

# The Fallacy Fallacy

Nobody asked but ...

We might even call this fallacy the Facebook Fallacy. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. One will frequently see another person post in a thread on Facebook, "That's an 'Appeal to Authority!'" or a citation of another logic fallacy. So what? An appeal to authority in form is not necessarily a fallacy. The content of the assertion may be true or false, or valuable or valueless, independently of whether the originator was an authority. All quotations offered for their ideas, if ascribed to a famous or recognizable person, are appeals to authority in form, but they may nevertheless carry truth or value regardless of the origin. "Thou shall not kill" has import in any context, quite separate from the origin. It also may be an appeal to authority in its place as one of the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, it may be a direct expression of authority in legislation and, by extension, in the criminal justice system. As with all fallacies, the claim of a fallacy does not render the object of the claim true or false. A fallacy only arises when the claim is made without supporting evidence. Sometimes the offer of evidence is withheld because there is none, or evidence to the contrary is substantial.

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