Family Life and Intellectual Growth: An Analysis of Helen Taylor's Contribution to John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill's Intellectual Development

SURG | Arts, Humanities, and Performance (AHP) | Tags: Archival, Literary/Composition Analysis

This cover page is meant to focus your reading of the sample proposal, summarizing important aspects of proposal writing that the author did well or could have improved. **Review the following sections before reading the sample**. The proposal is also annotated throughout to highlight key elements of the proposal's structure and content.



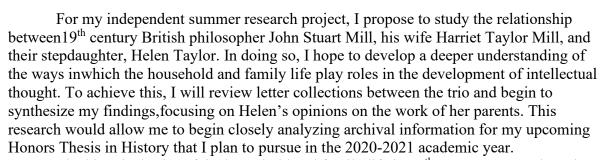
| Proposal Strengths | Areas for Improvement |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| The gap in knowledge and justification for the | It is important to be clear and confirm that you |
| research aims are clearly stated, and the scope of | have access to the archives and materials that |
| the proposal stays narrowed to what the | you name in your proposal. |
| researcher is planning to do during their 8 weeks. | |
| Archival methodology is explained with | |
| illustrative examples for what the student intends | |
| to find at the archives they will visit. There is a | |
| clear and extensive archival appendix. Trips to | |
| both archives are separately justified. | |
| The proposal includes specific research | |
| questions. These questions come at the end of | |
| the background section. As such, they are fittingly | |
| more concrete, answerable, and well justified by | |
| the preceding literature review. | |
| Includes an explicit research question. It comes at | |
| the end of the background section. As such, it is | |
| fittingly more concrete, answerable, and well | |
| justified by the preceding literature review. | |



Other Key Features to Take Note Of

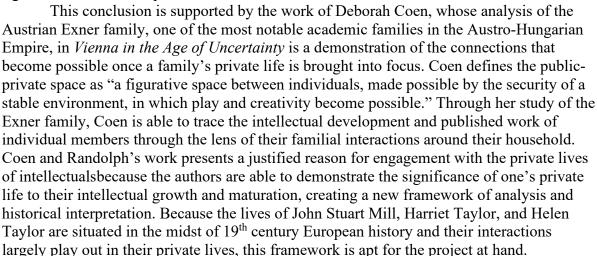
Projects that require international travel are eligible to receive additional funding of up to $\frac{1}{2}$ the price of the round-trip plane ticket (as long as that travel is not to a researcher's country of permanent residence).





The historical roles of the household and family life in 19th century Europe have been explored in significant depth by contemporary historians such as John Randolph and Deborah Coen. In Randolph's *The House in the Garden*, the author uses the household life of the famed Russian Bakunin family to demonstrate the merit of a closer inspection of the history of the private lives of historical figures. Randolph argues that, as intellectual inquiry shifts away from strictly public institutions such as popular literary publications or forums for speech, the domestic space has taken a character of "distinction, agency, and memory." In his analysis of thecorrespondence, meetings, and publications of three successive generations of the Bakunin family, Randolph illustrates that, in order to fully appreciate the intellectual figures as subjects, an inspection of their private lives and households is necessary. Without the implementation of this analytic framework, an evaluation of these figures would be incomplete.

this project is important.



Additionally, though there has been much biographical work done on John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill's published intellectual achievements and public lives, little information exists concerning the intellectual relationship between Helen Taylor and the former pair. Having already read and annotated four biographical works related to the Mill family – John's autobiography, two 20th century biographies of John, and a 21st century biography of Harriet – I have concluded that, though the biographies recognize Helen's contribution to the intellectual work of John and Harriet, they rarely specify the extent of that contribution. Given Helen's constant presence in Harriet's life until her death, and subsequent shared household with John forthe last 15 years of his life, there is significant potential for an exploration of the trio's personal lives as it relates to John and Harriet's intellectual development. Ultimately, this study will shed a new light on the life of John Stuart Mill's intellectual contribution and familial relationships. As some of the preeminent



answerable, and explicit research Background leads to specific, questions.

materials are digitized looked at in-person. and what will be Identifies what





Mentions larger goal of the research: a senior thesis. philosophers of their age, John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill'slives and personal relationships are certainly worth further inspection. In performing this exploration, I hope to answer the following questions: What was the extent of Helen Taylor's intellectual contribution to the work of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill? How does her contribution frame conceptions of the household and family as important dimensions of political and intellectual life in 19th century Europe? Through the courseof my research and subsequent Thesis project, my goal is to tease out the true extent of the trio's private relationship and potentially shed a new light on the suitability of the household and family life as an appropriate lens for the historical analysis of Victorian intellectual figures.

My plan for the summer consists primarily of archival data collection and synthetization. I will inspect the letters of John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor Mill, and Helen Taylor, looking specifically for mentions of John and Harriet's work in Helen's writing. Currently, letters between the trio are housed at the John Stuart Mill Collection at Yale University and the Mill-Taylor Collection at the London School of Economics (see Appendices C-D). Having consulted with my faculty advisor, I plan to spend one week at Yale University and two weeks at the London School of Economics, photographing and inspecting the letters. Additionally, several books of correspondence - John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor: their correspondence and subsequent marriage and The Letters of John Stuart Mill - have been published and are available through the Northwestern University Library portal. I will spend the remainder of my summer working my way through the digitized versions of the archive and aforementioned selected texts, reading and annotating relevant letters from Mill and Harriet Taylor that mention Helen, as well as Helen's letters to the former pair.

In order to successfully examine Helen's contributions, I will employ a biographical analysis similar to the work performed by Randolph and Coen. To ensure that this analysis fullycaptures the dynamics of Helen, Harriet, and John's relationship, it is important that I have as broad of an archive as possible. Therefore, the majority of my summer will be spent gathering and annotating evidence from the aforementioned archives and source bases. I will use this evidence throughout my Thesis project, during which I will perform the bulk of my analytical work and biographical formation.

As a result of my extensive coursework in European history and research experience, I believe that I have the skills necessary to perform and categorize archival research. Having takenan upper-level History elective on Victorian Britain for my major, I have had significant exposure to the various historical themes of the time period and have specifically analyzed the work of John Stuart Mill in a classroom setting. Additionally, I have worked as a Leopold Fellowfor my faculty advisor within the History Department, performing a year of archival research including a week-long independent research project at the archives of Southern Methodist University. With this experience under my belt, and having already read an extensive amount of literature on the subject, I believe that I am in the perfect position to perform this strand of archival research.

Working to explore new facets in which the household and private life played a role in the intellectual formation of prominent historical figures will help me further develop the necessary analytical skills to pursue future academic research. This work will not only aid the completion of my upcoming Thesis project, but will prepare me for my planned graduate study of Political Philosophy and Intellectual History. Ultimately, I plan to use this experience to further explore my academic interests and support the culmination of my academic career at Northwestern with the completion of a Thesis project.

archives student will visit. Gives overview of archival methods with illustrative examples at will be found in the

what you need

that you will have access to you provide verification methods, make sure that

to undertake this project. Researcher lists clear preparation

Bibliography

Borchard, Ruth. John Stuart Mill: the Man. Watts, 1957.

Coen, Deborah R. Vienna in the Age of Uncertainty: Science, Liberalism, and Private Life.

University of Chicago Press, 2011. pp. 19.

Jacobs, Jo Ellen. The Voice of Harriet Taylor Mill. Indiana University Press, 2002.

Mill, John Stuart, Autobiography. Penguin Classics, 1989.

Packe, Michael St. John. The Life of John Stuart Mill. Secker and Warburg, 1954.

Randolph, John. *The House in the Garden: the Bakunin Family and the Romance of Russian Idealism*. Cornell University Press, 2007. pp. 5.

Appendix A: Research Materials

Hayek, Friedrich A. von. *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, Their Correspondence and Subsequent Marriage*. Routledge & K. Paul, 1951.

John Stuart Mill Collection, Yale University

Mill, John Stuart, et al. The Letters of John Stuart Mill. Longmans, Green and Co., 1910.

Mill-Taylor Collection, London School of Economics

Appendix B: Plan

John Stuart Mill Collection, Yale University ~ 1 Week (Archival)

Mill-Taylor Collection, London School of Economics ~ 2 Weeks (Archival)

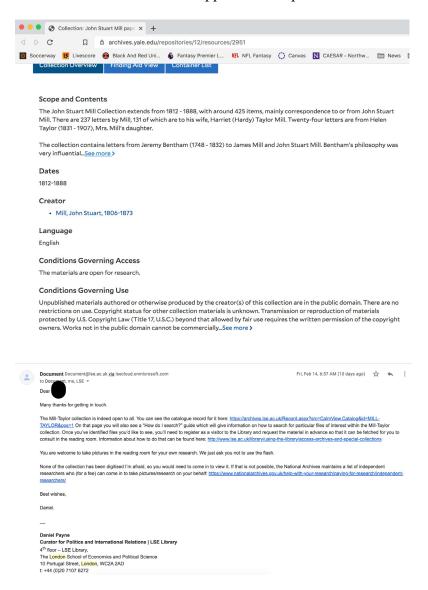
John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, Their Correspondence and Subsequent Marriage ~ 1 Week

(Reading/Annotating)

The Letters of John Stuart Mill ~ 1 Week (Reading/Annotating)

Synthesis and Notetaking ~ 3 Weeks

Appendix C: Open Archive Confirmation



Appendix D: Preliminary List of Files at Archives

Yale Archive:

John Stuart Mill papers

Collection

Call Number: MS 350

Collection Overview Finding Aid View Container List

Scope and Contents

The John Stuart Mill Collection extends from 1812 - 1888, with around 425 items, mainly correspondence to or from John Stuart Mill. There are 237 letters by Mill, 131 of which are to his wife, Harriet (Hardy) Taylor Mill. Twenty-four letters are from Helen Taylor (1831 - 1907), Mrs. Mill's daughter.

LSE Archive:

