

John Stuart Mill's theory of thought and speech

Freedom of speech has its origins in liberalism from Great Britain and the United States. The first claims for a free exchange of ideas started in the 17th century, with John Milton's *Areopagitica*. In 1791, freedom of speech was included in the Constitution of the United States, whose First Amendment declared: "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press". This study focuses on the specific contribution to freedom of speech made by the English utilitarian John Stuart Mill. Firstly, his work *On Liberty* is discussed bearing in mind the philosophical movement to which the author belongs. John Stuart Mill's theory of thought and speech is related to his moral and political philosophy, that is, to the utilitarianism supported by his father, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham. Secondly, this paper seeks to illustrate Mill's influence on the American realist Oliver Wendell Holmes and his judicial opinions on the "free marketplace of ideas", which were introduced at the beginning of 20th century. This approach makes it possible to show both authors liberalize the concept of freedom of speech and consider that its foundations are, basically, the discovery of truth along with individual self-development.

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