

# Language and the Nineteenth-century World

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## 1.

The various revolutions that took place in Europe and elsewhere in the period between 1770 and 1820 left the British people with an ambivalence towards — or even distrust of — all things foreign. This distrust became a factor shaping the position of language in people's thinking, and it was not until the 1870s that debate about language and language teaching began to alter, and then only from a relatively small group of practitioners who were aware of the success of European models.

Starting around 1770, international agitations of one sort or another affected the British people in ways that excited some and alarmed others, but for the most part tended to leave a residue of negative feelings about the ways other countries conducted their affairs. This had not been the case for most of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, when the aristocracy enjoyed the Grand Tour but the majority of British people were indifferent to, and largely ignorant of, other countries. Other countries, whenever they impinged on the national consciousness, could not be trusted. The fighting that had preceded the American Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the seizing of independence itself, confirmed in British minds that even kith and kin were apt to turn against one. The Irish rose up in the famous Rebellion of 1798, which just confirmed centuries-old views that the Celtic nations, too, were untrustworthy and best kept suppressed. The response to feelings of national betrayal was a new-found patriotism, and

Nelson's victory in the Battle of the Nile in 1798, and his funeral in 1806 saw patriotic feelings reaching new highs. In 1815 the Battle of Waterloo further stoked national pride; and by the time of the Great Exhibition (1851) a new Queen and Royal Family, imperial successes, a rising population and a thriving economy had convinced Britons that their nationalistic pride was fully merited.

This nationalism had a particularly corrosive effect, particularly when it allied itself to the hubris of the post-1815 years. The strengthening of the economy, the increased military might, the spread of the British Empire, and the ever-increasing population all fed the belief that Britain could dispense with foreign ideas, cultures or languages, and in many cases be openly resistant to them. This socio-cultural divide separated all that was good and noble (England) from that which was untrustworthy and stupid (Europe generally, the French in particular). The English language began to preoccupy many, and the marginal status of non-English-speaking groups, such as those using Gaelic, Welsh or Romany, was reinforced. In short, from about 1800 onwards the majority of the British people paid less and less attention to foreign matters, and even the Grand Tour aristocracy generally took more interest in home affairs than they ever had in the past. The symbolic re-orientation by Wordsworth and Coleridge to the beauties of Grasmere and the Lake District, rather than to the glories of the French Revolution, may be taken as an example of how nineteenth-century Britain began to look inwards at its own resources, and to its own problems.

As the century wore on, the Victorians were encouraged by a provincialism of thought which, in the absence of a questioning public and the rigorous intellectualism of a broad university system, tended towards self-satisfaction. This is not to say that great and influential works of scholarship did not emerge in the nineteenth century — the names of Darwin,

Mill, Bentham, Arnold, Murray and others come to mind. In every area of life groups naturally advanced their particular subjects, often with significant practical results. But by mid-century the building of railways, the digging of canals, and the draining of parts of the countryside were more familiar topics to the Victorian mind than the educational developments of Germany or the social analyses of Marx and Engels. Consequently, academic and intellectual interests were not, for the most part, shared by the majority of the influential middle classes, for whom anti-intellectualism and common sense were the touchstones of daily life. Languages in particular began to be classed with other dangerous and unwanted "foreign" matters such as revolutions, wars, and other disasters which were best ignored. In the schools they became "accomplishments" for girls, whose future roles as wives and mothers was to provide moral uplift for the family.<sup>1)</sup>

The devaluation of intellectual life is well caught by George Eliot in *Middlemarch* (1872). Whatever Dorothea thought of Mr. Casaubon at the beginning of their courtship — "a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint" — the general view of his work, as expressed by Lady Chettam, was that it was "so very dry".<sup>2)</sup> Far from being a modern Augustine, his lack of German put his projected great work, *The Key to all Mythologies*, into the category of "obsolete pedantry".<sup>3)</sup> In the same novel, the newly arrived doctor, Tertius Lydgate, is keen to continue his medical research, in which he sees himself as a possible successor of the French pathologist F.-X. Bichat (1771–1802). By contrast, Fred Vincy has been given an English university education "which has succeeded in nothing but

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1) See Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870* (New Haven & London, 1957), p. 351.

2) George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (London, Penguin Books, 1965), p. 47 & 117.

3) George Eliot, *ibid.* Notes (by W. J. Harvey), p. 903.

in giving him extravagant idle habits".<sup>4)</sup> Oxford and Cambridge did not, in George Eliot's portrayal, offer any particular intellectual stimulation, or even train devoted clergy. Worse, the medical profession's low level of medical training was largely accepted by the Middlemarch community, and Lydgate's early passion for research soon died from lack of stimulation. Mrs. Vincey looks down on Mrs. Garth, who had been a teacher before she got married, and equates the position of teacher with that of draper or courier. Mrs. Garth's apparent sin is that she knows Mrs. Mangnall's *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions* (1800) and Lindley Murray's *Grammar* (1795). There is no doubt that George Eliot, one of the century's most educated and international women, is here depicting a society enjoying considerable material wealth, but utterly provincial in its grasp of intellectual matters.

## 2.

But intellectual forces were at work as well, often combating the nationalism and empire-building with which so many of the population were concerned. The philosophical ideas which as a bundle became known as German Romanticism were to affect an influential group of poets, novelists, essay-writers, politicians and historians in ways that ran counter to the ubiquitous utilitarianism and frequent philistinism of nineteenth-century Britain.

The Romantic line that started with Kant and developed into the anti-Enlightenment movement was based on the notion that man is not only a rational being, but is also subject to idealistic and artistic human feelings. These feelings are what raise the human from the status of efficient animal to that of fully developed man. The Enlightenment application of reason to

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4) George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1872/New York: 1991), p. 130.

social, religious, intellectual and political problems had been one step, and this nobody denied; but it had created cold and heartless societies in which emotions had been set aside; in which Utilitarianism was the dominant philosophy; and in which all that was solemn, noble and worthy in life was undervalued. Hegel had said as much in the 1820s: he gives full due to Descartes and the Enlightenment thinkers, and accurately captures the excitement which their discoveries generated: "The human eye became *clear*, perception quick, thought active and interpretative. The discovery of the laws of Nature enabled men to contend against the monstrous superstition of the time".<sup>5)</sup> But to this he adds the distinctly "Romantic" view that there exists the "Spiritual Kingdom—the Kingdom of the *Will* manifesting itself in outward existence". It is the "Freedom of the Will *per se*" that makes "Man become Man".<sup>6)</sup>

Hegel was here giving a philosophical rendering of the Romantic ideal that had already been established by the German writers and thinkers of the previous forty years. Kant had opened a door which was to be further thrust wide by the later German Romantics such as Schiller, Herder and Welland. For these later Romantics, education was the *summum bonum* of life. This was a reaction to Enlightenment thinking, which had defined education in terms of "imparting knowledge, of spreading clear and distinct concepts".<sup>7)</sup> To many, including Rousseau, this view omitted spontaneity of thought, and assumed a passive receptivity to already-formulated ideas. In other areas too, passive receptivity was to be attacked: in politics,

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5) Hegel, G. W. F. *The Philosophy of History* (J. Sibree, Trans., New York: Dover, 1956), p. 440.

6) *Ibid.*, pp. 442–443.

7) F. C. Beiser, "A Romantic Education: The Concept of *Bildung* in Early German Romanticism". In A. E. Rorty (Ed.), *Philosophers on Education: Historical Perspectives* (Routledge, 1998), p. 288.

for example, the Romantics rejoiced in the French Revolution; in religion they admired the rise in secular attitudes; and in social matters they focused not on the Enlightenment values of aristocracy and gentility, but on the people and the state.

Yet, what must have come as a surprise to British intellectuals — hardly anyone else could read German — was that such idealistic ideas came not from pseudo-revolutionaries but from stolidly middle-class men.<sup>8)</sup> Schiller was a professor of history but could still write *alle Menschen werden Bruder* (all men become brothers) in his “Ode to Joy,” later incorporated by Beethoven into his Choral Symphony. Goethe was a minister in the Weimar administration, concerning himself with the practical sciences as they applied to the advancement of that state. Consequently, when leading thinkers in Britain became aware of the current of German thought — either by travel like Dr. Pusey, or by laboriously learning German like another Oxford intellectual, Mark Pattison — they were forced to take seriously the ideas they encountered.

The spread of German ideas influenced the young Wordsworth, the young Coleridge and others, soon to be dubbed the Romantic Poets. They too felt attracted to the radicalism that had produced the French Revolution. The Industrial Revolution caused Blake to write about the “dark Satanic Mills” which he saw all around him, and about the “Marks of weakness, marks of woe” on the faces of London’s poor. Keats, Shelley and Byron all in their different ways espoused the free Romantic spirit of the times. In particular they admired the way it placed question marks beside the old Enlightenment ideas, and in due course beside many of the accepted verities of Georgian and Victorian thought. These verities

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8) See E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789–1848* (London, 1962), p. 302.

— particularly the Benthamite philosophy of Utilitarianism — were of such magnitude and force that poets and other intellectuals had little hope of confronting them directly, and instead opted to bring Romantic ideas to the wider British public through literature. Consequently, by mid-century George Eliot had translated books by Strauss and Fauerbach into English, and George Lewes, her companion, had written a biography of Goethe (1855).<sup>9</sup> Carlyle and the Scottish Sir William Hamilton had read and publicised the work of Kant, Hegel and Fichte. Coleridge became the main proponent of Kant's "transcendental" philosophy in Britain. To any who were sufficiently open minded to read these works, it was evident that the ideas coming out of Germany were more radical, more constructive and more penetrating than anything being produced in Britain.

In the literary world the progress of Germany was equally radical. The Grimm brothers had begun the collection and resuscitation of folktales in the early years of the century, inspired by the writings of Herder. Their work was to result in the publication of the two volumes of *Kinder- und Hausmarchen* (1812, 1815), which gave Europe and the world the much-loved stories of "Snowwhite", "Rapunzel" and dozens more. The brothers were also at work on the *Deutsche Grammatik* (1817–37), which was to be a forerunner of, and inspiration for, Murray's *Oxford English Dictionary*. Such continental vigour communicated itself to groups of intellectuals such as the Romantic Poets and to William Hazlitt, much of it inspired by Rousseau and by Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791). The rift between progressive and conservative factions that was the hallmark of much nineteenth-century thought was already apparent: On the conservative side, Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), for example, offered a patri-

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9) A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London, 2002), p. 349.

otic, ethnocentric view of the Revolution. Its success as a best-seller indicated that the conservative version had struck a note tuneful to British ears, and symbolically the myth of "merrie England" originated around this time. Whether on the progressive or conservative side, the British intellectual elite was clearly engaged in the European scene, which they felt to have relevance to British life. By contrast, in the British populace as a whole there persisted a narrow nationalism which militated against pan-European sentiments.

### 3.

Academic life accurately reflected the tensions of the wider society. On the conservative side, as Rothblatt has shown, the ideal of universal knowledge dominated the university scene.<sup>10)</sup> Knowledge was to be pursued freely rather than by considerations of its immediate or even ultimate utility. It was to be studied for its intrinsic worth, for the maintenance and possible enhancement of learning. It sought for "underlying philosophical principles of organisation or the nomothetic arrangement of historical materials or even the employment of theories of biological evolution to arrange factual materials".<sup>11)</sup> To grasp such underlying principles or even the theories of biological evolution was only possible via a liberal education, itself based on the idea of universal knowledge. For example, in earlier "Georgian" thinking education was to equip a man to mix at a suitably exalted social level with those who would help him to get on, so that his true purpose in life would be attained. But the nineteenth-century view was more demanding than that: a liberal education set higher goals than mere socia-

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10) Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education* (London, 1976). Chapter 12, "The Quest for Liberal Education" is followed here.

11) *Ibid.*, p. 150.

bility, and certainly had little to do with vocational pursuits or skills. In an eloquent passage Rothblatt sets out the thesis for universal knowledge:

The challenge of industrial society was the foremost challenge education had ever faced, and therefore only the highest form of education could meet it. Industrial society was new, it overturned all known values and institutions, it moved at a speed unprecedented in history, and it brought more actors on to the historical stage than had ever before been accommodated. Living in such a society—always restless and impatient, always demanding and unstable, without a centre and without a common core of values—required more than style, conversation, or manners; more than sociability, liberality, and civility. It required leaders who grasped the magnitude of the problems before them and by an effort of speculative imagination, based on a solid understanding of the meaning of industrialism in the context of world history, would be able to give the turbulent society a proper sense of its character and its mission, directing it towards the realization of its uncommon potential. Universal knowledge alone could accomplish this.<sup>12)</sup>

The point that Rothblatt is making here is that universal knowledge, in practice called a liberal education, derived its strength from a knowledge of the past, as expressed by “in the context of world history”. The breadth of view that the educated man was to acquire was in fact based on traditional ways of thinking. This high idealism even applied to the Public Schools as well as to the academic world. It meant, in short, that having completed a liberal education — whether at the end of schooling or at the end of university — a man was fit to govern or manage, but was not expected to be actually competent in anything; it was not in any sense “useful”. Merely “useful” knowledge was of a different order, and applied to people lower down the social scale. In so far as our interest here is in the study of languages,

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12) Ibid., p. 154.

there was no doubt in the minds of those who had obtained, or were sending their sons to obtain, a liberal education, that modern languages existed in the realm of "useful" knowledge.

However, since the end of the eighteenth century groups of people had questioned the idea that knowledge was best acquired from the intensive study of past models. On the continent, particularly in Germany, the questioning had resulted in the emergence of "new knowledge", or a "knowledge revolution", in which a premium was placed on the idea of discovery. In Rothblatt's words, the universities of Europe dropped the "museum" concept, in which a university was a place to "store up and admire the marvellous achievements of the past".<sup>13)</sup> Instead they opted for the kind of research agenda that is familiar to us today. This was possible because of the diligent footwork that had already been done to extend the school system beyond anything that British planners had thought of. In the German schools there was a system which not only went from primary schools to university, but which also included science as a compulsory academic discipline. German laboratories, for example Lieberg's in Giessen, Bunsen's in Heidelberg and Wundt's in Leipzig, were well equipped and employed hundreds of skilled scientists. One example will have to suffice: Scotland's pre-eminence in medicine was directly attributable to the surgeon John Munro, who studied medicine in Leyden and returned to Edinburgh where he modelled the medical faculty on what he had learned there.<sup>14)</sup>

In addition to science, Germany was also leading the world in philology, history, theology, archaeology, literature, and language. In Britain, where

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13) Ibid., pp. 164-165.

14) R. J. W. Selleck, *James Kay-Shuttleworth: Journey of an Outsider* (London, 1994), p. 22.

even the expensive and prestigious Public Schools were floundering around wondering whether or not mathematics should be on the curriculum, and whether a foreign language could be considered on a par with the classics, there was nothing comparable. Nor was Germany the only country thrusting ahead: Matthew Arnold, sent in 1859 by the Newcastle Commission on Elementary Education to examine the schools of France, Holland and the French part of Switzerland, wrote in *The Popular Education of France* (1861) that the schools he had observed there were vastly superior to those he was used to inspecting in Britain.

4.

The intellectual arguments that pitted conservatives against reformers in Britain in the nineteenth century had a direct impact on the teaching of languages. Retention of the classics within the framework of a liberal education symbolised the conservative, or elite, or aristocratic view of knowledge. Within the sharply divided society of the time it amounted to “useful” knowledge in that it prepared young men for participation in their particular segment of British life. To be able to produce an appropriate classical quotation in the House, or to recognise a line from Virgil in a memo from London, was to be part of a brotherhood whose values were accepted and appreciated. The “well-bred” official did not intend to involve himself linguistically with the lower classes, whether in Manchester or Calcutta. His wife, equally “well-bred,” might read a light French or Italian novel, but that did not detract from the fact that classical languages were real, while modern languages were “accomplishments”. Consequently, schools that attempted to placate middle-class urgings to introduce modern subjects such as modern languages and science faced an uphill struggle.

But such attitudes were, by the middle of the century, already under

threat. The combination of Romantic thinking, the ramifications of the intellectual debate in the universities, the impact of literary works that revealed inadequacies in the educational structure, the evident shifts in a society under extreme industrialisation, the demands of the middle-class for more "useful" education, and the ever-present evidence of the success of the German model, showed very precisely that the established forms of education were in need of overhaul. This need was felt most of all by the Government, where the advances of European countries, particularly Germany, were seen as a growing threat. Britain was being left behind! To counter this real or apparent threat a number of Royal Commissions were set up in the middle years of the century, first to investigate the major Public Schools, and then all other types of educational facilities in the country. These Commissions paid particular attention to the nature and extent of provision in the "modern" subjects of science, mathematics, and languages. Their reports reflect not only the provincialism of mid-Victorian thought on matters of education, but also the seriousness with which this urgent national problem was treated. On every page of the reports the tensions between a Liberal Education and New Knowledge can be traced, and nowhere more clearly than on the topic of modern languages.

For example, the Clarendon Commission (1864) was set up to investigate the nine great Public Schools (Eton, Winchester, Harrow, Rugby, Westminster, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors', and Shrewsbury). On the matter of "modern" subjects the Commissioners wrote:

The school course at every school now includes arithmetic and mathematics, as well as classics. At every school except Eton it includes also one modern language, either French or German. At Rugby (and practically, as it seems, at the Charterhouse) it includes both French and German; at Rugby, however, modern languages are not studied by

those whose parents prefer that they should study natural science. At Merchant Taylors' it includes Hebrew and drawing. Natural science is taught at Rugby by an assistant master to those who choose to study it instead of modern languages, and it counts in promotion.<sup>15)</sup>

Having established that modern languages were in fact being taught at the schools, the Report goes on to give details of the number of hours of instruction compared with those the continent:

At Marlborough and Cheltenham, and in the Prussian Gymnasia, two lesson-hours a week are likewise given to modern languages. The same proportion of time is assigned to this study in the French *Lycees*.<sup>16)</sup>

Unfortunately, even if modern languages were being accorded space on the curriculum, and the hours of tuition were as many as those on the continent, the reality was quite different. The Report continues:

At all these schools the classification in the schools of mathematics and of modern languages respectively is made subordinate, to a more or less considerable extent, to that of the classical school. ...

The path of promotion and the subjects in which the time and thoughts of the boys are employed are mainly classical; classics are also, to the great majority of boys, intrinsically more attractive than mathematics, and to the ablest and most diligent more so than French and German, which, as languages, are less perfect in construction, and which lead the young student, pursued as they are but a very little way, barely to the threshold of a less noble though more abundant literature. But mathematics at least have established a title to respect as an instrument of mental discipline; they are recognised and honoured at the

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15) *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools and the Studies Pursued and Instruction Given Therein* (The Clarendon Report). (London, 1864), Vol. 1, p. 13.

16) *Ibid.*, p. 13.

Universities, and it is easy to obtain Mathematical Masters of high ability who have had a University education. It is otherwise with the study of modern languages, which in each of these respects, but especially in the last, labours under peculiar and great difficulties; whilst, since its introduction into the schools is of more recent date than that of mathematics, it has had less time to establish itself and has to make head against a stronger current of tradition and habit.<sup>17)</sup>

Modern languages, therefore, were subordinate to the classics, were less perfect in construction, were not recognised or "honoured" in the universities, and they laboured under "peculiar and great difficulties". Elsewhere is it more bluntly stated that the "difficulties" were mainly in the finding of suitable staff, with native speakers of the modern languages being the most problematical. Luckily, the Report continues, these problems were not only with British schools:

It is right to add, however, that we have no reason to think that in France and Germany a higher measure of success has generally been attained in the study of modern languages than at our own schools.<sup>18)</sup>

## 5.

The Schools Inquiry Commission, usually called the Taunton Commission (1868), had a broad remit to investigate all the schools except the nine Public Schools already investigated. These schools were the middle-class grammar schools, of which they found 782, and the endowed elementary schools, numbering 2,175.<sup>19)</sup> These they immediately divided into three types, the criterion being how long the pupils were to stay at school (e.g.,

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17) Ibid., pp. 16-17.

18) Ibid., p. 16.

19) R. L. Archer, *Secondary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1966), p. 170.

“Third Grade” schools until 14 or 15; “Second Grade” schools until 16; and “First Grade” schools until 18 or university entrance). The classical dominance in these schools was not as pronounced as in the great Public Schools, but remained a factor nevertheless. In the Report, the Commissioners dispensed with Greek early on, as being only suitable for selected schools in the First Grade. Latin, however, was granted space in all but the Third Grade Schools, on account of its “fulness and [the] precision of its accidence”.<sup>20)</sup>

The scheme suggested for languages was therefore: Third Grade schools: “the elements of Latin or some modern language”; Second Grade schools: “To Latin one modern language ought to be added and thoroughly well taught; and in some schools two modern languages”; and in First Grade schools: “besides the classics... modern languages... ought to find a place in such schools, and that even if they be considered subordinate subjects they should be made a serious part of the business of the school”.<sup>21)</sup> These recommendations closely followed the social structure of the times, in which those leaving school at 14 or so were seen as needing little familiarity with languages, while those attempting university entrance needed a lot. The interesting group was the middle one, for whom the fairly strong advice in the Report was that they be exposed to both the classical languages — or at least to Latin — with some addition of modern languages as well. The Report adds that “The schoolmasters were almost unanimous in regarding Latin as their chief educational instrument”.<sup>22)</sup> In addition “Lawyers, medical men, farmers, engineers agreed in wishing that a certain amount of

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20) *Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission* (London, 1868), p. 23.

21) *Ibid.*, pp. 80, 84, & 86 respectively.

22) *Ibid.*, p. 24.

23) *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Latin should form part of the preliminary education for their several occupations".<sup>23)</sup> Further, the Commission wished to give English an established place in the curriculum, noting that French and German children were carefully instructed in their respective languages, whereas British children were not.

The Royal Commissions were therefore somewhat ahead of the schools in their thinking about modern languages (and other modern subjects too, such as Maths and Science), and their intention to update the educational provision in the country was clear. Unfortunately, not all their recommendations were carried over into the Endowed Schools Act (1869), resulting in what one commentator has called a "patchwork".<sup>24)</sup> Britain was still, in effect, in the grip of traditional ideas as to the value of modern subjects, even if that grip was steadily being loosened. Unlike other countries, Britain did not seem able, or willing, to escape from the class-based structures of education which had dominated thinking in Georgian times. Modern languages also fell into the gap between higher academic achievement on the one hand, and skills education on the other; or, expressed differently, between universal knowledge and the newer learning. By 1869 no satisfactory mix had yet been found, and the "patchwork" curriculum would continue into the next century.

## 6.

The middle years of the century were also notable for the involvement of leading intellectuals in educational thinking, many inspired by the debate surrounding examinations. Examinations had been in the air for about 10 years when J. S. Mill (1806–1873) wrote *On Liberty* (1859). They had been

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24) Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

much talked about in the press and in journals, and the initial steps to make examinations public (as against being restricted to specific groups such as army entrants or teachers) had been taken by the College of Preceptors in 1854.<sup>25)</sup> The idea that “anybody” could take an exam was music to the ears of social reformers, but worrying to the traditionally minded and to the aristocracy. The biggest step regarding examinations occurred in 1858 when Oxford and Cambridge (separately) introduced their “Locals”.

Mill presented two views of education. On the negative side he saw “every extension of education” as promoting the “assimilation” of the people, by which he meant their social convergence towards homogeneity, or “bringing about a general similarity among mankind”. He felt that “identity” was being lost, with a consequent narrowing of opinions, and lack of tolerance for “opinions and tendencies at variance with those of the public”. He sums up his view with: “Mankind speedily become unable to conceive of diversity, when they have been for some time unaccustomed to see it”.<sup>26)</sup>

On the positive side, he argued forcefully for the need for the State to enforce education in the population. He asked — rhetorically, because he knew his own answer to be yes — if the “State should require and compel the education, up to a certain standard, of every human being who is born its citizen?”<sup>27)</sup> However, in Mill’s mind this did not mean that the State should operate the system, but rather that it should “direct” it. One of the

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25) See M. J. Benson (2004), “From Exercises to Exams: The Development of Foreign Language Testing in Nineteenth-century Britain.” In *Studies in the Humanities and Sciences*, 44 (2), 37–65. Japan: Hiroshima Shudo University.

26) J. S. Mill, *On Liberty* (1859). (*On Liberty*, with *The Subjection of Women* and *Chapters on Socialism*, Ed. Stefan Collini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 73–74.

27) Mill, *op cit.*, 105.

ways by which it would direct the education of the public would be through a system of public examinations, "extending to all children and beginning at an early age".<sup>28)</sup> He envisaged annual examinations which would raise the child up to "a certain minimum of general knowledge".<sup>29)</sup> The exams would be largely factual, so as to prevent the State from becoming an arbiter of correctness, particularly in the contentious areas of religion and politics. For example, he saw no objection to an atheist being examined in the principles of Christianity, provided "he is not required to profess a belief in them".<sup>30)</sup> Such exams would take place at the elementary stage of a child's education — effectively basic literacy — but higher-level exams should, he asserted, be voluntary. He follows von Humboldt in advocating that those who voluntarily present themselves for higher examination, and who pass, should be given appropriate certificates, which might in turn lead to higher public esteem for the individual. Thus Mill gave his considerable intellectual weight to the idea of examinations, even if his concerns were less connected with education than with social improvement.

Mill's opinions added strength to the position of exams such as the Oxford and Cambridge Locals. Their initially experimental and tentative nature was soon cast off, and by the mid-1860s they were also open to girls.<sup>31)</sup> These exams included, as well as Latin and Greek, popular with the boys, French and German, more popular with the girls. These developments must have pleased Mill because he set out his views on the education of girls in *The Subjection of Women* (1869). His main thesis here is the desirability of equal access for men and women. He argues that the "intel-

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28) Mill, *op cit.*, pp. 106–107.

29) Mill, *op cit.*, p. 107.

30) Mill, *op cit.*, p. 107.

31) Benson, *op cit.*, p. 50.

lectual powers of the species"<sup>32)</sup> would be enhanced with the "more complete intellectual education of women, which would improve *pari passu* with that of men".<sup>33)</sup>

The movement that had started with Kant and the German Romantics had therefore progressed by the mid-nineteenth century to areas far beyond what had initially been imagined. Education had been a major beneficiary of the philosophical, intellectual, and practical power that emanated out of Germany, and modern languages had been carried along in the flow. They had further been accorded recognition by the highest academic authorities in the land, and the public imagination had been forced to contemplate their existence. A new generation was growing up in which "languages" had come to have new and more diversified meanings. The second half of Victoria's reign was to see these new meanings take a fuller and more recognisable shape, particularly in the debate surrounding the reform of language teaching, from about 1870 onwards.

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32) Mill, *op cit.*, p. 199.

33) Mill, *op cit.*, p. 199.