The philosophy of error and liberty of thought: J.S. Mill on logical fallacies

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.22329/il.v26i2.440

Keywords: John Stuart Mill, philosophy of error, fallacies, liberty of thought, truth, history of logic, Bacon, Socrates, Aristotle

Abstract

Most recent discussions of John Stuart Mill's System of Logic (1843) neglect the fifth book concerned with logical fallacies. Mill not only follows the revival of interest in the traditional Aristotelian doctrine of fallacies in Richard Whately and Augustus De Morgan, but he also develops new categories and an original analysis which enhance the study of fallacies within the context of what he calls 'the philosophy of error'. After an exploration of this approach, the essay relates the philosophy of error to the discussion of truth and error in chapter two of On Liberty (1859) concerned with freedom of thought and discussion. Drawing on Socratic and Baconian perspectives, Mill defends both the traditional study of logic against Jevons, Boole, De Morgan, and others, as well as the study of fallacies as the key to maintaining truth and its dissemination in numerous fields, such as science, morality, politics, and religion. In Mill's view the study of fallacies also liberates ordinary people to explore the truth and falsity of ideas and, as such, to participate in society and politics and develop themselves as progressive beings.
Start studying JS Mill Philosophy. Learn vocabulary, terms and more with flashcards, games and other study tools. Even if the silenced opinion is an error, it often contains a portion of truth, and the prevailing opinion rarely contains the whole truth. The collision of partial truths can supply the lack of truth in one opinion and the other. Groundless Reason (Prejudice). Even if the prevailing opinion is true, without confrontation with error few will grasp the grounds of their belief. Heartfelt Conviction Reason. Without confrontation with error the meaning of a doctrine is in danger of being lost or enfeebled, and the dogma will become a mere formal profession. Confrontation encourages the growth of r Philosophy Stack Exchange is a question and answer site for those interested in the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. It only takes a minute to sign up. Sign up to join this community. A rulebook for arguments by Anthony Weston has a chapter on fallacies and subchapter with a list of fallacies; in this book, the author indicates another book with a bigger list of fallacies: Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric by Howard Kahane. Another I know is The art of being right: 38 ways to win an argument by Arthur Schopenhauer, but I'm not sure if it's exactly what you're looking for. share | improve this answer |. Logical Fallacies. Definition of a 'Fallacy'. A misconception resulting from flaw in reasoning, or a trick or illusion in thoughts that often succeeds in obfuscating facts/truth. Fallacies marked by an * are more common. Formal. A formal fallacy is defined as an error that can be seen within the argument's form. Every formal fallacy is a non sequitur (or, an argument where the conclusion does not follow from the premise.) Most recent discussions of John Stuart Mill's System of Logic (1843) neglect the fifth book concerned with logical fallacies. Mill not only follows the revival of interest in the traditional Aristotelian doctrine of fallacies in Richard Whately and Augustus De Morgan, but he also develops new categories and an original analysis which enhance the study of fallacies within the context of what he calls 'the philosophy of error'. After an exploration of this approach, the essay relates the philosophy of error to the discussion of truth and error in chapter two of On Liberty (1859) concerned with f