

Student Essay on John Stuart Mill's on Thought

John Stuart Mill's on Thought by John Stuart Mill

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Contents

Student Essay on John Stuart Mill's on Thought.....	1
Contents.....	2
Essay.....	3

Essay

Freedom of thought and speech was something that John Stuart Mill held in high regard. In his essay *On Liberty* Mill gives reasons why he believes silencing people's opinions, even if there is only one person with a particular opinion, is an illegitimate action. Mill believes that freedom of thought and speech are very important in order to keep alive possible truths, spur debates, understand the meaning of an opinion and increase reasonability. Mill believes that freedom of thought and speech are essential in keeping the majority from silencing the minority because "we can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is a false opinion." (p 16) It is important to Mill that people realize their opinion could be wrong and keeping an opposing viewpoint alive lends itself to that possibility. Next, Mill believes having freedom of thought and speech will bring people to debate their truths and understand where they come from. If a truth is simply a truth and there is no opinion against it then there is no reason to justify why you believe what you do. A debate of opposing opinions forces people to really understand why they believe something as true. Lastly, Mill believes that the freedom of thought should be kept alive for the fact that each truth could be partially false and each fallacy could be partially true. This idea keeps people reasonable, such as the case in politics. Mill thinks that truth is never a full truth, but simply one partial truth substituted for a more suitable partial truth.