

## **Mill as Public Intellectual**

“Mill’s Contribution to English Charity Reform: Politics, Utility, and the Curtailment of Private Property in the Conflict over Foundations 1833-1869.”

Arguably, Mill’s early essay “Corporation and Church Property” (1833) became one of his most controversial contributions to fierce contemporary debates over the proper rapport between politics and property. This essay went through several editions quickly and catalyzed sharper public debate over the reform and public administration of British charitable organizations. Mill gave sustained attention to this momentous conflict over the correct institutional forms of English philanthropy and the greater regulation of charitable organizations by government. He returned to commentary on these subjects in his essay “Endowments” of 1869. Central to Mill’s reform proposal was his contention that government possessed an incontestable right to close and confiscate the assets of private philanthropies whose operations had become obsolete or corrupted by the passage of time. The paper I propose will examine in detail the origins and public impact of Mill’s charity essays. I will compare their arguments and contextualize them by reference to Mill’s place in a surging public dispute about proper internal administration and external supervision of privately endowed charities. To comprehend these noted essays better, it is important to know how Mill capitalized on pre-existing charity reform movements and expanded upon their objectives via journal and pamphlet media. The paper will draw upon and synthesize information from a variety of sources (Parliament debates, private correspondence, newspaper articles, and pamphlet counter-attacks by Mill’s adversaries) to show Mill’s stature as a public intellectual bidding to enlist wider constituencies and the state in the reform of British philanthropy.

Kevin C. **Robbins**