

BENTHAM AND THE ARTS

Hosted by the Bentham Project and Faculty of Laws, University College London and the University of the Arts, London

Sponsored by UCL Faculty of Laws; UCL Bentham Project; and the International Society for Utilitarian Studies (ISUS)

Co convenors: Anthony Julius (UCL); Malcolm Quinn (UAL); Philip Schofield (UCL)

All seminars take place on Tuesday evenings, at 6.00 pm, at UCL.

The seminars on 30 January, 20 February, 6 March, and 20 March 2018 will take place in G10 Lecture Theatre, Chandler House, 2 Wakefield Street, London WC1N 1PF.

The remaining seminars will take place in the Moot Court, Bentham House, Endsleigh Gardens, London WC1H 0EG.

hedonistic utilitarianism to the existence of the aesthetic, as represented in the oft-quoted

attempted to exercise power and influence by elevating their own opinions into standards that
dherents of the principle of
sympathy and antipathy.

Benjamin Bourcier (Catholic University of Lille)

According to Bentham, claims about beauty, the sublime, and other aesthetic values can not
be separated from the experience of pain and pleasure. Nevertheless, these judgments
express something more than merely an aesthetic judgment. The fields of ethics and
aesthetics unquestionably frame Bentha

-autonomy of

ethics and aesthetics? What does this non-
philosophy? Finally, I will assess whether such non-
theory of private ethics.

Malcolm Quinn (University of the Arts, London)

Attitude to the Arts

In 'The Rationale of Reward', Jeremy Bentham argues that a politician might be better

heart the seeds of those ferocious passions which can only be gratified with
Here Bentham makes it possible to say that an enlightened choice between the Iliad and
solitaire need not be a choice between good taste and bad taste. J.S Mill was later to argue
aste and bad taste in the name of an
inclination towards pleasure was a rejection of the possibility of judgment. It can also be

from the forms of cultural idealism that have defined our relationship to the arts. In this

to an understanding of the arts in our own era, in which the the commercial idyll of middle-
class taste has come apart at the seams.

20 February 2018

Anthony Julius (UCL)

Who was the greater champion of literature, Bentham or Mill?

According to the received view of Bentham and Mill in the matter of literature, Bentham was
claims, while Mill was an ardent admirer of poetry,
who gave it an honoured place in liberal thinking. This is a view promoted by Mill himself,
with some accusatory pointing at a passage in Bentham's *Rationale of Reward*. Though the
view is not wholly wrong so far as it goes, it is seriously misleading in two respects. **First**, it
supports misjudgements of Bentham as a Platonic enemy of literature, with nothing of interest
to say about it, or the fine arts in general; and complementary misjudgements of Mill as an
advocate of literary free speech, with an interesting theory of poetry. Not one of these
misjudgements withstands scrutiny. **Second**, it encourages complacency regarding the
adequacy of liberal thinking about literature, and the adequacy of liberalism's response to

one is urgently needed), we need to look beyond Mill which means, among other things, looking behind him, to Bentham.

6 March 2018
Stella Sandford (Kingston)

Ressentiment

1812 1823) will be struck at numerous

Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905). Like Freud, Bentham finds no moral distinction between same-sex and heterosexual sexuality. Understanding sexuality primarily in terms of pleasure (rather than reproductive teleology) and presupposing sexual orientation to be matter of taste, not morality, Bentham, like Freud, denies that same-sex desire is either pathological or unnatural and advocates for a measure of sexual freedom

psychopathia sexualis of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries it is the pathology of the ferocious condemnation of homosexuality, not the seeker of same-sex pleasure, that

-sex pleasure is

psychological explanation for the social antipathy towards same-sex sexuality, and its
ressentiment

An

Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation

20 March 2018
Tim Milnes (Edinburgh)

Reason

Assessments of the relationship between Benthamite utilitarianism and Romanticism were

Coleridge as the great counterweights of early nineteenth-century British thought. While for

entham [...]

paper I suggest that this presents a misleading picture of both Bentham and his Romantic contemporaries. It is misleading because it overlooks the ways in which thinkers in this

Conversely, the aestheticisation of

abandonment of an Enlightenment model of factual knowledge, but its elegiac idealisation.

1 May 2018
Frances Ferguson (Chicago)
Bentham, Modernity, and the Arts
Jeremy Bentham's Expansive Aesthetics: Pushpin Too

the Millbank Penitentiary. The talk uses this recently completed art and architecture project at