

Psychologism in the logic of John Stuart Mill:
Mill on the subject matter and foundations of ratiocinative logic

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the question of whether Mill's account of the nature and justificatory foundations of deductive logic is psychologistic. Logical psychologism asserts the dependency of logic on psychology. Frequently, this dependency arises as a result of a metaphysical thesis asserting the psychological nature of subject matter of logic. A study of Mill's *System of Logic* and his *Examination* reveals that Mill held an equivocal view of the subject matter of logic, sometimes treating it as a set of psychological processes and at other times as the objects of those processes. The consequences of each of these views upon the justificatory foundations of logic are explored. The paper concludes that, despite his providing logic with a prescriptive function, and despite his avoidance of conceptualism, Mill's theory fails to provide deductive logic with a justificatory foundation that is independent of psychology.

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