Chapter VIII
Mill's Understanding of Customary Morality and Its Identity with Moral Pluralism [I]
Mill's Understanding of Perfectibility and Progress as Criteria of Measurement of Attainment of *Telos*: His Recognition of the Nature of Moral Pluralism and Its Relation to His Universal Virtue Theory.

§VIII.i. The potential of Mill's thought for engagement with the problems of contemporary political theory. The references in the previous chapters to Mill's engagement with the existence of moral pluralism suggests that it was a similar problem for the development of political theory in the nineteenth century as it is today. A more thorough way for the occurrence of this engagement to be recognized is by examination of Mill's understanding of customary morality, its origin, development and purpose in the lives of individual agents and of the community. Mill's approach to the problem was to acknowledge the existence of a plurality of moral codes, to explain their subsumption in a single universal code of moral action, and further to provide an explanation of their existence. The outcome of his examination of customary morality produced criteria whereby the plurality of codes may be evaluated and compared, thus providing means for establishing their compatibility and commensurability. Such criteria also serve to distinguish valuable from disvaluable codes of behaviour. Mill's examination continued beyond this categorization process to explain how the plurality of codes came about, how they all began as valuable in terms of their conduciveness to the attainment of *telos*, and how some of them altered their effect on human interaction to become either indifferent or counterproductive to that end.

Mill's explanation of the reason behind the emergence of a plurality of moral codes, each originally evolved to contribute to the same end - the achievement of happiness and the attainment of *telos*, for both individual and community - also engages with the contemporary debate. This explanation is found jointly in Mill's understanding first of the original potentials for cultivation and development across the spectrum of dispositions etc., found in all agents. and secondly of the impact of circumstances and environment on the shaping of individual agents' development and that of the community to which they belong. These, then, are the constituent parts of Mill's

understanding of moral pluralism and each rests on the body of evidence already set down in the previous chapters.

The attainment of *telos* in the particular agent was recognized by Mill to be reached via the cultivation and development of potentials across the spectrum of dispositions, in harmony and balance and to the highest degree of perfection possible in that agent. The recognition and development of the complex of intersecting paths of action with which to reach this stage is the product of reason. Because such achievement is governed by both the original potentials in agents and the context and environment in which they exist, Mill recognized that there is a multiplicity of ways of doing this. At the level of individual agents, Mill acknowledged that there would be developed a plurality of broad ethical doctrines, each with the common goal of attainment of *telos*. Mill also was aware that any particular agent does not exist in an isolated condition but is a member of a community, and within that community a member of a variety of groups. Approbation from the other members of the community, and of the groups, provides a significant part of an individual agent's happiness. Striving for such approbation marks the beginning of the overlap between Mill's understanding of the perfectibility of the agent and the achievement of progress which is its counterpart in the community.

The purpose of Chapter VIII is to establish the connection between Mill's understanding of perfecting dispositions in harmony and balance as the achievement of the greatest possible happiness and so the attainment of *telos* for the individual, and the development of one or more codes of action to that end as the employment of reason is transmuted into a pattern of habitual behaviours. In the sphere of private action, patterns of behaviour take shape as a broad ethical doctrine which has as its goal the individual's satisfaction of his or her desire for happiness and which is adopted by and governs the life of the agent. But agents are not isolated in their pursuit of happiness. Part of that happiness is achieved via action in the public sphere. Additionally, a significant amount of happiness is provided by others' approval both of actions in the private and the public spheres. In the public sphere, the requirement for others' approbation in conjunction with the satisfaction of the desires of other-directed dispositions means that generally recognized codes of behaviour govern the public actions of the individual agent. At the same time, similar approbation provides an imprimatur for action in the private sphere.

Codes of action governing acts in both the private and the public spheres are not homogeneous. Furthermore, they operate at both conditional and unconditional levels.

The conditional code which takes many different forms in differing contexts is equivalent to the commendation of supererogatory acts described above. Agents' performance of (or failure to perform) such acts is a double source of happiness (or unhappiness). It satisfies (or frustrates) the desires of other-directed dispositions, and it incurs the approbation (or indifference) of the community. The unconditional code of action, also described above, is equivalent to the set of moral commands governing action and prohibition in the particular community of which the agent is a member, and is a similarly complex source of happiness or unhappiness. In this case, failure by agents to adhere to the moral code incurs both disapprobation and sanction. Again and because of the plurality of possible environments, the development of these public codes of action - approved and applied by the community, or by the portion(s) of the community most important to the individual agent - can take many forms. The sum of these codes of action is Mill's recognition of moral pluralism, or as he terms it 'customary morality.'

Mill's analysis of customary morality was the outcome of his recognition of the requirement by his enlarged principle of utility of criteria of measurement whereby the achievement of happiness and the attainment of *telos* might be recognized. Using the language of his time, such criteria were categorized by Mill under the headings of perfectibility and progress, the means to and employment of both discovered by reason.[1] It is the relation of reason to the discovery and implementation of the criteria of perfectibility and progress, and the manner in which its employment mutates over time into custom and habit, that provides the key of Mill's explanation of his ambivalence to moral pluralism.

The pattern of examination of Mill's understanding of moral pluralism in this chapter begins with his search for the criteria with which to measure the success of agents and the community in achieving happiness. These are the perfectibility of the dispositional potentials of the individual agent and the progress of the institutions and practices of

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1 The concepts of perfectibility and progress are rejected by many contemporary thinkers as being vague, woolly and discredited terms, and so without any useful application in the development of political theory. Because of their significance for the unravelling of Mill's thought as interpreted here, I have provided a justification of their use by Mill in Appendix I. To do so is simply to recognize that without such justification, Mill's depiction of customary morality (and so of moral pluralism), its origins, function, and weaknesses, may be criticized as containing a weakness which I believe it does not possess. The format of the appendix demonstrates that Mill was as careful to distinguish the meaning of his terms in the case of 'perfectibility' and 'progress' as he was in defining his meaning for 'perception', 'desire', 'happiness' etc.

the community in harmony and balance to the end of achieving the greatest possible happiness.

§VIII.ii. Mill's requirement for criteria of measurement. The product of Mill's broad ethical theory was the development by him of a doctrine of ethical action with which to attain the *telos* of individual and community existence. Simply stated, that doctrine commands in some circumstances and commends in others particular choices of action in both the private and the public spheres the result of which will be the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for all concerned. Given that happiness accompanies the cultivation and development of dispositions etc., agents are virtuous insofar as they realize their potentials in dispositions, and actions are good in that they contribute to such realization. The nexus between human nature and its *telos*, the ultimate principle of action as the striving for happiness, and Mill's broad ethical doctrine is complete. The final stage of Mill's endeavour was to translate this knowledge into a system of social and political institutions and practices to assist all individuals and the community to the attainment of that end.

The task of Mill's socio-political theory was not to introduce the ultimate principle of action as the ground of doctrine. As demonstrated above, it operates naturally in every individual and in every community to some degree. What was intended by Mill was to develop a doctrine whereby conditions most conducive to the natural striving for happiness and the attainment of *telos* could be brought into being as the program of action for both individuals and the society as a whole. To this end, Mill first sought knowledge of how the motivating principle of the *telos* of existence worked in existential societies, both his own and those for which he had sufficient historical evidence. The object of his examination was, of course, mid-nineteenth century Britain, but it was understood by him to be a representative example of how the natural striving for *telos* worked, and had worked historically, in terms both of cultural and geographical environment. Mill acknowledged that differences occur in the institutions and processes of societies separated by time, location and sophistication, but the basic principle remains the same. Once he understood the degree and manner in which the principle was (and is) present in social and political organization and practices, it would be possible for him to build upon that foundation.[2]

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2 This is acknowledgment of Mill's ambition to bring about the social and political conditions conducive to the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for both individual and collective, via incremental reforms in the structure and processes of private and social action: it is, in short, recognition of his intention to develop social and political theory and praxis on the ground of his account of human nature and its *telos*, via the intermediary stage of development of a broad ethical doctrine. (Mill tells us, in his *Autobiography*, of the impact

The way in which Mill undertook such an examination was by analyzing the patterns of behaviour employed in both the private and the public sphere to achieve happiness. The degree to which happiness (and so the *telos* of individual existence) was achieved in the life of the particular agent was understood by him in terms of the perfecting of activities which comprise the agent's life. Additionally, the degree to which it was possible to achieve happiness in the existential conditions obtaining was understood as the degree of perfectibility open to the agent. In the public sphere, Mill understood the existential degree of community happiness to signal the degree of progress toward the greatest possible happiness. In both cases, in the private and public spheres of the individual agent and in the totality of interaction in the community, Mill contrasted perfectibility and progress with mere improvement. Through an understanding of Mill's employment of the terms 'perfectibility' and 'progress' and his contrasting of those terms with 'improvement,' a picture emerges of how Mill understood the state of both individuals and society to stand in the mid-nineteenth century, and of how he anticipated the melioration of that state.

Mill's analysis of the criteria of measurement of achievement of happiness and attainment of *telos* resonates with the contemporary debate concerning moral pluralism in a most fruitful way. It emerges that Mill's understanding of perfectibility in the individual and progress in the community and the means to their realization contains a detailed account of the way in which a plurality of moral codes is the inevitable result of the pursuit of such an end in a multiplicity of particular and group contexts. Examination of the manner in which the volition to perfectibility in the particular agent is expressed in culturally-, socially-, and technologically-conditioned environments, coupled with the natural interaction and co-operation of agents, is shown by Mill to lead to a variety of codes of ethical and moral behaviour which nonetheless have a common end - the achievement of happiness and the attainment of *telos*.

Mill's understanding of perfectibility and progress, together with his relation of those concepts to the context in which they operate, shows quite clearly his appreciation and acceptance of the inevitable advent of moral pluralism both within and between

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made upon him by the early Greek philosophers, in particular Plato and the several depictions of Socrates he read whilst a young and impressionable man. He also describes the impulse to action, provided by the early leaders of the French Revolution, when reading accounts of the fledgling French Republic. His ambition, he confided there, was to be 'an English Girondist,' and to effect change in the lives of all who comprise the English society. See 'Autobiography.' *Works*. Vol.1 p.66.)

communities. His further analysis of those concepts against the ultimate criterion of action - the achievement of happiness as the attainment of the purpose and end of existence - shows equally clearly that they obtain their justification and validity only when directed toward this environmentally-transcendent end. It turns out that Mill's universal virtue theory has the relation with moral pluralism as does his ultimate principle of action to the spectrum of secondary principles. Just as those secondary principles are numerous, and will vary from agent to agent and group to group depending on the existential circumstances and environment in which they operate, but always depend for their justification on their ultimate subsumption in the first principle of utility, so do the particular moral codes vary between and within communities whilst always depending for their legitimization on their being means whereby nature is amended to the end of the greatest possible happiness-achievement.

If Mill's analysis of the concepts of perfectibility and progress holds, then particular moral codes should be able to be assessed in terms of their compatibility once the contexts in which they operate (the circumstances and conditions of the culture and environment in which they are employed to achieve happiness) are examined and compared. Analysis of the codes would reveal those aspects which are directed toward the *telos* of existence (and identifiable by their achievement of happiness) and those which are indifferent, or counterproductive, to that end (identifiable by their failure to produce happiness or their production of unhappiness). Insofar as different moral and ethical codes are conducive to the attainment of *telos*, they are compatible. Inasmuch as they contain aspects indifferent, or counterproductive, to that end, they fall outside the goal of Mill's universal virtue ethic and are required by him to be modified. Incompatibility between codes is thus identified in terms of the failure of a code (or of some part of a code) to conduce to the achievement of happiness. Application of this criterion of happiness-achievement to moral codes in radically different contexts and environments will reveal the extent to which they are compatible.

Moreover, particular codes both within and across cultures will be commensurable inasmuch as they are, in the light of Mill's analysis, able to be evaluated against the single criterion of happiness-production. (Granted, this will be a difficult task, given the diversity of conditions which combine to form the environment in which a particular culture develops.) This is not to say that communities and groups within communities who hold to one moral code will not continue vehemently to reject other moral codes. It is to say, however, that such rejection would be on grounds other than compatibility and commensurability.

During the examination of Mill's understanding and use of the terms 'progress' and 'perfectibility' his linkage of them with codes of behaviour and the rules and precepts which comprise those codes is made clear. His recognition that the self-realization of agents takes place in widely differing contexts is the recognition that codes of behaviour will also differ, albeit with the same ultimate goal. The reasoning process which discovers the best means whereby to achieve the satisfaction of desires, and ultimately the happiness that accompanies the cultivation and development of a disposition is also the process that locks that means into a code of practice. The multiplicity of possible contexts in which reasoning faculties operate and which affect their development and interpretation of means to ends is the origin of an equally varied spectrum of codes of action designed to achieve the end of happiness within a particular context. Mill's completion of his understanding of the origin and development of this plurality of moral codes is in his recognition of the necessary conditions each code must satisfy in order to comply with the universal virtue theory which is his enlarged Utilitarianism. Those which do so are shown by him to be both compatible and commensurable.

The product of this chapter is, then, two-fold: in the first instance, it demonstrates how Mill's understanding of perfectibility and progress satisfies his requirement for criteria of measurement of the degree to which *telos* has been achieved either by the individual agent or by the community. Secondly, it notes the light shed by Mill's analysis on the inevitability of the emergence of a plurality of moral codes and practices compatible with the attainment of *telos*, together with the means whereby they are recognized as compatible and commensurable one with another.

§VIII.iii. Mill's understanding of the concept of perfectibility. Life-choices, the embrace of a particular way of life as being most valuable to a particular agent, the development of a moral code with which to justify that choice, and the defense of that code against the demands of alternative codes, are all component parts of the contemporary recognition of moral pluralism. Mill understood this endeavour undertaken by all agents as being the expression by individuals of their natural striving to perfect the spectrum of potentials in dispositions in context. (Part of that striving for perfection to the extent it is possible in the individual agent, according to Mill, necessitates other-directed action. This is the way in which he understood the general happiness of the individual agent to be increased, with the logical outcome of all agents' achievement of maximum personal happiness to be the achievement of the greatest possible community happiness.)

Analysis of what Mill meant by the perfection of the agent reveals the co-existence in the community of a plurality of particular ethical and moral codes (ranging from the unique and singular to those shared by large sections or the whole of the community) *and* a universal code of moral conduct.[3] The unifying principle of happiness was seen by Mill to underpin both the particular and universal codes, with the ultimate benchmark of each to be conduciveness to the attainment of the *telos* of both individual and community existence. Demonstration of Mill's understanding and use of perfectibility as the criterion with which to measure attainment of this end simultaneously demonstrates the relation between the plurality of moral codes and the universal code.

It will be seen that Mill's depiction of moral pluralism is not a cleanly-etched picture. This was intentional and may be seen to rest on his recognition of both the unique spectrum of potentials in dispositions within each individual and the infinite variety of possible outcomes created by the interaction of intervening variables on the cultivation and development of those potentials. However, his acknowledgment of the complexity of the matter is the start of a confirmation of his value to greater understanding of the contemporary problem. The relation between perfectibility, happiness, and the achievement of *telos*, is also made strongly in this analysis. So not only does Mill have an explanation for the origin of differing life-choices and evaluations of what it is that comprises the good life, he also relates each and all to the end of individual and species existence.

§VIII.iv. Mill's understanding of 'perfection,' and a comparison between it and his understanding and use of 'improvement.' The reaffirmation of the importance of harmony and balance. In Mill's understanding of perfection, the distinction between it and the meaning of improvement will be found to be an important strand of the connection between his account of human nature and its *telos*, and the broad ethical doctrine he developed to guide and assist agents in the achievement of their particular end.

What is Mill's definition of perfection? It is clear that Mill's understanding of the achievement of perfection through the alteration of human nature is the goal of human existence.[4] In order for this to be an intelligible goal for social and political theory and

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3 The similarity between Mill's universal code and the Golden Rule or categorical imperative in terms of outcome is not unexpected. The difference lies in the means of justification.

4 Mill, 'Three Essays on Religion.' *Works*. Vol 10 pp.396-397.

doctrine, he was required to go further and explain in what this alteration consists, how it is to be achieved, and how recognized. Mill sometimes used an unlimited understanding of the term 'perfection,' but for the development of his broad ethical doctrine he consistently employed an empirically demonstrable, limited definition which encompasses both a general and a particular account of the perfectibility of human beings.[5]

The key to Mill's understanding of the limited perfection possible for particular agents emerges when a comparison is made between its ground, which is the psychophysiological structure of human beings and the existential circumstances of their lives, and the speculative and purely abstract concept presented by earlier theorists. Mill did not, as they did, attempt to develop a definition of formally logical perfection, and then apply it to circumstances.[6] Just as his concept of perception is firmly grounded in the psychophysiological states of humans, so his anticipation of the degree of perfectibility possible in human beings also rests on that ground. This naturalist premise provides a different starting point to the religious one adopted by such theorists as Godwin and Priestley, and is more in tune with the pragmatic account of perfection developed by Kant.

Mill was, then, a perfectibilist rather than a perfectionist, and his perfectibilism has at its core the recognition that while limited perfection is described in the abstract in terms of the cultivation and development of any particular dispositions etc., it is unique to each individual in the concrete. This is simply to recognize that the variability of potentials in individuals is infinite. On this account, the possible perfecting of a particular disposition etc., is achieved by the cultivation and development of the potential in that disposition unique to each individual, and because of the infinite range of potentials - each perfectible within its own limits - any ordinary agent is as able to achieve perfection in a particular element of nature as is a genius. Perfection, according to Mill, is in this limited sense the bringing to its highest degree of

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5 See e.g. Mill, 'Autobiography.' p.250; 'On Liberty.' *Works*. Vol.18 p.273; 'Perfectibility.' *Works*. Vol.26 p.430; 'A System of Logic' Book VI Ch.X §3, *Works*. Vol.8 pp.913-14. For the distinction between limited and unlimited perfection, see Appendix I.

6 The origins of Mill's theory of perfectibility may be seen to exist in some of the theorists examined in Appendix I. His understanding of perfection is the achievement of the highest degree of realization of the potential capacities of human beings in a balanced and harmonious manner. These together combine to provide the foundation of moral excellence. This is similar to the understanding of perfection that is to be found in Aristotle, and which can also be drawn from Kant's overlap of speculative and practical accounts of perfection that occur in his philosophy of history. (See Immanuel Kant, *On History*. Indianapolis, New York, 1953 pp.11-26.)

excellence the potential in any disposition etc., in any particular agent. There is a *caveat* attached to this description, however, which emerges when Mill's understanding of the term 'improvement' is considered.

In what way does Mill's understanding of limited perfection differ from his understanding of an improvement in the degree of excellence in a disposition etc? Many instances occur where Mill's use of the terms 'perfection,' 'perfectibility,' or 'progress' is accompanied by or appears to be synonymous with his use of the term 'improvement.'[7] There is an important distinction between the terms, however, that must be noted. It is a distinction which, if not clarified, will lead to some confusion in reading Mill's text in order to assess the present claim that the achievement of limited perfection and progress in the individual agent and in the community are the goals of his enlarged utilitarianism.[8]

'Improvement,' which is always a change in a process or skill or the development of a particular disposition to a higher degree of excellence, is specifically noted by Mill to be not always identical to a movement toward perfection of the individual or toward the melioration of the whole.[9] A clearer understanding of his differentiation between improvement and melioration of the whole is found in his statement that; 'if a gain in one respect is purchased by a more than equivalent loss in the same or in any other, there is not Progress.'[10] The progress of the community, and the perfecting of the individual agent, are not, according to Mill, achieved by the improvement of any one aspect of the whole at the expense of any other. 'Improvement' remains the evaluative term used to describe the change in excellence in *any* disposition or process, *when considered in isolation*. However, when the change is considered with regard to its effect on the whole, of either a single agent or the community, it has to be achieved without a countervailing loss in any other part of that whole for it to be evaluated as progress. There is a clear relation between this understanding of the distinction

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7 See e.g. Mill, 'Autobiography.' pp.245, 247; 'Speech on the British Constitution.' *Works*. Vol.26 p.282; 'On Liberty.' p.273; Perfectibility.' p.430; 'Considerations on Representative Government.' *Works*. Vol.19 p.384.

8 Mill's goals for his enlarged utilitarianism have already been stated to be the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for both individual and the collective, which is the expression of the attainment of the end of existence. The implication here is that limited perfection and progress must in some way be linked to both happiness and the survival and melioration of the individual and the species. This implication is drawn out and made explicit in the remainder of this chapter.

9 Mill, 'A System of Logic.' Book VI. Ch.X §3. pp.913-14

10 Mill, 'Considerations on Representative Government.' p.388.

between 'improvement' and limited perfection and progress that may be traced back to Mill's account of human nature and its *telos*.[11]

The origin of the distinction is located in the shift of focus from the particular disposition etc., to the spectrum of dispositions, faculties, and capacities. This shift is away from consideration of improvement and limited perfection in the abstract to the application of the concept to Mill's depiction of the totality of human nature, its end, and the manner in which that end is to be achieved. Mill's understanding of the improvement of dispositions etc., in any particular agent has already been examined in the context of the desire for happiness. Agents desire the happiness that attaches to the cultivation and development of dispositions. This development, insofar as it occurs in any particular disposition, is the degree to which the particular agent has achieved the self-realization possible via that disposition, and general self-realization is Mill's definition of the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for the individual agent.

Self-realization in its broad sense is not inevitable, however. Mill was aware of the inclination in agents to choose not only the nearest and most easily obtainable happiness, but to do so to excess.[12] This means that agents may develop particular dispositions to an excessive degree in order to obtain the maximum pleasure and happiness that accompanies such development. The result is the lopsided development of character.[13] Such development is, without doubt, improvement in the particular disposition and may if it is taken in isolation to its highest possible degree be properly classed as the achievement of limited perfection, but it is detrimental to the cross-spectrum development of dispositions which is the basis of character development. It is, according to Mill, the general cultivation and development of dispositions that is the necessary condition for the achievement of the greatest possible happiness, of self-realization as an holistic concept, and the attainment of the *telos* of the individual. And development of particular dispositions to their highest possible degree, which is recognized always by Mill as improvement, and in isolation as limited perfection, may in fact turn out to be counterproductive to the limited perfection possible to the totality of the individual agent's nature and therefore to the achievement of the greatest happiness possible.

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11 See Chapter I., particularly §§viii-x.
12 Mill, 'Utilitarianism.' *Works*. Vol.10 p.212.
13 Mill, 'Considerations on Representative Government.' pp.396-397.

This account suggests Mill's understanding of the difference between improvement or limited perfection in the particular dispositions, and limited perfection across the whole of human nature, is linked to the totality of their relations. Both self- and group-realization were understood by Mill to be dependent upon a harmony in the development of the component parts of human nature. In that case, the concept of improvement is one that is potentially beneficial or detrimental. Improvement in any particular disposition or faculty is beneficial insofar as it does not destabilize the balance of cultivation and development necessary for self-realization. Should it do so it is detrimental to the achievement of that end. In the community, improvement in any process or institution must harmonize with other improvements in order for progress to take place. If it does not, and instead unbalances the harmony of the parts of social interaction, it is detrimental to the achievement of progress and so of community-realization. This is recognized by Mill in his criticism of the development of past societies wherein individuals had been encouraged to advance in 'a lame and lopsided manner.'[14] So Mill's understanding of the achievement of limited perfection in dispositions etc., within the individual agent, and of progress across the broad community, will be discovered to pivot on the concept of harmony and balance in both individual and group.

§VIII.v. Summary of Mill's understanding of the concept of perfectibility as it applies to individual agents. Balance and harmony between the elements of individual nature, between the individual and the community, and between parts of the community is, according to Mill, a necessary condition for the achievement of the greatest possible happiness. Its internal effect on the individual agent is the virtuous development of that agent, and the code of behaviour whereby such virtuous development is achieved is the ethical code of the agent. This is the explanation behind the distinction Mill made between the concept of improvement of any and every disposition in isolation and the concept of the limited perfectibility of the whole agent and the progress of the community. This distinction is particularly important in the extended understanding of Mill's advocacy of self-realization to include the necessary requirement of balance and harmony. It is, in the amended form of harmonious self-realization, a complete account of the relation between the individual and the community based on the achievement of the greatest possible individual happiness accompanied by the by-product of the greatest possible happiness for the community. This is underwritten by Mill's account of human nature and its *telos*.

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14 *Loc. cit.*

The potential for excellence in any particular talent which exists in an individual may be realized through cultivation and development, to the degree of improvement possible in that particular individual. It is only when the cultivation of the particular disposition is viewed as a contributing factor in the striving for the *telos* of the individual that it is evaluated in terms of the limited perfection possible for the individual *qua* holistic entity. From this perspective, Mill made plain that improvement in any disposition etc., could be counterproductive to the achievement of the limited perfection possible to the individual as a whole. The concepts of harmony and balance as the method whereby the greatest degree of perfection, and so of self-realization, happiness, and the achievement of the end of existence, is obtained demonstrates clearly Mill's understanding of the link between his account of human nature and its *telos*, at the level of the individual agent, and his development of a broad ethical doctrine whereby to assist agents in bringing about this condition. That doctrine was developed to operate across the spectrum of dispositions in order to develop them as a group to the end of the achievement of the greatest possible happiness.

Mill's understanding of perfectibility in individual agents turns out to be the highest degree of *overall* excellence possible in an individual: it is the optimum balance and harmony of all the skills, capacities, and dispositions possessed by the individual. The result of perfecting dispositions in harmony and balance is the achievement of virtue in the agent, and the code of action with which the agent's possible perfection is achieved is the ethical code of that agent. Significantly, a vital part of the individual's self-realization is the cultivation and development of other-directed dispositions which is achieved through the performance of social actions. The performance of social actions by the individual also contributes to the happiness of the society, and, cumulatively, results in the progress of that society which is signified by an increase in societal happiness.

While Mill's argument expressly noted the value of all dispositions etc., in their original condition as contributing factors to the individual agent's general happiness, the focus of his perfectibilism is the cluster of elements of human nature that Mill called the internal senses.[15] These include, as inherent in human nature, the

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15 It is this recognition of the potential contribution of each to the *telos* of individual existence that underpins his opposition to the organized religions which attempt to repress or to condemn the development of some of these talents. Rather than condemn them, Mill wrote, a believer in the goodness of God would accept that it is more consistent to believe 'that this Being gave *all* human faculties that they might be cultivated and unfolded, not rooted out and consumed, and that he takes delight in every nearer approach made by his creatures to the ideal conception embodied in them, every increase in any of their capabilities of

dispositions of selfishness, altruism and kinship altruism (which he refers to as 'sympathy'), imagination, and most importantly human beings' desire to form their own character, and the wish for self-culture.[16]

At the same time, Mill recognized that other dispositions which operate purely in the private sphere have an important effect on the development of the character of the agent. This is the explanation for Mill's insistence on the development of the spectrum of dispositions, capacities and faculties as contributors to the overall moral state and character of the agent. Holistic development, which includes the performance of perfect and imperfect obligations, was considered by Mill to be necessary for the achievement of the highest possible moral state for the individual, and as such justifies his presentation of a broad ethical doctrine in which the cultivation of the moral disposition, whilst crucial, is only one aspect.[17]

The link between Mill's account of human nature and his development of a broad ethical doctrine may now be summarized in terms of the perfectibility of individual human beings. The movement of particular agents toward self-realization through the harmonious development and proper balance of the spectrum of faculties and dispositions leads to the limited perfection of that nature, the product of which is the greatest possible individual happiness. [8] A vital part of the individual's self-realization is the cultivation and development of the moral faculty, achieved in part through the performance of social actions. These social actions contribute concurrently to the happiness of the society, and, cumulatively, result in the progress of that society which is signified by an increase in societal happiness. Mill's understanding of the limited perfectibility of individual agents turns out to be the attainment of the highest degree of overall excellence possible in an individual: it is the optimum balanced and harmonized cultivation and development of all the skills, capacities, and dispositions possessed by the individual; it is, most importantly, the achievement of the highest possible moral state for the individual. [9]

The above analysis shows that the focus of Mill's pragmatic understanding of the amendment of human nature was the degree of perfectibility to be achieved in the moral life of human beings. This, Mill noted, was recognized by each individual

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comprehension, of action, or of enjoyment.' Mill, 'On Liberty.' p.265. (Emphasis added.)

16 Mill, 'Three Essays on Religion.' pp.393-395; 'Autobiography.' p.115; 'Remarks on Benthams Philosophy.' *Works.* Vol.10 p.6; 'Bentham.' *Works.* Vol.10 p.98.

17 Mill, 'Sedgwick's Discourse.' *Works.* Vol.10 p.70.

18 Mill, 'Three Essays on Religion.' p.391. (Emphasis added.)

19 Mill, 'Sedgwick's Discourse.' p.70; 'Three Essays on Religion.' pp.396-397.

internally and privately. 'Man is' he wrote, 'a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end; of desiring for its own sake, the conformity of his own character to *his* standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil, from other source than his own inward consciousness. The impulse to develop the moral faculty or disposition in the individual, he continued, 'in the strict sense of the term [is] the desire of perfection, or the feeling of an approving or of an accusing conscience.'[20] As such, the achievement of moral excellence which Mill made the central theme of his work is evaluated by each individual on two levels. The first is against a private recognition of the original state of dispositions etc., and awareness of the highest degree of excellence possible for them, as individuals. The second is against the recognition by conscience of the degree of approbation or disapprobation for such cultivation and development present in the community of which the individual is a part. The instrument of evaluation thus turns out to be, in part and in an important sense, the conscience of the individual rather than a universal, and universally accepted, external benchmark.[21] There is implicit in this statement the expectation of differences of opinion and belief concerning moral matters between individuals and between communities. This requires explanation.

Mill did not believe that individuals can be perfected in any easily understood or organized fashion. He was aware of the difference and the distance between human nature as a state of undeveloped powers and properties, and its mature state as evidenced in the variety of characters found in the existential world. The perfecting of the inherent potentials of human nature to whatever degree possible is a process that takes place in a complicated and shifting arena. It is not a straightforward, nor - even if desired - an inevitable process. 'The simple fact is,' Mill pointed out, 'human interests are so complicated, and the effects of any incident whatever so multitudinous, that if it touches mankind at all, its influence on them is, in the great majority of cases, both good and bad.'[22] The expectation of differences of ethical and moral beliefs between agents (and, as will be noted below, between communities) is flagged here by Mill. It does not detract, however, from perfectibility as a concept central to Mill's

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20 Mill, 'Bentham.' p.85. (Emphasis added.)

21 Mill did not, of course, deny the existence of external codes of morality, nor of the standards of behaviour regulated by positive law. He was, however, concerned to distinguish them from the internal evaluation of excellence that is the individual's standard against which to measure achievement of degrees of perfectibility. In this regard, Mill recognized also the obstacle sometimes presented by both customary morality and outdated positive law. This distinction between the internal conscience of the individual and what was sometimes regarded by Mill as merely public opinion is further explored below where Mill's understanding of customary morality, organized religion, and the power of conformity is examined.

22 Mill, 'Three Essays on Religion.' p.337.

understanding of human nature, and the manner in which it is achieved as a signal which indicates the probable shape of his social and political theory.

The connection between Mill's understanding of the perfectibility of the individual agent and its relation to the achievement of happiness, and the development of a plurality of moral codes, lies in the input of conscience at the second level of evaluation described above. The approbation of other agents is significant in the individual's evaluation of action and its consequences, both in the private and the public spheres.[23] The grounds of approbation in a community are those which comprise the rational acknowledgment of its members that particular acts are valuable or disvaluable to the achievement of the satisfaction of desires.[24] Rational recognition of the value or otherwise of acts is gradually transmuted into habitual response, and in the case of community recognition becomes what Mill understood to be a tenet of customary morality, or moral pluralism.[25] For an agent to receive the approbation of the community of which he or she is a member, the performance of actions must satisfy the moral criteria accepted by the community and which cover the act in question. This is clearly the case when considering the development of moral codes of action in the abstract. When Mill considered such development in historical terms (the examination of which takes place below) he recognized that the emergence of a plurality of moral codes was inevitable given the plurality of contexts and environments which house both individuals and communities over time and space.

The place of perfectibilism in Mill's naturalistic and holistic theory is thus significant in that, in the form described above, it provides the bridge between his understanding of the individual agent as driven by self-interested desire for happiness and his requirement of the generation of community happiness. The individual's pursuit of the greatest possible happiness which is found in the balanced and harmonious development of dispositions etc., necessitates the development of other-directed dispositions in order to achieve that end. This development of altruistic and sympathetic dispositions has the primary effect of contributing to the performing agent's happiness and the by-product of an increase in the community happiness. The satisfaction of the desires of the social disposition, which leads agents to value their status in and the approbation of the community, augments that of the other-directed dispositions to result in a strengthening of the bridge between individual and community happiness. This bridging relation between the individual's striving for

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23 See Chapter VII §vii.
24 See Chapter III §iii.
25 See Chapter II §vii; and Chapter VII §viii.

personal happiness and the increase in the happiness of the community is further explained in the examination of Mill's understanding of the concept of progress in the community, and his recognition of a similar type of improvement in that sphere as occurs in the private sphere of action

In addition, there is found in Mill's analysis of the significance of progress to the attainment of the community *telos* a continuation of his implicit acknowledgment of the inevitable development of a plurality of moral codes. It will be noted in the examination of his understanding of the concept how Mill continued to relate their evaluation back to the principle of utility as the universal and overarching moral principle.

§VIII.vi. Mill's understanding of the concept of progress as it applies to the community.[26] Mill's understanding of the difference between improvement and

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26 What of the particular criticisms of Mill's adherence to the concept? John Gray appears to suggest in one place that Mill subscribed to the optimistic faith in progress that was common to his age. This understanding of Mill is also to be found in Susan Mendus' work on toleration. (See John Gray, *Mill on Liberty: a defence*. London, 1983 p.70ff. Susan Mendus, *Toleration and the Limits of Liberalism*. London, 1989 p.104.) It has been acknowledged above that Mill did, on occasion, write in such an optimistic vein. However, according to the interpretation of this essay, when the totality of his writing on progress is considered, it is clear that for Mill progress was in no sense inevitable. Similar criticisms of Mill occur in the work of Stromberg and van Doren. (See Roland N. Stromberg *European Intellectual History Since 1879*. New York, 1968 p.111; Charles van Doren *The Idea of Progress*. New York, 1967 p.239.) Both claim that Mill's is inevitabilist theory of progress. Halévy's position is closer to the mark, in that he argues that Mill held that human beings are capable of progress and perfectibility as a fundamental doctrine. However, he also considers Mill to subscribe to a belief in the laws of progress. (See Elie Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*. London, 1972 p.274.) It is true, as shown above, that Mill did concur with the claim that human beings have a disposition to progress. If, as is claimed here, his understanding of progress is of advancement in general good, this is certainly his position. But his categorical denial of inevitability and the laws of progress refute the criticisms made here. A disposition is far removed from a determined course of action.
Finally, in his interesting work, *Liberalisms*, Gray returns to the subject of Mill's account of progress. Here, Gray accuses Mill of neglecting the cultural tradition as a contributor to progress. This omission, according to Gray, 'infects' his account of progress with a rationalist and abstract-individualist 'distortion'. For Mill, he claims, tradition and culture are 'the enemy of progress'. (See John Gray, *Liberalisms: Essays in Political Philosophy*. London, 1989 p.226.] Furthermore, according to Gray, while Mill's progress is inherent as a tendency in the human mind, he fails to acknowledge its dependence on institutions and processes. This failure contributes to 'the traditional caricature of Mill as a fumbling and unprincipled eclectic.' (See Gray *op.cit* 1989 pp.227-228.)
This criticism fails to take into account Mill's understanding of the historical conditions that affect the possibility of progress. It is true that Mill argued against the despotism of custom and customary morality over the advancement of the general good. He did so, however, in depicting the circumstances of historical periods of transition. His acknowledgement of the contribution of custom and tradition to the achievement of progress in historical periods of stability is demonstrated above.(See Mill, 'Autobiography.' p.171.) In addition, Mill's

perfectibility at the level of the individual is found below to be paralleled by the distinction he made between improvement and progress in his understanding of the changes that occur in societies. The starting point of Mill's account of progress is found in his account of perfectibility. It is that human beings are social animals and are naturally disposed to desire recognition by, and the approbation and sympathy of, their fellow creatures. The satisfaction of this desire brings with it a degree of happiness in the same manner as does the satisfaction of those other desires previously mentioned. The most stable and long-lasting way in which this desire is satisfied, according to Mill, is in the cultivation of a reputation for integrity, honesty, and virtue. Such a reputation is made by adherence to the positive and customary laws of the society, by performance of both duties and supererogatory acts, and by conforming to the customs and mores of the group. The signal of the happiness that attaches to public approbation is found in the satisfaction of the 'internal criterion of conscience.'[27]

In his restatement of this bridge between the desires of the individual agent and the progress of the community, Mill once again noted the contrast in terms of effect between the performance of natural actions of human beings toward the achievement of the end of existence, and the possible distortion of those actions by the development and acceptance of what turn out to be counterproductive traditions. In all societies, Mill noted, some approbation and sympathy attaches to the performance of duties and behaviours sanctioned not because of their value to the community, but merely because they form the customary morality of the time.[28] Thus the criterion of conscience may be mistaken and at odds with the primary criterion of happiness, which is focused on both individual and species survival and melioration.

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understanding of the value of custom and tradition, together with the important role played by institutions and processes in achieving advancement in the general good, is clearly stated in his account of the religion of humanity, and in his promotion of participation in the processes of government of all citizens. (See Mill, 'Three Essays on Religion.' p.369ff.; 'Considerations on Representative Government.' p.371ff.)

It would appear that the bulk of general criticisms of the term 'progress' are criticisms of what Mill called 'improvement', and as such he would concur with their thrust. Because they do not address the more complex understanding Mill has of progress as a holistic concept, they do no harm to that concept. As far as particular criticisms of Mill's account of progress are concerned they do not appear to damage the account of progress held by Mill as understood by this essay. Mill's strict understanding of progress as the advancement of general good across the broad front of elements that comprise the state of society is able, at this point, to stand as part of a plausible foundation for his theory of harmonious self-realization.

27 Mill's acceptance of the Aristotelian understanding of human sociability is melded by him with his own account of human nature and its *telos* to produce his version of naturalistic teleology.

28 Mill, 'A System of Logic.' Book VI Ch.X §2, pp.911-12; 'Utilitarianism.' p.227.

This flaw in the criterion of conscience in the recognition of what is valuable in terms of the *telos* of the whole is what separates it in status from the primary, internally recognized criterion of happiness. Mill was sharply aware of the problematic nature of this paradoxical state. The crux of the problem is the degree of activity or passivity occurrent in the faculty of reason, together with the quality of information and education used by that faculty to determine the choices of agents in both the private and the public sphere. Recognition of this impediment to the achievement of the greatest happiness possible for each individual became a major spur for Mill in the development of his socio-political theory.

§VIII.vii. Mill's understanding of progress cf. improvement, as a state or condition of the community. Condorcet's use of the term 'progress' is understood by him to represent no more that the sum of individual improvement and development 'realized in a large number of individuals joined together in society.'[29] Such progress may be quantified in the various arenas of social, intellectual, and commercial life, and an increase in quantity is sufficient to justify its application. In this way commentators speak of progress in the spheres of knowledge, of the various aspects of trade and manufacture, of the natural sciences. and so on.[30] The use of the term in this sense carries the implication of differing rates of progress in different spheres of activity. What it does not do is provide any criteria for evaluation of the qualitative change, nor of the relation between the progresses taking place, in the various spheres of activity. Recognizing these limitations, Mill understood such developments simply as improvement, judged on the criteria applicable only to the particular activity. It was not, for him, equivalent to the progress of the community.

Mill acknowledged that the discovery and delineation of the progress of human beings in society was the fundamental problem of social science, and consequently the goal and purpose of his proposed science of ethology, and in so doing he made a clear distinction between progress and improvement.[31] They are not synonymous.[32] Because

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29 Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet, *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*. 1795. Reprinted London:Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1955 p.4.

30 The view that material progress leads in some way to happiness and the improvement of virtue remains an element of twentieth century progressivist interpretation, see e.g. Christopher Lasch (*The True and Only Heaven*. New York, 1991 p.54) where he writes that 'it is to Adam Smith and his immediate predecessors, rather than to those second-rate thinkers more conventionally associated with the idea of progress - Fontanelle, Condorcet, Godwin, Comte, Spencer - that we should look to for the inner meaning of progressive ideology.' Lasch locates the origin of modern progressivism in the 'new science of political economy.'

31 In many of contemporary understandings of the concept of progress, concentration is upon economic and material progresses. But without corresponding progress in social institutions and practices, in the arts, and most particularly, in moral progress, there is an incompleteness

this is the case, argued Mill, 'progress' is not the solid foundation for social science that social theorists understand it to be.[33] There is no such thing as a law of progress. This is particularly apparent when consideration is given to the variable rates at which elements that comprise the social fabric improve in relation one to the others. If an improvement in one area of the organization and functioning of the community brings about a loss in another area, then, wrote Mill, 'there is not Progress.'[34] This is a clear indication that Mill's understanding of the meaning of the term was not simply as an amorphous and subjective belief in a general betterment of community conditions, nor

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in the overall concept. Progress, in this case, is technical only, rather than human and moral. (See John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*. Boston, 1920, pp.43, 125.) This sweeping concept of progress has been systematized by later commentators and presented as a 'more careful and bounded concept of progress' that incorporates all lesser progresses. Their interaction in terms of 'preserving and extending the gains of the past into the future', when considered as a whole, is an acceptable, valid and necessary intellectual tool, according to its proponents. (See R. D. Gastil, *Progress: Critical Thinking About Historical Change*. Wesport, Conn., 1993 p.22.) Nonetheless, there remains a reluctance to use the term 'progress' to describe the broad advancement of the general good. Kenneth E. Boulding accepts the relation of his understanding of such advancement to the term 'progress' but is also aware of the taint that attaches to it in the late twentieth century. Accordingly, he has substituted 'human betterment' as an alternative term. (See Kenneth E. Boulding, *Human Betterment*. Los Angeles 1985.)

32 Mill, 'A System of Logic.' Book VI Ch.X §§2-3, pp.912-913. At the same time, Mill accepted that in ordinary discourse the terms 'progress' and 'improvement' are used interchangeably. This led to his frequent use of the term 'progressive', in his more popular works, to signify improvement; and, on other occasions, to his conflating the terms. Conflation of this sort, found for example in Rousseau's link between material progress and moral corruption, is the ground of criticism which regards progress in terms of inequality, acquisitiveness, and the division of labour. These accompaniments, the critics of progress argue, are the contributors to moral regress. (See e.g. Lasch, *op cit.*, p.52.) This criticism may be set aside as far as Mill is concerned. Such progress is regarded by Mill as improvement only. The criticism of material progress by twentieth century commentators does not impinge upon Mill's concept of progress as the advancement of the totality of society.
A similar conflation also occurs in Mill's writing in his use of the terms 'perfectibility' and 'improvement' when referring to individual agents. At the level of theory, however, Mill was completely aware of and avoided the mistake of conflating concrete material improvement with abstract ethical progress. However, the similarity of usage points to the relation between Mill's understanding of 'progress' as a term applicable to the community and 'perfectibility' as applying to the condition of the individual agent.

33 One possible source of confusion with regard to the question of Mill's subscription to the inevitability of progress, is the position held by James Mill and the classical Utilitarians. James Mill, following Condorcet and Helvétius, and incorporating the mechanistic associationist psychology of Hartley, had, as his son recorded in his *Autobiography*, 'a firm confidence...in the general progress of improvement, and the good which individuals could do by judicious effort.' (See Elie Halévy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*. Boston, 1955 pp.274.282; Mill 'Autobiography.' p.105.) The confidence exhibited by James Mill in the inevitable progress that would follow the promulgation of the Benthamist Utilitarian doctrine has, in some degree, been linked to J S. Mill. (See e.g. van Doren, *op.cit.*, pp.239, 247, 337.)

34 Mill, 'A System of Logic.' Book VI Ch.X §3. pp.914-915; 'Considerations on Representative Government.' p.388.

did he believe it to be an inevitable process resting on either a law of nature or of society.[35]

The criterion of progress in the community is, for Mill, the counterpart of the criterion of perfectibility in the individual agent. It is, unsurprisingly, an increase in happiness. And just as the achievement of the greatest possible happiness in the individual agent requires the harmonious and balanced cultivation and development of all the dispositions etc., which occur naturally in the human constitution, so the greatest possible happiness of the community requires the harmonious development of the processes and institutions which comprise the community organization. This understanding of progress sheds light on Mill's expectations for success, and the necessary conditions required for success, in any program of cultivation and development of the community as a holistic entity.

'Progress,' then, is Mill's term for the balance and harmony of development of all contributing factors to the increase in happiness of the community. This balanced and harmonious development in the whole community parallels that in the individual agent in that it signifies community-realization and the achievement of species *telos*. This condition is identical to the achievement of community happiness, and when taken to the highest degree possible in the circumstances and environment of the particular community is the achievement of the greatest possible happiness. The attainment of harmony and balance across the range of processes and institutions which comprise community organization is not a simple matter, however, and making progress at that level is dependent upon the positive interaction of a large number of either static or dynamic elements of community life. Recognition of the difficulty of achieving progress in the community, and therefore the achievement of greater community happiness, is most fully addressed in Mill's philosophy of history.

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35 Progress as faith, or superstition, or as belief in 'Nature', has been the target of much vigorous attack. Emile Brunner, for example, dismissed the concept as 'an axiomatic belief which needed no proof nor could be disproved...a pseudo-religious creed, which to negate was a kind of blasphemy.' (Emile Brunner cited in Stromberg, *op.cit.*, p.111. See also D. Spadafora *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth Century Britain.* New Haven, 1990 p.391n.) This understanding of the meaning of progress is no longer viable. It is, as Lewis Mumford expressed it, 'the one notion that has been thoroughly blasted by the facts of the twentieth century experience.' (Lewis Mumford, cited in Lasch, *op.cit.*, p.42.) Progress as scientific advancement and as increase in material goods and sevices has been similarly criticized. So also has the core belief of modern progress theory, that increased knowledge and power over nature inevitably brings about increased happiness. (John Plamenatz, *Man and Society.* Vol.2. London, 1963 pp.416, 420; E. H. Carr *What is History?* Harmondsworth, 1964 p.118.)

§VIII.viii. Mill's philosophy of history as illustration of his understanding of community progress: the significance of circumstances and environment for the achievement of possible progress: the inevitable emergence of moral pluralism and the way dominant moralities change over time. Mill's natural bent lay from his earliest years in the direction of history[36], and in his maturity he was to value historical analysis highly as a test of systems and theories against the conditions of the past to determine their consistency and applicability.[37] In terms of the good life of the community and of the codes of behaviour developed to produce that good life, which is Mill's meaning of progress, the relation of present circumstances and conditions to those of the past is the benchmark of holistic social advancement.[38] Mill believed that a careful comparison of existent ethical values with those of past epochs, together with a concurrent comparison of social, political, and economic circumstances, will determine the extent, if any, of the progress made during the intervening years.

It is commonplace today to consider the historical dimension as critical to a complete understanding of the interrelation of ideology, theory, and practice, and to include in that consideration the analyses and interpretations of social theorists.[39] The origin of such an approach is found in the work of Saint-Simon and Comte, and the foundation of Mill's philosophy of history and its application is located in their writings.[40] Saint-Simon's division of history into organic and critical periods struck Mill as a particularly useful tool with which to dissect historical change.[41] Organic periods, in this understanding, are those in which a particular code of morality dominated throughout society, and the authority of its teachers and promulgators was generally accepted. During these periods, Mill noted, societies make 'all progress *compatible with the creed*, and finally outgrow it.'[42] At this point the organic period dissolves into a critical, or transitionary, period, during which the society, unable to continue believing the old doctrines, casts about to find new ones. New moral codes of practice emerge, exist side by side, and vie for dominance as the new means whereby to

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36 Mill, 'Autobiography.' p.15

37 Mill, 'Guizot's Essays and Lectures on History.' *Works*. Vol.20 pp.261-262.

38 Mill, 'State of Society in America.' *Works*. Vol.18 p.93.

39 See e.g. Felix E. Oppenheim, *Moral Principles in Political Philosophy*. 2nd. Ed. New York 1975 p.vii; J. G. A. Pocock, 'The History of Political Thought: A Methodological Enquiry.' in P. Laslett and W. G. Runciman (Eds.) *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. Oxford, 1962 pp.186-7; Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?* Glencoe, 1959 pp.221-232.

40 Alexander Bain (*John Stuart Mill: A Criticism*. London, 1882 pp.71-73) gives a detailed account of the impact of the French Positivist view of history on Mill, and considers it to be the major intellectual influence on his decision to write a science of ethology.

41 Mill, 'Autobiography.' p.171.

42 *Loc.cit.* (Emphasis added.)

achieve the desired good life. During the critical period, great improvements may occur in particular areas, but the likelihood of progress (in Mill's sense) is not great.[43]

At a later date Mill recognized in Comte's theory of history, with its three successive stages of society's evolution, a clearer and more systematic presentation of the Saint-Simonian thesis. The organic and critical periods were transformed by Comte into Empirical Laws of Society, those of Social Statics and those of Social Dynamics; but the essential concepts of equilibrium and of instability remain central to the understanding of historical change in Comteian social theory. While Mill was critical of Comte's working out of the empirical laws, particularly those that concerned Social Statics, he was in accord with Comte's general conception of history and used it as the basis of his own philosophy of history.[44] It is this understanding of the movement of history as a cycle through successive periods of stability and unrest, and concurrently as a progress or regress from one state of civilization to another, that may be seen to stand at centre stage in Mill's development of social theory.

What are the contributing factors in Mill's understanding of progress as the increase in the general good of society? That it is not inevitable has already been confirmed in his rejection of the notion of a law of progress. Mill's statement that 'the circumstances in which mankind are placed, operating according to their own laws and to the laws of human nature, form the characters of human beings,' points to the factors that make up the environment and circumstances of both individuals and society as being one set of influences. However, this is not to suggest that human beings are impotent to effect change, for Mill went on to say that 'human beings, in their turn, mould and shape the circumstances for themselves, and for those who come after them.'[45] Thus it appears that there are two sets of factors operating as contributors to the possibility of progress in society: circumstances together with environmental conditions, and the nature and character of human beings.

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43 The influence of Saint-Simon is clearly apparent in Mill's article, *Spirit of the Age Part I*, wherein he describes the condition of the early nineteenth century as one of transition 'in which the world of opinion is a mere chaos, and in which, as to worldly affairs, whosoever is dissatisfied with any thing or for any reason, flies at once to an alteration in the conditions of worldly power.' Once through that transitional period, however, Mill anticipated a new and better organic period, 'when society is once more in its natural state, and resumes its onward progress.' See Mill, 'Spirit of the Age. I.' *Works*. Vol.22 pp.252-253.

44 Mill, 'Auguste Comte and Positivism.' *Works*. Vol.10 pp.269-279, 298-300, 315-324; esp. pp.314, 322; 'A System of Logic' Book VI Ch.X §§5-6, pp.917-925.

45 *Ibid.*, §3, p.913.

The significance of human nature in Mill's theorizing has been extensively examined in previous chapters. By incorporating the internal senses Mill was able to develop a far richer and more fruitful understanding of the manner in which human beings exist both as individuals and as members of society than the Hobbesian version used by the Benthamists. Recognition of the central part played by the natural other-directed dispositions in human nature, and their grounding in the satisfaction of desires, allowed Mill to delineate what Kant termed 'unsocial sociability,' and to translate the benefits of that understanding into his theory of political organization.[46] In this way, Mill was able to develop an account of the co-existence in human beings of both a powerful self-interest and what appears to be a disinterested altruism whose satisfaction lies in other-directed acts. This is the framework of Mill's bridge between the self-interested core of individual human nature and the other-directed actions which bring about community happiness. While Mill acknowledged that the spectrum of human dispositions was not a possible object of alteration in itself, the capacity of human beings to develop the tendencies of their nature to the highest possible degree of perfection turns out to contain the key to his theory of progress understood as the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for the community.[47] The achievement of the greatest possible personal happiness, which comes about through balanced and harmonious development across the spectrum of capacities, requires the development of codes of behaviour that bring about the increase in the happiness of the community.

The second set of factors considered by Mill to affect the achievement of progress are those that go to make up the circumstances and environment of human beings. Mill's definition of a 'state of society' at a particular moment in its history is 'the simultaneous state of all the greater social facts or phenomena.' These include the degree of knowledge, and intellectual culture; the state of industry, of wealth and its distribution; the social and political institutions and practices; the body of positive laws; and the widespread acceptance of customary morality and traditions.[48] The state of society may be considered as a collection of separate areas such as these, and it is convenient at times to do so. It may also be considered as a whole, and in this sense it is 'like different constitutions or different ages in the physical frame . . . [a condition] not of one or a few organs or functions, but of the whole organism.'[49]

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46 Kant, *op.cit.*, p.15.

47 Mill, 'On Liberty,' pp.261,263; 'Three Essays on Religion,' pp.396-397. This Darwinian view of human nature as not amenable to measureable change in the time frames of human history is a further link between Mill and the evolutionists. See van Doren, *op.cit.*, p.303.

48 Mill, 'A System of Logic,' Book VI Ch.X §2, p.911-912.

49 *Loc. cit.*

Mill's distinction between improvement and progress is found in this distinction between the society as a cluster of discrete areas and as comprising an interdependent organic entity. In the first case, the discrete areas may improve independently of one another; in the second case, progress is the integrated improvement of all the areas that constitute society. Such a view of progress underpins Mill's account in *Spirit of the Age Part III,* where he adopts the Comteian account of transition in history to point out that an age of transition, whilst heralding an age of progress in society as a whole, is unlikely to be a period of improvement in the crucial areas of social and political doctrine.[50]

While the possibility of progress through human endeavour is almost always regarded by Mill in a positive light, his approach to the human environment is more guarded. The particular state of society is, as has been noted above, at some times conducive to progress, and at others an obstacle to its achievement. Sometimes (during periods of stability) the relations between the leaders and the instructed class and those who follow their lead is an environment that encourages progress. The body of positive law, the institutions of government and of society, the customs and traditions that prevail and significantly the sway of dominant codes of morality are all, at such times, factors that contribute to society's progress. At other times (during periods of transition) they may all be impediments to such progress. The intervening variables that are so significant to the success of the individual agent in his or her striving for greater happiness, occur and are writ large in the movement of the community toward a similar state. The primary difference between the struggle for happiness made by the individual and that which occurs in the community is explained by the different responses to those variables. And that difference revolves around the role of reason and the development of habitual response in the different spheres of action. Most significantly the product of this transitional turmoil includes the emergence of conflict between codes of morality in their struggle to fill the vacuum left by the now overturned dominant morality of the previous stable era.

§VIII.ix.The significance of harmony and balance to Mill's understanding of perfection in the individual and progress in the community. Harmony and balance turn out to be vitally important to development of Mill's holistic naturalist theory. He made this clear in a number of places, particularly in his placement of the quotation from von Humboldt's work, *Sphere and Duties of Government*, as the motto of *On*

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50 Mill, 'Spirit of the Age Part III.' *Works*. Vol.22 p.253.

Liberty.[51] It remains to be discovered what is the significance of harmony and balance to the overall development of his theory. On the one hand, it has been demonstrated that Mill argued a case for the development of all the faculties present in human beings in order to realize the happiness that accompanies that development, and that this argument underpins his assertion that all elements of human nature should be amended. And yet his statement of the primary duty of all human beings was deliberately modified by his subsequent warning against overamendment of particular aspects of human nature.

What was Mill's purpose in advocating this modification? Given Mill's account of human nature and his depiction of its focal motivation to be the achievement of the greatest possible personal happiness it seems reasonable to ask why not simply cultivate and develop those capacities that generate the greatest particular happiness, and ignore those that are accompanied by a lesser degree of pleasure/happiness? Mill instead adopted the Aristotelian ideal of harmony and balance as the route to the maximization of happiness in all agents. Harmonious and balanced development of dispositions etc., he argued, will lead to the development of an optimally happy whole and consequently the attainment of the end of existence for both individual and species. Why did he do so?

The answer to this question is to be found in the relation Mill discerned between elements of human nature, and in the relation of the parts to the whole. This has been described in the psychophysiological sense in his account of human nature and the end of individual and species existence. It will be revisited here in the context of his broad ethical doctrine. The discovery of this relation will provide an understanding of why Mill advocated, not simply the individual's striving after happiness via the cultivation of powers, but that that striving should be for 'the highest and most harmonious development of [those] powers to a complete and consistent whole.'[52]

The examination begins at the level of the individual agent. Mill's primary statement of the duty of all individuals is to amend nature, and this is to be done through the cultivation and development of dispositions etc. The purpose of such amendment is the achievement of the happiness that accompanies their perfection to the highest degree possible. Mill referred to the amendment of nature in this way as

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51 Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Sphere and Duties of Government*. London, 1845 p.65. Mill's views on the general development of all faculties present in human beings are found in Ch.I.§.x.. A clear indication of his intention may be found in 'On Liberty.' pp. 261, 263.

52 Mill, 'On Liberty.' p.261.

self-realization, and so that term takes its place as a synonym for the achievement of happiness. If balance and harmony are as important to Mill's holistic theory as is being claimed, they must have some relation to the amendment of nature, the attainment of self-realization, and the achievement of the greatest possible happiness that signifies the end of individual existence. That this is the case is confirmed by Mill.

Mill's confirmation begins with his acknowledgment of the importance of raising the degree of excellence across the whole spectrum of dispositions etc., for the achievement of happiness. Raising the level of perfection of human nature was possible, he argued, only by cultivating and improving both its shared animal and its specifically human aspects. 'The portion of human nature which corresponds to the various instincts of animals . . . may be modified to any extent,' he wrote, 'by other mental influences, and by education,' and as for our higher nature: 'human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites,' he asserted, 'and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification.'[53] The repression of any natural and undistorted disposition is a mistake, according to Mill, and such repression promulgated by organized religion was noted by him to be a counterproductive element within customary morality and an obstacle to the achievement of happiness.[54]

Within this cross-spectrum cultivation and development of the elements of human nature, Mill has been noted to give special prominence to the moral sense or disposition, on the grounds that it is in that disposition that the activities which contribute to species continuation and melioration originate.[55] The desire for justice and sympathy for others is combined through reason, education and experience, and exemplars of right action, to provide the means of achieving community happiness, or, as Mill put it, to produce 'a clear intellectual standard of right and wrong, that moral desire and aversion may act in the proper places, and such general mental habits as shall prevent moral considerations from being forgotten or overlooked, in cases to which they are rightly applicable.'[56] What is instructive here, in terms of harmony and

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53 Mill, 'A System of Logic.' Book VI Ch.IV §4, p.859; 'Utilitarianism.' pp.210-11.

54 Mill, 'Perfectibility.' *Works*. Vol.26 p.432. Mill's attacks on the distorted development of the moral faculty that are expressed in the opinions and actions of the dogmatic believers in religions contribute significantly to the shape of his social and political theory. It will emerge during the unfolding of this thesis that Mill's opposition to organized religion, and his promotion of the religion of humanity, are his direct response to the obstacle presented by the former to the achievement of both the perfectibility of the individual and the progress of society. See also Mill 'On Liberty.' p.265.

55 Mill, 'Utilitarianism.' p.213.

56 Mill, 'Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy.' *Works*. Vol.9 p.453.

balance, is that Mill is also careful to point out, that notwithstanding its crucial importance the moral disposition can also be cultivated and developed in a lopsided manner in a similar fashion to all other dispositions.[57] Excessive zeal for righteousness, he noted, is as destabilizing as any unbridled appetite for animal pleasures or happinesses.

Given the possibility of distortion in the cultivation and development of *all* dispositions, and given Mill's recognition of the destabilizing effect of that distortion, what does Mill understand by a balanced and harmonious development? 'Right action,' which is the source of happiness, Mill asserted, 'must mean something more and other than merely intelligent action.' It comprised for Mill actions that affect the totality of human nature, and impact upon or encompass both the happinesses of gratified self-interested desire and the happinesses of satisfied altruistic feelings.[58] Mill understood the codification of these actions to be the ethical and moral code developed by human beings to achieve that end. Furthermore, the particular happinesses that accompany the amendment of elements of individual human natures must be considered holistically, according to Mill, in order to discover their effect upon the entire being of the agent.[59] It is in the totality of relations between actions and between the states of the various dispositions, capacities and faculties that comprises, for Mill, the degree of self-realization and so of general happiness of the individual. From this perspective, the counterproductive nature of overdevelopment of particular capacities becomes clear, and the significance of balance and harmony between the component parts of human nature is confirmed to be of supreme importance in Mill's naturalistic theory, and to his understanding of the place within that theory of particular ethical and moral codes of behaviour.

§VIII.x. Modification to the theory of self-realization brought about by the importance of harmony and balance to the achievement of individual happiness. This understanding of the significance of harmony and balance in the amendment of human nature in order to achieve the greatest possible personal happiness contains the beginning of Mill's account of how the bridge between the gratification of self-interested desires in the individual and the performance of other-affecting actions for the sake of others' happiness is made. Mill's insistence on the development of

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57 See e.g. Mill's speech on 'The Universities.' given in 1826 and reprinted in *Works*. Vol.26 pp.349-351; his article in 'The Examiner' March 1833 in 'Newspaper Writings.' *Works* Vol.23. pp.558-559; Mill to Frederick J. Furnival, Nov. 1850, 'The Later Letters.' *Works*. Vol.14 p.53.

58 Mill, 'Three Essays On Religion.' p.380

59 Mill, 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy.' pp.7-8.

other-directed dispositions, particularly sympathy and the moral sense, in order to achieve the greatest possible personal happiness turns out to produce not only a benefit for the individual agent but also an increase in the happiness for the community. The result of the introduction of the requirement of harmonious and balanced development of capacities has a significant effect on the theory of self-realization that is central to the development of Mill's socio-political theory.

This is demonstrated by addressing two of the most frequently raised objections to Mill's theory. Mill's assertion that his theory of enlarged utilitarianism is based upon the principle of happiness, and that personal and community happiness are the twin goals of existence is objected to on two grounds. Two commonly-observed ways of pursuing private happiness are put forward as counterproductive to the increase in the happiness of the community. The first is that agents will develop those dispositions etc., which give them great pleasure and happiness, but are anti-social in their effects. The second is that agents will ignore the performance of actions that contribute to communal happiness and concentrate selfishly on purely self-interested acts and the achievement of private pleasure.

Using the material provided by Mill in his account of human nature and its operation, and the content of his broad ethical theory, it becomes clear that his insistence on harmony and balance in the cultivation and development of all natural dispositions etc., deals conclusively with these objections. For an agent to single out the capacities and activities that result in the greatest intensity of personal pleasure and happiness in isolation and to concentrate only on their development is, according to Mill's account of human nature, to increase simultaneously the amount of unhappiness and displeasure that accompanies the unsatisfied desires of those capacities which are ignored and undeveloped. Concentration upon anti-social or asocial activities for the happiness they produce, and to develop the corresponding dispositions etc., to their fullest extent, actually turns out to be a flawed path to the greatest possible personal happiness. Mill recognized that some agents do take this path, and it is part of the goal of his socio-political theory to provide the means whereby they may be advised of their mistake and shown a more productive route to happiness.[60]

As far as the choice by agents to pursue only private and selfish happinesses is concerned, the same reasoning applies. Mill's recognition of the requirement of harmonious and balanced development of dispositions etc., obliges agents to cultivate

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60 Mill, 'Utilitarianism.' p.212.

and develop other-directed dispositions in order to achieve the greatest possible personal happiness. The necessity of developing sympathy and the moral sense both for the happiness that accompanies such development and to avoid the unhappiness that occurs when they are left undeveloped is the link between the self-interested actions of the individual agent and the increase in the happiness of the community. Greater community happiness which is the result of agents developing their other-directed dispositions is, on this reading, the prime example of the link between the individual and the species *telos* understood as signified by the quantity and quality of happiness achieved. Self-interest, according to Mill's account of human nature and the manner in which happiness is achieved, is served by the performance of other-interested, or altruistic, actions.

The impact on the theory of self-realization of Mill's insistence on harmony and balance may now be appreciated. It has been demonstrated that, for Mill, self-realization in any particular faculty is the cultivation and development of the potential excellence possible in that faculty and that the degree of an agent's self-realization is the parallel of the quantity and quality of happiness in the agent's general state of being. The introduction of the concept of harmonious and balanced development of the elements of human nature has the effect of modifying the theory of self-realization into a theory of harmonious self-realization. Self-realization understood in this extended sense as the route to the greatest possible individual happiness is now one that has the bridge between individual happiness and the happiness of all as a necessary condition of its achievement. The relation between self-realization and the ethical and moral codes found within a society is now firmly established.

§VIII.xi. The necessary conditions implicit in Mill's naturalist theory for ethical and moral codes to satisfy in order to be compatible and commensurable both with Mill's enlarged utilitarianism and with one another. Moral pluralism, or customary morality, has now been depicted by Mill both in its origin and its inevitability in that the emergence of ethical and moral codes which differ in content has been explained via the multiplicity of environments and personal circumstances which shape the general and identical desire for happiness in all agents. The relation between the cultivation of particular dispositions etc., and the happiness that accompanies each, with the harmonious and balanced development of the spectrum of dispositions that results in the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for the individual agent, and subsequently for the community, has also been described. The evidence is now sufficient for there to be depicted the necessary conditions found

implicitly in Mill's naturalist theory which ethical and moral codes must satisfy in order to be compatible and commensurable both with the ultimate principle which is the ground of Mill's enlarged utilitarianism and with one another.

Compatibility and commensurability between different ethical and moral codes is discovered via their relation to and subsumption in Mill's universal injunction to amend nature in order to achieve happiness. What follows is an account of those conditions implicit in Mill's work and which different ethical and moral codes must satisfy in order to achieve this end.

It has been demonstrated that Mill was aware of the infinite variety of contexts in which the limited perfection of agents and the progress of communities takes place. Across time and space and also within communities, he argued, there will inevitably develop a range of views concerning what comprises the good life, and codes of practice with which to achieve it. He also acknowledged that such codes of practice, or moral codes, are localized and rest on the epistemic, cultural, traditional, and particular circumstances in which agents mature. Furthermore, the input of education, example, history, and technology all serve to shape and mold those codes. The above interpretation of Mill's holistic theory has also demonstrated his claim that all the codes, regardless of their contextual development, have one common goal: the achievement of happiness which is the attainment of *telos*. This is the natural goal of individual agents, and of the community.

From this evidence provided by Mill, it can be stated with assurance that, in the case of any existential or proposed ethical or moral code, providing that code of practice is, or will be, conducive to the achievement of this goal, Mill's acceptance of it can be assured. This statement also recognizes that Mill regarded some codes to be more efficient than others in achieving this end, but this is not to distinguish between them in terms of coherence and consistency, nor in terms of 'moral worthiness.' Rather it is to rank them in terms of efficiency.

The necessary conditions any ethical or moral code has to satisfy in order to fall within this categorical acceptance by Mill may now be defined. In the case of a private code of practice, it must assist the self-realization, and so the achievement of happiness, of the particular agent without impinging upon the happiness of any other agent. In the case of codes applicable to action in the public sphere, each must assist the self-realization, and so the achievement of happiness, of all agents affected by such action. The net effect of these conditions on the parameters of any ethical or moral

code is to confine that code within the bounds of the ultimate principle of action. Providing a code satisfies these conditions, in Mill's understanding, it may take whatever form is compatible with the contextual circumstances of the individual agent and the environment of the community of which he or she is a part. (There is within this provision, as Mill recognized, an expectation that as the context changes so will the shape of the moral codes change. The satisfaction of the provision remains constant however.)

To summarize: Mill's goal of perfectibility of the agent and progress in the community has as its end the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for each and all which signifies the attainment of the *telos* of individual and community existence. At the same time, Mill recognized that the infinite variety of original potentials in dispositions, of intervening variables in the life of individuals, and of the epistemic, cultural, traditional, geographical, and technological contexts of communities would result in a multiplicity of programs of action and codes of practice with which to achieve this outcome. Providing a program of action or code of practice is conducive to the end of Mill's enlarged utilitarianism, it is worthwhile.

Once these necessary conditions are accepted as the criteria whereby each distinct ethical or moral code is subsumed in the universal principle of Mill's enlarged utilitarianism, then the analysis of the compatibility and commensurability (or otherwise) of and between different codes of action may be undertaken. Compatibility is discoverable between what appear to be radically different codes of action in vastly dissimilar environments and circumstances insofar as they are alike in their ultimate end of achievement of self-realization/happiness/*telos*. This occurs both for the acting agent without impingement on the identical end of any other agent at the level of private action, and for all concerned at the level of public action.

Incompatibility between codes of practice can occur and be recognized at two levels. Ethical and moral codes can be incompatible because either one or both is not, in part or in whole, conducive to the above described end of Mill's enlarged utilitarianism. They can also be incompatible because, while both are conducive to that end, the agents involved are not habituated to one of the codes and believe it to be counterproductive to the achievement of happiness. In the first case, the solution is found by determining which practice is indifferent or counterproductive to the achievement of happiness, and taking steps to shift public adherence from that practice to one conducive to the *telos* of existence. In the second case, the solution is found via a process of education in cross-cultural or inter-group understanding.

Ethical and moral codes of action are commensurable insofar as they are all measured against the production of happiness. The immediate objection to such commensurability concerns the difficulty of quantitative or qualitative measurement. That Mill was aware of this problem and noted the difficulty it presents does not detract from his argument. As he pointed out, the vast amount of data necessary to perform such measurement makes it impractical (it requires exhaustive information concerning both the environment and particular circumstances of each agent, which is theoretically obtainable but realistically a waste of resources). Nonetheless, the recognition and adoption of the principle that codes of action are theoretically commensurable in this way is helpful as a general guide to the development of social and political theory. As for apparently implacably opposed moral codes, such codes are frequently regarded as incommensurable insofar as they occur in contexts which have major points of difference in non-moral areas (e.g. democracies cf. dictatorships, theological cf. secular societies, technologically advanced civilization cf. primitive tribal organization.) Given that the argument for commensurability rests on the existence of a universal principle against which all codes are measured, such incommensurability is able to be dissolved by a process of cross-contextual understanding against the backdrop of Mill's principle of happiness. Once the elements of the opposed codes which are compatible via the principle of happiness are discovered, commensuration is able to take place.

Mill's approach recognized moral pluralism as valuable as the means whereby agents in different particular circumstances and general environments develop codes of practice whereby to achieve happiness. The unifying principle, the core element which comprises Mill's universal virtue ethic, is the striving for happiness as the means to achieve individual and species *telos* There is no universally recognized, culturally transcendent, morality other than the striving for happiness (however it might be understood)[61] as depicted in Mill's enlarged utilitarianism and which is the ground of the ultimate principle of action. It is on this single moral principle all others rest, he argued, and against which all others are to be measured.

Nonetheless, there is no question that even if such necessary conditions are recognized by all parties concerned in the comparison of apparently conflicting codes of action, there would still remain obstacles to their acceptance of the degree of compatibility

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61 The objection that 'happiness' in this depiction can mean whatever an agent or a collective wishes it to mean is addressed in Chapters III and IV.

and commensuration between them. These obstacles, however, lie outside the analysis of such codes in terms of their purpose and end. The content of the code is set aside in such cases, and the disagreement turns rather on other, deep-seated cross-cultural, ethnic, or intragroup differences. Mill was sufficiently optimistic, however, to believe that such apparently intransigent positions as these could ultimately be reconciled through education, experience, and participation in dialogue and debate.

§VIII.xiii. The relation between the concepts of perfectibility and progress and the faculty of reason. Mill's location of the potential weakness in social and political theory. Mill was also aware that, in the existential relations within and between communities that prevail in the world, these conditions are not universally recognized, and moral practices and codes are in apparently irreconcilable conflict. Mill's explanation for this situation is found in his understanding of the relation between reason and habitual action, and its resulting development of the codes of customary morality. In his examination of the relation of reason to the development of codes of behaviour whereby to satisfy the desires for pleasure and the general desire for happiness, and the subsequent occulting of the product of reason and its ossification into codes of behaviour that are frequently no longer recognized as being directed to that end, Mill discovered it to be a mixed blessing.

Mill's conclusion was to the effect that customary morality, in which lay the major obstacles to the achievement of the greatest possible happiness for both individual and the community, could not simply be rejected. It was, he accepted, necessary insofar as the employment of reason to determine the best choice of action in sets of circumstances that are repeated time after time is impossible both in terms of time and resources. The development of habitual response in such circumstances is both efficient and inevitable given the constitution of human nature. At the same time, he acknowledged that this valuable transformation of repeated reasoning into habitual response was paradoxically the main impediment to the achievement of the maximum happiness possible for each and all.

Mill's recognition of the difficulty faced by any universal theory when confronted by this spectrum of ethical and moral positions, each considered by their adherents to be both right and irreconcilable with other positions, was the starting point of his development of socio-political theory and doctrine. The decision to direct his attention to the causes rather than the symptoms - to address the failure to recognize compatibility, to develop a program of action which would promote the means to syncretize distinct ethical positions rather than to use a Procrustean political system

(or, by implication, a neutral one) to act as the organizing force in the society - resulted in the development of a program of action which bypasses the immediate concerns of any society and aims instead at remodeling and focusing the psychological drives of agents toward achieving the greatest possible happiness which is the primary purpose of existence.

Before examining the relation of Mill's theory of liberty to this end, an examination of his awareness of the origin and nature of customary morality (and its relation to contemporary accounts of moral pluralism) will complete the process begun here. His analysis of the relation between, and the outcome of, reason, the development of habitual response, and the resulting customary morality as the dominant code of action in particular societies is the subject of the next chapter.

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