



Bentham's Works

Recommended reading on equality

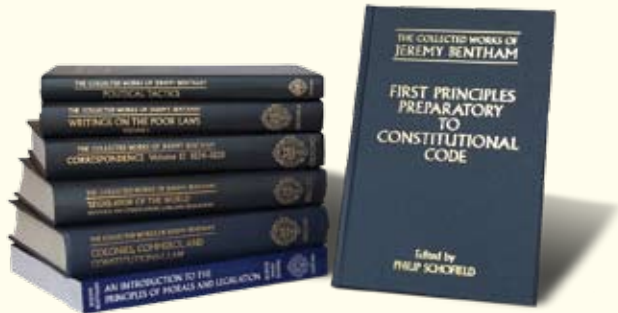
Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, (1789) paperback Oxford, 1996.

Bentham: Selected Writings of John Dinwiddy, ed. W. Twining, Stanford, 2003.

Lea Campos Boralevi, *Bentham and the Oppressed*, Berlin, 1984.

Frederick Rosen, *Classical Utilitarianism from Hume to Mill*, London, 2003.

Philip Schofield, *Utility and Democracy: The Political Thought of Jeremy Bentham*, Oxford, 2006.



The new edition of Bentham's works

A new, authoritative edition of *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham* is being produced by the Bentham Project, under the supervision of the Bentham Committee, UCL.

This new edition is based on two main sources: first, texts which Bentham printed or published himself; and second, the collection of 60,000 manuscript folios deposited in the UCL Library. Fifteen volumes of Bentham's works on the principles of legislation, constitutional law, politics, judicial procedure, economics and society, philosophy, education, and twelve volumes of correspondence have been published so far.

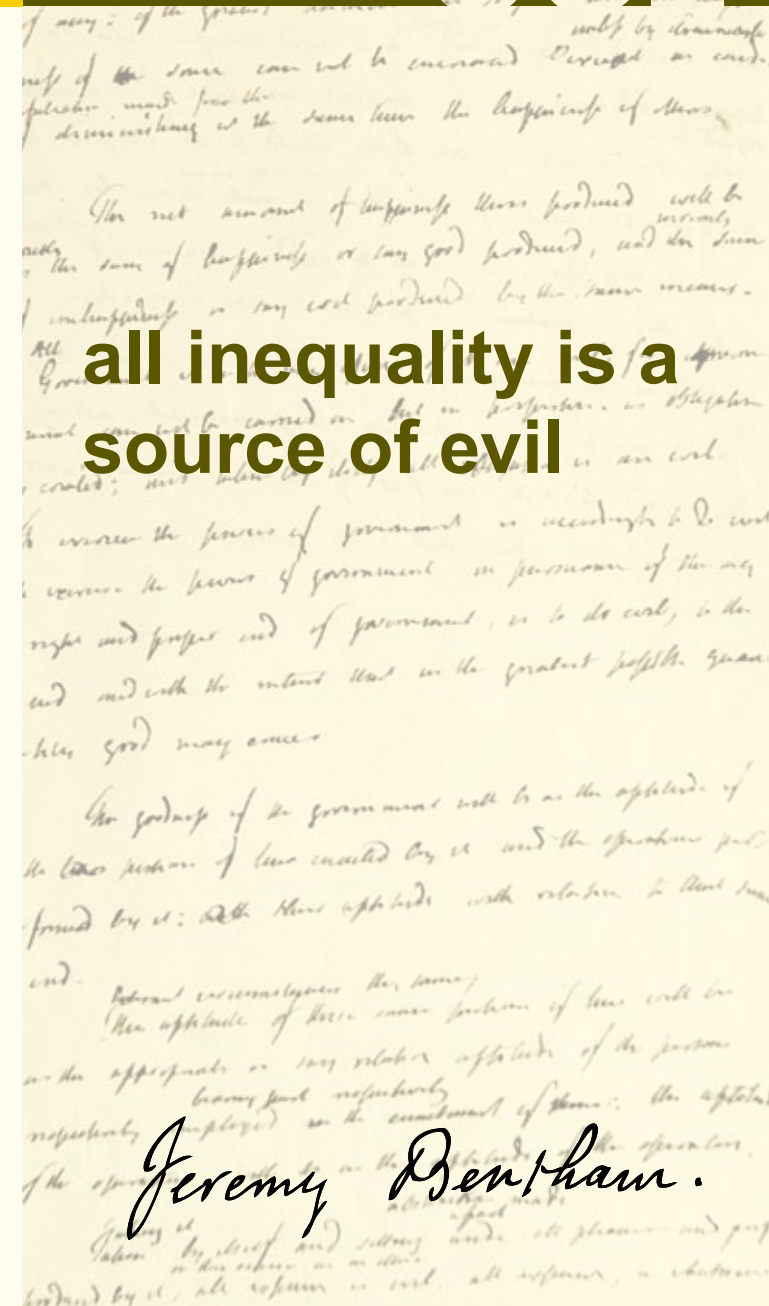
The Bentham Project

The Bentham Project, the global centre for Bentham studies, attracts a constant stream of academic visitors from countries around the world. It maintains an informative web-site, which includes a Bentham bibliography and the *e-Journal of Bentham Studies*. It has produced an on-line database catalogue of the Bentham Papers at UCL Library, to make the collection accessible to all. It administers the International Society for Utilitarian Studies, which organizes major conferences, colloquia, and seminars, and promotes the internationally-renowned journal *Utilitas*.

The Bentham Project, part of UCL's prestigious Faculty of Laws, is recognized as a British Academy Research Project, and receives financial support from University College London, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Wellcome Trust, and the British Academy.

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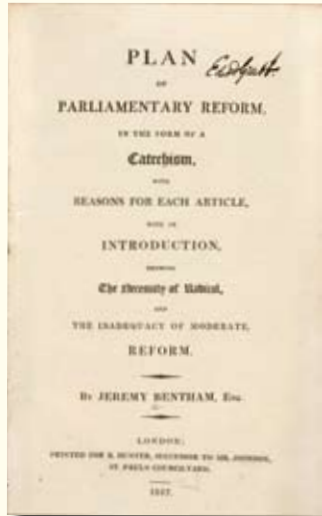
August 2006



'All inequality is a source of evil – the inferior loses more in the account of happiness than by the superior is gained.'

First Principles preparatory to Constitutional Code, written 1822

Bentham believed that each individual should be given equal consideration, and that any deviation from equality was an evil in itself. Bentham's fundamental



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principle of right and wrong was the principle of utility. This principle states that the right action is that which promotes the greatest happiness. From the perspective of the legislator, there are four ends or aims which will be most likely to bring about the greatest happiness. These ends are subsistence (food and shelter), abundance (wealth), security (legal protection for person, property, reputation, and condition in life), and equality.

Inequality is an evil for two reasons. First, the best distribution of material resources is an equal one. The value of a unit of a particular resource, for instance £100 of money, diminishes with each increment: an addition of £100 to the income of a poor person is much more valuable than the addition of £100 to the income of a rich person. Second, the concentration of resources in a few members of society will increase their power proportionately, and will lead to their promoting their selfish interests to the detriment of the interest of the community in general, resulting in corruption and oppression, and even greater inequality.

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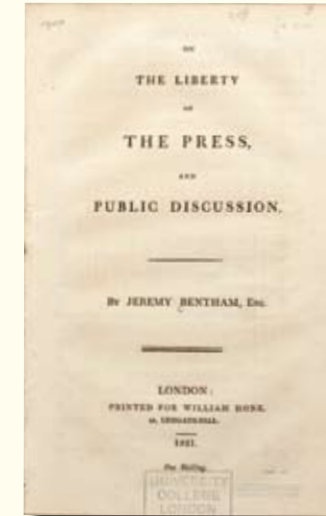


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HENRY TONKS (1862-1937) SKETCH FOR THE FOUNDERS OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE COMMISSIONED IN 1922 TO COMMEMORATE THE CENTENARY OF UCL

The mural in the dome of the Flaxman gallery at UCL depicts an imaginary meeting of those associated with the founding of the university. Although not directly involved, Bentham's inclusion in the mural confirms his close connection with the founders, and acknowledges his role as the spiritual father of UCL.

Bentham's solution to this problem is a representative democracy, where officials are genuinely accountable to the people, primarily through the operation of open government.



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Bentham argued against inequality on grounds of race and religion. He advocated the repeal of laws which discriminated against Jews, Muslims, and non-orthodox Christians. He called for the 'euthanasia' of the Church of England and the abandonment of religious tests at the two Church-of-England universities, Oxford and Cambridge.

It was these concerns which led Bentham's supporters to establish the University of London (soon afterwards renamed University College London) in 1826, and to promote Bentham's vision of useful learning accessible to all. The new University opened higher education to those excluded from Oxford and Cambridge, admitting students irrespective of race, class, or religion. It later became the first English university to admit women on equal terms with men.

Bentham argued in favour of gender equality. He wanted women to have equal voting rights with men.

He argued in favour of equality between sexual orientations. He demanded the decriminalization of acts of 'sexual non-conformity'.

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'Every individual in the country tells for one; no individual for more than one.'

Rationale of Judicial Evidence, published 1827