

## J. S. Mill's Satisfied Pig: Valuing and Education

**William Lloyd Fridley, Southeastern Oklahoma State University**

*Would you like to swing on a star  
Carry moonbeams home in a jar  
And be better off than you are  
Or would you rather be a pig  
A pig is an animal with dirt on his face  
His shoes are a terrible disgrace  
He's got no manners when he eats his food  
He's fat and lazy and extremely rude  
But if you don't care a feather or a fig  
You may grow up to be a pig,*

—from the song “Swinging on a Star”

*It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool or the pig think otherwise, that is because they know only their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides.*

—John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), *Utilitarianism*

Bing Crosby sang “Swinging on a Star” in the 1944 film *Going My Way*. Writer Jimmy Van Heusen conceived the idea for the song after fielding his son’s complaints about having to go school the next day. Though my dad did not sing too often, I remember him singing “Swinging on a Star” to me as a pre-school child. To what degree I understood the clever wit or aspirational import is hard to say. I liked the song, the animal references (mules, pigs, and fish) were welcome, and it stuck with me. Years later, when reading the *satisfied pig* passage in Mill’s *Utilitarianism*, I was vividly reminded of the song, and felt a bit of affirmation that my work as a philosopher of education, and professor in a university Teacher Education program, if not swinging on a star, is nonetheless a worthwhile pursuit.

Mill uses the passage as a colorful example to introduce, support, and illustrate his argument that some pleasures are of a higher quality than others and are therefore more worthy of our pursuit and enjoyment. This is a noteworthy contribution to utilitarian thought that expands the axiological

palate beyond the primarily quantitative measure of value proposed by Mill's philosophical predecessor and occasional mentor, Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). I will examine Mill's arguments for the higher pleasures, consider the experiment he recommends for testing competing values, and note some attractive elements that comprise his conception of the higher pleasures. I will then highlight Chris Higgins' *The Good Life of Teaching* and consider his case that the practice of teaching is a site for ethical self-development and a means to generate human flourishing.

The film *Educating Rita* raises the metaphoric question of whether education (particularly higher education) is a better song to sing. I will consider this question, and I will conclude with some examples from my own educational journey to propose that Mill's robust conception of the higher pleasures is a humane, realistic, and aspirational vision for life that can be meaningfully pursued through education and in teaching. To lay the groundwork I will provide a clarification of some foundational axiological terminology related to Mill's utilitarianism, and take a brief look at Mill's remarkable education and his transformative recovery from a mental crisis, with healing brought forth by his discovery of the art, poetry, and emotion that were lacking in the education scripted and executed by his father, James Mill.

## **Utilitarianism**

### *Background and Utility*

Mill claims to have been the first to apply the term *utilitarianism* to the ethical theory developed by Bentham, and Mill continued to adopt, apply, and defend Utility, as defined by Bentham's Greatest Happiness Principle, as the sole test of right and wrong, and as the foundation of morals. The Principle holds that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure." British philosopher John Gray notes, however, "For all his referenes to pleasure and the absence of pain, Mill never endorsed the primitive view that pleasure is a sort of sensation that accompanies our actions." Mill was, it appears, giving verbal fidelity to Bentham's Principle and, at the same time, broadening the concept of pleasure.

### *Consequentialist Ethics*

Utilitarianism is a consequentialist ethical theory that bases its determination of good and bad, right and wrong, on the consequences and outcomes of our actions. Consequentialist theories are typically contrasted with non-consequentialist or deontological theories. Mill distinguishes these two theoretical perspectives by noting that for one (the exemplar being Kantian ethics) the "principles of morals are evident *a priori*," and for the

other, determinations of right and wrong involve “questions of observation and experience.” American pragmatism, which draws considerably from utilitarianism, is also a consequentialist theory. William James, one of the founders of pragmatism, likened its consequentialist orientation to the biblical parable of the tree. A tree is evaluated by the fruit it bears.

### *Instrumental and Intrinsic Value*

Another axiological distinction is between instrumental and intrinsic value. Something is instrumentally valuable because it serves as a means to an end. Consider, for example, tools. A screwdriver is valuable to the degree it helps us insert a screw, a hammer for pounding nails, and a saw for cutting boards. On the other hand, something is intrinsically valuable if it is valuable “in and of itself,” regardless of instrumental considerations. Claims that something has intrinsic value have aroused the tongue-in-cheek philosophical question, “Oh yeah? ...and what is it intrinsically valuable for?” While debate persists about intrinsic value, I tend to side with the utilitarian position that the best candidate for intrinsic value is happiness and pleasure. The question “what do you want happiness and pleasure for?” is a non-starter. One of Mill’s important contributions to our understanding of happiness and pleasure is his argument, illustrated in the *satisfied pig* passage, that not all pleasures are equal. Some pleasures and the quest for them are of a higher quality.

Mill explains the epistemological dimensions of the means-to-ends axiology by clarifying the application of the word *proof*. For example, a “medical art is proved to be good, by its conducing to health,” and music is proved to be good because it produces pleasure. Proving the value of pleasure (an end), is a different story though, and Mill acknowledges that we do not have the means to make this determination. At the same time, Mill claims that the adoption of the utilitarian formula is not an arbitrary, purely intuitive, or impulsive choice, but is a rationally defensible position when presented clearly and accurately. “Considerations may be presented capable of determining the intellect either to give or withhold its assent to the doctrine; and this is equivalent to proof.” He goes on to refer to utilitarianism as a “theory of life” on which the “theory of morality is grounded,” “and that all desirable things (which are as numerous in the utilitarian as in any other scheme) are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain.”

### *Calculate Every Line of Conduct?*

Mill clarifies several misunderstandings of the theory and refutes numerous criticisms; perhaps none more forcibly than the charge that there “is not time, previous to action, for calculating and weighing the effects of any line of conduct on the general happiness.” Mill responds that “there has been ample time, namely, the whole past duration of the human

species. During all that time mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions; on which experience all the prudence, as well as all the morality of life, is dependent.” Our experience is collective and cumulative, providing a deep reservoir from which we draw secondary moral principles, figurative roadmaps, cautionary and laudatory examples, and prudential guidelines for our conduct. Moreover, Mill insists that the principle of utility has a progressive dimension and an ameliorative impulse. “The corollaries from the principle of utility, like the precepts of every practical art, admit of indefinite improvement, and, in a progressive state of the human mind, their improvement is perpetually going on.”

### **Mill's Life, Education, and Mental Crisis**

To aid our understanding of the *satisfied pig* passage, a little more background on the formative events of Mill's life is in order. In *Courting the Abyss*, his book on free speech, John Durham Peters introduces Mill by recognizing the historically receptive U.S. audience for his philosophical explanations of liberal democracy, and then by listing the remarkably varied and wide-ranging scope of his achievements:

During his life he was a public intellectual, philosophical radical, utilitarian, member of Parliament, Romantic manqué, socialist, feminist, imperial administrator, comparative historian of Greece, Rome, and France, and codifier of research methods in social science; and his multifaceted influence still stamps Anglo-American political institutions and their many imitators.

#### *Mill's Education*

Mill was a precocious child who was the recipient of a rigorous and highly structured education designed and implemented by his father, James Mill. By the age of three, Mill was reading Greek, and Latin by age eight. His education included history, mathematics, physics, and astronomy, and at age twelve he began a serious study of logic and economics. In a spirit of humility, and with a generous acknowledgement of the power of his father's educational scheme, Mill maintains that he was “below rather than above par” in regard to natural intellectual gifts, and that any child would have reached these intellectual achievements under such pedagogical conditions.

His rigorous education was also marked by a cold efficiency and a neglect of the social, emotional, and nurturing dimensions that are crucial for children's development. The young Mill was restricted in his interactions with other children and, in the *Autobiography*, Mill describes his father's blunted affect: “For passionate emotions of all sorts, and for everything which has been said or written in exaltation of them, he professed the greatest contempt. He regarded them as a form of madness.” As a young adult, due in no small part to the demanding strictures of his upbringing, Mill was stricken with a deep and lengthy bout of depression, which he recounts in a chapter entitled “A Crisis in my Mental History.”

Mill credits reading the poems of Wordsworth with lifting him from his depression.

What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings."

These were the seeds for Mill's expanded view of happiness (in quality) that took utilitarianism beyond the strictly quantitative conception of pleasure proposed by Jeremy Bentham, whose hedonistic calculus featured seven quantitative criteria including *intensity* and *duration*. This notion of a pleasure calculus led to Bentham's infamous statement: "The quantity of pleasure being equal, push-pin is as good as poetry," and incited critics to charge utilitarianism (as they had charged Epicureanism, before) with being a philosophy worthy of swine.

### **Mill's Account of the Higher Pleasures**

Against these criticisms, Mill offers an expanded version of happiness with an account of these higher pleasures that includes several attractive features that warrant a place in our pedagogical philosophy and practice.

#### *Reason and Emotions, Mind and Body*

Mill presents a broad array of intellectual pleasures that includes moral, affective, and aesthetic sensitivities, and he largely avoids pitting the intellect against the body. Poetry and art aroused the emotions that brought Mill out of his mental crisis, and the importance of nurturing the affective dimension of our lives is a thread that runs through *Utilitarianism* and much of Mill's work. He writes, "The cultivation of the feelings became one of the cardinal points in my ethical and philosophical creed." This is similar to what Israel Scheffler would later call "the cognitive emotions," integrating the cognitive and the affective. Mill was, among his many talents, a master synthesizer, most notably with his work at merging Enlightenment and Romantic perspectives. One commentator characterizes Mill's drive for integrating varying perspectives as the "pursuit of wholeness by means of practical eclecticism."

The axiological tension between pleasures of the body and pleasures of the intellect is not lost on Mill, and he acknowledges the somewhat-awkward perceptual effects created by whether the word happiness or pleasure is used in formulating and expressing the principles of utilitarianism. He favorably—and likely with some amusement—cites an "able writer's" quip that utilitarianism is "impracticably dry when the word utility precedes the word pleasure, and as too practicaly voluptuous when the word pleasure precedes the word utility."

In his historical survey of axiological theories, Mill contends that some theories which give precedence and privilege to intellectual pleasures grossly underestimate and fail to acknowledge the role that bodily pleasures actually play in their doctrines. Conversely, he chides the critics of hedonism for their failure to recognize that even the “worthy of swine” philosophy of the Epicureans gives place to the pleasures of the mind. Moreover, Mill envisions these higher pleasures of the mind as the means to improve health and to fight sickness and disease. I liken Mill’s approach to what we call *holistic* education. In my Foundations of Education classes I use the youth organization 4H (head, heart, hands, and health) as an introductory illustration of an integrated, holistic approach to education and to life.

*Autonomy, Liberty, and an Ameliorative Impulse*

Happiness is not a state of mind, it is an active form of life. According to John Gray, Mill’s account of happiness is hierarchial and the higher pleasures are pluralistic, that is, available to an indeterminate number of people in an inexhaustible range of possible activities. Utilitarianism does not prescribe the particular activity, and while the forms of activity vary from person to person, the higher pleasures “have a common feature of being available for those who have developed the distinctive human capacity for autonomous thought and action.” Gray recognizes that autonomy is not a concept used by Mill, and he acknowledges hesitance to make an impositional retrofit to Mill’s theory. Though not derived from Mill’s writing, there is a strong correspondence between the concept of autonomy and Mill’s ideas. “What more is involved in autonomy, however, than choice-making and an imaginative awareness of alternative forms of life-activity?” Gray concludes that “we are on firm ground if we include an ideal of personal autonomy among Mill’s most fundamental commitments.”

The exercise of autonomy does not cause happiness, nor does it necessarily lead to happiness. It is, in Gray’s view, a necessary condition for happiness. Autonomy requires social and political conditions of security and freedom from interference that would thwart or preclude us from exercising it. Mill’s Principle of Liberty is intended to guide the establishment of these conditions. The principles of liberty do not cause the deliberative exercise of autonomy; they secure and protect the conditions that make autonomy possible. And those who engage fully in autonomous thought and action are those most likely to preserve and extend the conditions that secure liberty.

**The Test of Pleasure**

To test which is the “best worth having of two pleasures, or which of two modes of existence is most grateful to the feelings,” Mill answers that pleasure or state of existence to which all—or almost all—who have experienced both give a decided preference: metaphorically, “the general suffrage of those who are qualified.” Mill elaborates,

...the way of life that employs the higher faculties is strongly preferred to the way of life that caters only to the lower ones by people who are equally acquainted with both and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both. Few human creatures would agree to be changed into any of the lower animals in return for a promise of the fullest allowance of animal pleasures.

No intelligent human being would consent to be an ignorant. No person of sensitivity and conscience would rather be a selfish brute. And no person who has experienced freedom would prefer slavery or forced servitude. These are stark and disparate options, and more subtle discriminations of competing values are not handled so easily.

John Gray presents a credible argument that Mill's test was not intended as a serious test to weigh the merits of differing preferences, (e.g., beer-drinking vs. wine-imbibing for those experienced at drinking both) but is instead used to make the larger point that he is "committed to the view that a preference for activities involving the exercise of autonomous thought and of capacities of imagination and discrimination will dominate the lives of experienced judges."

### **Chris Higgins' The Good Life of Teaching**

The question "what good is teaching for the teacher?" is posed by Chris Higgins in "Teaching and the Good Life: A Critique of the Ascetic Ideal." He explores this question further in *The Good Life of Teaching*. This question, Higgins notes, is too-seldom asked. Rather, questions of educational policy and practice are typically framed in terms of "what good is this for the students?" What this prevalent framing misses, Higgins argues, is that students are served best by teachers who first take care of themselves and by doing so are then better able to educate and inspire. Making this point flies in the face of what Higgins calls "education's nagging asceticism," that is, the belief that teaching is a sacrificial endeavor and all is to be given *in the name of the students*. Higgins notes numerous examples of how this disposition is reinforced by advertising slogans, portrayals of teachers in popular films, and the sometimes-implicit cultural expectations and perceived demands that can, over time, take their toll and sap teachers of their vitality.

Non-stop giving and neglect of the self is not sustainable, and leads to exhaustion, burnout, or leaving teaching. In some cases, those embracing the ascetic ideal descend to a form of sadistic "burn-in." Fresh out of the university, new teachers are often infused with a noble altruism, accompanied by an unfounded and unrealistic (though understandable and, in some ways, admirable) zeal to change the world. They may perceive their initial fatigue from hard work, long hours, and lack of self-care as confirmation that they are doing their jobs, sacrificing their lives for the good of their students. These teachers (spent, but still employed) will, in some cases, *turn* on their ungrateful students for not recognizing and

appreciating the selfless sacrifice that was done *for them*. Interestingly, in discussing *instrumental value*, Mill makes the point that “the practice of sacrifice is not in itself good, but only good to the degree it promotes the happiness of others.” The severe altruism of the ascetic ideal is not effective for promoting the happiness of others in the long run.

To this point, Higgins has taken on the project of developing a normative framework he calls *ethical professionalism*. Building on Bernard Williams’ distinction between ethics and morality, Higgins distinguishes his framework from moral professionalism, a common approach to ethics in teacher education, which features codes of ethics, case studies, and moral dilemmas operating in a rather limited range of discrete contexts that have been identified as requiring ethical decisions. Following the aretaic orientation of virtue ethics, Higgins proposes that professional ethics expand the normative scope of teaching from the question “what should we do?” in select instances, to the broader question of “how can we live excellent lives?” Drawing from Dewey’s insights on vocation and craft, and Alasdair MacIntyre’s work on those activities he calls “practices,” Higgins argues that the practice of teaching is the generative site for self-development and for “integrating distinctive modes of perception and valuation into one perspective.” “Practices do not sit at the endpoint of ethical reflection, passively awaiting ethical understanding to guide them, but are themselves formative of ethical understanding.” Between the extremes of base self-interest and severe altruism lies fertile ground for flourishing—the practice of teaching.

### **Is Education a Better Song to Sing?**

Mill’s idea of “those who have experienced both,” reminds me of the phrase I often heard from my doctoral advisor: *a consensus of the learned*. It is a great phrase, and it was typically coupled with my advisor’s favorite axiological/epistemological dictum: *While equally reasonable and informed people may disagree on matters of judgment, that does not mean that all value judgments are equally reasonable*. The dictum is a hedge against relativism, a nudge toward epistemic humility, and a claim that some judgments can be reasonably demonstrated to be better than others. Might it be the case that some life pursuits, e.g. higher education, are better than others?

This question is raised in the 1983 film *Educating Rita*. Julie Walters plays Rita, a 27-year-old British working-class hairdresser. Her husband Denny is an electrician whose life is highlighted by habiting the local pub with family and friends. Rita is surreptitiously taking birth control pills and feigns wonderment at his incessant query “when are we having a baby?” Through an advertisement on the television, Rita decides to enroll in an Open University program, and convinces the alcoholic, burn-out, hasn’t-written-in-a-long-time poet, Dr. Bryant (played by Michael Caine), to be her teacher. Rita falls under the spell of the study of literature, and is consumed by the desire to know all those things that “you educated people know” that are hidden from the working classes.

In a dramatic scene, Rita storms Dr. Bryant's home on a rainy night to declare her commitment to pursue an education was irrevocable, her resolve being stiffened by an experience at the pub, with Denny and their extended families. The group was singing along to some inane ditty on the juke box, "I'm so happy that you're so happy..." and Rita is struck with the realization that "there must be a better song to sing." Education she concludes, is a better song. She has tasted its fruits. She cannot go back, and she will not settle for anything less.

Claims of "better" beg the question, "compared to what?" While agreeing that a solid education makes our lives better, I will forgo further comparative evaluations. I prefer to think of teaching as a meaningful and worthwhile way of *life* that is guided by and engaged with those activities identified by Mill as *higher pleasures*.

### **Initiation to the Higher Pleasures and My Educational Journey**

How do we introduce our students to the finer things in life, the higher pleasures, if you will, in a way that is attractive and evokes interest? How do we stoke and nurture the work and time that is necessary for students to refine their abilities and to deepen their understanding, to enjoy and to appreciate, and to make the most of the many beautiful things life has to offer? How do we foster the understanding that we are all struggling human beings who fall short at times and continue to do our best to live a life of progressive improvement; striving for excellence, not perfection? As we know, these questions and responsibilities are not solely reserved for professional educators. I have been blessed to have many such people in my life, and I find that reflecting about those who contributed to my initiation into the higher pleasures renews my understanding of what attracted me to the arts and humanities, and helps me to conjure ideas of how I might channel the spirit of valuing to my students.

#### *Aunt Linda*

My aunt Linda (actually a second cousin who was about ten years older than my brother and me) was our favorite babysitter. She was an artist and brought us sketchbooks and art supplies. We would work on all kinds of creative projects: making puppets and putting on shows, drawing silhouette busts, making styrofoam snowpeople and Christmas figures, and collectively drawing a picture of something/anything from random squiggles. She played guitar and sang, turning us on to the songs of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. It was an intoxicating introduction to art, music, and creating.

#### *Mr. Rader*

Mr. Rader was my fifth- and sixth-grade teacher. He taught our class for two years running. We had gym class every day: boys and girls basketball teams and coed volleyball. We got to make the bulletin boards, and he took

small groups—on a rotating basis—on weekend field trips to museums, the Columbus public library, skating, bowling, and to movies. He would play albums in class: The Beatles, Bread, Marvin Gaye, Junior Walker and the All Stars, Jesus Christ Superstar, and Issac Hayes’ Shaft, which was the rage at the time—**right on!** He would let us borrow albums on weekends.

For a sixth-grade project, our class brainstormed and planned a schoolwide community carnival that we held in the Moler Elementary school gymnasium (in all its tile-floored glory). We did it all ourselves, with some good help from Mr. Rader, third-grade teacher Mrs. Haslip, and several room mothers. We made and sold popcorn, Kool-Aid, and arts and crafts (including mosaic ashtrays—it was a different time). We took turns operating games (ring toss, free-throw shooting, and behind-the-veil fishing). We made over \$300! After deliberation, we voted unanimously to put the money toward a class camping trip. With a little investigation in the phone book and a couple calls, we arranged a weekend stay in two cabins at Y-Park on the southside of town. We learned by doing. As the magazine *Highlights for Children* slogan proclaims, it was “fun with a purpose.”

*Mr. Krider*

Mr. Krider was my eighth-grade history teacher at Southmoor Jr. High. In a unit on the American labor movement he staged a mock exam accompanied by all the distractions and annoyances he could muster. In response, the students “unionized” and hammered out a contract that established fair conditions for the administration of tests. This was not some uninformed, spontaneous revolt. Rather, as was the custom with each new unit, we spent the prior week in the library researching, defining, and learning the foundational vocabulary of the labor movement: collective bargaining, unions, open shop and closed shop, strikes, scabs, Samuel Gompers, John L. Lewis, the American Federation of Labor, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. In retrospect, I realize Mr. Krider understood that the exercise of creative, critical thinking depends on a rudimentary understanding of something to think about and to think with. To connect the dots (higher-order thinking) you first need some dots (concepts, facts, names, dates, places) to connect. That summer, prompted by our history lessons and assured by Mr. Krider’s endorsement, I checked out Upton Sinclair’s *The Jungle* and John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* from the Columbus Public Library. The characters and stories continue to inform and animate my thoughts, feelings, and actions on social and economic justice.

*Mr. Shalinske*

My high school English teacher, Mr. Shalinske, was my favorite. Every grading period we would do individual writing projects and in-class

presentations on artists, poets, composers, writers, or books. We would each choose our topic and announce it in class. Mr. Shalinske would choose topics for those who did not have one. I always let him pick my topic, because I knew he would have something new and interesting that I was not familiar with: Sinclair Lewis' *Babbitt*, Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, the poems of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the art of Salvador Dali.

For one unit, the class read and discussed B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*. A few years later, taking Psychology 100 in my first year at The Ohio State University, I was clued in when our TA, David Goldstein, told us that B. F. Skinner would be coming to campus. This was big, seeing B. F. Skinner in person. I remember his topic: the lag time between scientific discoveries and their widespread adoption by society. Not content with the thorough permeation (some might say *rampant infestation*) of behaviorist practices in schooling, Skinner still had an axe to grind. I have a hunch that Mill would have delighted in skewering Skinner. He may have modified the *satisfied pig* passage to "I'd rather be Socrates dissatisfied than a pigeon satisfied." Before presenting this paper, I searched in vain for a picture of a smiling pigeon. Later, I asked a colleague (an ornithologist), if birds smile. "No," he answered with a smile. "Why do you ask?"

#### *Aunt Betty and Uncle Jim*

Aunt Betty and uncle Jim were my second mom and dad. James Joseph Rush married my mom's sister, Betty, in 1965, after a torrid two-week romance. It was the second marriage for both. My mom was shocked, and not without cause. Uncle Jim was quite a colorful character who was a bit rough around the edges. Mom predicted the marriage would last six months. In 2015, we celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Jim had an extremely hard and tumultuous life growing up on the southside of Columbus, Ohio, and dropped out prior to high school. He did a ten-year stint in the navy and saw many parts of the world. While onboard ship, he found the Lord (or, as he would say, the Lord found him), and became a Christian. When he married Aunt Betty, Jim was in the process of solidifying his Christian walk, which he did in rather quick order. An image that stands out in my mind was all the tatoos on Uncle Jim's arms, which included several naked women. This made quite an impression. Uncle Jim eventually addressed the problem by having clothes tattooed on the women.

They both had an incredible passion for excellence, style, and grace in all they did. Their lives were infused with generosity and prudence, curiosity and interest, and helping others. Uncle Jim had a successful career as a heating-and-air-conditioning service man. Over the years, we had many conversations about theology, philosophy, and life. We did not always agree. A couple years back, to market our university's online graduate programs, faculty created profiles using questions such as "what is the best advice

you've been given?" I cited Uncle Jim, who often told me: "Bill, get what you can, and can what you get." To pair this with the higher pleasures, I will paraphrase one of Uncle Jim's favorite Bible verses: Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are the rewarders of those who diligently seek them.

### **Satisfaction and The Rolling Stones**

I had the pleasure of seeing The Rolling Stones in Jacksonville in July, 2019. It was my fifth time seeing the Stones, the first time being in Cleveland in 1978 on the *Some Girls* tour. I have been a big Stones fan for a long time. "It's only rock and roll, but I like it." And, for what it is worth, an appreciation and enjoyment of the Stones' work is, in my opinion, a higher pleasure. Given the topic, I must make mention of the Stones' classic record (*I Can't Get No*) *Satisfaction*. In the film *Gimme Shelter*, a documentary of the Stones' 1969 U.S. tour, Mick Jagger was asked if he was now satisfied. Jagger responded, "Economically satisfied. Sexually satisfied. Philosophically, trying." Mill would have loved that answer. Happiness, he wrote, is not a continuous state of highly pleasurable excitement, nor is it a life of rapture. Rather, happiness is a "life containing some moments of rapture, a few brief pains, and many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation, not to expect more from life than it is capable of providing." Amen. Remember, "You can't always get what you want. But sometimes, you just might find, you get what you need."

### **Some Concluding Thoughts**

Mill's thought experiment is a generative source to deepen our understanding of life and to heighten our understanding of teaching as part of the human experience. I would like to add one last item of clarification. Formal schooling and higher education are not the sole means to access and enjoy the higher pleasures. As the examples from my educational journey illustrate, some of my formative influences were individuals of sophistication and taste who lacked significant educational pedigree. At the same time, perhaps we know of those who have reached a high degree of formal educational attainment and still manifest the brutish and obtuse nature of Mill's metaphorical pig.

As Foundations of Education scholars and faculty, most of us work as teachers preparing teachers. Mill's lessons comport well with Higgins' reimagining of teaching as a site to develop our conceptions and realizations of the good life, to expand the realm of the ethical, and to refine our abilities to value wisely. Teaching is a line of work where we can bring to bear all our knowledge, skills, and experiences in creative and imaginative ways that enrich our lives and thereby contribute to the common good. I recently read a statement from Clemson University head football coach Dabo Swinney that captures a *practice of mind* I have been working on for

some time now: “How you do anything, is how you do everything.” Indeed. In his axiological primer *The Theory of Valuation*, Dewey includes a relevant and surprisingly stirring passage about (oddly enough) *means and ends*:

In empirical fact, the measure of the value a person attaches to a given end is not what he says about its preciousness but the care he devotes to obtaining and using the means without which it cannot be attained. No case of notable achievement can be cited in any field (save as a matter of sheer accident) in which the persons who brought about the end did not give loving care to the instruments and agencies of its production.

Let thoughtful care and attention to detail guide us as we work to improve our practice, as we hone our craft, and as we enjoy those gracious moments of pedagogical bliss when our art is perfected.

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke, “Swinging on a Star,” performed by Bing Crosby with Williams Brothers Quartet and John Scott Trotter and His Orchestra, from the Paramount Picture *Going My Way*, Decca Records, L 3309, 1944, LP.
- <sup>2</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (1836) ([place of publication not identified]: Compass Circle, 2019), 15.
- <sup>3</sup> “Swinging on a Star,” *Wikipedia*, last modified 30 December 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swinging\\_on\\_a\\_Star](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swinging_on_a_Star)
- <sup>4</sup> John Stuart Mill, “Bentham,” in *Autobiography and Other Writings*, ed. Jack Stillinger (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 213–256.
- <sup>5</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 103, note 1.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 10–11.
- <sup>7</sup> John Gray, “Mill’s Conception of Happiness and the Theory of Individuality,” in *J. S. Mill on Liberty in Focus*, ed. John Gray and G. W. Smith (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 191.
- <sup>8</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 4.
- <sup>9</sup> James claims that pragmatism involves an attitude or orientation: “The attitude of looking away from first things, principles, ‘categories,’ supposed necessities; and of looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts” (*italics in original*). William James, *Pragmatism* (1907) (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), 27.
- <sup>10</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 6.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 6–7.

- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 11.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 36.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 37.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Mill, *Autobiography*, 5–7. For frame of reference, *On Liberty* was published in 1859, and the *Autobiography* was published posthumously in 1873.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 20.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., 31.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 80.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 89.
- <sup>21</sup> James E. Crimmins, “Jeremy Bentham,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bentham/>
- <sup>22</sup> “Introduction” to Mill, *Autobiography*, xiv.
- <sup>23</sup> Israel Scheffler, *In Praise of the Cognitive Emotions* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991).
- <sup>24</sup> “Introduction” to Mill, *Autobiography*, xvi.
- <sup>25</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 9.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 9–12.
- <sup>27</sup> Gray, “Mill’s Conception,” 192.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 199.
- <sup>30</sup> “The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection.” Mill, *J. S. Mill On Liberty in Focus*, 30.
- <sup>31</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 17.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 13–14.
- <sup>33</sup> Gray, *On Liberty*, 216.
- <sup>34</sup> Chris Higgins, “Teaching and the Good Life: A Critique of the Ascetic Ideal in Education,” *Educational Theory* 53, no. 2 (2005): 131–154.
- <sup>35</sup> Chris Higgins, *The Good Life of Teaching: An Ethics of Professional Practice*

- (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).
- <sup>36</sup> Higgins, "Teaching and the Good Life," 131.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 146–148.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 149–152.
- <sup>39</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 26.
- <sup>40</sup> Higgins, *The Good Life of Teaching*, 51.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 47.
- <sup>42</sup> *Educating Rita*, directed by Lewis Gilbert (Acorn Pictures, 1983).
- <sup>43</sup> Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, "It's Only Rock 'N' Roll (But I Like It)," performed by The Rolling Stones, *It's Only Rock 'N' Roll*, Rolling Stones Records, COC 59103, 1974, LP.
- <sup>44</sup> *Gimme Shelter*, directed by Albert Maysles, David Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin (Maysles Films, 1970).
- <sup>45</sup> Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 20.
- <sup>46</sup> Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, "You Can't Always Get What You Want," performed by The Rolling Stones, *Let It Bleed*, Decca Records, LK 5025, 1969, LP.
- <sup>47</sup> Thank you to a reviewer of this manuscript for bringing this to my attention.
- <sup>48</sup> Bruce Schoenfeld, "How Dabo Swinney Turned Clemson Into a Football Juggernaut," *The New York Times*, January 10, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/10/sports/dabo-swinney-clemson-cfp.html>
- <sup>49</sup> John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1939), 27.

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