

British idealist responses to JS Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government*

It has long been recognised that many British idealists were torn in their appreciation of utilitarian metaethics and classical utilitarian liberalism. The idealists' attitude toward utilitarian constitutionalism has not received much comment however. In part this neglect has been due the obscurity of the texts in which the idealists discussed this issue. This paper examines this topic, assessing idealist responses to JS Mill's *Considerations on Representative Government*. It draws upon recently published writings of Thomas Hill Green and, in particular, Edward Caird. It is argued that, while Green and Caird found much to admire in Mill's *Considerations*, nevertheless they saw deep problems with his constitutional prescriptions firstly, regarding the social atomism which they believed it presupposed and, secondly, regarding the rather ambiguous trust that it placed in the respectable poor.

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