

Jeremy Bentham

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Jeremy Bentham (/ˈbɛnθəm/; 15 February 1748 [O.S. 4 February 1747]^[1] – 6 June 1832) was an English philosopher, jurist, and social reformer. He is regarded as the founder of modern utilitarianism.^{[2][3]}

Bentham defined as the "fundamental axiom" of his philosophy the principle that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong".^{[4][5]} He became a leading theorist in Anglo-American philosophy of law, and a political radical whose ideas influenced the development of welfarism. He advocated individual and economic freedom, the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, equal rights for women, the right to divorce, and the decriminalising of homosexual acts.^[6] He called for the abolition of slavery, the abolition of the death penalty, and the abolition of physical punishment, including that of children.^[7] He has also become known in recent years as an early advocate of animal rights.^[8] Though strongly in favour of the extension of individual legal rights, he opposed the idea of natural law and natural rights, calling them "nonsense upon stilts".^[9]

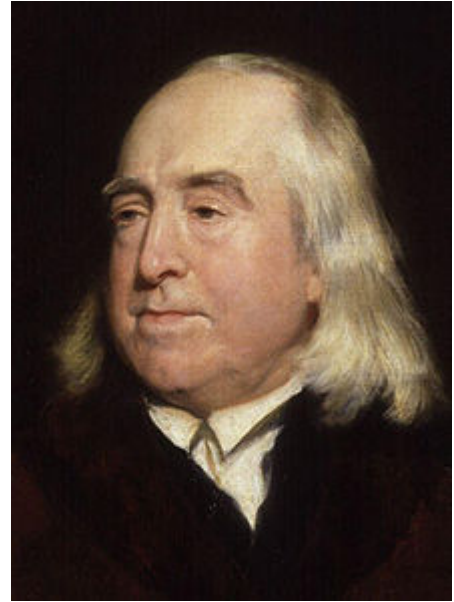
Bentham's students included his secretary and collaborator James Mill, the latter's son, John Stuart Mill, the legal philosopher John Austin, as well as Robert Owen, one of the founders of utopian socialism.

On his death in 1832, Bentham left instructions for his body to be first dissected, and then to be permanently preserved as an "auto-icon" (or self-image), which would be his memorial. This was done, and the auto-icon is now on public display at University College London (UCL). Because of his arguments in favour of the general availability of education, he has been described as the "spiritual founder" of UCL. However, he played only a limited direct part in its foundation.^[10]

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Jeremy Bentham



Born	15 February 1748 London, England
Died	6 June 1832 (aged 84) London, England
Alma mater	The Queen's College, Oxford (BA 1763; MA 1766)
Era	18th century philosophy 19th century philosophy
School	Utilitarianism, legal positivism, liberalism
Main interests	Political philosophy, philosophy of law, ethics, economics
Notable ideas	Greatest happiness principle
Influences	
Influenced	

Signature

A handwritten signature of Jeremy Bentham in cursive script, written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

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Life

Bentham was born in Houndsditch, London, to a wealthy family that supported the Tory party. He was reportedly a child prodigy: he was found as a toddler sitting at his father's desk reading a multi-volume history of England, and he began to study Latin at the age of three.^[11] He had one surviving sibling, Samuel Bentham, with whom he was close.

He attended Westminster School and, in 1760, at age 12, was sent by his father to The Queen's College, Oxford, where he completed his bachelor's degree in 1763 and his master's degree in 1766. He trained as a lawyer and, though he never practised, was called to the bar in 1769. He became deeply frustrated with the complexity of the English legal code, which he termed the "Demon of Chicanery".

When the American colonies published their Declaration of Independence in July 1776, the British government did not issue any official response but instead secretly commissioned London lawyer and pamphleteer John Lind to publish a rebuttal.^[12] His 130-page tract was distributed in the colonies and contained an essay titled "Short Review of the Declaration" written by Bentham, a friend of Lind's, which attacked and mocked the Americans' political philosophy.^{[13][14]}

Among his many proposals for legal and social reform was a design for a prison building he called the Panopticon.^[15] He spent some sixteen years of his life developing and refining his ideas for the building, and hoped that the government would adopt the plan for a National Penitentiary, and appoint him as contractor-governor. Although the prison was never built, the concept had an important influence on later generations of thinkers. Twentieth-century French philosopher Michel Foucault argued that the Panopticon was paradigmatic of several 19th-century "disciplinary" institutions.^[16]



Portrait of Bentham by the studio of Thomas Frye, 1760–1762

Bentham became convinced that his plans for the Panopticon had been thwarted by the King and an aristocratic elite acting in their own interests. It was largely because of his brooding sense of injustice that he developed his ideas of "sinister interest" – that is, of the vested interests of the powerful conspiring against a wider public interest – which underpinned many of his broader arguments for reform.^[17]

More successful was his cooperation with Patrick Colquhoun in tackling the corruption in the Pool of London. This resulted in the Thames Police Bill of 1798, which was passed in 1800.^[18] The bill created the Thames River Police, which was the first preventive police force in the country and was a precedent for Robert Peel's reforms 30 years later.^[19]

Bentham was in correspondence with many influential people. Adam Smith, for example, opposed free interest rates before he was made aware of Bentham's arguments on the subject. As a result of his correspondence with Mirabeau and other leaders of the French Revolution, Bentham was declared an honorary citizen of France.^[20] He was an outspoken critic of the revolutionary discourse of natural rights and of the violence that arose after the Jacobins took power (1792). Between 1808 and 1810, he held a personal friendship with Latin American Independence Precursor Francisco de Miranda and paid visits to Miranda's Grafton Way house in London.

In 1823, he co-founded the *Westminster Review* with James Mill as a journal for the "Philosophical Radicals" – a group of younger disciples through whom Bentham exerted considerable influence in British public life.^[21] One was John Bowring, to whom Bentham became devoted, describing their relationship as "son and father": he appointed Bowring political editor of the *Westminster Review*, and eventually his literary executor.^[22] Another was Edwin Chadwick, who wrote on hygiene, sanitation and policing and was a major contributor to the Poor Law Amendment Act: Bentham employed Chadwick as a secretary and bequeathed him a large legacy.^[23]

An insight into his character is given in Michael St. John Packe's *The Life of John Stuart Mill*:

During his youthful visits to Bowood House, the country seat of his patron Lord Lansdowne, he had passed his time at falling unsuccessfully in love with all the ladies of the house, whom he courted with a clumsy jocularly, while playing chess with them or giving them lessons on the harpsichord. Hopeful to the last, at the age of eighty he wrote again to one of them, recalling to her memory the far-off days when she had "presented him, in ceremony, with the flower in the green lane" [citing Bentham's memoirs]. To the end of his life he could not hear of Bowood without tears swimming in his eyes, and he was forced to exclaim, "Take me forward, I entreat you, to the future – do not let me go back to the past."^[24]

A psychobiographical study by Philip Lucas and Anne Sheeran argues that he may have had Asperger's syndrome.^[25]

Death and the auto-icon

Bentham died on 6 June 1832 aged 84 at his residence in Queen Square Place in Westminster, London. He had continued to write up to a month before his death, and had made careful preparations for the dissection of his body after death and its preservation as an auto-icon. As early as 1769, when Bentham was 21 years old, he made a will leaving his body for dissection to a family friend, the physician and chemist George Fordyce, whose daughter, Maria Sophia (1765–1858), married Jeremy's brother Samuel Bentham.^[26] A paper written in 1830, instructing Thomas Southwood Smith to create the auto-icon, was attached to his last will, dated 30 May 1832.^[26]



Public dissection

On 8 June 1832, two days after his death, invitations were distributed to a select group of friends, and on the following day at 3 p.m., Southwood Smith delivered a lengthy oration over Bentham's remains in the Webb Street School of Anatomy & Medicine in Southwark, London. The printed oration contains a frontispiece with an engraving of Bentham's body partly covered by a

sheet.^[26]

Afterward, the skeleton and head were preserved and stored in a wooden cabinet called the "Auto-icon", with the skeleton padded out with hay and dressed in Bentham's clothes. Originally kept by his disciple Thomas Southwood Smith,^[27] it was acquired by University College London in 1850. It is normally kept on public display at the end of the South Cloisters

in the main building of the college; however, for the 100th and 150th anniversaries of the college, and in 2013,^[28] it was brought to the meeting of the College Council, where it was listed as "present but not voting".^[29]

Bentham had intended the Auto-icon to incorporate his actual head, mummified to resemble its appearance in life. However, Southwood Smith's experimental efforts at mummification, based on practices of the indigenous people of New Zealand and involving placing the head under an air pump over sulphuric acid and simply drawing off the fluids, although technically successful, left the head looking distastefully macabre, with dried and darkened skin stretched tautly over the skull.^[26] The Auto-icon was therefore given a wax head, fitted with some of Bentham's own hair. The real head was displayed in the same case as the Auto-icon for many years, but became the target of repeated student pranks. It is now locked away securely.^[30]

A 360-degree rotatable, high-resolution 'Virtual Auto-Icon'^[31] is available at the UCL Bentham Project's website.

Work

Utilitarianism

Bentham's ambition in life was to create a "Pannomion", a complete utilitarian code of law. He not only proposed many legal and social reforms, but also expounded an underlying moral principle on which they should be based. This philosophy of utilitarianism took for its "fundamental axiom", *it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong*.^[32] Bentham claimed to have borrowed this concept from the writings of Joseph Priestley,^[33] although the closest that Priestley in fact came to expressing it was in the form "the good and happiness of the members, that is the majority of the members of any state, is the great standard by which every thing relating to that state must finally be determined".^[34]

The "greatest happiness principle", or the principle of utility, forms the cornerstone of all Bentham's thought. By "happiness", he understood a predominance of "pleasure" over "pain". He wrote in *The Principles of Morals and Legislation*:



Bentham's auto-icon

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think ...^[35]

Bentham and Thomas Hobbes were the only major figures in the history of philosophy to endorse psychological egoism.^[36] As to religious values, however, while Hobbes was an avowed Anglican, Bentham was a determined opponent of religion. Crimmins observes: "Between 1809 and 1823 Jeremy Bentham carried out an exhaustive examination of religion with the declared aim of extirpating religious beliefs, even the idea of religion itself, from the minds of men."^[37]

Bentham suggested a procedure for estimating the moral status of any action, which he called the Hedonistic or felicific calculus. Utilitarianism was revised and expanded by Bentham's student John Stuart Mill. In Mill's hands, "Benthamism" became a major element in the liberal conception of state policy objectives.

In his exposition of the felicific calculus, Bentham proposed a classification of 12 pains and 14 pleasures, by which we might test the "happiness factor" of any action.^[38] Nonetheless, it should not be overlooked that Bentham's "hedonistic" theory (a term from J.J.C. Smart), unlike Mill's, is often criticized for lacking a principle of fairness embodied in a conception of justice. In *Bentham and the Common Law Tradition*, Gerald J. Postema states: "No moral concept suffers more at Bentham's hand than the concept of justice. There is no sustained, mature analysis of the notion..."^[39] Thus, some critics object, it would be acceptable to torture one person if this would produce an amount of happiness in other people outweighing the unhappiness of the tortured individual. However, as P. J. Kelly argued in *Utilitarianism and Distributive Justice: Jeremy Bentham and the Civil Law*, Bentham had a theory of justice that prevented such consequences. According to Kelly, for Bentham the law "provides the basic framework of social interaction by delimiting spheres of personal inviolability within which individuals can form and pursue their own conceptions of well-being".^[40] It provides security, a precondition for the formation of expectations. As the hedonic calculus shows "expectation utilities" to be much higher than natural ones, it follows that Bentham does not favour the sacrifice of a few to the benefit of the many.

Bentham's *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* focuses on the principle of utility and how this view of morality ties into legislative practices. His principle of utility regards "good" as that which produces the greatest amount of pleasure and the minimum amount of pain and "evil" as that which produces the most pain without the pleasure. This concept of pleasure and pain is defined by Bentham as physical as well as spiritual. Bentham writes about this principle as it manifests itself within the legislation of a society. He lays down a set of criteria for measuring the extent of pain or pleasure that a certain decision will create.

The criteria are divided into the categories of intensity, duration, certainty, proximity, productiveness, purity, and extent. Using these measurements, he reviews the concept of punishment and when it should be used as far as whether a punishment will create more pleasure or more pain for a society. He calls for legislators to determine whether punishment creates an even more evil offence. Instead of suppressing the evil acts, Bentham argues that certain unnecessary laws and punishments could ultimately lead to new and more dangerous vices than those being punished to begin with, and calls upon legislators to measure the pleasures and pains associated with any legislation and to form laws in order to create the greatest good for the greatest number. He argues that the concept of the individual pursuing his or her own happiness cannot be necessarily declared "right", because often these individual pursuits can lead to greater pain and less pleasure for a society as a whole. Therefore, the legislation of a society is vital to maintain the maximum pleasure and the minimum degree of pain for the greatest number of people.

Economics

Bentham's opinions about monetary economics were completely different from those of David Ricardo; however, they had some similarities to those of Henry Thornton. He focused on monetary expansion as a means of helping to create full employment. He was also aware of the relevance of forced saving, propensity to consume, the saving-investment relationship, and other matters that form the content of modern income and employment analysis. His monetary view was close to the fundamental concepts employed in his model of utilitarian decision making. His work is considered to be an early precursor of modern welfare economics.

Bentham stated that pleasures and pains can be ranked according to their value or "dimension" such as intensity, duration, certainty of a pleasure or a pain. He was concerned with maxima and minima of pleasures and pains; and they set a precedent for the future employment of the maximisation principle in the economics of the consumer, the firm and the search for an optimum in welfare economics.^[41]

Law reform

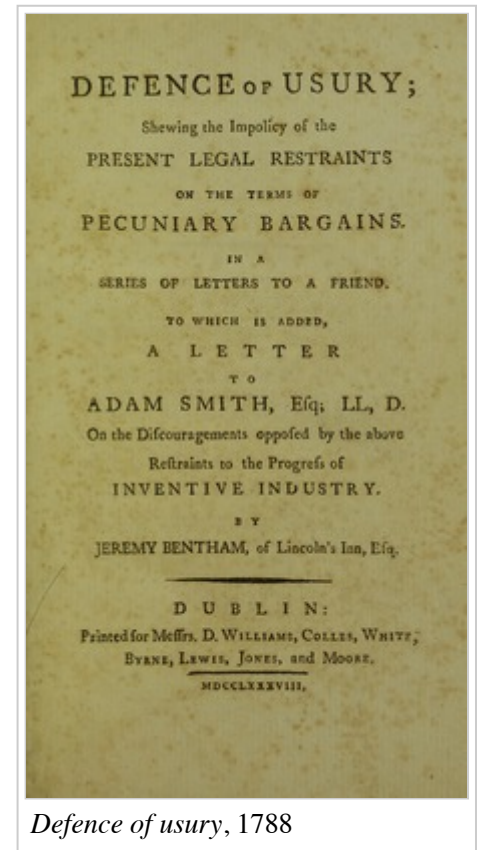
Bentham was the first person to aggressively advocate for the codification of *all* of the common law into a coherent set of statutes; he was actually the person who coined the verb "to codify" to refer to the process of drafting a legal code.^[42] He lobbied hard for the formation of codification commissions in both England and the United States, and went so far as to write to President James Madison in 1811 to volunteer to write a complete legal code for the young country. After he learned more about American law and realized that most of it was state-based, he promptly wrote to the governors of every single state with the same offer.

During his lifetime, Bentham's codification efforts were completely unsuccessful. Even today, they have been completely rejected by almost every common law jurisdiction, including England. However, his writings on the subject laid the foundation for the moderately successful codification work of David Dudley Field II in the United States a generation later.^[42]

Animal rights

Bentham is widely regarded as one of the earliest proponents of animal rights, and has even been hailed as "the first patron saint of animal rights".^[43] He argued that the ability to suffer, not the ability to reason, should be the benchmark, or what he called the "insuperable line". If reason alone were the criterion by which we judge who ought to have rights, human infants and adults with certain forms of disability might fall short, too.^[44] In 1789, alluding to the limited degree of legal protection afforded to slaves in the French West Indies by the Code Noir, he wrote:

The day has been, I am sad to say in many places it is not yet past, in which the greater part of the species, under the denomination of slaves, have been treated by the law exactly upon the same footing, as, in England for example, the inferior races of animals are still. The day *may* come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by



Defence of usury, 1788

the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognised that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum* are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog, is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor, Can they *talk*? but, Can they *suffer*?^[45]

Earlier in that paragraph, Bentham makes clear that he accepted that animals could be killed for food, or in defence of human life, provided that the animal was not made to suffer unnecessarily. Bentham did not object to medical experiments on animals, providing that the experiments had in mind a particular goal of benefit to humanity, and had a reasonable chance of achieving that goal. He wrote that otherwise he had a "decided and insuperable objection" to causing pain to animals, in part because of the harmful effects such practices might have on human beings. In a letter to the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* in March 1825, he wrote:

I never have seen, nor ever can see, any objection to the putting of dogs and other inferior animals to pain, in the way of medical experiment, when that experiment has a determinate object, beneficial to mankind, accompanied with a fair prospect of the accomplishment of it. But I have a decided and insuperable objection to the putting of them to pain without any such view. To my apprehension, every act by which, without prospect of preponderant good, pain is knowingly and willingly produced in any being whatsoever, is an act of cruelty; and, like other bad habits, the more the correspondent habit is indulged in, the stronger it grows, and the more frequently productive of its bad fruit. I am unable to comprehend how it should be, that to him to whom it is a matter of amusement to see a dog or a horse suffer, it should not be matter of like amusement to see a man suffer; seeing, as I do, how much more morality as well as intelligence, an adult quadruped of those and many other species has in him, than any biped has for some months after he has been brought into existence; nor does it appear to me how it should be, that a person to whom the production of pain, either in the one or in the other instance, is a source of amusement, would scruple to give himself that amusement when he could do so under an assurance of impunity.^[46]

Gender and sexuality

Bentham said that it was the placing of women in a legally inferior position that made him choose, at the age of eleven, the career of a reformist.^[47] Bentham spoke for a complete equality between sexes.

The essay *Offences Against One's Self*,^[48] argued for the liberalisation of laws prohibiting homosexual sex.^[49] The essay remained unpublished during his lifetime for fear of offending public morality. It was published for the first time in 1931.^[50] Bentham does not believe homosexual acts to be unnatural, describing them merely as "irregularities of the venereal appetite". The essay chastises the society of the time for making a disproportionate response to what Bentham appears to consider a largely private offence – public displays or forced acts being dealt with rightly by other laws. When the essay was published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* in 1978, the "Abstract" stated that Bentham's essay was the "first known argument for homosexual law reform in England".^[51]

Privacy

For Bentham, transparency had moral value. For example, journalism puts power-holders under moral scrutiny. However, Bentham wanted such transparency to apply to everyone. This he describes by picturing the world as a gymnasium in which each "gesture, every turn of limb or feature, in those whose motions have a visible impact on the general happiness, will be noticed and marked down".^[52] He considered both surveillance and transparency to be useful ways of generating understanding and improvements for people's lives.^[53]

Fictional entities

Bentham distinguished among fictional entities what he called "fabulous entities" like Prince Hamlet or a centaur, from what he termed "fictitious entities", or necessary objects of discourse, similar to Kant's categories,^[54] such as nature, custom, or the social contract.^[55]

Bentham and University College London

Bentham is widely associated with the foundation in 1826 of London University (the institution that, in 1836, became University College London), though he was 78 years old when the University opened and played only an indirect role in its establishment. His direct involvement was limited to his buying a single £100 share in the new University, making him just one of over a thousand shareholders.^[56]

Bentham and his ideas can nonetheless be seen as having inspired several of the actual founders of the University. He strongly believed that education should be more widely available, particularly to those who were not wealthy or who did not belong to the established church; in Bentham's time, membership of the Church of England and the capacity to bear considerable expenses were required of students entering the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. As the University of London was the first in England to admit all, regardless of race, creed or political belief, it was largely consistent with Bentham's vision. There is some evidence that, from the sidelines, he played a "more than passive part" in the planning discussions for the new institution, although it is also apparent that "his interest was greater than his influence".^[56] He failed in his efforts to see his disciple John Bowring appointed professor of English or History, but he did oversee the appointment of another pupil, John Austin, as the first professor of Jurisprudence in 1829.

The more direct associations between Bentham and UCL – the College's custody of his Auto-icon (see above) and of the majority of his surviving papers – postdate his death by some years: the papers were donated in 1849, and the Auto-icon in 1850.

A large painting by Henry Tonks hanging in UCL's Flaxman Gallery depicts Bentham approving the plans of the new university, but it was executed in 1922 and the scene is entirely imaginary. Since 1959 (when the Bentham Committee was first established) UCL has hosted the Bentham Project, which is progressively publishing a definitive edition of Bentham's writings.

UCL now endeavours to acknowledge Bentham's influence on its foundation, while avoiding any suggestion of direct involvement, by describing him as its "spiritual founder".^[10]



Henry Tonks' imaginary scene of Bentham approving the building plans of London University

Bibliography

Bentham was an obsessive writer and reviser, but was constitutionally incapable, except on rare occasions, of bringing his work to completion and publication.^[57] Most of what appeared in print in his lifetime (see list of published works online)^[58] was prepared for publication by others. Several of his works first appeared in French translation, prepared for the press by Étienne Dumont, for example, *Theory of Legislation, Volume 2 (Principles of the Penal Code)* 1840, Weeks, Jordan, & Company. Boston. Some made their first appearance in English in the 1820s as a result of back-translation from Dumont's 1802 collection (and redaction) of Bentham's writing on civil and penal legislation.

Publications

Works published in Bentham's lifetime include:

- *Short Review of the Declaration* (<https://persistentenlightenment.wordpress.com/2014/07/03/of-rights-and-witches-benthams-critique-of-the-declaration-of-independence/>) (1776). An attack on the United States Declaration of Independence.^[61]
- *A Fragment on Government* (<http://www.ecn.bris.ac.uk/het/bentham/government.htm>) (1776).^[62] This was an unsparing criticism of some introductory passages relating to political theory in William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. The book, published anonymously, was well received and credited to some of the greatest minds of the time. Bentham disagreed with Blackstone's defence of judge-made law, his defence of legal fictions, his theological formulation of the doctrine of mixed government, his appeal to a social contract and his use of the vocabulary of natural law. Bentham's "Fragment" was only a small part of a *Commentary on the Commentaries*, which remained unpublished until the twentieth century.
- *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=278) (printed for publication 1780, published 1789).^{[63][64]}
- *Defence of Usury* (<http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/bentham/usury>) (1787).^[65] Bentham wrote a series of thirteen "Letters" addressed to Adam Smith, published in 1787 as *Defence of Usury*. Bentham's main argument against the restriction is that "projectors" generate positive externalities. G.K. Chesterton identified Bentham's essay on usury as the very beginning of the "modern world". Bentham's arguments were very influential. "Writers of eminence" moved to abolish the restriction, and repeal was achieved in stages and fully achieved in England in 1854. There is little evidence as to Smith's reaction. He did not revise the offending passages in *The Wealth of Nations*, but Smith made little or no substantial revisions after the third edition of 1784.^[66]
- *Essay on Political Tactics* (1791)^[67]
- *Emancipate your Colonies!* (1793)^[68]
- *Anarchical Fallacies* (http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1921#lf0872-02_head_411) (printed 1796, published 1816).^[69] An attack on the



Jeremy Bentham House in Bethnal Green, East London; a modernist apartment block named after the philosopher



The back of No. 19, York Street (1848). In 1651 John Milton moved into a "pretty garden-house" in Petty France. He lived there until the Restoration. Later it became No. 19 York Street, belonged to Jeremy Bentham (who for a time lived next door), was occupied successively by James Mill and William Hazlitt, and finally demolished in 1877.^{[59][60]}

Declaration of the Rights of Man decreed by the French Revolution, and critique of the natural rights philosophy underlying it.

- *Traité de législation civile et pénale* (1802, edited by Étienne Dumont. 3 vols)
- *Punishments and Rewards* (1811)
- *A Table of the Springs of Action* (1815)^[70]
- "Swear Not At All" (1817)
- *Parliamentary Reform Catechism* (1817)^[71]
- *Church-of-Englandism* (printed 1817, published 1818)^[72]
- *Elements of the Art of Packing* (<http://www.constitution.org/jb/packing.htm>) (1821)^[73]
- *The Influence of Natural Religion upon the Temporal Happiness of Mankind* (1822, written with George Grote and published under the pseudonym Philip Beauchamp)
- *Not Paul But Jesus* (1823, published under the pseudonym Gamaliel Smith)
- *Book of Fallacies* (1824)^[74]
- *A Treatise on Judicial Evidence* (1825)^[75]
- *Rationale of Judicial Evidence* (1827)^[76]

Posthumous publications

On his death, Bentham left manuscripts amounting to an estimated 30 million words, which are now largely held by UCL's Special Collections (c. 60,000 manuscript folios), and the British Library (c.15,000 folios).

Bowring (1838–43)

John Bowring, the young radical writer who had been Bentham's intimate friend and disciple, was appointed his literary executor and charged with the task of preparing a collected edition of his works. This appeared in 11 volumes in 1838–1843. Bowring based much of his edition on previously published texts (including those of Dumont) rather than Bentham's own manuscripts, and elected not to publish Bentham's works on religion at all. The edition was described by the *Edinburgh Review* on first publication as "incomplete, incorrect and ill-arranged", and has since been repeatedly criticised both for its omissions and for errors of detail; while Bowring's memoir of Bentham's life included in volumes 10 and 11 was described by Sir Leslie Stephen as "one of the worst biographies in the language".^[77] Nevertheless, Bowring's remained the standard edition of most of Bentham's writings for over a century, and is still only partially superseded: it includes such interesting writings on international^[78] relations as Bentham's *A Plan for an Universal and Perpetual Peace* written 1786–89, which forms part IV of the *Principles of International Law*.

Stark (1952–54)

In 1952–54, Werner Stark published a three-volume set, *Jeremy Bentham's Economic Writings*, in which he attempted to bring together all of Bentham's writings on economic matters, including both published and unpublished material. Although a significant achievement, the work is considered by scholars to be flawed in many points of detail,^[79] and a new edition of the economic writings is currently in preparation by the Bentham Project.

Bentham Project (1968–present)

In 1959, the Bentham Committee was established under the auspices of University College London with the aim of producing a definitive edition of Bentham's writings. It set up the Bentham Project^[80] to undertake the task, and the first volume in *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham* was published in 1968. The *Collected Works* are providing

many unpublished works, as well as much-improved texts of works already published. To date, 31 volumes have appeared; the complete edition is projected to run to around seventy.^[81]

To assist in this task, the Bentham papers at UCL are being digitised by crowdsourcing their transcription. Transcribe Bentham is an award-winning crowdsourced manuscript transcription project, run by University College London's Bentham Project,^[82] in partnership with UCL's UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, UCL Library Services, UCL Learning and Media Services, the University of London Computer Centre, and the online community. The project was launched in September 2010 and is making freely available, via a specially designed transcription interface, digital images of UCL's vast Bentham Papers collection – which runs to some 60,000 manuscript folios – to engage the public and recruit volunteers to help transcribe the material. Volunteer-produced transcripts will contribute to the Bentham Project's production of the new edition of *The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham*, and will be uploaded to UCL's digital Bentham Papers repository,^[83] widening access to the collection for all and ensuring its long-term preservation. Manuscripts can be viewed and transcribed by signing-up for a transcriber account at the Transcription Desk,^[84] via the Transcribe Bentham website.^[85]

Legacy

The Faculty of Laws at University College London occupies Bentham House, next to the main UCL campus.^[86]

Bentham's name was adopted by the Australian litigation funder IMF Limited to become Bentham IMF Limited on 28 November 2013, in recognition of Bentham being "among the first to support the utility of litigation funding".^[87]

Ivan Vazov, national poet and man of letters of Bulgaria (then recently liberated from Ottoman rule, but divided by the Treaty of Berlin) refers to Bentham in his 1881 poem "Дипломираните" (in English: "People with Diplomas").^[88]

See also

- List of civil rights leaders
- List of liberal theorists
- Philosophy of happiness
- Rule according to higher law
- Rule of law

Notes

1. "Ancestry of Jeremy Bentham - countyhistorian".
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