

## **Mill and Platonic Ideals of Public Life**

J. S. Mill was engaged with Plato early in life and at at least one important stage in his intellectual development. It is also very arguable that Mill's ideals for the self-conscious, moral, rational, intellectual in public life were very close to the Platonic ideals of his early and middle periods.

In this paper, I review Mill's early involvement with the Platonic corpus, and argue that the effect of that engagement was much more influential in Mill's moral/political ideals, and more generally for his moral point of view, than has been acknowledged, whether by Mill himself or by most commentators.

In this regard, I take issues with his self-characterization in a critical passage of the *Autobiography*. I also attempt to show that a reasonable grasp of his social/political philosophy will show it to be quite comparable to a very plausible rendering of the Platonic ideals. This perhaps, more than any other source, is the basis for Mill's shrinking away from those powerful Benthamite ideals in his mature life and in his mature moral point of view.

**Stanley Yake**