Fallibility's Value

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Abstract

Fallibilism is a concession to the permanent possibility of error. As a stance, it teeters between skepticism and dogmatism. 'I know but I might be wrong' seems to give assurance with one breath and take it away with the next. 'I know even though I might be wrong' seems to combine intellectual arrogance with mock modesty. I argue that fallibilism is properly a stance toward understanding, not knowledge. By sensitizing us to the possibility of error, it puts us in a position to assess the strength, stability and resiliency of the various commitments that constitute our understanding of a topic.