

Bad attitude accompanied by contrived strawman agendas in attacks on factually objective criticisms: hate attacks on objective critics of eugenics pseudoscience tragedies (Godwin's law)

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ABSTRACT

According to Al Gore's testimony and books, if you are objectively critical of, for example, the similar positive feedback assumption which underpinned all 21 climate change exaggerations models of IPCC in 2007, you can be dismissed by analogy, by simply saying that incorrect Moon Landing Deniers or Holocaust Deniers are also critics. Likewise, if you want to point out how eugenics pseudoscience was not a harmless error in the gas chambers, people with this attitude problem against objective criticism can merely point out a specious argument called *Godwin's Law*, simply the abuse dished out on those warning of Hitler in the 1930s, by so-called pacifists including Professor Cyril Joad on Winston Churchill and other critics of appeasement in the 1930s; attacks which resulted not in peace, but in war. The objective of this paper is to examine how you can tell apart objective fact based science from pseudoscience. The key is to examine the *attitude* towards *objective criticism*. A useful summary was published in John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, which was condensed in 1944, after the 1930s appeasement fiasco in Britain, by Sir Basil Henry Liddell-Hart, in *Why Don't We Learn From History*:

"If a man reads or hears a criticism of anything in which he has an interest, watch ... if he shows concern with any question except 'is it true?' he thereby reveals that his own attitude is unscientific. Likewise if ... he judges an idea not on its merits but with reference to the author of it; if he criticizes it as 'heresy'; if he argues that authority must be right because it is authority ... The path of truth is paved with critical doubt, and lighted by the spirit of objective enquiry... the majority of people have resented what seems in retrospect to have been purely matter of fact ... nothing has aided the persistence of falsehood, and the evils resulting from it, more than the unwillingness of good people to admit the truth ... the tendency continues to be shocked by natural comment, and to hold certain things too 'sacred' to think about. ... How rarely does one meet anyone whose first reaction to anything is to ask: 'is it true?' Yet, unless that is a man's natural reaction, it shows that truth is not uppermost in his mind, and unless it is, true progress is unlikely."

- Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Why Don't We Learn from History?*, PEN Books, 1944; revised edition, Allen and Unwin, 1972.

Mill's definition of truthful, factual objectivity in *On Liberty*

Freedom of factual criticism in objective science, versus subjective opinion or fashionable dogma, is made *very* clear in John Stuart Mill's classic, *On Liberty*:

"There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true, because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation." — John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*.

This is the key problem of Edward Witten's claim 1996 that no credible alternatives exist to string theory's failed "prediction" of quantum gravity: see Witten's claim shown in Figure 32 on p 40 of our 2011 paper, located at: <http://vixra.org/abs/1111.0111>. (That paper *proves Witten's claims wrong*.)

"Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil: there is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides; it is when they attend only to one that errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth, by being exaggerated into falsehood." — John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*.

Thus, Edward Witten's 16 November 2006 letter in *Nature* v. 444, p. 265, *advised string theorists not to directly engage in discussions about their use of elitist power to suppress dissent for fear of fuelling discussion*: "A direct response may just add fuel to controversies. Critics, who are often prepared to devote immense energies to their efforts, can thrive on the resulting 'he said, she said' situation."

“In general, opinions contrary to those commonly received can only obtain a hearing by studied moderation of language, and the most cautious avoidance of unnecessary offence, from which they hardly ever deviate even in a slight degree without losing ground: while unmeasured vituperation employed on the side of the prevailing opinion, really does deter people from professing contrary opinions, and from listening to those who profess them.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*.

“First, if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility. Secondly, though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of the truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“To call any proposition certain, while there is any one who would deny its certainty if permitted, but who is not permitted, is to assume that we ourselves, and those who agree with us, are the judges of certainty, and judges without hearing the other side.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“In the case of any person whose judgment is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so? Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by as much of it as was just ... the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this; nor is it in the nature of human intellect to become wise in any other manner.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The assumption that we are infallible can we justify the suppression of opinions we think false. Ages are as fallible as individuals, every age having held many opinions which subsequent ages have deemed not only false but absurd.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough: there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling ...”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“A general State education is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another ... in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a despotism ... An education established and controlled by the State should only exist, if it exist at all, as one among many competing experiments, carried on for the purpose of example and stimulus, to keep the others up to a certain standard of excellence.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“All silencing of discussion is an assumption of infallibility.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“What the State can usefully do is to make itself a central depository, and active circulator and diffuser, of the experience resulting from many trials. Its business is to enable each experimentalist to benefit by the experiments of others, instead of tolerating no experiments but its own.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The human faculties of perception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice. He who does anything because it is the custom, makes no choice.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion. ... Nor is it enough that he should hear the opinions of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. ... he must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think ...”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Every man who says frankly and fully what he thinks is so far doing a public service. We should be grateful to him for attacking most unsparingly our most cherished opinions.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“In this age, the mere example of non-conformity, the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigor, and moral courage which it contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of the time.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental or spiritual. Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves, than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Even despotism does not produce its worst effects, so long as individuality exists under it; and whatever crushes individuality is despotism, by whatever name it may be called ...”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“It is not because men’s desires are strong that they act ill; it is because their consciences are weak.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“A person whose desires and impulses are his own—are the expression of his own nature, as it has been developed and modified by his own culture—is said to have a character. One whose desires and impulses are not his own, has no character, no more than a steam-engine has character ...”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Society can and does execute its own mandates: and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with it ought not to meddle, it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“There are many who consider as an injury to themselves any conduct which they have a distaste for, and resent it as an outrage ... But there is no parity between the feeling of a person for his own opinion, and the feeling of another who is offended at his holding it; no more than between the desire of a thief to take a purse, and the desire of the right owner to keep it. ... It is easy for any one to imagine an ideal public, which leaves the freedom and choice of individuals in all uncertain matters undisturbed, and only requires them to abstain from modes of conduct which universal experience has condemned. But where has there been seen a public which set any such limit to its censorship? ... In its interferences with personal conduct it is seldom thinking of anything but the enormity of acting or feeling differently from itself; and this standard of judgment, thinly disguised, is held up to mankind as the dictate of religion and philosophy, by nine tenths of all moralists and speculative writers. These teach that things are right because they are right; because we feel them to be so. They tell us to search in our own minds and hearts for laws of conduct binding on ourselves and on all others. What can the poor public do but apply these instructions, and make their own personal feelings of good and evil, if they are tolerably unanimous in them, obligatory on all the world?”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Persons of genius, it is true, are, and are always likely to be, a small minority; but in order to have them, it is necessary to preserve the soil in which they grow.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Persons of genius are, *ex vi termini*, more individual than any other people - less capable, consequently, of fitting themselves, without hurtful compression, into any of the small number of moulds which society provides in order to save its members the trouble of forming their character.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Originality is the one thing which unoriginal minds cannot feel the use of. They cannot see what it is to do for them: how should they? If they could see what it would do for them, it would not be originality.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“... the general or prevailing opinion in any subject is rarely or never the whole truth; it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“If there are any persons who contest a received opinion, or who will do so if law or opinion will let them, let us thank them for it, open our minds to listen to them, and rejoice that there is some one to do for us what we otherwise ought, if we have any regard for either the certainty or the vitality of our convictions, to do with much greater labor for ourselves.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Truth, in the great practical concerns of life, is so much a question of the reconciling and combining of opposites, that very few have minds sufficiently capacious and impartial to make the adjustment with an approach to correctness, and it has to be made by the rough process of a struggle between combatants fighting under hostile banners.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Their conclusion may be true, but it might be false for anything they know: they have never thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them, and considered what such persons may have to say; and consequently they do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“When there are persons to be found, who form an exception to the apparent unanimity of the world on any subject, even if the world is in the right, it is always probable that dissentients have something worth hearing to say for themselves, and that truth would lose something by their silence.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

This last quotation really is the root cause of wars, when bigoted dogma by the democratic majority censors out the views and facts of minority opponents, causing wars. This censorship mindset of bigoted democratic “might is right” dictators is the error made by Hitler and Stalin, but instead of recognising that it is wrong and needs to be replaced by more open debate and less censorship, the “when in a hole, keep digging” mindset insists that if censorship is not working, we need more of it, not less. This is what happened when conventional weapons failed in Vietnam.

“In countries of more advanced civilisation and of a more insurrectionary spirit, the public, accustomed to expect everything to be done for them by the State, or at least to do nothing for themselves without asking from the State not only leave to do it, but even how it is to be done, naturally hold the State responsible for all evil which befalls them, and when the evil exceeds their amount of patience, they rise against the government and make what is called a revolution; whereupon somebody else, with or without legitimate authority from the nation, vaults into the seat, issues his orders to the bureaucracy, and everything goes on much as it did before; the bureaucracy being unchanged, and nobody else being capable of taking their place. A very different spectacle is exhibited among a people accustomed to transact their own business.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The *people* who exercise the power are not always the same people with those over whom it is exercised; and the *self-government* spoken of is not the government of each by himself, but of each by all the rest. The will of the people, moreover, practically means, the will of the most numerous or the most active part of the people; the majority, or those who succeed in making themselves accepted as the majority: the people, consequently, may desire to oppress a part of their number; and precautions are as much needed against this, as against any other abuse of power.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Truth gains more even by the errors of one who, with due study and preparation, thinks for himself, than by the true opinions of those who only hold them because they do not suffer themselves to think.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“All errors which he is likely to commit against advice and warning, are far outweighed by the evil of allowing others to constrain him to what they deem his good.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Society can and does execute its own mandates: and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it practises a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“In many cases, though individuals may not do the particular thing so well, on the average, as the officers of government, it is nevertheless desirable that it should be done by them, rather than by the government, as a means to their own mental education—a mode of strengthening their active faculties, exercising their judgment, and giving them a familiar knowledge of the subjects with which they are thus left to deal.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Government operations tend to be everywhere alike. With individuals and voluntary associations, on the contrary, there are varied experiments, and endless diversity of experience.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“Where there is a tacit convention that principles are not to be disputed; where the discussion of the greatest questions which can occupy humanity is considered to be closed, we cannot hope to find that generally high scale of mental activity which has made some periods of history so remarkable.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

“The beliefs which we have the most warrant for have no safeguard, but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded.”

— John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*