially the most synthesized socially available truths, so long as the social structures do not reflect the truth of the various individual natures. For example, the real biological potential of human beings is not, and has never been, reflected by the social structures; these better reflect the truth that the world is dominated by falsehoods about individual developmental capacities.

The freedom-utilitarian project treats the rational life and developmental needs of the individual as if their satisfaction can, to a large extent, be detached from the social environment which influences the nature of those needs. For this reason, the progress that Mill's freedom-

utilitarian project can bring for the individual is mainly in principle, not in practice. The enhanced appearance of progress is not necessarily accompanied by actual progress. The mere appearance of progress can help to secure the mainstream illusion that society is already progressive. Laissez-faire freedom ideals, such as those of Mill, which are not meant to be implemented through enforceable programs, can only add to rationalizations of the existing order. Since laissez-faire freedom ideals appear to support rationality, and "unrestricted" expression is the "blessed" rule of the "developed" world, many accept the view that challenging the status quo is irrational. Consequently, while progress is hindered in practice, progress is preserved as an abstract notion held in some principled minds.

The social developmental capacity is inherent to the individuals that constitute society, but this capacity can, to a large extent, be socially facilitated or hindered for individuals. "Unrestricted" expression and formation of opinions interferes with the capacity for individual development. At its best such expression unevenly promotes individual development. As "unrestricted" expression makes the strong developmental capacity scarcer and promotes the contest over the worth of the development of each individual, the freedom-utilitarian project continues a perpetual condition of unequal benefactors and beneficiaries.

Finally, I suggest that there are various argumentative biases including one-sidedness that weaken Mill's consequentialist arguments for freedom, and thus that he fails to meet his own epistemic standard of multi-sidedness. Mill is perhaps motivated to assert one-sided views so that his position may be more forceful and compelling (CW, 18, Ch. 2, ¶33). This would explain why Mill's discussions on the capacity of free individual expression to add to the common good are often biased in their coverage. Mill focuses on the benefits of politically unrestricted expression, but he does not give enough coverage to the harms that can result from it. He ignores logical conflicts and examples that problematize his views.<sup>47</sup> This thesis has identified at least seven of the incoherences in Mill's freedom-utilitarian project, and explained that these incoherences are

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<sup>47</sup> See Kimball (1998).

the consequence of political egoism.



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## VITA AUCTORIS

Sulma Portillo was born in San Salvador, El Salvador, in August 28, 1977, where she spent her early years during a time of civil war. To escape the Salvadoran civil war, in 1982, her family migrated to the United States, then, in 1985, to Windsor, Ontario, Canada where she has lived since.

Portillo has dedicated much time to learning and cultivating her various intellectual and creative skills. In 1998, she commenced her undergraduate studies at the University of Windsor in the psychology program. That year, she took her first course in philosophy "Reasoning Skills." She did not pre-cognize that she would later study philosophy as an undergraduate student, while working for *Informal Logic*, and that she would assist the same professor of the "Reasoning Skills" course, who happened to be an Editor of the journal. Even less did she pre-cognize that she would go on to study philosophy at the Master's level, while working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant of the "Reasoning Skills" course.

In her fourth year of psychology, she took the course "Informal Logic: Argumentation" which was taught by Ralph Johnson who would later employ her at the journal *Informal Logic*. The argumentation course stimulated her interest in the study of philosophy. The capacity of philosophical study to help in the development of good reasoning and argumentation skills impressed her. Also, that year, she took the course "Informal Logic: Fallacy" which she would later take again, but this time as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, while working with Catherine Hundleby, the professor of the course, and her Master's philosophy thesis advisor.

Portillo graduated from the University of Windsor with a Bachelor of Arts degree with Honours in Psychology with Thesis in 2002. During the academic year after her graduation, she worked as a Research Assistant for the Psychotherapy Research Centre at the University of Windsor. In this time, she studied International Relations and Development. As well, she held other positions as a Research Assistant for the Department of Political Science and for the

Department of Sociology & Anthropology.

Portillo took the undergraduate courses "Philosophy of Science" and "Philosophy of Education" which Professor Parr taught, and "Metaphysics," "Environmental Ethics" and "Social and Political Philosophy" which Jeff Noonan taught. As well, she took the undergraduate third year course "Philosophy of Mind" which Marcello Guarini taught. These courses stimulated her interest in philosophical study so much that they influenced her choice to major in Philosophy.

In her official, first semester as a philosophy undergraduate major, she took the third year course "Mind Design and Android Epistemology" which Guarini taught. Later in her first year of graduate philosophical studies, she took a course on Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence & Cognitive Science which Guarini taught, while employed as a Research Assistant helping Guarini in the development of neural networks. Also, in her first semester as a philosophy undergraduate major, she obtained the position of Editorial Assistant at the journal *Informal Logic* where she worked for three years helping the Editors including Hans Hansen. Hansen later employed her to contribute to the research analysis of the arguments used in the 2004 Canadian national election campaign. As well, she took a graduate seminar course on John Stuart Mill which Hansen taught, and for Portillo's philosophy Master's thesis, Hansen was the internal reader. Additionally, that same semester, she took the course "Existentialism" which Johnson taught and an ethics course which Blair taught. Last but not least, in the same semester she took the courses "Early Modern Philosophy: Empiricism" and the third year course "Theories of Nature" which were taught by Philip Rose, with whom she later worked as the Graduate Teaching Assistant of the course "Environmental Ethics."

In 2005, Portillo graduated from the University of Windsor with the Bachelor of Arts degree with Combined Honours in Philosophy and Political Science, and a minor equivalent in Sociology. During the summer which followed her graduation, she worked as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Philosophy.

Portillo was able to pursue her Master of Arts degree in Philosophy with the help of a

University of Windsor tuition scholarship. As well, graduate assistantships have permitted her an interesting and rewarding experience working with the instructors of some of the courses that she completed earlier as a student at the same university.

Portillo has a wide range of academic interests, and looks forward to further opportunities to explore these interests. Her main philosophical interests include social and political philosophy, particularly, the notion of the 'just society.' Also, she is interested in philosophy of social science, in part, because the development of fair, non-elitist approaches to the study of social phenomena is essential for understanding the nature of the just society. Additionally, she is interested in the philosophy of education, and, in particular, anti-oppressive education, because it is crucial for the development of wisdom on social justice. Last but not least, she is interested in the philosophy of mind and concepts such as wisdom and rationality which consists of both critical thinking and creativity. These mental attributes are important for the development of good judgment which is essential for the capacity to understand and conceive the just and peaceful society.