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Author	水野, 俊誠(Mizuno, Toshinari)
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J. S. Mill's higher pleasure

Toshinari MIZUNO

J. S. Mill's conception concerning the quality of pleasure includes two claims: (1) there is a quality difference between pleasures as pleasures. (2) Some of these are superior to others on grounds of quality. I have already considered how to understand the first claim in another paper. So in this paper I will consider how to understand the second claim, that is how to understand Mill's notion of higher pleasure.

I will criticize an interpretation of Mill's notion of higher pleasure that Mill's higher pleasures are the pleasures caused by the exercise of higher faculties such as intellect, emotion, imagination, and moral sentiment. Then I argue for a more appropriate interpretation: Mill's higher pleasures are best understood as pleasures taken in the development of individuality or maybe in flourishing in what one makes of oneself.