

The Conception of Freedom according to John Stuart Mill

In the essay *On Liberty*, considered one of the classics of liberalism, Mill defends the freedom of the individual against the usurping action from the State and the Society. Mill is especially attentive to forms a little subtle of intervention for the State and the Society in the private sphere of the individual and he yearns for the most individual freedom. For him the only justifying reason for an intervention in the individual life is the presence of a risk of damages to another person. Besides, only with sights to prevent damages to another one is that the society is legitimated or morally authorized to intervene, imposing restrictions to the individual freedom. The "Principle of the Freedom", to use Mill's expression, is not as simple as its author thought. Our objective will be, first, to look for circumscribing the concept of underlying freedom to the essay *On Liberty*. This makes us examine and search to elucidate the damage concept, since this concept is that, according to Mill, allows us to trace the border between the private sphere (in the scope of which the individual must be able to exert his freedom) and the public sphere submitted to restrictions or interventions from the State and the Society.

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