

The Pleasures of Office Life: Mill at East India House

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I. Introduction

From ten to eleven, ate a breakfast for seven;
From eleven to noon, to begin 'twas too soon;
From twelve to one, asked, "What's to be done?"
From one to two, found nothing to do;
From two to three began to foresee
That from three to four would be a damned bore¹

So wrote Thomas Love Peacock in an undated skit on life (if not work) at East India House, the headquarters of the East India Company and John Stuart Mill's place of employment from the age of seventeen until his retirement thirty-five years later. Mill began his career as a clerk there in May 1823, rose to the position of Assistant Examiner in 1836, and succeeded Peacock as Chief Examiner twenty years later, serving until the Company's abolition in 1858. In his *Autobiography* (1873) Mill said very little about his work other than to suggest it provided a steady income without distracting him from "other mental occupations."² This image of intellectual detachment from his work gains further support from a passage excised from an earlier draft of the *Autobiography*, in which Mill maintained that his official duties "had nothing in them to produce anxiety, or to keep the mind intent on them at any time but when directly engaged in them."³ In the published version, Mill noted only that his duties "were sufficiently intellectual not to be a distasteful drudgery, without being such as to cause any strain upon the mental powers of a person used to abstract thought, or to the labour of careful literary

composition”⁴ His employment, as he put it in those excised passages, “precluded all uneasiness about the means of subsistence,” but “occupied fewer hours of the day than almost any business or profession,” leaving him sufficient time and energy for his “private intellectual pursuits.”⁵

For many years studies of Mill accepted this self-assessment, and the implicit compartmentalization of an administrative Mill (a figure as uninteresting as that sobriquet suggests) from Mill the philosopher and the political economist. The tone for this was arguably set even before the publication of the *Autobiography* in the string of eulogies and obituaries that followed Mill’s death, including John Morley’s nine-page contribution to the *Fortnightly Review*, which made no mention of Mill’s work for the East India Company.⁶ Alexander Bain’s biography was almost as parsimonious, and even Mill’s most thorough twentieth century biographer, Michael St John Packe, had nothing of consequence to say regarding Mill’s thirty-five years of paid employment. This neglect of Mill at work bred two interrelated difficulties in Mill scholarship. The first was what Lynn Zastoupil dubbed “Das John Stuart Mill Problem”: “the puzzling relationship between the famous life and the hidden career of our Victorian intellectual.”⁷ The second, in part a consequence of the first, was an underestimation of the intellectual relationship between Mill and India. Eric Stokes, in his seminal study of *The English Utilitarians and India* (1959), claimed that Mill “lacked the clear objectives, the range of opportunity, and the enthusiasm for Indian affairs, which his father had possessed.” He concluded that Mill had little influence on India, and the East India Company had little influence on Mill.⁸ Yet starting in the early 1980s, and gathering considerable pace in the 1990s, scholars were increasingly struck both by the inadequacy of Mill’s self-presentation and of Stokes’ conclusions.

R.J. Moore, Martin Moir, Douglas Peers, Lynn Zastoupil, and others set out to satisfy what Alan Ryan called the “long-felt need” to know and understand more about Mill and India, and to demonstrate that “India mattered more to Mill than observers” once allowed.⁹ This was a multifaceted task that drew upon the 1,708 dispatches Mill drafted at his

East India House desk; a more nuanced reading of his *Autobiography*; and an analysis of Mill's use of India as an illustrative example in many of his most important publications, including the *Logic*, *On Liberty*, and *Principles of Political Economy*.¹⁰ The focus of these studies settled on two main themes: the extent to which Mill "brought his larger social concerns into the office," and its flipside, the impact of India on Mill's political economy and philosophical thought.¹¹ Zastoupil, in particular, sought to relate "Mill's imperial career to the more famous story of his intellectual life," and argued that it was possible to discern important parallels between Mill's development as a thinker and his administrative career.¹² What these studies did not attempt, however, was to probe the influence of what we might broadly call office life and office culture upon Mill. Thus we are still in the position where we have a detailed study of Mill's time as an MP but no comparable study of his much longer career at East India House.¹³ The six-hour days and forty-eight-week years, spread over thirty-five years, are a lacuna in Mill studies. On the few occasions when historians have turned their minds to Mill's working life, it has tended to be in order to lament Mill's employment for compromising his vocation.

Bain set this in train, bemoaning the influence of East India House upon both Mill and his father, complaining that by their work they "brought upon themselves premature exhaustion, and vitiated their theories of life by shaping them under the perverting influence of shattered frames."¹⁴ This bleak assessment has continued into modern scholarship, with Janice Carlisle making the most stinging assessment of Mill's employment. For Carlisle, Mill's work represented a fatal infringement of his independence as a philosopher, and "proved his continual subjection to external forces." For this she blamed both Harriet, who, Carlisle alleged, "kept" Mill at his desk, and Mill himself, for failing "to acknowledge any conflict between his avocation as a writer and his employment as a bureaucrat."¹⁵ Bain might be forgiven for indulging a Victorian longing for the philosopher as a "gentleman scholar," untroubled by the demands of paid employment, but Carlisle's

naive assumption that it would have been possible for Mill to have achieved “independence” from “external forces” is less excusable. Certainly one can sniff hypocrisy in Mill’s attacks on jobbery and “connexions” even as he benefited from his father’s patronage in securing him a post at East India House, but the suggestion that administrative work overloaded him and curtailed his philosophical development is not borne out by the evidence.

Even allowing for Peacock’s comedic license, East India House was clearly not a site of austere work-discipline. Far from bequeathing him a “shattered frame,” Mill was in good physical health throughout his working years. He remained a prodigious pedestrian, capable of walking immense distances, right up until his death, and only once, in thirty-five years at East India House, did he complain of overwork, and that was in the exceptional circumstances of 1836, around the time of his father’s final illness and when his relationship with Harriet was at its most torturous.¹⁶ For the most part Mill found philosophy and bureaucracy entirely compatible pastimes: conducting a vibrant intellectual correspondence from his desk, using his office as a meeting place for friends and interlocutors, and drafting some of his books in working hours. Work was not that arduous; even the legendary 1,708 dispatches, divided over the course of his long career, works out at about one per week, and in his private correspondence, Mill himself never acknowledged any incompatibility—quite the opposite. Writing four years after his retirement to a young would-be philosopher, Mill counselled that “combining two occupations makes each of them, as I have found in my own experience, a rest from the other.”¹⁷ He certainly would not have recognized Carlisle’s argument that his workload doomed him to a life of drudgery and hampered his philosophical output. Indeed, in the few reflective comments on East India House he allowed himself in the *Autobiography*, far from lamenting office life as a form of slavery, Mill credited time at his desk with his acquirement of qualities “of the greatest possible importance for personal *happiness*.”¹⁸

II. Office Culture

What Mill meant by this has sometimes been over-interpreted. Office life, Mill explained, had taught him both pragmatism—"how to obtain the best from any given situation"—and fortitude—how to "bear with complete equanimity being overruled altogether."¹⁹ When historians note his comments, however, they tend to make a broader point than the one Mill perhaps intended. According to R.J. Moore, for example, it was East India House that saved Mill from becoming "doctrinaire." India, Moore argued, provided "a practical exception to every theoretical generalization" and, as Mill "found theory a doubtful guide to action," this led him to develop "a complex mind for a complex world."²⁰ This may well have been the case, but Mill's own point might be read more narrowly: not as a reflection on the broad contours of Indian politics but as being aware that he had learned the value of compromise, and camaraderie that came from participating in the collective enterprise of office life. Above all else, said Mill, his employment "was valuable to me by making me, in this portion of my activity, merely one wheel in a machine, the whole of which had to work together."²¹ This sense of subordination is a little overplayed, but the general point is valid. Working life shaped his character and development and taught the philosopher of individualism the value of common endeavor. To understand this better we need to descend from the realm of high philosophy, in which Mill is invariably discussed, and probe the office culture of East India House.

Admittedly, the use of a late-twentieth-century sociological construct such as office or corporate culture will strike many as problematic and inherently anachronistic. That said, application of the core idea underlying all notions of office culture—that values, beliefs, and norms are shared, often unconsciously, among employees and are transmitted to newly-joined members of an organization—is an approach with some nineteenth-century pedigree.²² Mill's understanding of culture, like that of Matthew Arnold, was conceived primarily as a progressive striving toward "high culture," but their contemporary, Edward Burnett

Tylor, who defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society,” provided a template that at least one commentator has identified as anticipating twentieth century theories of office culture.²³ The central analytical claim of studies of office culture, after all, is that it helps us to probe the ways in which “ideas, values, attitudes, and beliefs” are transmitted and “guide the way in which its employees think, feel, act—quite often unconsciously.”²⁴ This notion was certainly familiar to employees of East India House. Charles Lamb, whose “thirty-three years slavery” at East India House overlapped with the first two years of Mill’s employment, pictured himself as having “grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.”²⁵ Mill lacked Lamb’s lyricism, but recognized a similar symbiosis.

As John William Kaye, the military historian who assumed Mill’s Examiner’s responsibilities when they were transferred to the India Office in 1858, put it, Mill was “brought up among us” and “if he did not imbibe philosophy with his mother’s milk, must have found it in some far off corner of Mr Company’s house.”²⁶ Kaye’s suggestion that Mill was a “Company man” through and through is consistent with contemporary opinions of him, and Mill’s role in the Company’s ultimately futile attempts to prevent its 1858 dissolution is doubly illustrative of this. First, Mill drafted the petition to Parliament to save the Company. The Company’s government of India, Mill wrote, just months after the Indian Rebellion, was “not only one of the purest in intention, but one of the most beneficent in act, ever known among mankind,” arguing that “during the last and present generation in particular it has been, in all departments, one of the most rapidly improving governments in the world.”²⁷ That this was his own opinion, and not just a professional duty, is confirmed both in his personal correspondence and his published writings, most notably *Representative Government*, after his retirement.²⁸ Second, in a tribute to Mill after his death, his fellow East India House worker W.T. Thornton told a story of

how Mill happily allowed others to take credit for his work.²⁹ Moreover, the few accounts we have of Mill in the office stress how at "home" he felt at East India House. One account describes him as prone to "moving restlessly to and fro, 'like a hyena,'" and "When particularly inspired, he used, before sitting down to his desk, not only to strip himself of his coat and waistcoat, but of his trousers, and so set to work, alternately striding up and down the room and writing at great speed."³⁰ Despite this eccentricity, Mill held the respect, and even affection, of his co-workers. "One and all," William Foster recorded, "bore emphatic testimony to his energy, ability, and kindness of heart, and accepted Mill, as Mill accepted himself to be, as part of 'John Company.'"³¹

This would have mattered wherever Mill had worked, but it mattered especially because he worked for the East India Company. Thomas Macaulay described the Company as a "very strange [...] anomaly." It was certainly no ordinary organization; its headquarters was no ordinary office, and its employees were no ordinary office workers.³² The Company, was "neither commerce nor state," and its employees, in turn, were "neither private citizens nor government employees, neither professionals nor wage-slaves, neither leisured gentlemen nor quill-driving hacks." It was in this "no-man's-land between theory and practice, between governmental dependency and professional independence" that Mill spent his working life, and the evidence suggests he was willingly subsumed within it. Thus whatever doubts one might have about the concept of office culture as an analytical tool, attempting to understand the significance of Mill's employment for his life and thought is a legitimate historical pursuit. From his *Autobiography* we learn that Mill understood that work had helped him grow in confidence and independence, but in this, as in every other regard, the *Autobiography* tells only a very limited part of the story, and deploying the concept of an "office culture" helps us to go beyond what Mill tells us directly. Like Carlisle, our starting point is that East India House influenced Mill in more ways than he acknowledged, but rather than seeing this in purely negative terms, as only having limited his freedom and thought, it is our

contention that the office culture of East India House also opened Mill up to a set of social and intellectual forces that played a positive role in his ongoing development.

III. Physical Space and Observable Artifacts

Key to any office culture are the “observable artifacts,” including the architecture and physical environment, which frame its employees’ day-to-day experiences. In the case of the East India Company this framing was on a grand scale. The “Monster of Leadenhall,” as it was less than affectionately known, stood on Leadenhall Street (on the site of today’s Lloyds Building) in the heart of the city of London. Large office buildings on this scale were a rare and relatively recent phenomenon, born out of the need to run complex transnational organizations. The first modern office in what is now the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, was the administrative center of the Medici mercantile empire and opened in 1560. London’s first large scale office, The Old Admiralty Office, dedicated to handling the paperwork generated by the Royal Navy, opened in 1726, the same year that Theodore Jacobsen began the redesign and expansion of the building that would become East India House. The result did not quite match the Florentine splendor of the Uffizi, but the Palladian style exterior and Corinthian pilasters, heavy molding, and lavish Georgian furniture within, made a similar statement about the power and prestige associated with commercial wealth and international trade.

By the time Mill first passed through its pillared portals, almost a century after its opening, East India House had grown even larger (an additional plot of land had been purchased in 1796, with building commencing three years later) and the artwork and sculptures within even more resplendent. The Court Room was an exact 30ft cube, ornamented by gilding and large looking glasses and windows near the ceiling. Six large pictures were hung from the cornice, representing the three Providences, the Cape, St. Helena, and Tellicherry, while a white marble sculpture of Britannia sat over the awning, receiving homage

from the female figures of Asia, Africa, and India: Asia proffered spices in her right hand, while leading a camel with her left; India held a half open box of jewels; while Africa rested its hand on the head of a lion; a laborer is depicted cording a large bale of merchandise, while a trade ship sails in the distance. Deciphering the meaning here is not difficult, and similarly straightforward was the message intended to be conveyed by the statues of the six company servants, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Marquis Cornwallis on the left, and Sir Eyre Coote, General Lawrence, and Sir George Pocock on the right, which populated the sides of the Court Room.³³

Mill, of course, did not conduct his daily work in the Court Room, any more than he stood each day upon the pediment, but even his immediate work surroundings had more than a hint of grandeur about them. Bain recalled how his regular visits to Mill entailed passing through "the great front," nodding acquaintance to the uniformed porter, resplendent in a cocked hat, before walking a corridor of "not less, I should think, than a hundred feet," and ascending "two pair of very unpretentious stairs" before reaching a door bearing the inscription "Examiner's Office." This opened on to a small room occupied by the messengers, and was where tea was made for the more senior staff, and where Mill took his boiled egg breakfast each morning. A baize spring door then led into a long room, housing the clerks and heated to a "sickly, stuffy temperature" in winter by a "huge fire," in front of which clerks often gathered for conversation. This was where Mill had worked when he had first joined the Company, but promotion had soon led him through another spring door into a further passage housing private rooms, the second of which was Mill's:

The room itself was very spacious, I should suppose nearly thirty feet long and about eighteen wide; it was lighted by three large windows. From the fire at one end to a book press at the other, the whole length was free from furniture, and was Mill's promenade with papers in hand. While reading he was generally always on foot. At

the angle between the fire and the nearest window, in a recess, was his standing desk, and near it his office table, which was covered with papers, and provided with drawers, but was not used according to his intention; he wrote at the tall desk either standing or sitting on a high stool. The chair for visitors was next the blank wall, beside a large table, on which the India Despatches used to lie in huge piles.³⁴

Demonstrating a direct connection between the splendor of Mill's surroundings and his views on any particular question is of course impossible and beside the point. The importance of observable artifacts is that they complement and reinforce two other key elements of office culture: "espoused values" (meaning those values championed by a company's leadership) and "basic assumptions" (the underlying and often unconscious determinants of an organization's attitudes, thought processes, and actions). In the case of East India House, the art and architecture were consistent with, and reinforcing of, the Company's core objectives and values, and many of these were congruent with what became Mill's own understanding of questions of trade, "civilization," and democracy. Again, one needs to be wary of claiming too much. Mill was subject to a host of intellectual influences, but whenever we think of Mill writing about the virtues of international trade, the process of development from barbarism to civilization, or the need for paternal governance until such time as a democratic culture is fully matured, it is not difficult to imagine the pediment of East Indian House or the piles of dispatches on Indian governance, casting their shadow across his page.

IV. A Literary Atmosphere

Below the "observable artifacts" of ornate cornices and imposing pediments that framed the office culture of East India House sat, or in the case of many of the clerks stood, Mill's co-workers. As in any office, the shared character, interests, clothing, myths, and rituals of the individuals who made up Leadenhall workforce was vitally important in determining

office culture. These were the men, and it was an exclusively male environment, who espoused the values and embodied the shared assumptions of the workplace and through their daily interactions came to mold and shape each other. The most obvious aspect of East India House culture was that it was markedly "literary" and even "romantic."

From its eighteenth-century opening, East India House had been home to many "writers of distinction, and some genius." John Hoole (1727-1803), the translator and friend of Samuel Johnson, joined the staff at the age of 17 in 1744, and stayed for 39 years, rising to Principal Auditor.³⁵ This literary dominance continued into the nineteenth century in part because of recruitment practices that were strongly influenced by personal friendships and patronage. Martin Moir has charted how the Examiner's Office, in particular, developed across the first half of the nineteenth century into "an advanced semi-elite organization manned by some of the leading British intellectuals," but never quite grew out of the practice of providing jobs for friends and family.³⁶ Not only did Peacock owe his 1819 appointment to a school friendship with Peter Auber, whom he succeeded in the Examiner's Office, he also found work at East India House for his own son, Ned. Peacock, in turn, in 1821, was approached by his friend, Percy Shelley, enquiring "about his own chances of an Indian career."³⁷

Shelley never made it to Leadenhall Street, but the appeal of East India House to him and others of a literary persuasion is clear. Charles Lamb, who like Mill joined the company at the age of 17, complained "bitterly" of the "liberty-haters" and "tyrants" of the Accountant's Office where he worked, but in his private correspondence acknowledged the "stable foundation of Leadenhall" that enabled him to achieve literary success.³⁸ Many of his poems, *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), and his *Essays of Elia* (1823), date from his days at his Leadenhall desk. Beyond the stability, East India House provided a congenial atmosphere for those literary interests. Lamb made friends and contacts at the office, including one William Evans, who combined work at East India House with ownership of the journal *The Pamphleteer*, and invited Lamb to literary

soirees. Work and literary pleasures also combined in Lamb's regular Wednesday evenings in Inner-Temple Lane when "clerks from the India House" would join him to listen to Hazlitt, Godwin, and sometimes Coleridge.³⁹

These clerks were said to have cultivated a self-consciously Byronic air: "long hair, loose collars, and a poetic melancholy became the tone of the literary members of the staff."⁴⁰ The clerks were drawn from all social classes, although the majority "belonged distinctly to the well-to-do," and many harbored literary ambitions, but also a high-spirited sense of fun. Practical jokes were often the order of the day, with the junior administrators famed for their inkpot fights and an incautious game that consisted of throwing a heavy ruler over the top of one of the "compounds" that divided up the floor space with intention of said ruler landing on a fellow clerk's head. Lamb was once "half-blinded" by an overexcited friend throwing an ink pot at him during a jape.⁴¹ More serious scraps also occurred, with a sporting passion for pugilism also strong among the clerks, and bouts said to take place in East India House itself after office hours. Peacock's son Ned was said to have gained considerable credit from one such encounter with "a professional bruiser."⁴²

What the rather callow, priggish, and unworldly young Mill made of such shenanigans is not recorded, but East India House undoubtedly exposed him to a host of new influences and experiences, with the hubbub and hijinks contrasting sharply with the high-minded, controlled environment of his upbringing. The sheer scale of East India House would, perhaps, have been disconcerting enough for a boy who had been home schooled, but Mill was also being drawn to a setting where values other than those of his father vied for consideration. That this impacted, in some way, upon Mill's development seems certain. Zastoupil suggested Mill's interest in romanticism was reinforced by the romanticism taking hold among the colonial officials in India.⁴³ More broadly, Mill's encounter with his India House colleagues must have contributed to an undermining of his father's authority. At first sight this

might seem counter-intuitive. The elder Mill after all had secured his son a post working directly under him, and accompanied him on the walk to and from work each day. But as Moir noted, in a sensitive reading of the relevant passages of Mill's *Autobiography*, what on a first reading looks like a prolongation of his father's authority, soon gives way to a son's account of growing independence in mastering the art of writing his own dispatches.⁴⁴

The more fundamental point, however, is that the office culture to which Mill was exposed harbored an alternative world view to that in which he had been raised, and was populated by men not in intellectual thrall to his father. The values of his colleagues, especially the premium they placed on jollity, poetry, and literature, were not the values of the home in which Mill had been raised. For the serious-minded son this must have been deeply discombobulating. Moir's argument that Mill's first five years at East India House (1823-28) involved "a progression from youthful dependence to mature self-direction," seems fully justified, but he was too cautious in concluding it "perhaps unlikely that his East India House experiences played any direct part" in Mill's "mental crisis" of 1826-1827.⁴⁵ Of course, a lot may turn on what is meant by "direct," but a good *prima facie* case can be made that Mill's experience of East India House made urgent, reinforced, and helped to precipitate many of the trends that fed into the nineteenth century's most discussed "mental crisis." Zastoupil made the telling point that Mill's "mental crisis" began "about the same time that he began writing despatches on his own," but the broader point to be made here is that East India House both helped to precipitate Mill's mental crisis and provided him with many of the materials essential to his resolution of that crisis and his re-emergence as a more complex and rounded thinker.⁴⁶

If this is not immediately obvious then it is worth returning to Mill's claim to have found "happiness" at work. At first sight this might seem surprising. Mill, after all, famously responded to Carlyle's invocation of a "gospel to work" with a call for a "gospel of leisure." In his *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) he complained that "Englishmen have no

life but their work: that alone stands between them and ennui”; and in considering de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, he lamented the lack of a leisured class in the new world.⁴⁷ It would, however, be a mistake to read this as Mill favoring idleness over work. As much as he despised drudgery, Mill opposed the indulgence of animal pleasures. At the center of his mature philosophy was a striving to answer the criticism made by Carlyle, Coleridge, and others, that Bentham’s view of man, as a hedonistic utility-maximizer, was the amoral philosophy of swine, reducing all values to their lowest common denominator.⁴⁸ His solution lay in creating a hierarchy of pleasure in which it was not necessarily the most immediately gratifying but the “higher,” in a qualitative sense, that should be sought.⁴⁹ The higher pleasures, that is, were not the sensual pleasures of indulgence and idleness, but the pleasures of an educated and cultivated mind, and such a mind was well served at East India House.

Initially, the inadequacy of utilitarianism, doubts about his father’s judgement, and the painful self-awareness of the ways in which his own education had rendered him undeveloped emotionally, were all brought painfully home to him and accelerated and deepened by his work environment. But in time East India House also played a part in the resolution of that crisis. The poetry, literature, and romanticism from which he drew sustenance; the walks upon which he recovered his spirits; the interest in non-Benthamite pursuits, such as botany; and many of the friendships he made were also rooted, nurtured, and sustained through his office life. No one better embodied this dual disquieting and constructive effect upon Mill than Thomas Love Peacock.

V. Thomas Love Peacock

Peacock was Mill’s immediate superior for most of his time at East India House. Despite this proximity, the absence of Peacock from Mill’s *Autobiography* has been taken to confirm the apparent lack of sympathy between the two men.⁵⁰ Peacock, who was said to have never faltered in his “boyish love of fun,” was in many ways the embodiment of all that

Mill might have found disquieting about his place of employment.⁵¹ Peacock's biographer, Felix Felton, was certainly not alone in noting the contrast between the "dour" Mill and the mischievous Peacock, and in supposing Peacock "too jocular for Mill's tastes."⁵² Jocularitas was not the only characteristic of Peacock that Mill might have found uncomfortable. Not only did Peacock harbor a series of "grotesque antipathies" and irrational prejudices, to the Scots, paper money, the Lake Poets, and Coleridge, to which Mill might have taken exception, but in his novels he seemed to aim his pen at some targets close to Mill. Most obviously, Chapter Six of *Crotchet Castle* (1831), "Theories," was a thinly veiled satire of a dinner that James Mill had hosted. Evidence of the younger Mill's irritation with Peacock might even be said to pre-date this, with the editors of Mill's *Collected Works* identifying Peacock as his target in an 1828 contribution at the London Debating Society in which Mill complained of those who regarded the very notion of the "march of intellect" as "a subject of laughter and derision."⁵³ If Peacock was the target, the admonishment was ignored, as in his 1837 edition of *Crotchet Castle* Peacock repeated his scorn of the phrase the "march of intellect."⁵⁴

This, however, is not the whole story. Certainly Peacock was temperamentally unsuited to political economy and no utilitarian. As Edward Strachey put it, Peacock was both too much of a "fun-loving caricaturist" and too much of a nostalgic who "really considered the state of society when men wore armour and had no paper money, was better than our own" to indulge the "dismal science." But he seems to have harbored a genuine affection for both Mills.⁵⁵ He occasionally dined with James Mill and, it has been suggested, refrained from publishing *Paper-Money Lyrics* until after the elder Mill's death out of consideration for his colleague's feelings.⁵⁶ He displayed a similar sensitivity following Mill's and Taylor's dual diagnosis of tuberculosis in 1854.⁵⁷ Moreover, intellectually and socially there was more common ground between Peacock and the Mills than it might at first appear. In his diaries, M.E. Grant Duff (1829-1906), who later became Gladstone's Under-Secretary

of State for India, and who was on friendly terms with both Mill and Peacock, described the latter as having been “extremely intimate” with Jeremy Bentham, the two apparently dining “*tête à tête*, once a week for years together.”⁵⁸ Duff, admittedly, would have had no direct knowledge of this (he was only three years old when Bentham died), but Peacock was certainly friends with some in the Benthamite circle, including Walter Coulson, a former amanuensis to Bentham and future editor of the *Globe and Traveller*, and Albany Fonblanque, who became editor of the *Examiner* in the 1830s. We also know that Peacock wrote for the *Westminster Review* on more than one occasion, and there were “clear similarities” between James Mill’s views on poetry and Peacock’s influential essay, “The Four Ages of Poetry” (1820).⁵⁹ Intellectually, Peacock shared with the younger Mill a tendency to see the world as an abstract battle of ideas.

Peacock’s importance as a novelist rested on the fact that he was, as one of his editors put it, “the first novelist to write purely for an intelligent, highly educated public who would be expected to find amusement in mental rather than physical or emotional contortions.”⁶⁰ Storyline and “extraneous circumstances” were almost entirely absent from Peacock’s novels, in which the “action” was an intellectual and amusing contention of opinions, and the setting incidental. Thus Peacock’s novels foreshadow the central weakness of Mill’s *Autobiography*, which is similarly an odyssey of ideas almost devoid of physical form and context. Yet perhaps, paradoxically, Peacock found inspiration for this in his office life. If Mill had read *Crotchet Castle* (1831), it would have been with a sense of recognition of the “young stranger” who enters the Roman Camp, to be told by Crotchet that “all the arts and sciences are welcome here: music, painting, and poetry; hydrostatics, and political economy; meteorology, transcendentalism, and fish for breakfast.” Besides recognizing the broad intellectual environment at East India House, Mill would have had some sympathy with the “central wisdom” of Peacock’s novels: “a warning against extremes of doctrine or of sentiment.” Just as importantly, the two men

enjoyed shared interests beyond work. Both were enthusiastic pedestrians: Peacock’s first book, *The Genius of the Thames* (1810), was the result of hours spent tramping along the banks of the river that Mill came to know so well, and for many years Peacock wrote musical notices for both Coulson and Fonblanque at a time when music was a great passion of Mill’s, and one which he linked to his broader thought by a Malthusian worry that the number of musical note combinations would soon be exhausted.⁶¹

VI. Botany

Even greater than Mill’s enthusiasm for walking and music was his passion for botany. Mill had been introduced to the science during a trip to France at age 14. It was the first intellectual interest Mill adopted independently of his father, and by the end of his life Mill had assembled a remarkable herbarium of over 12,000 specimens.⁶² Mill’s interest was nurtured and developed at East India House where, alongside literature, botany was the most pervasive shared interest among the staff, for both commercial and personal reasons. Long before Mill went to work there, the Company’s Treasurer (Cashier-General), and one of the seven Trustees, Charles Du Bois (c.1653-1740), was said to have combined his “comparatively light” duties with “an absorbing hobby” in the form of his love for flowers. In fact, he was much more than an enthusiastic amateur: Du Bois contributed observations to an updated edition of John Ray’s *Synopsis* (1724) and engaged in a correspondence with Dr William Sherard, the founder of the Chair of Botany at Oxford, and Dr Dillenius, its first occupant. Upon his death, Du Bois left his 13,000-sheet herbarium, bound in 74 folio volumes, to the University, where he was further commemorated by Brown’s establishing the genus *Duboisia*.⁶³ One striking feature of Du Bois’ herbarium, which was to be replicated in Mill’s, was the opportunity his employment provided to obtain specimens from India. In his large garden at Mitcham, Du Bois reared exotic plants, and many of his dried specimens were also from the subcontinent. These specimens, of course, were not gathered purely for pleasure. The East India Company was interested in the botanical

exploitation of the subcontinent, and Mill worked alongside John Forbes Royle (1799-1858), a surgeon and naturalist who shared Mill's passion for botany and who was in charge of the East India Company's correspondence relating to vegetable production.

That Mill's botanical interests were fed by his office life can be seen in some of the accounts we have of his friends and associates. Toward the end of Mill's career, Grant Duff, who visited Peacock at East India House, recalled dropping by to talk botany with Mill and to seek his help in identifying certain specimens.⁶⁴ Over a quarter of a century earlier it was Henry Cole, another Peacock associate, who found Mill "exulting in his discovery of the Martigon Lily at Dorking."⁶⁵ By this point Cole, who would act as Mill's intermediary with Joseph Hooker, forwarding Mill's notes on Hooker's *British Flora* to its author and sparking an exchange of specimens between Mill and the Director of Kew Gardens, had begun to accompany Mill on botanical trips to Battersea fields and spent a number of evenings examining Mill's herbarium.⁶⁶ Nor was it just botany that formed a point of contact between Mill and Cole at East India House. According to Cole's diary, in 1829 Mill lent him six numbers of the music periodical *The Harmonicom*, and in 1832 Mill introduced him to the French 'Saint Simonian missionary', Gustave d'Eichthal, and discussed "the Philosophy of the Fine Arts" at East India House.

What Cole's diary points to, apart from the fact that conversations with Mill at East India House ran the whole gamut of botany, music, poetry, French socialism, tea drinking, walking, geology, and opera, is the impossibility of attempting to compartmentalize one part of Mill's life from another. Cole was not an employee of the East India Company, but he was a frequent visitor, and in that sense became part of Mill's experience of East India House's office culture, precisely because that culture was pervasive.

East India House enjoyed a deserved reputation as a venue for sociable intellectual encounters and it was common practice, among the senior staff at least, to use their offices to pursue non-work-related friendships. Thomas de Quincey, for example, recalled calling on

Charles Lamb.⁶⁷ The importance of this for Mill should not be underestimated. To give but a few examples: Bain first met Mill at East India House and became a regular caller; Henry Solly too was a frequent visitor to Mill's office; David Masson said that Mill was accessible to non-work friends between 3 and 4 pm each afternoon; and Thomas Carlyle was introduced to John Sterling in Mill's office.⁶⁸ One could, of course, argue that this tends to confirm the view of those who maintain that for Mill "the main importance of his job was that it enabled him to do things that had nothing to do with his job."⁶⁹ But that would imply that office life is simply about immediate work tasks rather than the social relations formed, and interactions conducted, at work. Cole was not an East India House employee but his landlord was Peacock, and it was Peacock who introduced Cole to Mill at Leadenhall Street, just as it was Peacock who introduced Mill to John Arthur Roebuck, who went on to become one of Mill's most "intimate companions."⁷⁰ It was not simply the case, that is, that Mill's friends found their way into East India House: he first met Cole and Roebuck through his work, not separated from it, and there are also examples of work colleagues who became friends.

VII. Friendships

Friendship sits beyond the factors normally considered in studies of "office culture," but it might easily be encompassed within what Deal and Kennedy identify as a corporation's "cultural network." A more serious objection might be that friendship is not a characteristic immediately identified with Mill. Many later commentators have shared the judgement of R.H. Hutton, who claimed Mill had "no pleasure in men, no delight in actual intercourse with this strange, various, homely world of motley faults and virtues," and that friendship was not a significant feature of his life.⁷¹ This is a view that finds some encouragement in Mill's *Autobiography* (Hutton reached his judgement while reviewing that book) where Mill tells us that he had no intimate friend in whom he could confide at the onset of his mental crisis and

confuses some readers by categorizing his relationship with Harriet Taylor as his “most valuable friendship.” His friendships with both Cole and Roebuck, however, demonstrate that Mill did indeed sometimes find “pleasure in men” and “delight in actual intercourse,” and that his office life facilitated this. Those two were not colleagues, but East India House, like any other workplace, had the potential to bring together individuals who would not otherwise have met and to form important and lasting friendships that extended out of office hours.

The most obvious example of friendship with a co-worker in Mill’s later years was the one he formed with W.T. Thornton. In a tender tribute, written after Mill’s death, Thornton recalled how despite being located in different parts of the building, and a “mutual shyness,” his intimacy with Mill had developed to the extent that “a day seldom passed without, if I did not go into his room, his coming into mine.”⁷² Thornton’s friendship mattered to Mill’s intellectual development: without it, Mill may never have changed his position on the wages fund, and we are fortunate to have a record of it. The difficulty with charting other such friendships and attempting to assess their influence is that the proximity and frequency of workplace contact tends to leave little in the way of a written record for historians. When Peacock introduced Roebuck to his “young friend,” he told him that Mill belonged to a “disquisitive set of young men,” but it is unclear whether this “set” were inside or outside East India House.⁷³ Certainly there were plenty of individuals in his workplace with whom Mill might have formed friendships throughout his time there. Thomas Gowing, for example, who entered East India House at the age of 15 and stayed until the Company’s dissolution in 1858, had a strong interest in two of Mill’s favorite subjects: education and botany. Although Gowing has achieved some posthumous fame in recent years as the author of *The Philosophy of Beards* (1854), the “best memorial of his labours,” according to his obituarist, was his educational tract, *Normal Schools: and the principles of government interference with education* (1838).⁷⁴ This book, which dealt in part with the experience of Prussian Normal Schools, might well

have attracted Mill's interest, but this is speculation and we have no evidence of any meaningful interactions.

There is more evidence in the case of Octavius Greene. A few years older than Mill, Greene had joined the Company as an extra clerk in 1814, became a junior clerk in 1819, and later transferred to the Correspondence Branch; remaining until his retirement in 1847. Greene was fully aligned to the literary culture of East India House, publishing poems in the *Asiatic Journal* and other periodicals, and in 1831 he privately printed a poetry collection, *The Pass of Bonholme and other occasional verses*. We do not know whether or not this formed part of Mill's poetic reading, but we do know that Mill was a reader of the *Asiatic Journal*, and that Greene, like Mill, attended the London Debating Society in the mid-1820s.⁷⁵ Indeed, on one occasion Mill spoke against a motion that Greene proposed and moved, which stated: "That the System pursued at our Universities is adapted to the Ends of Education." In the two extant drafts of his response Mill complained that the "defectiveness" of Oxford and Cambridge was rooted in their being "ecclesiastical establishments," and that the clergy, pledged as they were to the established church, were inherently opposed to the tendency of the human intellect to "progressiveness."⁷⁶ It seems difficult to believe that this and other debates were not continued at Leadenhall Street, although again the available evidence does not positively prove any friendship between Greene and Mill.

The one instance in which we can prove an important and potentially influential workplace friendship, other than that with Thornton, is with Horace Grant (1801-1859).⁷⁷ Five years older than Mill, Grant joined the Examiner's Office as a clerk in 1826, and he retired on grounds of ill health in 1845. In the late 1820s and early 1830s the two men were especially close. Some of the intensity of the friendship faded, on Mill's part at least, as Grant's ill-health took hold, but Mill was planning to visit Grant at his Fairseat home a few days before the older man's death in March 1859, and upon hearing of his passing, Mill described Grant as "without exception the most unselfish

person, of the male sex, whom I have ever known intimately enough to be able to judge.”⁷⁸ The tone and content of their daily intercourse—at East India House and beyond—has inevitably been lost, but what evidence we have points to three noteworthy aspects of their relationship. First, this was an important friendship: Grant was far more than the “India House colleague” referred to by Mill’s most recent biographer. Second, Grant’s selflessness and social skills helped Mill to sustain other important relationships, most notably that with Thomas Carlyle. Third, theirs was an “intellectual” friendship, and since Grant was a thinker in his own right, he may have exercised some limited influence over Mill.

In his *Autobiography*, Mill notes that he did not have a friend in whom he could confide at the onset of his mental crisis.⁷⁹ This, of course, predated Grant’s employment at East India House, and when in 1828 Mill detected a return to his “old state of gloomy dejection” it was swiftly dispelled by a summer evening’s walk along the Thames, from Reading to Pangbourne, in the company of Grant.⁸⁰ The walk was part of the second of three walking tours on which Grant accompanied Mill between 1827 and 1831. The first had seen the pair, along with George John Graham, spend ten days walking in Sussex; the second, in 1828, had lasted twelve days, taking in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Surrey, on which Mill and Grant were joined by Edwin Chadwick and Francis Crawley; while the third, and most famous, in 1831, lasted a month, and begun with Mill and Grant alone in Yorkshire, before being joined briefly in the Lake District by Henry Cole.⁸¹ As well as sharing holidays, Grant was a regular companion for Mill on his Sunday excursions around Surrey, and in 1836, in the immediate wake of his father’s death, when Mill was arguably at his lowest ebb, Grant was one of those Mill invited to stay with him at Mickleham. It says something for the depth of the friendship that it was able to endure even when Mill’s relationship with Harriet developed at the cost of some of Mill’s other friendships, such as that with Cole.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this was Grant’s apparently unassuming and good-natured disposition. Grant, it seems, helped Mill

socially, easing relationships with others. His name pops up time and again in conjunction with Mill's in Cole's diary (on one occasion Cole writes of the three of them passing a "blithesome evening" together), and he seems to have been even more central in facilitating and encouraging Mill's friendship with Carlyle.⁸² Besides often being present at their meetings, Grant also took an active role in encouraging communication. Twice, in 1836 and 1839, Grant took Carlyle a copy of a letter he was about to send Mill and suggested that Carlyle add a few words of his own.⁸³ On another occasion he acted as a courier for a letter of Carlyle's to Mill. Carlyle was characteristically condescending, frequently referring to "little Grant" in his correspondence, and only occasionally "Friend Grant." In 1844 he received a portrait of Goethe as a present from Grant. Responding to a letter in which his wife reported that Grant had asked "if he could '*do anything for me*,'" Jane Carlyle described Grant as "assiduous."⁸⁴

This selfless and facilitative aspect of Grant's character may have led his contemporaries, as well as subsequent historians, to undervalue his intellectual standing. Grant was, as Edwin Chadwick's obituary of him confirmed, a member of the Society of Students of Mental Philosophy, along with Mill, Grote, and Chadwick himself, and held his own in the "study of mental philosophy." In devoting himself "to the study of the human mind, and, from a most kindly disposition to little children, to the especial study of the mind in its earlier stages of growth," said Chadwick, Grant displayed "the practicality of a careful observer and experimenter in the physical sciences." Posterity, Chadwick concluded, would find Grant "worthy to be classed with Comenius, Pestalozzi, the Abbé Gaultier, and the Abbé Girard, men of great humanity and eminent ability, who devoted themselves zealously to the especial study of the minds of children, and to the best means of cultivating them."⁸⁵ Mill seemed to entertain a similarly high opinion, penning a "laudatory review" of the two books for teaching children that Grant had published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in 1835.⁸⁶ The great value of Grant's books—*Arithmetic for*

Young Children and Exercises for the Improvement of the Senses for Young Children—Mill maintained, was that they foreswore “the system of cram” for “the system of cultivating mental power”:

the author of the works before us (Mr. Horace Grant) has shown still more strongly than any one else the excellence of the system which considers a child as a being endowed with reason—by the admirable specimen which he has afforded of the means of bringing that reason into exercise from the earliest year.

Grant, Mill continued, had structured his exercises so that:

the child’s intellect is carried with him throughout; and at every step the child acquires not only a set of sounds, but ideas, and with those ideas the habit of really discovering truths for himself; of using his eyes, his hands, all his perceptive faculties, and his first nascent powers of judgement and reasoning.⁸⁷

The tone of these remarks, as the editors of the *Collected Works* noted, closely corresponds with the *Autobiography*’s account of the training Mill himself would go to describe as having received from his father. The editors chose to read this as adding “support to the words of the *Autobiography*” and suggested that Mill “may have been consciously acknowledging a debt” to his terminally-ill father when reviewing Grant.⁸⁸ This is an entirely plausible reading, but not the only one possible. The editors, after all, assume that Mill—a “young man of nearly thirty,” as they describe him—was necessarily commenting on his own education. It is equally plausible to argue that Mill, who had been actively engaged in the education of his siblings, might have been thinking of his role as a teacher. It is also likely that rather than being an uninhibited memory, the account in the *Autobiography* owes more to post-hoc rationalization and reassessment, and a desire to see his own experience as a “good” one, along the lines that Grant prescribed. This is not to claim the need for a reassessment of Mill’s education, merely to provide another warning of the need for wariness when handling his

Autobiography. In relation to Grant, we might at least speculate that he influenced Mill's thinking on education, to some degree, and that something of the spirit of this found its way into Mill's autobiographical recollections. Even if this is not accepted, what seems indisputable is that Mill's friendship with Grant was formed and fostered in the workplace, and then extended beyond it, and has not received sufficient attention in previous studies of Mill, which have undervalued the centrality of his work to understanding his life and thought.

VIII. Conclusion

The preceding sections have shown the context of Mill's life at Leadenhall Street in more detail than is usual in studies of the philosopher. I have used the framework of contemporary investigations of office culture to suggest ways in which we might explore the impact of East India House on Mill's personal and intellectual development. I argue that the distinctive working environment that Mill found himself in, embracing everything from the "observable artifacts" of the art and architecture, through to the friendships Mill formed with other staff, would have shaped and influenced Mill, almost certainly quite unconsciously, to a far greater extent than he, or most of those who have studied him hitherto, have allowed. Few readers are likely to dispute this in general terms, but many might pose two further questions. First, what examples of the definite influence of working at East India House on Mill's life and thought can we identify? Second, how does an appreciation of Mill in the context of East India House reshape our broader understanding of him?

The first of these questions is in some respects the wrong one to ask. Just as Mill himself was misleading in his attempts to compartmentalize and separate his working life from his broader intellectual development, so too would it be equally misleading to go to the other extreme and attempt to delineate a discrete and bounded influence that his working life exercised over his philosophical thought. Our central contention is that the context of Mill's office life needs to be built into, not separated

out from, the story of his intellectual odyssey. Indeed, it ought to be obvious from all that has been said already that such a separation is impossible. When we consider the influence of the Company's "leadership values" upon Mill, how might one separate these out from the lessons Mill learned directly from his father's *History of British India* (1817)? Or, indeed, how might one delineate what Mill imbued in Leadenhall Street from what was instilled in him over the family dinner table or during his daily walk to and from the office with his father? Similarly, when one considers the possible influence of the enthusiasm for Byron exhibited by many of the East India clerks, and ponders whether or not this impelled Mill, in reaction, to identify himself as a Wordsworthian, it is equally impossible to separate out Mill's office life from his broader life.⁸⁹ In his *Autobiography*, Mill makes no mention of his work colleagues, but makes clear that Roebuck's enthusiasm for Byron (and remember he was introduced to Roebuck by Peacock in East India House) was a factor in helping to crystalize his own romanticism, and it seems more than reasonable to assume that his Byronic co-workers were, at the very least, a reinforcing factor.⁹⁰ But again delineating office influences from non-office influences is impossible: Mill openly debated poetry outside of work, at the London Debating Society, but as we have seen, his principal opponent was a work colleague, Octavius Greene.

The second question, how ought a recognition of the centrality of work and office culture to Mill's life and thought shape our understanding of him, is both more pertinent and more straightforward to answer. First and foremost it joins with a growing body of literature in recent years that has sought to sketch an ever-more-rounded view of Mill. He was not, as scholars have increasingly found it necessary to assert, the cold-eyed detached philosopher depicted in G.F. Watts's much criticized portrait, but a living, breathing, paid employee. Where an acknowledgement of Mill at East India House perhaps parts company with this broader literature, however, is in suggesting that far from Mill's conforming to Richard Reeves' antidotal depiction of his favorite philosopher as a "firebrand," Mill is, in fact, equally perspicaciously

viewed as a bureaucrat.⁹¹ Indeed, if one can see beyond the pejorative associations of this term, we are led into the second way in which an understanding of office culture might help to shape our understanding of Mill: it taught him the value of collaborative working. His daily experience was of sharing drafts and authorships, and far from being something he resented, it was, he tells us, a source of "personal happiness." This ought to be borne in mind when, for example, we come to those often criticized passages in the *Autobiography* where, to the chagrin and dismay of many of his admirers, Mill accords joint authorship of many of his most significant publications to Harriet Taylor. East India House might help the disappointed understand that for Mill, this was not a matter of regret or something that diminished his own contribution, and that joint authorship could, and did, mean a whole range of differing levels of input. The third way in which acknowledging the centrality of office culture affects our understanding is that it brings us back to the point with which we began: the importance of place. It is a truism of Mill scholarship that he was influenced by a succession of thinkers, but his life was more than a parade of such thinkers acting upon a malleable and disembodied mind. East India House was the site of much of Mill's philosophical endeavor: not only did he often write at his desk, he used his office as a meeting place and discussion venue, and remembering this draws attention to what we might call the "material Mill": a man who ate, drank, worked, slept, and enjoyed friendships and hobbies, and whose lived experiences fed in various ways into his thought and philosophy.

For some these conclusions may seem frustratingly imprecise, and the influence of work culture too elusive to merit consideration. That would be a mistake. For while it is not possible to delineate any discrete work-culture influence on Mill with any degree of certainty, it was a contributing element in forming a full understanding of Mill's life and thought in a whole host of areas. Any influence would have been at its strongest, of course, in the 1820s and early 1830s, when Mill was still developing.⁹² The best illustration of this relates to that most pivotal

moment in Mill's development, his mental crisis. Mill's own account focuses exclusively on direct intellectual influences, abstracted from any physical and social context. However, once we attempt to put this into a broader context and to understand why and how Mill came to question the utilitarian principles he had been so deeply and effectively schooled in, we are led immediately to Leadenhall Street. At the heart of the "mental crisis," as many commentators have noted, was a questioning of the authority of his father, which must have been accelerated by working in an environment where Peacock and others would have implicitly undermined the status James Mill had hitherto held for his son, and where the nature of his work, as Mill himself tells us, won him a degree of independence from his father. The crisis, moreover, was resolved by his apparent success in reconciling those new literary interests and romantic insights that found encouragement at his workplace, with the utilitarian principles he had learned before he began work. The result was the mature thought of John Stuart Mill, which pervades all of his later work, and which has running through it an inheritance from East India House.

Notes

The abbreviation CW refers to John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, 33 Volumes, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963-1991).

¹ Thomas Love Peacock. *Biographical Notes. From 1785 to 1862*, ed. Henry Cole (London 1875), 21.

² CW 1:85.

³ CW 1:84n.

⁴ CW 1:83-85.

⁵ CW 1:84n, 85.

⁶ J. Morley, "The Death of Mr. Mill," *Fortnightly Review* 58 (1873), 669-76.

⁷ L. Zastoupil, "J.S. Mill and Indian Education," *Utilitas* 3 (1991), 69-83, at 70.

⁸ E. Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1959), vii-viii and 48-50.

⁹ A. Ryan, "Introduction," in M.I. Moir, D.M. Peers, and L. Zastoupil, *J.S. Mill's Encounter with India* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999), 3-17, at 3.

¹⁰ M. Moir, "The Examiner's Office and the drafting of East India Company Despatches," *East India Company Studies. Papers Presented to Sir Cyril Philips*, ed. K. Ballhatchet & J. Harrison (Hong Kong 1986), 123-52. The fact that Mill took the trouble to leave a careful record of what would otherwise have been anonymous despatches, suggests an element of pride in his work that historians were slow to pick up on. According to Zastoupil, Stokes only cited one of the despatches! L. Zastoupil, *John Stuart Mill and India* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1994), 3. Peers, by contrast, commented that historians "can only be grateful for his recording compulsion." D.M. Peers, "Imperial Epitaph: John Stuart Mill's defence of the East India Company" in Moir, Peers, and Zastoupil (1999), 198-220, at 201.

¹¹ Ryan, "Introduction," 16.

¹² Cf. R.J. Moore, who seemed to argue there was "no need to consider—Mill's imperial career in the context of his more famous intellectual life." Zastoupil (1994), 4-5. See R.J. Moore, "John Stuart Mill at East India House," *Historical Studies* 20 (1983), 497-519, and R.J. Moore, "John Stuart Mill and Royal India," *Utilitas* 3 (1991), 85-106.

¹³ B.L. Kinzer, A.P. Robson, and M. Robson, *A moralist in and out of Parliament: John Stuart Mill at Westminster, 1865-1868* (Toronto: Toronto University Press 1992).

¹⁴ A. Bain, *John Stuart Mill: A Criticism with Personal Recollections* (London: Longmans, Green & Co. 1882), 148.

¹⁵ J. Carlisle, *John Stuart Mill and the Writing of Character* (Athens: University of Georgia Press 1991), 100.

¹⁶ Even then the two letters that make reference to "drudgery" frame this in terms of all the different tasks—at East India House and beyond—

that Mill has hanging over him. Mill to Sarah Austin, 28 January 1837 and Mill to J.P. Nichol, 29 January 1837, CW 12:321-24.

¹⁷ CW 15:793-94.

¹⁸ CW 1:88, emphasis added.

¹⁹ CW 1:88.

²⁰ Moore argued that Mill's work ensured that he was "no doctrinaire," and helped him to develop "a complex mind for a complex world." Moore (1983), 518.

²¹ CW 1:87.

²² The dominant understanding of office or corporate culture is rooted in twentieth-century sociology. Interest in the concept burgeoned in the 1980s as a dual response to the growing interest in semiotics, which drew heavily on Clifford Geertz's *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973), and US fears of Japanese economic success, which was perceived as being rooted in a distinctive, national corporate culture. For two of the most important studies see: T. Deal and A. Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (Cambridge, MA, 1982) and J.P. Kotter and J.L. Heskett, *Corporate Culture and Performance* (New York, 1982). For more recent discussions see also A. Kazmi, *Business Policy and Strategic Management* (Delhi, 2003) and E.H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco, 2004).

²³ E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches Into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*, Volume I (London: John Murray 1871), 1.

²⁴ B.M. Tharp, "Defining 'Culture' and 'Organisational Culture': from anthropology to the office," https://www.thercfgroup.com/files/resources/Defining-Culture-and-Organizationa-Culture_5.pdf. Accessed 28/10/2019.

²⁵ C. Lamb, "The Superannuated Man" in *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, Volume 2, ed. E.V. Lucas (London 1903), 219-25, at 219.

²⁶ [J.W. Kaye], "The House that John built," *Cornhill Magazine* 2 (1860), 118.

²⁷ Petition of the East India Company to Parliament, *Parliamentary Debates*, Series 3, 148 (3 December 1857-22 February 1858), Appendix. CW 30:75-89.

²⁸ "I believe the E.I.C. to have always been, & know it to be now, what my father represented it, the government which of all others (except perhaps the U.S. of America) wishes to do & does, most for the people under its sway, & the protector of the natives of India against the avarice & domineering spirit of rapacious European adventurers...." Mill to Col. W.F.P. Napier, 5 January 1837, CW 17:1982-1983. See also Mill to W.T. Thornton, n.d., after 19 September 1860. CW 15:707-8, and Mill, *Consideration on Representative Government*, CW 19:575. According to Karl de Schweinitz, "there is no doubt, whatever Mill may have felt about his job in his early years, that he came to identify with the Company and its mission and did not approve of the transfer to the Crown in 1858, following the suppression of the Sepoy Rebellion, of what authority it still had." K. de Schweinitz, "John Stuart Mill and India," *Research in the History of Economic Thought and Methodology* 2 (1984), 47-61, at 48.

²⁹ W.T. Thornton, "His career in the India House," in H. Spencer *et al.*, *John Stuart Mill, His Life and Work. Twelve Sketches by Herbert Spencer, Henry Fawcett, Frederic Harrison, and Other Distinguished Authors* (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1873), 30-37, at 32.

³⁰ William Griggs, *Relics of the Honourable East India Company. A Series of Fifty Plates by William Griggs. With Letterpress by Sir George Birdwood and William Foster* (London 1909), xi.

³¹ William Foster, *The East India House. Its History and Associations* (London, 1924), 223. R.J. Moore, "John Mill of John Company," *East India Company Studies. Papers Presented to Sir Cyril Philips*, ed. K. Ballhatchet & J. Harrison (Hong Kong 1986), 153-82. Although Griggs found evidence of some less kindly feelings among the clerks who "detested transcribing his manuscript, and appear to have even disliked him personally for its extreme illegibility; for one of his subordinate clerks, looking utterly miserable and distracted at his desk,

on being asked if he was ill, replied angrily: ‘Oh no! it’s only that I’m trying to unriddle some more of that d____d old fool’s _____.’” Griggs, xi-xii.

³² T.B. Macaulay, “Government of India (July 10, 1833)” in *The Miscellaneous Writings and Speeches of Lord Macaulay*; Vol. IV, *Lord Macaulay’s Speeches* (London 1871).

³³ Griggs, *Relics*, v.

³⁴ Bain, *John Stuart Mill*, 64-65n.

³⁵ Griggs, *Relics*, xi.

³⁶ M. Moir, “The Examiner’s Office: The Emergence of an Administrative Elite in East India House (1804-1858),” 25-42. See also N. Gardner Cassels, “John Stuart Mill, Religion and Law in the Examiner’s Office,” in Martin I. Moir, Douglas M. Peers, & Lynn Zastoupil, *J.S. Mill’s Encounter with India* (Toronto, 1999), 173-97.

³⁷ K.N. Cameron, ed., *Shelley and his Circle 1773-1822*, Volume IV, 792 (London, 1973).

³⁸ C. Lamb, *Letters* (London, 1909), 260.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 219-20.

⁴⁰ Griggs, *Relics*, 235-36.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 237.

⁴² *Ibid.* 235-36.

⁴³ Zastoupil (1991), 76.

⁴⁴ M. Moir, “Introduction,” CW 30:vii-liv.

⁴⁵ Moir, “Introduction,” CW 30:xvii.

⁴⁶ Zastoupil (1991), 72

⁴⁷ CW 21:90, 2:104, and 18:25.

⁴⁸ See R. Crisp, *Mill on Utilitarianism* (London: Routledge 1997).

⁴⁹ “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, is of a different opinion, it is only because they only know their own side of the question.” Mill, CW 10:212.

⁵⁰ Foster, *East India House*, 211.

⁵¹ Edward Strachey, “Recollections of Thomas Love Peacock,” in R.

Garnett, ed., *Calidore and Miscellanea* (London 1891), 15-23, at 22.

⁵² de Schweintz, "John Stuart Mill," 60n. F. Felton, *Thomas Love Peacock* (London 1973), 183-86. Peacock undoubtedly drew much comic material over what he regarded as the elder Mill's excessive seriousness, but this is as easily interpreted as good-natured ribbing as it is open hostility.

⁵³ CW 26:424.

⁵⁴ Peacock, *Crotchet Castle* (London, 1837).

⁵⁵ See Strachey, "Recollections," 18-19.

⁵⁶ Foster, *East India House*, 210. Strachey, "Recollections," 17-18.

⁵⁷ Packe says that when Mill returned in 1854, leaving Harriet at Hyères: "Only his superior, Thomas Love Peacock, had the good sense to avoid the topic of illness altogether: after mentioning a visit he had had from Mill's only remaining brother James, who had just come back from India, he plunged gruffly into official matters as though nothing at all had happened." M. St. John Packe, *The Life of John Stuart Mill* (London, 1954), 365.

⁵⁸ Sir Mountstuart E. Grant Duff, *Notes from a Diary 1851-1872*, Volume 1 (London: John Murray, 1897), 60, entry for 10 November 1853.

⁵⁹ F. Felton, *Thomas Love Peacock* (London, 1973), 183, 190-91, and 204. J. Majeed, "James Mill's *The History of British India*" in Moir, Peers, & Zastoupil. *J.S. Mill's Encounter*, 53-71, at 58-59.

⁶⁰ J. Mair, "Introduction" to *Three Novels (Headlong Hall, Nightmare Abbey, Crotchet Castle)* by Thomas Love Peacock (Edinburgh, 1940), xi-xii.

⁶¹ CW 1:149.

⁶² On Mill and botany see CW 31.

⁶³ Foster, *East India House*, 113, 118, 119, and 121. The Du Bois herbarium is still held as a separate collection at the University of Oxford.

⁶⁴ Duff, *Notes from a Diary*, I, 83-84, 30 October 1855.

⁶⁵ Anna J. Mill, "Some notes on Mill's early friendship with Henry

Cole," *Mill News Letter* 4 (1969), 2-8, at 3.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ R.L. Brett, ed., *Barclay Fox's Journal 1832-1834* (London, 2008), 184, 192, 196, and 341. Foster, *East India House*, 182-83.

⁶⁸ H. Solly, *These Eighty Years. The Story of an Unfinished Life*, Volume 1 (London, 1893), 204. D. Masson, "Memories of London in the Forties," *Blackwood's Magazine* 183 (1908), 260-69.

⁶⁹ Trevor Lloyd, "John Stuart Mill and the East India Company," *A Cultured Mind: Essays on J.S. Mill presented to John M. Robson*, ed. M. Laine (Toronto, 1991), 44-79, at 74.

⁷⁰ According to Packe, it was Peacock who first suggested John Arthur Roebuck might like to meet Mill. Packe, *John Stuart Mill*, 66-67. CW 1:83. See also *Life and Letters of John Arthur Roebuck, with Chapters of Autobiography*, ed. E.E. Leader (London: Edward Arnold, 1897), 51.

⁷¹ R.H. Hutton, "Mr. John Stuart Mill's Autobiography," *Spectator* 46, 1337-41, 25 October 1873, at 1339.

⁷² Thornton, "His career," 34. On Thornton, see M. Donoghue, "William Thomas Thornton's Career at East India House: 1836-1860," *History of Political Economy* 36 (2004), 295-322.

⁷³ Packe, *John Stuart Mill*, 66-67.

⁷⁴ Anon., "Death of Mr. Thomas Shave Gowing," *Ipswich Journal*, 13 January 1874, 7.

⁷⁵ Mill's readership of the *Asiatic Journal* is confirmed in a letter discussed in G. Sirkin and N.R. Sirkin, "Mill in India House: A Little Bureaucratic Tale in Two Letters," *Mill Newsletter* 9 (1974), 3-7.

⁷⁶ CW 26:349 and 424.

⁷⁷ Edith Nicolls, "A Biographical Notice of Thomas Love Peacock by his grand-daughter," *The Works of Thomas Love Peacock, including his novels, poems, fugitive pieces, criticisms etc, with a preface by the Right Hon. Lord Houghton, a biographical notice by his grand-daughter, Edith Nicolls, and portraits*, ed. H. Cole (London, 1875), xxv-lii. See xxxvii for comments on Grant.

⁷⁸ Mill to William E. Hickson, March 31, 1859, CW 15:614.

⁷⁹ CW 1:138.

⁸⁰ "About Midsummer of that same year 1828 I set out on a short walking tour: for months before I had been in my old state of gloomy dejection, though as I have already mentioned not so intense as at first; this continued the greater part of the first day, but the walk by the side of the Thames from Reading to Pangbourne, in one of the loveliest of summer evenings with the western sky in its most splendid colouring before me, and the calm river, rich meadows and wooded hills encompassing me, insensibly changed my state, and except a short interval two days later I had no return of depression during that excursion nor for several months afterwards." Cancelled text from the early draft of the *Autobiography*. CW 1:150n.

⁸¹ See CW 27.

⁸² A.J. Mill, "Some Notes," 6.

⁸³ T. Carlyle to J.A. Carlyle, 20 October 1836, <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/09/lt-18361020-TC-JAC-01>. T. Carlyle to J.S. Mill, 23 March 1839, <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/11/lt-18390323-TC-JSM-01>.

⁸⁴ T. Carlyle to Jane Welsh Carlyle, 24 July 1836, <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/09/lt-18360724-TC-JWC-01>. T. Carlyle to J.S. Mill, 8 December 1837, <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/09/lt-18371208-TC-JSM-01>. T. Carlyle to H. Grant, 23 June 1844, <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/18/lt-18440623-TC-HGR-01>. Jane Welsh Carlyle to T. Carlyle, 12 Oct. 1835, <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/08/lt-18351012-JWC-TC-01>.

⁸⁵ E. Chadwick, "Biographical Notice of Horace Grant," v-vi in H. Grant, *Geography for Young Children* (London, 1861).

⁸⁶ Ann P. Robson, "Introduction," CW 22:xix-ciii, at lxxv.

⁸⁷ "Grant's Arithmetic for Young Children and Exercises for the Improvement of the Senses," *Globe and Traveller* 23 October 1835, 3, in CW 24:785-87.

⁸⁸ Ann P. Robson, "Introduction," CW 22:lxxv.

⁸⁹ According to his diary, Cole was on 20 January 1829 at Leadenhall Street “for the purpose of Discussing the merits of Byron & Wordsworth.” See A.J. Mill, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ “I suppose that of the set of young men with whom I had associated, Roebuck would have been and was generally regarded as the most complete type of what was considered narrow Benthamism. This however is only an example of the extreme inaccuracy of that common conception. Roebuck was in many things totally opposite to the vulgar notion of a Benthamite. He was a lover of poetry and of almost all the fine arts. He took great pleasure in music, in dramatic performances, especially in painting, and himself drew and designed landscapes with great facility and beauty. Instead of being, as Benthamites are supposed to be, unfeeling, he had very quick and susceptible feelings: and his feelings towards persons, favourable and hostile, have greatly influenced his course all through life.” CW 1:154.

⁹¹ R. Reeves, *John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand* (London: Atlantic Books, 2007). “What is tantalising here is that we prefer to see him always as a man of ideas and not what he as an official was actually expected to be in the administrative structure. Basically he was a bureaucrat at a time when the Indian administration was becoming rigidly organised, and he grew along with the bureaucracy of the East India Company’s administration of India.” S. Ambirajan, “John Stuart Mill and India,” in Martin I. Moir, Douglas M. Peers, & Lynn Zastoupil, *J.S. Mill’s Encounter with India* (Toronto 1999), 221-64, at 231.

⁹² CW 1:199.

