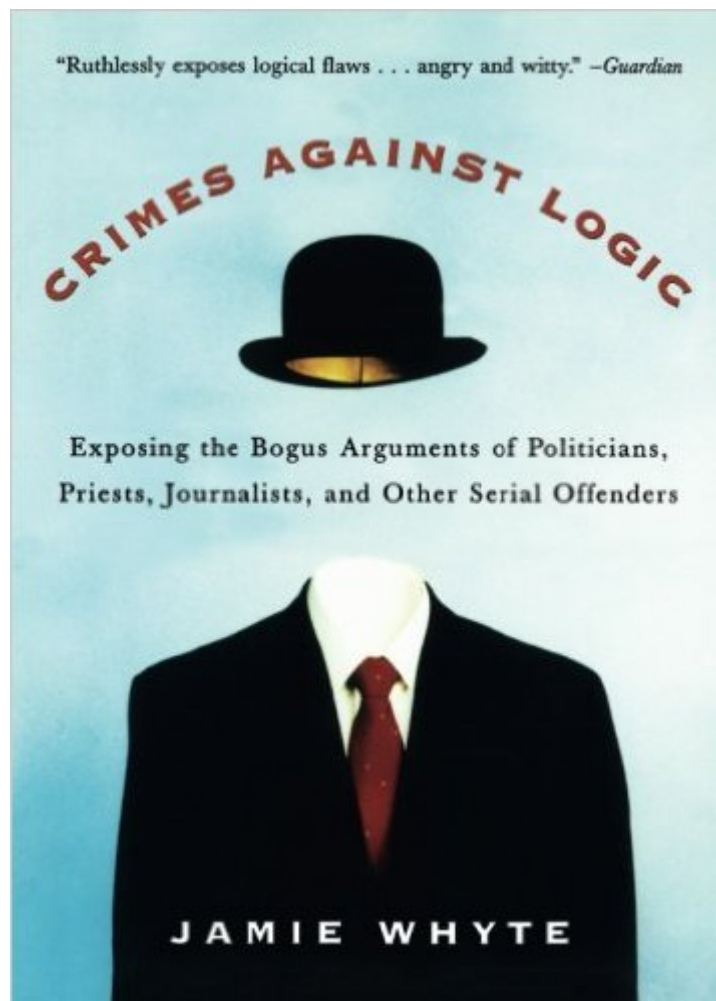


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Crimes Against Logic: Exposing The Bogus Arguments Of Politicians, Priests, Journalists, And Other Serial Offenders



Synopsis

Uncover the truth under all the BS In the daily battle for our hearts and minds--not to mention our hard-earned cash--the truth is usually the first casualty. It's time we learned how to see through the rhetoric, faulty reasoning, and misinformation that we're subjected to from morning to night by talk-radio hosts, op-ed columnists, advertisers, self-help gurus, business "thinkers," and, of course, politicians. And no one is better equipped to show us how than award-winning philosopher Jamie Whyte. In *Crimes Against Logic* Whyte take us on a fast-paced, ruthlessly funny romp through the mulligan stew of can, folderol, and bogus logic served up in the media, at the office, and even in your own home. Applying his laserlike wit to dozens of timely examples, Whyte cuts through the haze of facts, figures, and double-talk and gets at the real truth behind what they're telling us. "An incisive philosopher."--Sunday Telegraph

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Customer Reviews

This book deserves the widest possible exposure in America, especially so close to the election, because it an excellent primer on how to guard yourself against the faulty reasoning that governs so much modern political discourse - and avoid adopting it yourself. I first heard about the book because one of its points was mentioned in an essay. The point was basically that just because someone has a motive to hold a certain position doesn't necessarily mean that the position is false. This seemed pretty obvious, but as I turned to the media I was amazed at how often politicians use this method, and how easily I had accepted their claims if they lined up with my political preferences. Any damaging report against either side, for example, would frequently be denounced

as a "partisan" attack, with occasional documentation of how the person who presented the report was tied to one party or another, as if this were the issue at hand. No attempt was made to address whether the report was true or not, the assumption being that exposing a bias - a motive for the potentially false information - was conclusive evidence. Some of the things Whyte discussed in the book - for example, sample bias in statistics - are going to be familiar to many people, but just as frequently he comes up with something that all of us have probably used in an argument. For example, in the chapter "begging the question," he quotes a common pro-choice argument: "If you believe abortion is wrong, that's fine, don't abort your pregnancies. But show tolerance toward others who don't share your beliefs." He points out that this ignores that actual position of anti-abortionists, that abortion is murder, morally equivalent to killing a live human being.

There is much about this book that I like very much. Mr. White's ability to see the logical flaws in an argument is impressive and there are few things that would benefit this world more than if more people had the ability to see if they were being misled by their politicians, pundits and religious leaders. A serious reader of this book would certainly gain more tools in this difficult task. On the other hand, in my opinion this book does have one weakness: its dismissive tone. There is a subtle air of superiority that Mr. White projects in his prose that I find disheartening. Though he pays lip service to the fact that it can be very difficult to spot certain logical fallacies, particularly as we are bombarded by opinions disguised as fact 24 hours a day through the media, he does not seem very sympathetic to the fact that many people do try their best to work their way through the morass of opinions despite being hampered by media overkill, prominent positions demanding action, their own strongly held opinions and the lack of a prestigious education. Mr. White has much to teach but it is difficult to swallow when the student is made to feel small and foolish. I am particularly disappointed by Mr. White's dismissiveness towards religion. Though I agree completely with his assertion that religious tenets (like the existence of God, etc.) cannot be proved logically and that many religious leaders misuse logic severely, I do not agree that this is sufficient to dismiss religious experience out of hand. Granted, I am a person of religious belief, but I am also a mathematician and I would argue that there are things that are true that cannot be proved. But I'm sure Mr. White, chuckling sadly and looking down his nose at me, would disagree.

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