

Harriet Taylor and John Stuart Mill's Socialism

Helen McCabe

In his *Autobiography*, John Stuart Mill claims that by the mid-1840s he and his (future) wife (Harriet Taylor Mill) were “much less Democrats than we had been,” and were, instead, “under the general designation of Socialists.”¹ This statement has caused controversy ever since it was published.² Many Mill scholars have tried to deny that this is an accurate reflection either of Mill’s thought at the time, or of his thought taken as a whole,³ with many arguing that Taylor made Mill more socialist than he would otherwise have been; or even that she made him (at least in print) sound more socialist than he really was, through some sort of domination or sexual manipulation⁴—what Gregory Claeys has called the “henpecked” thesis.⁵ In this article, I explore and look to explode this particular “Harriet Taylor myth,”⁶ and in particular her role in the development of Mill’s views on socialism.

There seems to be a general view that Taylor was more of a socialist than Mill, and their correspondence regarding communism is often taken as exemplary of Taylor’s role in the development and authenticity of Mill’s views on socialism more generally.⁷ This view, I contend, is mistaken. Though there is perhaps less evidence than we might wish for in order to build arguments in this case, what evidence there is points to *both* Mill and Taylor losing faith in the democratic-radicalism they had averred when they met, and slowly transforming their views into a kind of socialism, with Taylor being somewhat more open to the possibilities of communism than was Mill. In particular, the events in France in 1848 introduced both thinkers to new ideas and “experiments in living”⁸ of a

socialist nature, which made what had previously appeared a desirable but unattainable good, seem not only feasible, but more readily “available as a present resource.”⁹ Mill and Taylor may have disagreed to some extent regarding the availability, feasibility, and desirability of communism, but this does not undermine Mill’s strong commitment to the “moral superiority”¹⁰ of socialism over capitalism, nor his belief that the feasibility of some immediate socialist experiments would lead gradually but inexorably¹¹ to a socialist transformation.

In this article I first consider the claim that Taylor’s influence made Mill more socialist in *Principles* than he really was, adding all the socialist elements of the work in particular, to the chapters “On the Probable Futurity of the Working Classes” and “On Property.” Second, I consider what we can say of Taylor’s socialism independently of pieces written by and with Mill. Lastly, I turn to a consideration of the claim that their extant correspondence regarding changes to the 1849 edition of *Principles* reveals that it was Taylor, not Mill, who was the socialist, and that she had such power over him that even after her death she could make him avow socialist positions in *Principles* that were not actually his own.

In doing so, I seek to continue a growing trend of taking Mill’s socialism seriously as a core part of his political and economic thought, and to forward the case for taking Taylor seriously as a political, economic, and philosophical thinker who had a significant role in the production of several canonical works on political and economic thought.

I. Taylor’s Role in *Principles of Political Economy*

Much of the view that Mill’s socialism is due to Taylor derives from three claims: first, that Mill’s socialism is confined to *Principles* (aside from what he declares in the *Autobiography*), linked to the view that *Chapters on Socialism* is much less pro-socialist than *Principles*;¹² second and related, that Taylor is responsible for the socialist elements of *Principles*; and third, again related, that she was more of a socialist than Mill. The second and third views are the focus of this part of this article. I

start by considering what Mill claims for Taylor's role in *Principles*; then critique some arguments put forward for seeing Taylor's elements as the only socialist ones.

1. Mill's account of Taylor's Role in Authoring *Principles*

In his *Autobiography* Mill says, "The first of my books in which her [i.e., Taylor's] share was conspicuous was the *Principles of Political Economy*."¹³ Regarding the composition of "Probable Futurity," Mill says that it was "entirely due" to Taylor, not existing in the first draft of the book that was completed in 1847. It was, he says, Taylor who "pointed out the need of such a chapter, and the extreme imperfection of the book without it," which "was the cause of my writing it."¹⁴ He adds, "the more general part of the chapter, the statement and discussion of the two opposite theories respecting the proper condition of the labouring classes [dependence and independence], was wholly an exposition of her thoughts, often in words taken from her own lips."¹⁵

Mill "did not learn from her" "the purely scientific part" of the book (having, indeed, learned the "science" of political economy almost since his birth, from his father and David Ricardo, among others), but he does say "it was chiefly her influence that gave to the book that general tone by which it is distinguished from all previous expositions of Political Economy."¹⁶ "This tone," he adds, "consisted chiefly in making the proper distinction between the laws of the Production of Wealth [...] and the modes of its Distribution."¹⁷ Thus, "The economic generalisations which depend, not on necessities of nature, but on those combined with the existing arrangements of society, it deals with only as provisional, and as liable to be much altered by the progress of social improvement."¹⁸ Mill notes that he had "partially learnt this view of things" from the Saint-Simonians, "but it was made a living principle pervading and animating the book by my wife's promptings."¹⁹ This, he thinks, makes a good example of some general differences in their characters, and what each brought to "his" writings.²⁰ He contributed "What was abstract and purely scientific," while she contributed "the

properly human element.”²¹ He saw her as “bolder,” “more courageous and far-sighted” in speculation and “anticipations of an order of things to come,” and also more “cautious” in practical judgement. He concludes:

Those parts of my writings and especially of the *Political Economy* which contemplate possibilities in the future such as, when affirmed by Socialists, have in general been fiercely denied by political economists, would, but for her, either have been absent, or the suggestions would have been made much more timidly and in a more qualified form.²²

On the other hand, he adds, “while she thus rendered me bolder in speculation on human affairs, her practical turn of mind [...] repressed in me all tendencies that were really visionary.”²³ “Her mind invested all ideas in a concrete shape, and formed to itself a conception of how they would actually work,” and her skill in this was better, he felt, than his own.²⁴

There are five things to take from this account. First, Taylor suggested the need for “Probable Futurity” and wrote much of the general content regarding the theories of workers’ dependence and independence. Second, she influenced Mill’s view regarding the difference between laws of Production of Wealth, and its Distribution. This has significant import for Mill’s view of socialism and its feasibility, but as he also notes, she was not *solely* responsible for it, this being something with roots back in his first interaction with the Saint-Simonians, which pre-dates by roughly two years his first meeting Taylor.²⁵ Third, where Mill does consider “possibilities in the future” associated with socialism (that generally were vehemently denied by political economists), these considerations were less “timid” and “qualified” than they would have been without her. Fourth, I conclude that some of the considerations may have been due to her. Fifth, Taylor prevented Mill from being “really visionary,” and that “visionary” does not seem to be something Mill thought was necessarily positive, but rather pejorative, like the term “utopian.” She was more

skilled in imagining possible schemes in reality and therefore saw the practical problems they presented.

Having noted these points, I ask, What are the implications for the view that Taylor is *solely* responsible for the "socialist" elements of Mill's work? I consider this question in detail in the next section.

2. Taylor's Authorship of "On the Probable Futurity"

It seems plausible to say that if Mill had not known Taylor, or had some sort of co-authoring relationship with her, then "Probable Futurity" would not have appeared in at least the first edition of *Principles*. That is, his book on the "influence of the progress of society on production and distribution" would have ended—not wholly unnaturally—with a consideration of "the Stationary State," which was where all contemporary political economists thought the economy was headed, as "production," and in particular the rate of profit, could not continue to grow forever.²⁶ Given the number of revisions to the book that Mill made, the way "Probable Futurity" follows the previous one (on the stationary state), and that he had already elsewhere written about profit-sharing, it is not clear we can say anything *much* stronger than this. That is, it seems odd to think Mill would *never* have considered profit-sharing in any edition of *Principles*. Second, "the general account" of the two prevailing theories respecting the proper condition of the working classes given in "Probable Futurity" is, perhaps entirely, composed by Taylor.

However, this does not mean that Mill did not *also* believe what was written in this chapter, or that the words Taylor suggested did not chime with his own ideas. Indeed, when we look at the manuscript and first edition of *Principles*, we see very familiar views to which this chapter forms a natural succession. Introducing "Probable Futurity," Mill explains that the purpose of the preceding chapter on the Stationary State was "to deprecate a false ideal of human society. The [...] applicability [of his arguments in it] to the practical purposes of present times, consists in moderating the inordinate importance attached to the mere increase of

production, and fixing attention upon improved distribution, and a large remuneration of labour.”²⁷ He rejects the idea that we should pursue production “after a certain amount has been obtained.”²⁸ Instead, “that it [*i.e.*, “aggregate produce”] should increase relatively to the number of those who share in it, is of the utmost possible importance,” and in any “state,” “this [...] must depend on the opinions and habits of the most numerous class, the class of manual labourers.”²⁹ Thus, a chapter on the likely future development of that class seems a natural (and even necessary) successor.

Mill then parses what he means by “the labouring classes.”³⁰ This, he insists, is a term he uses

in compliance with custom, and as descriptive of an existing, but by no means a necessary or permanent, state of social relations. I do not recognise as either just or salutary, a state of society in which there is any “class” which is not labouring; any human beings, exempt from bearing their share of the necessary labours of human life, except those unable to labour, or who have fairly earned rest by previous toil.³¹

We see these ideas even more explicitly repeated in the *Autobiography*, where Mill writes:

we [...] looked forward to a time when society will no longer be divided into the idle and the industrious; when the rule that they who do not work shall not eat, will be applied impartially not to paupers only, but impartially to all; when the division of the produce of labour, instead of depending, as in so great a degree it now does, on the accident of birth, will be made by concert, on an acknowledged principle of justice.³²

Evidently, this passage is supposed to reflect Taylor’s views as well as Mill’s. But it is clearly connected to changes in Mill’s view, stemming from the 1840s, which he stated in private correspondence not meant to express *both* their views.

For instance, Mill admits that up until the mid-1840s he had believed (with his father) that "a leisured class [...] is an essential constituent of the best form of society."³³ But in 1847 he said he had abandoned this idea, and thought instead that what was "essential [...] is that society at large should not be overworked, not over-anxious about the means of subsistence."³⁴ No "leisured class," no over-work, and no anxiety about subsistence is not *exactly* the same position as "no one shall eat who does not work, or has not earned rest by previous toil," but the positions are evidently aligned. That is, the first "socialist" moment in "Probable Futurity" may be expressed in words spoken by Taylor, but this is not to say they do not chime with Mill's own sentiments and ideas.

The argument continues, "the state of the labouring people has lately been a subject of much more speculation and discussion than formerly [...]. The suggestions which have been promulgated [...] have put in evidence the existence of two conflicting theories [...]. The one may be called the theory of dependence and protection, the other that of self-dependence."³⁵ There follows a description of the "ideal of the future" as paternalists see it, and a critique of the idea.³⁶ The idea is taken seriously, its attractive qualities admitted and drawn out, but in the end the hollowness, and anachronism, of the myth of chivalry in modern times, is exposed:

these [...] virtues and sentiments [...] belong emphatically to a rude and imperfect state [...] and [...] the feelings between protector and protected [...] can no longer have this beautiful and endearing character, where there are no longer any serious dangers from which to protect [...]. To be under the power of some one, instead of being as formerly the sole condition of safety, is now [...] the only situation which exposes to grievous wrong. The so-called protectors are now the only persons against whom [...] protection is needed.³⁷

These may well be Taylor's words, but it is striking that they are very similar to words in *The Claims of Labour* (1845) and also to the sentiments

of *The Subjection of Women*.³⁸ They also chime with words from later in *Principles* where there is a more in-depth discussion of exceptions to the “rule” of *laissez-faire*, including justifiable “cases of persons exercising power over others” where “protection of children and young persons” is deemed allowable, but it is very firmly stated, “Case of women not analogous.”³⁹

Again, there are two ways of reading this. Perhaps *all* this emphasis on the badness of dependency, and on the anachronism of women and workers being told they need protection, and being expected to feel gratitude toward their protectors, is *just* Taylor speaking, wherever we find it. In favor of this, we might recall Mill’s youthful enthusiasm for the ideas of some of the Romantic conservatives who would later endorse paternalism, and that Mill credits Taylor with ensuring that he “was penetrated” with the spirit of independence which permeates *On Liberty*, because “There was a moment in my mental progress when I might easily have fallen into a tendency towards over-government,” but “she benefitted me as much by keeping me right where I was right, as by leading me to new truths and ridding me of errors.”⁴⁰ Alternatively, we might think that this antipathy to dependence was something *both* shared (at least by the 1840s), and that these views, in whoever’s words they are expressed, are “theirs,” and thus also authentically Mill’s.

In the first edition of *Principles*, this chapter next asserts a familiar claim, that “the future well-being of the labouring classes is principally dependent on their own mental cultivation.”⁴¹ This, too, may have been Taylor’s view, but it is something Mill had argued for many years (including against the Owenites), and is behind his long-standing support for universal education, universal suffrage, and a Poor Law based (as he saw it) on sound economic (and psychological) principles, as well as his frustration with existing British and French politics, and the repressive and paternalist policies being enacted by both governments in the face of pressure to reform.⁴²

Similarly, the following section of this chapter may be in words composed by Taylor, but the sentiment reflects long-standing commitments

on Mill's part. The workers will become increasingly unwilling to be governed "by the mere authority and *prestige* of superiors," they will lose their "deferential awe," and when they demand the legislature to act, it will be to enact *their* will, not that of a ruling class, and though they may well "respect [...] superiority of intellect and knowledge, and defer much to the opinions [...] of those whom they think well acquainted with it [...] they will judge for themselves of the persons who are and are not entitled to it."⁴³

There follows a section on the positive effects of women's independence, especially on reducing the population rate: again, a subject close to Taylor's heart, but hardly alien to Mill.⁴⁴ This is followed by a section predicting that working people will not "be permanently contended with the condition of labouring for wages as their ultimate state."⁴⁵ Again, this may well have been Taylor's view, but it is also clear in other pieces Mill authored around the same time, notably *Claims of Labour*. There, we see a similar account of the problems of "the rich regard[ing] the poor as, by a kind of natural law, their servants and dependents," while "the rich in their turn are regarded as a mere prey and pasture for the poor"; of a lack of "just pride" among workers "which will choose to give good work for good wages"; and of "hostility" between employers and employees.⁴⁶ We also see a similar solution proposed "in placing the operations of industry on such a footing, that those who labour for them [i.e., for "Capitalists"] may feel the same interest in the work, which is felt by those who labour on their own account."⁴⁷ Or, as it is parsed in *Claims*, "raising the labourer from a mere receiver of hire—a mere bought instrument in the work of production, having no residuary interest in the work itself—to the position of being, in some sort, a partner in it" through a scheme of profit-sharing.⁴⁸

In the first edition of *Principles*, too, profit-sharing is suggested as the solution, and for similar reasons:

Labour is unquestionably more productive on the scale of large industrial enterprises; the produce if not greater

absolutely, is greater in proportion to the labour employed [...] if public spirit, generous sentiments, or true justice and equality are desired, association, not isolation, of interests, is the school in which these excellences are nurtured. The aim of improvement should be not solely to place human beings in a condition in which they will be able to do without one another, but to enable them to work with or for each other in relations not involving dependence.”⁴⁹

Moreover, this passage opens with a direct reference to a previous part of the work (on the productiveness of different forms of agricultural labor). This undermines somewhat both the idea that Taylor simply dictated *all* of this Chapter, and that it has *no* connection to the rest of the book. Instead, it is closely connected with preceding and subsequent sections of the book. Moreover, sentiments such as those just quoted are linked, as already shown, to other parts of Mill’s work beyond *Principles*. This may mean we should *also* expand what we think of as Taylor’s influence (and Taylor’s work) beyond this one section of *Principles*, and people may take that as either positive or negative. Either way, it makes Mill’s socialism harder to divorce from his work as a whole.

In the rest of the first edition, profit-sharing schemes are gone into in some detail. Although all of this chapter is included as “Taylor’s” in her *Complete Works*, that detailed accounts of different schemes, including precise amounts of profit, were among the words “taken from her lips” seems unlikely. As noted above, what Mill actually says is that the “general part” of the chapter—the idea of there being these two views as to the proper futurity of the working classes—was what she dictated, not the whole thing. Thus, this chapter ought to be seen as a joint work, even if we see Taylor’s as the mind dictating the general shape and tone, and Mill as finding all the facts and details that support the view.

As also noted, Mill had written about profit-sharing before, and even about the endeavors of M. Leclaire, the Parisian house-painter, and thus this section of the chapter (whether Taylor’s or “his”)—again—sits

naturally with other works by Mill (or by both). There is a very short section in the first edition of this chapter on the "Probable future development of this principle," where it is concluded that profit-sharing is likely to greatly increase as people will be less and less content to "co-operate as subordinate agents in any work, when they have no interest in the result."⁵⁰ In *Claims* this was expressed more as a hope than as a prediction, but overall the view seems similar, and a natural progression given the changing political circumstances (and wider adoption of profit-sharing) between 1845 and 1847/48.

In terms of the first version of this chapter, then—the one that Mill records as being taken from Taylor's "lips," and that is often used as "proof" that she was more socialist—it has to be said that there is not that much socialism. There is certainly a concern about working people; a belief that they will, and should, become increasingly independent; a dislike of the hostile relationship currently existing between workers and employers; and a sense that profit-sharing is an expedient remedy for the problems of society which will increasingly be resorted to by employers under pressure from workers. That is a move away from Mill's previous "Democratic" views, heavily influenced by James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. But, in itself, it is not socialism.

There are certainly echoes of Saint-Simonism, in the idea of employers leading the people; in a commitment to there being no "idle" but only an "industrious" class; and in the desire to proportion remuneration to ability or contribution (where owner-employers are seen as contributing more than their employees, as they also contribute the risk and earlier prudence, as well as managerial efforts, and leadership). But this, too, is not socialism. When we consider this chapter, as it originally stood, then, it does not give us any good grounds for thinking that, even if every single word of it was contributed by Taylor, it is what makes *Principles* socialist, or that she was more socialist at the time than Mill.

It is true that Mill records their change from "Democrats" to "under the general designation of Socialist" as occurring during the mid-to-late 1840s. He also says that their opinions were "promulgated, less clearly

and fully in the first edition, rather more so in the second, and quite unequivocally in the third.”⁵¹ This difference he puts down to the “change of times” arising from “the French Revolution of 1848.”⁵² This both made “the public mind more open” to socialist ideas, and also introduced Mill to new forms of socialism, notably Fourierism and producer-cooperation.⁵³ Mill writes that “the difficulties of Socialism were stated so strongly” in the first edition, “that the tone was on the whole that of opposition to it.”⁵⁴ But by 1852, “much time was given to the study of the best Socialistic writers on the Continent, and to meditation and discussion on the whole range of topics involved in the controversy,” which resulted in an almost total re-writing of the relevant sections by 1852.⁵⁵

But these sections are not—in the main—in “Probable Futurity,” but in the chapter “On Property.” There *are* significant differences in later editions of “Probable Futurity,” and these *also* emerge from studying the writings of Continental (French) socialists, notably Louis Blanc and Victor Considerant, but the idea of socialism is invoked only thrice in the section on producer cooperation. Once, to dispel the idea that “the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves” is only possible by “seizing on the existing capital, and confiscating it for the benefit of the labourers; which is even now imagined by many persons, and pretended by more [...] to be the meaning and purpose of Socialism.”⁵⁶ That is, to separate producer cooperation from the common idea of socialism. A second time, to explain how “the ideas sown by Socialist writers” blossomed in the conditions of Paris in 1848.⁵⁷ Again, this shows that producer cooperation, though inspired by socialist writers, does not involve what is often thought of as “socialism” (i.e., violent seizure of property). Third, to praise the “vitality of these associations,” who have survived “not only the anti-socialist reaction [...] but [...] all the difficulties arising from the trying condition of financial and commercial affairs from 1854 to 1858 [...] which must be

conclusive to all minds as to the brilliant future reserved for the principle of cooperation."⁵⁸

It is also worth noting that it is only after the first edition of *Principles* that we also get the section in "Probable Futurity" that defends competition, which Mill evidently saw as something separating his views from those of most socialists. This passage is very similar to the defense of competition in *Chapters on Socialism*.⁵⁹ If we think Taylor wrote *all* of this chapter, then she also wrote this (which sits uneasily with the idea that she was the socialist, and Mill the *laissez-faire* liberal). Of course, some might argue that this was the *only* section Mill added, but this seems to be cherry-picking.

This said, I do not mean to say that "Probable Futurity" (once it starts seriously engaging with producer and consumer cooperation) is *not* socialist: these ideas not only were, but were acknowledged by Mill to be, important forms of socialism.⁶⁰ But it is not the *sole*, or even the main, place in *Principles* where socialism is discussed. That is in the chapter "On Property." That chapter Mill does not give Taylor a direct role in writing (in the *Autobiography*), though this has been given to her, as noted above, by Winch. I will consider this claim in more detail in the next section.

For now, I want to emphasize that "Probable Futurity" is probably not *solely* Taylor's work (as Mill, indeed, never claims that it is), and that it is not plausible to read it as wholly distinct from the rest of *Principles*. Nor is the first edition notably more "socialist" than other contemporary pieces usually considered to have been written by Mill, for instance, *Claims of Labour*. It does not support a theory, therefore, either that Taylor was "more" socialist than Mill; or that *only* her ideas are represented in the text. Instead, it suggests that she and Mill had similar ideas on this subject, and that these are discernible beyond (and elsewhere in) *Principles*—and that these ideas ought not to be seen as inauthentically "Mill's" just because they both shared them. Indeed, a commitment to self-dependence, and to eradicating dependence, is a strong theme in Mill's work almost from the start of his life right through to his death.

In relation to this chapter, it is also worth recalling what else Mill said about Taylor's influence. First, that when considering "possibilities in the future" associated with Socialism, and generally denied by other political economists, these considerations were less "timid" and "qualified" because of Taylor. This might apply to producer cooperation, and particularly to the sketch of a future society made up of socialist communities. But even if Mill was encouraged to stick his neck out in this way (as it were) by Taylor, this does not undermine his commitment to making experiments in producer and consumer cooperation immediately. Moreover, it is also possible Mill would have liked to be *more* visionary than the short sketch in "Probable Futurity," from what he says in the *Autobiography*, and this is worth bearing in mind when claiming that Taylor was the "more" socialist one, and pushed Mill to be more "left-wing" than he really wanted.

Similarly, what he says in the *Autobiography* might suggest that it was due to Taylor that he considers producer cooperation at all in *Principles*. But on the other hand, Mill was evidently very interested in developments in France, and mentioned and defended them in other texts⁶¹—so it seems odd to think he would not have mentioned them in subsequent editions of *Principles*. Even if he had somehow felt *Principles* was not the place, this does not undermine his commitment to this form of socialism, which is evidenced in other texts.⁶²

3. Taylor's Role in Authoring the Chapter "On Property"

As noted above, Winch claims "The parts of the *Principles* to which Harriet [Taylor] unmistakeably contributed are chiefly concentrated in the chapter in Book IV on the [probable futurity of the] labouring classes and the opening chapters of Book II on property and socialism."⁶³ Winch offers no grounds for this view of "On Property." One thought—from supporters of the "hen-packed thesis" at least—might be that, as it concerns socialism, it *must* be hers. If we do not start from this premise, however, what can be said for the claim that her hand is so evident in *this* part of *Principles* and—apart from the chapter already discussed—nowhere else?

In Mill's account of her role, he emphasized her influence in his adoption of the Saint-Simonian idea that there is an important distinction between the laws of production and distribution, overlooked (as Mill saw it) by other political economists. His adoption of this view is evident in this chapter, where he treats the institution of private property as very much a human choice, and as something which can be changed or modified by human endeavor (constrained by certain considerations of feasibility, which in turn are dependent—at least in part—on laws of production).⁶⁴ Similarly, he considers the justice of particular distributive outcomes and arrangements.⁶⁵

This said, the *whole* of *Principles* is permeated with this differentiation between these two kinds of laws. Book I concerns Production, Book II Distribution, and the two elements are treated very much in the way Mill describes, with an account of this view opening Book II. Of course, what opens Book II is "On Property." Thus, on one way of viewing Winch's assertion, as Mill credits Taylor with bringing home to him the truth of this point of view, and as "On Property" opens with an account of the view, this chapter does "unmistakeably" show her influence. But then so does the *whole* "tone" of *Principles*—as is, of course, Mill's claim. Because this distinction structures the whole book (with Books III, IV and V—on Exchange, Influence of the Progress of Society on Production and Distribution, and the Influence of Government respectively—following on from this distinction).

This is not to say that Taylor may not have had a significant role in this chapter. She may even have composed specific passages, with Mill's emphasis on her contribution to "Probable Futurity" not being meant to deny her a significant role in authoring other elements. (Indeed, as I will turn to below, in private correspondence Mill highlights one passage from this chapter as being "inserted on your proposition & very nearly in your words."⁶⁶) Certainly, she seems to have had a significant role in editing the book, and the final text appears to have been the outcome of intense discussion as to "their" views (and not just in terms of clarifying Mill's own: that is, Taylor was not only

a sounding-board for his own ideas when it came to writing *Principles*). What I want to argue is that separating out “On Property” as *specifically* Taylor’s seems contrary to the evidence—to the extent that she is responsible for the “tone” of *Principles*, and the important distinction between laws of production and laws of distribution, this is not confined to “On Property” but permeates the whole book. As the *whole* book does not concern socialism; and as this view, though inspired by socialists, and being important in making the very idea of socialism possible (and feasible), is neither *in itself* socialism, nor evidently something Mill did not *also* believe, according to Taylor a significant role in “On Property” cannot be used to further an account of how *she* was the socialist, not Mill.

Second, Mill says that where he did consider “possibilities in the future” associated with socialism, he was less “timid” and “qualified” because of Taylor than without her he might have been; that he may have included more forms than without her he would have; and that Taylor was always concerned with questions of feasibility, and prevented Mill from being “really visionary.” Again, the chapter “On Property” is where these “possibilities” are discussed at greatest length, with decreasing “timidity.” No doubt, then, Taylor had a significant role in its composition, or at least in the discussion of ideas that went into it.

This said, Mill also recognizes that the third edition of *Principles* was less “timid” because of political events rather than because he significantly changed his mind on the general desirability of socialism.⁶⁷ The changes in 1852, then, are not plausibly *all* due to Taylor. Similarly, all the forms of socialism mentioned in this chapter (and elsewhere in Mill’s work) are forms that he came to have knowledge of without that knowledge being mediated by Taylor. Owenism, for instance, he knew of through his father, and for a long time before he had met Taylor. I have already mentioned that he came to know about Saint-Simonism before he met Taylor, and it was through Saint-Simonism that he first gained knowledge of Fourierism.⁶⁸ Similarly, Mill had knowledge of events in France via French newspapers and friends in France, which led him to know about

both Étienne Cabet and Louis Blanc independently of Taylor.⁶⁹ Discussion with Taylor may have encouraged him to include these forms in *Principles*, but they do not *only* appear in *Principles*, being—for instance—heavily relied upon in *Chapters on Socialism* written long after Taylor's death.⁷⁰

Overall, then, I am sure we *can* see Taylor's influence—and more than this, her ideas—in "On Property." However, to think that either it or "Probable Futurity" is *solely* her work, represents ideas that are not *also* Mill's, and is the *only* element of *Principles* in which we see her hand, is implausible. Instead, we should read *Principles* as being, to a significant degree, co-authored (even if most of the writing, and all the "scientific" part of the book was contributed by Mill) and containing positions that were meaningfully "theirs" rather than a composite of "his" and "hers."

This last claim might be challenged by those who read Taylor as significantly *more* socialist than Mill, and as forcing Mill to adopt more left-wing positions than he really believed (including Winch, who claims both that the early editions of *Principles* were "less" socialist than the later ones because Taylor was insufficiently attentive to the early draft, but later forced Mill to change his position, and that these positions were retained even after her death because Mill was so devoted to Taylor's memory that he would not change a word of what she had approved.⁷¹) In the next section, I consider this general claim in more detail.

II. Taylor's Socialism

We know relatively little of Taylor's views on socialism apart from what is published under Mill's name—and, of course, we are not certain of how much of *that* is "hers" or "theirs" or completely "his." To some extent, the claim seems to be reasoned backwards—as Mill is viewed as the sole author of *On Liberty*, and the author of *Liberty can't* have been a socialist, then the parts of *Principles* that seem socialist cannot have been written by the same author: ergo, they must have been Taylor's, and therefore *she* must have been the socialist, not Mill.⁷² Certainly, if we see

her hand at all in *Principles* (and I have argued above that it is plausible to do so), and take Mill's account of their views in the *Autobiography* as accurate, then we can say she was a socialist of some kind—but independent evidence is hard to come by.

That they had a joint position *before* this transition is provided by what Taylor's editor claims are co-authored notes, though they are entirely in Taylor's hand,⁷³ regarding "Political" and "Social" reforms, where she writes:

No hereditary privileges whatever. No exclusion from the suffrages, but an educational qualification (qu. what?). Complete freedom of speech, printing, public meetings and associations, locomotion, and industry in all its branches. No church establishments or paid clergy; but national schools and colleges without religion.

All occupations to be alike open to men and women; and all kinds and departments of instruction. Marriage to be like any other partnership, dissoluble at pleasure, and not merging any of the individual rights of either of the parties to the contract. All the interests arising out of marriage to be provided for by special agreement. The property of intestates to belong to the state, which then undertakes the education, and setting out in life, of all descendants not otherwise provided for. No one to acquire by gift or bequest more than a limited amount.⁷⁴

Clearly, this list looks a lot like the description of Mill's "democratic" views in his *Autobiography* (universal education, eradication of primogeniture and automatic inheritance by the relatives of those dying intestate, limit of bequest, voluntary restraint on population, representative government elected by universal personhood suffrage, free trade, and "complete freedom of discussion").⁷⁵ It shows some evidence that, at the very least, Taylor was not a rabid socialist *before* Mill met her (though, as the editor of Taylor's *Complete Works* does not provide any dating evidence for these notes, we cannot be sure of *exactly* when the list was written).

There are no mentions of socialism, or particular socialist writers, in Taylor's existing works, apart from in her correspondence with Mill (and some criticisms of marriage as an institution which are akin to those put forward by socialists from Owen onwards, but which she might not have taken from them). In an undated letter probably (as it most likely refers to a speech given on 24 July 1848) from July 1848, Taylor mentions Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and more favorably, perhaps, than Mill generally did—she is "amused" by the notice of his "mov[ing] that the fiction of the acknowledgement of [the?] being of a God should be erased": but, of course, she might simply be laughing *at* Proudhon.⁷⁶ At some unknown time Taylor also wrote that it was a fallacy that there would always be poor (though this belief is not, in itself, solely the purview of socialists).⁷⁷ In 1848, she described as "trash" the opinion that community of property, as it "interfere[d] with the labour of others," was a direct violation of the "fundamental laws of society," though it is not clear whether the *content* is so much what is wrong, or the inconsistency of the writer, for Taylor points out that, after all, legislation limiting working hours is also an interference with the labor of others, and yet the author appears not to have minded that.⁷⁸ Also in 1848, she speaks of the need for the "hydra-headed selfishness of the idle classes" to be "crushed by the demands of the lower," which has links to socialist concerns and evident connections to the message of *Principles*, as well as to the account of their socialism in the *Autobiography*.⁷⁹ As evidence of her views, though, it is slight—though what there is does not obviously point to her being "more" socialist than Mill.

Most of what we can say regarding Taylor's socialism as distinct from anything *jointly* said or proposed in *Principles* (and, perhaps, other, earlier, texts), then, comes from her remaining correspondence with Mill during the revision and editing of *Principles* for the second, 1849, edition. This correspondence has been used to argue both that she was much "more" of a socialist than Mill *and* that her influence over him was complete. In the following section, then, I consider the content and

implications of this correspondence in more detail. To conclude this section, though, I think we can only say that Taylor was a radical; that she was evidently interested in socialism, and that she shared many concerns with socialists; and that her position is not noticeably different from the description of it Mill provides in the *Autobiography*.⁸⁰

III. Mill and Taylor's Correspondence Regarding Communism

The extant correspondence is only a fragment of what Mill and Taylor wrote to each other over the years—and we only have Mill's side of it, which makes discerning Taylor's position quite difficult. The context is discussion regarding revisions to *Principles* for the second edition (1849).

The first thing we can glean from this correspondence is that Taylor seems to have thought there was more to be said in terms of gains for utility concerning securing "freedom from the anxiety as to the means of subsistence" than Mill.⁸¹ In the 1848 edition of *Principles*, Mill had written, at, he says, Taylor's "proposition & very nearly in [her] words"⁸²:

Those who have never known freedom from anxiety as to the means of subsistence, are apt to overrate what is gained for positive enjoyment by the mere absence of that uncertainty. The necessities of life, when they have always been secure for the whole of life, are scarcely more a subject of consciousness or a source of happiness than the elements.⁸³

Now, however, Taylor (apparently) objected "strongly and totally" to this, which marked a change of mind on her part that Mill was not willing to put into print until he was sure he too had also changed his mind.⁸⁴ In a phrase which has led to the letter being called "notorious," Mill says that he is sure his opinion *will* change, "as by thinking sufficiently I should probably come to think the same [as you]—as is almost always the case, I believe *always* when we think long enough."⁸⁵

This has been taken to show that Taylor's intellectual influence over Mill was more than merely important, it was complete. This phrase is,

however, a very shaky foundation upon which to build so enormous a charge, and so single-mindedly liberal a view of Mill's political theory. After all, what does Mill really say here? That if he thinks about something long and hard enough, he will "probably" come to think the same as Taylor, because, when "we" think long enough about something, he and Taylor always tend to agree. I do not think this is so very terrible, or ought to be taken as Mill cravenly seeking to appease some tyrannical mistress, forcing himself into the sort of "wretched wastes of human faculties" he complained theologians had to occupy themselves with in order to make their reason comply with the commands of their God(dess).⁸⁶

Instead, it seems a plausible description of a close intellectual relationship. It is true that we do not *always* agree with our close colleagues and friends, even when we have thought about something together long and hard, but it does not seem so outrageous to think that we would (come to) agree with our co-authors, nor that deep thinking, time, and honest discussion might make partners in a different kind of relationship agree.

This also seems particularly clear concerning what is at stake, which is a fairly empirical question concerning the extent to which people's utility is improved by knowing that they will, indeed, be given (or be able to earn) their daily bread. This seems to be exactly the kind of thing one could come to an agreement about, through a process of offering and discussing evidence. It is not a question of taste, nor of fundamental principles, upon which it is much more difficult to get agreement through debate, and on which questions there might be no "evidence"—moreover, it also seems clear that Taylor and Mill agreed on the kind of framework for analysis, both being utilitarians and empiricists.

All this letter can tell us is that Mill and Taylor discussed *Principles*, and other things, a great deal; that they sought consensus in their views, that Mill trusted Taylor's opinions though he did not slavishly adhere to them (the letter, after all, makes clear he is not going to change *Principles* until he is sure he has changed his mind), and that Taylor did indeed

change her position on this one specific question concerning the benefits of communism between 1848 and 1849.

If we turn to *Principles* itself, we can see that (most probably) Mill also (eventually) changed his mind on this point: the 1849 edition's version of the same paragraph reads: "On the Communistic scheme, supposing it to be successful, there would be an end to all anxiety concerning the means of subsistence; and this would be much gained for human happiness."⁸⁷ "But," Mill immediately adds, "it is perfectly possible to realise this same advantage in a society grounded on private property; and to this point the tendencies of political speculation are rapidly converging."⁸⁸ Moreover, the system of private property has the distinct advantage of securing greater individual freedom and individuality.⁸⁹ As a change of opinion concerning communism, this is interesting, but it is hardly profound. Mill's concern that if he conceded this point there would be nothing to be said against communism notwithstanding, for evidently he *did* find something to say against communism, and had a relatively stable position from then onwards that there was much to be said for Communism, and that its benefits evidently outweighed the claims of contemporary capitalism: but that, opposed to a perfected system of private property, these benefits might be outweighed by gains for liberty and the free development of individuality, which is so necessary, on Mill's understanding, for social progress.⁹⁰ What it really shows is the extent to which Mill and Taylor were concerned with even the *minutiae* of their position and with being precise about the explication of their thought (and that is another reason to take Mill's pronouncements on socialism seriously, and to negate the idea he would have positioned himself "under the general designation of socialist" if he did not really mean it).

Apart from this "notorious" sentence in one of their letters, there are a few other clues as to Taylor's opinions on communism at this time, and the extent to which she may have influenced Mill's socialism on specific questions. It would appear, for instance, that she may have thought France more ready for communism than did Mill. Mill had written that

the choice between communism and private property "will finally depend upon considerations not to be measured by the coarse standard which in the present state of human improvement is the only one that can be applied to it."⁹¹ Apparently, Taylor had voiced disagreement with this, though from what Mill says, her issue may be more with the phrasing than the content.⁹² The passage probably became, in published editions of *Principles*:

We are as yet too ignorant either of what individual agency in its best form, or Socialism in its best form can accomplish, to be qualified to decide which of the two will be the ultimate form of human society. In the present stage of human improvement at least, it is not (I conceive) the subversion of the system of individual property that should be aimed at, but the improvement of it, and the participation of every member of the community in its benefits.⁹³

If Taylor was trying to get Mill to change his mind, then, she was not successful. But if, as seems more likely, she was encouraging a change in how the idea was phrased, then this seems to have been successful, and adds weight to Mill's account of her role as editor of his work, and the idea that *Principles* was a joint production, not just Mill's work with an interpolated chapter by Taylor.

It also seems that Taylor thought the majority better capable in the current state of public morality of exerting themselves for something more than self-interest than Mill.⁹⁴ It is, therefore, also possible that Taylor saw communism as more feasible and more immediately available in 1849 than did Mill, for he thinks that the outcome of her preferred changes to *Principles* would be that "there is nothing to be said against Communism at all," which would mean that "one would only have to turn round & advocate it," but if this was the case, it would be better done in a separate treatise.⁹⁵ This is another reason, he thinks, for not substantially changing *Principles*, or at least not until such a treatise had been published.⁹⁶

Given that Mill says this, though none of the specific sentences he quotes as being ones Taylor wished to change directly mention this, she may also have thought the threat to individuality from communism was less than Mill, or perhaps only that the French were less likely to crush individuality if they tried communism. The concern that communism crushes individuality is put forward in this section of the published version of *Principles*, in-between sentences Mill picks out in the letter, and Mill does say one of the problems with the Continental character, which he thinks makes it unsuited to a trial of communism, is how much it lacks concerning the individual, and that Continental people are “incapable of entering into the feelings which make very close contact with crowds of other people both disagreeable & mentally & morally lowering.”⁹⁷ Similarly, Mill was concerned that French workers, experimenting with association, were over-keen on regulation.⁹⁸ Thus, perhaps, any practical trial of communism they made would indeed be too crushing of individuality, and would not be a trial of either socialism or communism at its best, and thus Mill was wary of advocating it, a wariness that perhaps Taylor did not share.

It would, however, be wrong to draw the conclusion from this that she did not care about individuality, or mind if communism crushed it – Mill credits her with co-authoring not only *Principles* but *Liberty*, after all, and in one of her earliest extant pieces, from 1831-1832, she outlines something very akin to the harm principle: “every human being has a right to all *personal* freedom which does not interfere with the happiness of some other.”⁹⁹

Specifically, Taylor seems to have disagreed with Mill that communism would make life a “dead-level.”¹⁰⁰ This was something he did change his mind about after further thought, as can be seen from the changes between the 1848 and 1849 editions of *Principles*.¹⁰¹ However, this does not mean she did not care about individuality or that she did not think communism would present *any* dangers for it.

Indeed, when Mill later tries to explicate what he meant by the sentence to which she objected, he says three things of note. First, he

did not mean there would have to be a "mysterious change in human nature" to make communism practicable, but that "the best people now are necessarily so much cut off from sympathy with the multitudes" that they will have difficulty "in judging how they would be affected by such an immense change in their whole circumstances as would be caused by having multitudes whom they could sympathise with," or "in knowing how far the social feelings might [...] supply the place of [...] solitariness and individuality which they cannot now dispense with."¹⁰² Second, as the more obvious obstacles to communism are cleared away, less obvious ones will emerge, which will also need dealing with, problems we cannot know about, or know the answers to, "without trial," and thus the present generation are not competent to decide the question.¹⁰³ Third, he thinks Taylor "greatly overrate[s] the ease of making people unselfish."¹⁰⁴ Even if we could teach the children of a community to be perfect in ten years, we would need perfect people to teach them, and such people are, by the very nature of the thing, lacking.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps clever people could do it – but how to generate the desire to do so amongst clever people, even if there were enough of them?¹⁰⁶

To make people really good for much it is so necessary not merely to give them good intentions & conscientiousness but to unseal their eyes—to prevent self-flattery, vanity, irritability & all that family of vices from warping their moral judgements as those of the very cleverest people are almost always warped now.¹⁰⁷

This is an interesting passage, showing that Taylor was more sanguine than Mill as to the speed at which humanity might be ready for communism (and possibly for other forms of socialism). It also shows some of the character problems Mill thought were bad about contemporary society, and would also threaten the stability and workability of communes—something he returned to in *Chapters on Socialism*, though he does not mention it (perhaps because there were other, more obvious, problems to discuss) in *Principles*.¹⁰⁸

More strength can be added to the idea that Taylor was less opposed to communism than Mill when he adds that he thinks there are still valid things to be said against it, but if she does not, he will not print them, even if the only reason for doing so was “the certainty I feel that I should never long continue of an opinion different from yours on a subject which you have fully considered.”¹⁰⁹ (A phrase which probably has more claim to show Taylor’s supposed ascendancy over Mill than the “notorious” one more usually picked out.)

Given that all editions of *Principles* do indeed contain objections to communism, and in particular on the grounds of its negative impact on individuality, we are left with three options. One, Taylor did not think there were *no* objections to communism, and agreed with those Mill voiced in 1849. Two, Mill was exaggerating in this letter, and published his objections despite disagreement with Taylor. Three, Taylor urged him to publish his own ideas, disagreement notwithstanding. I do not think it is possible to really tell which of these options is true, but, again, I do not think we ought to automatically assume Taylor was trying to tyrannize over Mill, or that he was trying to appease her, and nor ought we to see the discussions of communism in *Principles* as inauthentically Mill’s. Certainly, however, we can see Taylor as one of the influences on Mill’s changing views on communism, and socialism more widely, and she evidently thought the problems facing communism and socialism were less insurmountable than Mill did, and may have persuaded him of this point of view. We ought not, however, to assume that this influence was malign, nor that she forced Mill into positions or ideas with which he did not agree.

Overall, then, it seems that what we can say regarding Taylor’s own socialism is that she was more positive about communism’s feasibility and immediate availability than was Mill. It is worth bearing in mind that Mill distinguished between communism and socialism, and only ever identified himself with *socialism* (which involved the unequal division of the product of labor, and communal property only in the means of production, not in articles of consumption).¹¹⁰ But that she was more positive toward

communism does not necessarily mean that she made him (or made him sound) more positive toward *socialism* than he "really" was (even if we can mount some plausible claim to what he "really" was, or what he would have been without having ever met Taylor).

Similarly, when we look at this correspondence, it is also worth noting that Mill always had concerns about communism, which he treats as a specific sub-set of socialism, and when calling himself (and Taylor) "Socialists," he did not need to imply they were communists. Second, Mill says that *both* "individual agency" and "Socialism" are "necessarily imperfect now, & *both* susceptible of immense improvement"—this is the line which permeates *Principles* but does not undermine his socialism.¹¹¹ He felt the "choice" between them would depend on the attractions they offered to people who were also far more advanced than his contemporaries—and this too is a sentiment repeated in *Principles*, but one which does not undermine a normative commitment to socialism.¹¹² And last, it is worth remembering that this correspondence comes from 1849, when Mill was still learning about advances in socialist thought emerging from the events of 1848, and in particular about the ideas of Fourier and Blanc that he went on to endorse in glowing terms from 1852 onward—whatever the correspondence tells us about Taylor's view at the time, therefore, it also only provides a small snapshot of Mill's developing views that were affected not *only* by Taylor, but by wider events, and wider reading among socialist writers (as is also described in the *Autobiography*).

IV. Conclusion

Mill's account of the development of his radical "democratic" views toward a form of socialism in the *Autobiography* have been contentious since its publication, and one line of thought holds Taylor responsible for these changes (also seeing them as relatively short-lived, and certainly not persisting when he wrote *Liberty*), a viewpoint, of course, that ignores the possibility that *Liberty* was also co-written. Looking carefully at Mill's account in the *Autobiography* of the process by which *Principles* was

written, and at the first edition of the chapters “Probable Futurity” and “On Property,” it does not seem plausible to think that these are interpolations by Taylor that are completely alien to the rest of the book or to Mill’s wider thought, or indeed that we could see her role in writing that book as simply that of dictating a few passages in one or two distinct chapters. Instead, we should see the book as carefully co-authored (though probably with Mill doing more of the writing, and contributing—in particular—more of the “scientific” element, in which he had such extensive education). The positions in it are plausibly “theirs”—but this does not make them any less authentic to Mill (or Taylor). Instead, they show an organic trajectory from the ideas in early works such as *Claims of Labour* and Mill’s private correspondence—as well as radical, democratic views we find in earlier pieces by Taylor—as their knowledge of what socialism might be developed, and so did their views regarding the feasibility and availability of specific forms of it, as events unfolded in France in 1848.

This said, they certainly differed in their opinions at times, and they discussed these differences (even where very small) at length. This involved differences regarding the substance of their views (how great a difference to utility *would* security of subsistence make?) through to *minutiae* of how to express themselves exactly. In general, Taylor seems to have thought communism might have more positive effects than did Mill, and that the time was ripe for experiments with it to a greater extent than did Mill. These more optimistic views, however, are not reflected exactly in *Principles*.

Moreover, the suggestion that Taylor felt this way ought to be taken with a pinch of salt, as we only have a small fraction of Mill’s side of their correspondence to base this argument on: everything else in her single-authored work shows her sharing similarly radical democratic views to Mill and slowly moving toward an increasing interest in, and positivity toward, socialism. The claim that Taylor was the socialist and forced Mill into avowing socialist positions he did not really believe does not hold water. The claim that she was *more* left-wing than him may also miss the point, as their disputes (as we have knowledge of them) were

about relatively small questions of communism, which Mill viewed as something different to socialism, and never claimed as a label for their views. (This said, he certainly endorses the normative desirability of communist distributive principles, notably those of Blanc.) Mill says she made him braver in publicly endorsing socialism than he might have been, and less "visionary" in his ideas than he also might have been, which is not quite the same as saying he would have been more, or less, left-wing without her influence.

Lastly, given the length and nature of their relationship, perhaps we ought not be trying to construct some counterfactual as to what Mill might have believed if they had never met, or have some sense that what was "theirs" is not also authentically both "his" and "hers." The same goes for her views—the changing nature of which we are much less well-placed to determine, given the relative paucity of her single-authored material and the fact that most of her work was co-authored with Mill, though relatively infrequently acknowledged as such (except by him). The fragmentary correspondence on which most claims regarding her political opinions, character, and influence over Mill are based provides very flimsy evidence for the "hen-pecked thesis." Instead of reading Mill's socialism as an alien aberration enforced upon him by his demanding wife, then, we should see it as a central element of his thought, and the natural outcome of the development of his thought over time—time which was, of course, shared to a great extent (though not as much as either desired) with Taylor.

University of Nottingham

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 John Stuart Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:239.

² Some modern scholars have been more open to the suggestion than others have been in the past. See: Oskar Kurer, *John Stuart Mill: The*

Politics of Progress (London: Garland, 1991), especially 33-59. Oskar Kurer, "J.S. Mill and Utopian Socialism," *The Economic Record*, Vol. 68, No. 202 (1992), 222-32. William Stafford, "How can a Paradigmatic Liberal Call Himself a Socialist? The Case of John Stuart Mill," *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1998), 325-45. Gregory Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 123-72. Gregory Claeys, "Justice, Independence, and Industrial Democracy: The Development of John Stuart Mill's Views on Socialism," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (1987), 122-47. Bruce Baum, "J.S. Mill and Liberal Socialism," ed. Nadia Urbinati and Alex Zakaras, *J.S. Mill's Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Bruce Baum, "J.S. Mill's Conception of Economic Freedom," *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (1999), 494-530. Jonathan Riley, "J.S. Mill's Liberal Utilitarian Assessment of Capitalism versus Socialism," *Utilitas*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1996), 39-71. Helen McCabe, "Navigating by the North Star: The Role of the 'Ideal' in John Stuart Mill's View of 'Utopian Schemes' and the Possibilities of Social Transformation," *Utilitas*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2019), 291-309. Helen McCabe, "Mill's 'Modern' Radicalism Re-Examined: Joseph Persky's *The Political Economy of Progress*," *Utilitas* (published online, August 2019). Helen McCabe, "John Stuart Mill and Fourierism: 'Association,' 'Friendly Rivalry' and Distributive Justice," *Global Intellectual History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2018), 35-61. Helen McCabe, "Mill and Socialism: A Reply to Capaldi," *The Tocqueville Review*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2012), 145-64. Helen McCabe, "John Stuart Mill, Utility and the Family: Attacking 'the Citadel of the Enemy,'" *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* (2015), 225-35. Helen McCabe, "John Stuart Mill's Analysis of Capitalism and the Road to Socialism," *A New Social Question: Capitalism, Socialism and Utopia*, ed. Casey Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 8-22. Joseph Persky, "Mill's Socialism Re-Examined," *Utilitas* (published online, September 2019).

³ R. Anschutz, *The Philosophy of J.S. Mill* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 31. J. Salwyn Schapiro, "John Stuart Mill, Pioneer of Democratic

Liberalism in England," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1943), 127-60. J.R. Hains, "John Stuart Mill and the Saint-Simonians," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1946), 103-12. L.E. Fredman and B.L.J. Gordon, "John Stuart Mill and Socialism," *Mill Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1967), 3-6. Donald Losman, "J.S. Mill on Alternative Economic Systems," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (1971), 84-104. William Thomas, *Mill* (Oxford, 1985), 190 and 226. Oskar Kurer, "J.S. Mill and Utopian Socialism," *The Economic Record*, Vol. 68, No. 202 (1992), 222-32. Jonathan Riley, "J.S. Mill's Liberal Utilitarian Assessment of Capitalism versus Socialism," *Utilitas*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (1996), 39-71. Donald Winch, *Wealth and Life: Essays on the Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 49-53.

⁴ Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 50-54. Lionel Robbins, "Introduction," CW 4:xxxix. Lionel Robbins, *The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy* (London, 1952), 143, 153, and 168. Anthony Flew, "J.S. Mill: Socialist or Libertarian?" *Prophets of Freedom and Enterprise*, ed. Michael Ivans (London: Kogan Page for Aims of Industry, 1975), 21. Philippe Légé, "Hayek's Reading of Mill," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2008), 199 and 202. Ludwig Von Mises, *Liberalism* (Kansas, 1962), 195. Friedrich Hayek, "J.S. Mill at Twenty-Five," *The Spirit of the Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), xxx. Hayek, *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor: Their Friendship and Subsequent Marriage* (London: Routledge, 1951), 297. J.C. Rees, *John Stuart Mill's On Liberty* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 7. Pedro Schwartz, *The New Political Economy of J.S. Mill*, (London: London School of Economics; George Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd. 1971), 165-74, 191. Michael B. Levy, "Mill's Stationary State and the Transcendence of Liberalism," *Polity*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1981), 279. Robert B. Ekelund and Robert D. Tollison, "The New Political Economy of J.S. Mill: The Means to Social Justice," *The Canadian Journal of Economics*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1976), 215. Josephine Kamm, *John Stuart Mill in Love* (London: Gordon and Cremonesi, 1977), 83. Michael St John Packe, *The*

Life of John Stuart Mill (London: Macmillan, 1954), 306. Although allowing that Mill had some independent interest in socialism, Reeves says it was radicalized and “sharpened” by Taylor. Richard Reeves, *John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand* (London: Atlantic, 2007), 213.

⁵ Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism*, 36-42.

⁶ Cf. H.O. Pappe, *John Stuart Mill and the Harriet Taylor Myth* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1960).

⁷ Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 137. Stafford, “Paradigmatic Liberal,” 325-45, 327. Packe, *Life*, 313-14. Ruth Borchard, *John Stuart Mill, the Man* (London: Watts, 1957), 99. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *On Liberty and Liberalism* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 130-31.

⁸ Mill, *On Liberty*, CW 18:281.

⁹ Mill, *Chapters on Socialism*, CW 5:750. For more on desirability, feasibility and availability as I am using them here, see McCabe, “Navigating by the North Star,” 291-309.

¹⁰ Riley, “Capitalism versus Socialism,” 41.

¹¹ Persky gives a very clear and persuasive account of the impact of Mill’s political economy on the question of how “open” he left the socialist future, given the strong trends he saw in economic history (e.g., toward greater and greater combination of labor, and the dwindling of profit as growth slowed and the economy entered a stationary state). Joseph Persky, *The Political Economy of Progress: John Stuart Mill and Modern Radicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 133-48.

¹² There is not time to go into this first claim in detail, but see McCabe, “Navigating by the North Star,” 291-309.

¹³ Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:255.

¹⁴ *Autobiography*, CW 1:255.

¹⁵ *Autobiography*, CW 1:255.

¹⁶ *Autobiography*, CW 1:255.

¹⁷ *Autobiography*, CW 1:255.

¹⁸ *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

¹⁹ *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

²⁰ *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

²¹ *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

²² *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

²³ *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

²⁴ *Autobiography*, CW 1:257.

²⁵ Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:63. Eugène d'Eichthal, "Introduction to the Correspondence of John Stuart Mill," *Cosmopolis: An International Monthly Review*, VI (1897), 2-21. Richard Pankhurst, *The Saint-Simonians, Mill and Carlyle: A Preface to Modern Thought* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1965), 6-11.

²⁶ See Persky, *Political Economy of Progress*, 133-48.

²⁷ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:758.

²⁸ *Principles*, CW 3:758.

²⁹ *Principles*, CW 3:758.

³⁰ *Principles*, CW 3:758.

³¹ *Principles*, CW 3:758.

³² Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:239.

³³ Mill, Letter 501, to John Austin, 13 April 1847, CW 13:713.

³⁴ Letter to Austin, 13 April 1847, CW 13:713.

³⁵ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:759.

³⁶ *Principles*, CW 3:760.

³⁷ *Principles*, CW 3:761.

³⁸ Winch's claim that Taylor added the dependence of women on men to the analysis already extant in *Claims* would perhaps explain the similarities with *Subjection*, if we also see *Subjection* as owing a great deal to Taylor, despite being published a decade after her death. Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 50.

³⁹ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:950-953.

⁴⁰ Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:259.

⁴¹ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:763.

⁴² Mill, Letter 501, to John Austin, CW 13:712-13. Mill, Letter 504, to Auguste Comte, 17 May 1847, CW 13:716-19. Mill, *Claims of Labour*, CW 4:363-89. Mill, "The Condition of Ireland," CW 24:879-82, 885-916, 919-22, 927-45, 949-52, 955-1020 and 1024-35. Mill, "Poulett Scrope on

the Poor Laws,” CW 24:923-54. Mill, “The Irish Debates in the House of Commons,” CW 14:1058-62. Mill, “The Proposed Irish Poor Law,” CW 24:1066-73. Mill, “The General Fast,” CW 24:1073-75. Mill, “Emigration from Ireland,” CW 24:1075-78. Mill, Letter 497, to Alexander Bain, 27 January 1847, CW 13:707. Mill, Letter 499, to Henry S. Chapman, 9 March 1847, CW 13:708-10. Mill, Letter 500, to Bain, 27 March 1847, CW 13:710-11.

⁴³ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:764-65. For more on Mill’s theory of persuasion, which this echoes, see McCabe, “Mill’s Philosophy of Persuasion,” *Informal Logic*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (2014), 38-61.

⁴⁴ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:765-66.

⁴⁵ *Principles*, CW 3:766.

⁴⁶ *Principles*, CW 3:766.

⁴⁷ *Principles*, CW 3:766.

⁴⁸ Mill, *Claims of Labour*, CW 4:382.

⁴⁹ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:767.

⁵⁰ *Principles*, CW 3:1013-14.

⁵¹ *Autobiography*, CW 1:241.

⁵² *Autobiography*, CW 1:241.

⁵³ *Autobiography*, CW 1:241.

⁵⁴ *Autobiography*, CW 1:241.

⁵⁵ *Autobiography*, CW 1:241.

⁵⁶ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:775.

⁵⁷ *Principles*, CW 3:775.

⁵⁸ *Principles*, CW 3:785.

⁵⁹ Mill, *Chapters on Socialism*, CW 5:729-33.

⁶⁰ See also Iowerth Prothero, *Radical Artisans in England and France, 1830-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 145.

⁶¹ For instance: Mill, Letter 523, to Henry S. Chapman, CW 13:731-32. Mill, Letter 525, to Sarah Austin, March 1848, CW 13:733-34. Mill, “The Provisional Government in France,” CW 25:1091-92. Mill, Letter 526, to Armand Marrast, [May?] 1848, CW 13:735. Mill, *England and Ireland*, CW 25:1099-1100. Mill, Letter 531, to John Pringle Nichol, 30

September 1848, CW 13:739. Mill, *Vindication of the French Revolution of February 1848*, CW 20:317-63.

⁶² For instance: Mill, *The Writings of Junius Redivivus, Parts 1 and 2*, CW 1:268. Mill, "Co-operation," CW 28:8-9.

⁶³ Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 50.

⁶⁴ Mill, *Principles*, CW 2:199-214.

⁶⁵ *Principles*, CW 2:199-214.

⁶⁶ Mill, Letter 15, to Harriet Taylor, 19 February 1849, CW 3:1027.

⁶⁷ Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:241.

⁶⁸ Mill, Letter 64, to Thomas Carlyle, December 1832, CW 12:133. Charles Pellarin, *The Life of Charles Fourier*, trans. Francis Shaw (New York: W.H. Graham, 1848), 76.

⁶⁹ For instance: Mill, *French News* [64], CW 23:482. Mill, *French News* [66], CW 23:495. Mill, *French News* [90], CW 23:688. Mill, *M. Cabet*, CW 25:1144-46.

⁷⁰ Mill, *Chapters on Socialism*, CW 5:711-27.

⁷¹ Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 53-54.

⁷² The irony here, of course, as Claeys rightly points out, is that Mill also credits Taylor with co-authorship of *Liberty*, and she may even have been the one to keep Mill on a more liberal footing. Mill's note in the dedication that *Liberty* had not received Taylor's final "revision" before her death has led some to argue that she had no chance to make it less liberal (or even illiberal). But given what we have of Taylor's own writings on freedom, this seems an unwarranted claim. Claeys, *Mill and Paternalism*, 40. Mill, *On Liberty*, CW 18:216.

⁷³ Jo-Ellen Jacobs suggests these notes are necessarily co-authored because of the tone: few of Taylor's other surviving works are lists of points like this. I am not sure how weighty that thought is (it seems slightly misogynist, after all, implying that Mill had the clarity of mind and argumentative skill to plan works, and organized points in lists, and Taylor did not). She also thinks this list only applies to women, but I would argue it has a more universal application than that—not only are men specifically mentioned regarding freedom of occupation, but the freedoms mentioned

clearly benefit both sexes: it is not only women, after all, who need and benefit from freedom of speech, movement, association and the press. See Jacobs, "Women's Rights," in *Complete Works of Harriet Taylor Mill* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 29.

⁷⁴ Taylor, *Complete Works*, 50.

⁷⁵ Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:107-9 and 239.

⁷⁶ Regarding Proudhon, although, from what Mill praises regarding socialism, one might expect Mill to have some sympathy with his decentralized "mutualism" and its avocation of producer cooperatives, and with his opposition to centralized ownership of property, Mill instead described him (in 1849) as "the most mischievous man in Europe," and as having "nothing whatever of all that I like and respect in the Socialists to whom he in no way belongs." In correspondence with Taylor he was even more vociferous, saying "I heartily wish Proudhon dead." Mill seems to have especially disliked Proudhon's policy on property, and his influence over other socialists, as well as having severe doubts over the practicalities of his proposals. Mill, Letter 15, to Henry Samuel Chapman, 28 May 1849, CW 14:34. Mill, Letter 11, to Harriet Taylor [c. 31 March 1849], CW 14:21.

⁷⁷ Taylor, *Complete Works*, 222.

⁷⁸ Taylor, *Complete Works*, 341.

⁷⁹ Taylor, *Complete Works*, 341.

⁸⁰ In which, of course, she also had an editorial role.

⁸¹ Mill, Letter 15, to Harriet Taylor, CW 3:1027.

⁸² Letter 15, to Harriet Taylor, CW 3:1027. (Which adds weight to the claim, considered above, that Taylor did, indeed, have a role in composing this chapter.)

⁸³ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:978.

⁸⁴ Mill, Letter 15, to Harriet Taylor, CW 3:1027.

⁸⁵ Winch, *Wealth and Life*, 137. Stafford, "Paradigmatic Liberal," 327. Mill, Letter 15, to Harriet Taylor, CW 3:1027.

⁸⁶ Mill, *Utility of Religion*, CW 10:404. This said, Timothy Larsen offers an interesting analysis of their relationship in which he *does* see

Mill as treating Taylor in a "religious" manner. (Larsen, *John Stuart Mill: A Secular Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 85-88.) Even so, this does not seem—to Mill—to have been a religion that required mental "gymnastics" of a kind that forced people into tortuously avowing the very opposite as their real beliefs as true, but rather an experience whereby Mill was faced with a conviction of truth which he could not empirically prove.

⁸⁷ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:978.

⁸⁸ *Principles*, CW 3:978.

⁸⁹ *Principles*, CW 3:978.

⁹⁰ Mill, Letter 15, to Harriet Taylor, CW 3:1027.

⁹¹ Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28.

⁹² Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28.

⁹³ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:986-87. Mill, Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027 footnote 8.

⁹⁴ Mill, Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28.

⁹⁵ Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1028. Claeys suggests that Mill wrote this "probably with a tone of suppressed irritation" (*Mill and Paternalism*, 151), but I do not think there is any reason to think that was the case. Tone is, after all, very hard to read with such a passage of time, and there is no sign that this was a much-debated point upon which Taylor refused to give way for reasons that Mill thought unfounded, unreasonable, or stupid. Instead, the point he seems to be making is that *if* they are to change their position so fundamentally on communism, and advocate it, then they should do it in a separate text and not as a revision of the existing *Principles*. And that seems like a valid thought.

⁹⁶ Mill, Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28.

⁹⁷ Mill, Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28. Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:978.

⁹⁸ Mill, *England and Ireland*, CW 25:1099-1100.

⁹⁹ Mill, *Autobiography*, CW 1:259. Taylor, *Complete Works*, 19.

¹⁰⁰ Mill, Letter 16, to Taylor, 21 February 1849, CW 3:1028.

¹⁰¹ Mill, *Principles*, CW 3:978.

- ¹⁰² Mill, Letter 24, to Taylor, 21 March 1849, CW 3:1030.
¹⁰³ Letter 24, to Taylor, 21 March 1849, CW 3:1030.
¹⁰⁴ Letter 24, to Taylor, 21 March 1849, CW 3:1030.
¹⁰⁵ Letter 24, to Taylor, 21 March 1849, CW 3:1030.
¹⁰⁶ Letter 24, to Taylor, 21 March 1849, CW 3:1030.
¹⁰⁷ Letter 24, to Taylor, 21 March 1849, CW 3:1030.
¹⁰⁸ Mill, *Chapters on Socialism*, CW 5:744.
¹⁰⁹ Mill, Letter 16, to Taylor, CW 3:1029.
¹¹⁰ Mill, *Principles*, CW 2:203.
¹¹¹ Mill, Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28.
¹¹² Letter 15, to Taylor, CW 3:1027-28.

