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John Stuart Mill

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John Stuart Mill, a British philosopher and economist, was born in London on 20th May, 1806. He was a son of the Scottish economist, philosopher, political activist and historian named James Mill. John Stuart Mill was educated at home by his father with the collaboration of Jeremy Bentham who regarded as the founder of utilitarianism and Francis Place.¹ James Mill and Jeremy Bentham tried to create a genius who would keep on their beliefs of utilitarianism after they died. As expected, John Stuart Mill was a genius and prominent contributor to political economy and liberal political philosophy.² He agreed with Bentham about utilitarianism and he was also interested in liberalism as he wrote in his book named *On Liberty*. For his personal life, he had a beautiful childhood with his beloved books and beautiful married life with his beloved wife. Although he suffered the mental crisis when he was twenty years old, he took a few years to get well and come back to have a successful and happy life.³ Therefore, the most interesting about John Stuart Mill is that homeschooling made John Stuart Mill intelligent, happy and successful in both working and personal life.

¹ John Stuart Mill. *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*. 2009. p. 3-4.

² Peter McMillan. "John Stuart Mill." *Spartacus Educational*. 5 Feb. 2013. <
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/PRmill.htm>

³ Wikipedia contributors. "John Stuart Mill." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 25 Jan. 2013.<
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stuart_Mill>

James Mill saw that the society at that time was vicious, ignorant and conviction of all churches and wicked, in consequence, he decided not to send his own son to study at school as he did not want his son to be contaminated by school and society. Homeschooling was his choice instead. He wanted his son to be a diligent and competent reformer, a proper successor to Jeremy Bentham and himself and a utilitarian messiah.⁴ James Mill tried very hard to create a genius by his own afford. The education plan for his son was very intensive. John Stuart Mill started learning Greek when he was only three years old. That means he had to write, read and speak English fluently since he was one or two years old. During that time, he read a large number of books, until he was six, he could write about Roman history. When he was seven, he studied the Dialogues of Plato and he studied Latin when he was eight. Before he was ten, he read a lot of classic and modern books and studied Logic when he was twelve. Unsurprisingly, he could explain the noble economics and logic issue when he was only fourteen.⁵

The method that James Mill used to educate his son is very interesting. Father and son worked in the same room and John learned to solve problems by his own afford unless he beg for the help from his father. John had to discuss everything he studied with his father. In every evening, father and son went to walk together and John would talk about the books he read and what he thought and got from the books. In addition, since John was the eldest son, he had to teach all his brothers and sisters. John Stuart Mill worked as his father's secretary. He had to proofread lots of documents; at the same time he studied various kinds of knowledge that he was

⁴ Tony Aspromourgos and John Lodewijks. *History and Political Economy: In Honour of P.D. Groenewegan*. 2004. P. 78.

⁵ John Stuart Mill. *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*. 2009. p. 4-11.

interested. Until he was seventeen years old, his knowledge was equal to his father's that was fifty years old.

Many people may consider whether homeschooling will make people not to contact with other people in the society. In the case of John Stuart Mill, although he had never talked or contacted with other children with the same age until he was fourteen, he could live a happy and successful life.⁶ In addition, he could work as the leader of the team that fought for utilitarianism and also in East India Company that means he could live in the society without problem. On the side of moral, James Mill valued the moral and ideal to be equal or more important than the knowledge. Therefore, he tried very hard to make John Stuart Mill be both intelligent and moral. Ultimately, James Mill educated his son to be a competent and diligent reformer; a proper successor to himself and Jeremy Bentham and a utilitarian messiah as he hoped and John Stuart Mill was also the prominent contributor to political economy and liberal philosophy who introduced the famous concept about liberalism on the famous book named *On Liberty*. Besides, he was the Member of Parliament for City and Westminster who called for women to be given the right to vote reflect that he also cared about the equity between the genders.⁷

One of the most popular issues about John Stuart Mill is the mental crisis when he was twenty. Some people believe that the reason which made him sick is homeschooling and the too intensive education by his father. But if we consider the situation at that time, we can see that before he got sick he had to work very hard for East India Company and also work as the political activist for utilitarianism before

⁶ John Stuart Mill. *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*. 2009. p. 16.

⁷ Wikipedia contributors. "John Stuart Mill." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. 25 Jan. 2013.<
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Stuart_Mill>

and after working hours.⁸ In addition, he had to study by himself and taught his seven brothers and sisters. And he had to work as the editor of Bentham's five books. So, we can conclude that the mental crisis did not directly relate to homeschooling but it is because of too hard working that made him worn out temporarily. Finally, he took only two years to recover and be back to work. Homeschooling by James Mill has been discussed pervasively. Some people believe that homeschool is practical and better than study at school but there are some people see that it is incredible and define homeschool by James Mill as parental tyranny. Nonetheless, for the case of John Stuart Mill, it is better to say that homeschool can make people intelligent, successful and also happy if they are educated in the correct way like James Mill did.

Homeschooling may be not appropriate for everyone, it would be absolutely wrong if the interests of the children are opposite to the need of the parents that want children to be. But for the case of John Stuart Mill, there are a lot of factors that made him successful in homeschooling not only his own cleverness but also his father's afford to make the son intelligent and also the interest in what father want the son to study. In this case, the homeschooling would certainly not be successful if John Stuart Mill chose to ignore his father's teaching and also if his father permitted John to see other children and he chose to play with others instead of reading and studying in what his father prepared for him. No matter it was the coincidence that make John Stuart Mill was a special case for homeschooling or this case can be happened to everyone, the truth is that homeschooling made John Stuart Mill intelligent, happy and successful both in working and personal life.

⁸ Fred Wilson. "John Stuart Mill." *Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy*. 5 Feb. 2013. <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mill/>>