

## Re: Tautologies and Empirical Truth

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.cognitive/2004-10/0867.html>

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**From:** Stephen Harris ([cyberguard1048-usenet\\_at\\_yahoo.com](mailto:cyberguard1048-usenet_at_yahoo.com))

**Date:** 10/30/04

Date: Sat, 30 Oct 2004 06:06:43 GMT

"Stephen Harris" <[cyberguard1048-usenet@yahoo.com](mailto:cyberguard1048-usenet@yahoo.com)> wrote in message  
news:A6Ggd.36745\$QJ3.27084@newssvr21.news.prodigy.com...

>

> "Lester Zick" <[lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net)> wrote in message

> news:4181bedf.75193516@netnews.att.net...

>> On Wed, 27 Oct 2004 22:22:32 GMT, "Stephen Harris"

>> <[cyberguard1048-usenet@yahoo.com](mailto:cyberguard1048-usenet@yahoo.com)> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>>

>>>

>>>"Lester Zick" <[lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net)> wrote in message

>>>news:4180c3a7.71190262@netnews.att.net...

>>>> On Wed, 27 Oct 2004 17:04:19 -0400, Wolf Kirchmeir

>>>> <[wwolfkir@sympatico.ca](mailto:wwolfkir@sympatico.ca)> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>>>>

>>>>>Lester Zick wrote:

>>>>>

>>>>> Tautologies and Empirical Truth

>>>>> -----

>>>>>

>>>>> In a frank discussion with Wolf Kirchmeir yesterday concerning

>>>>> whether

>>>>> tautologies constitute empirical evidence he took occasion to remind

>>>>> me quite candidly that tautologies are always true. And the moral he

>>>>> drew from this was that tautological truths can't be empirical

>>>>> because

>>>>> empirical observations are always problematic and tautologies are

>>>>> not.

>>>>>

>>>>> Then I got to pondering. It seemed a shame to have something that was

>>>>> always true and not be able to draw some useful information from it.

>>>>> Here was this beacon of universal truth, and we had no use for it. I

>>>>> understood that philosophers and scientists consider tautologies

>>>>> useless despite their universal truth. However, I decided that the

>>>>> final chapter on usefulness of the tautology had yet to be written.

>>>>>

>>>>>"Always true" does not mean "universal truth."

>>>>>

>>>> *Aw, c'mon, Wolf, you're quibbling. If something is always true, it's true for all things everywhere at all times. If it's not true for all things everywhere, it's not true all the time. Totally irrelevant.*

>>>>

>>>> *Regards – Lester*

>>>

>>>*I am more sympathetic to Wolf's original point, which was something which is logically/tautologically true does not have an empirical*

>>>*(physical*

>>>*reality) implication. Of course if the premise is true about reality then*

>>>*the argument is called sound and then has an actual implication about*

>>>*reality, because you are essentially just stating a fact about reality.*

>>

>> *So statements about reality which are true constitutes a sound*

>> *argument? A mere statement doesn't constitute an argument at all.*

>>

>> *I can appreciate where your sympathies lie, Stephen, but where does*

>> *your reason lie?*

>>

>

> *Arguments are called valid if they are logically correct.*

> *Arguments are called sound if they are both valid and have a true premise.*

> *An argument consists of a premise and statements which follow to arrive at*

> *a*

> *conclusion.*

>

> *Rabbits are often white. (true premise)*

> *Some rabbits are pets for children. (supporting premise)*

> *Conclusion: Some pets for children are white.*

>

>>>*the argument is called sound and then has an actual implication about*

>>>*reality, because you are essentially just stating a fact about reality.*

>>

>

> *"Some pets for children are white." is a true statement about reality*

> *because it follows from the true premise "Rabbits are often white*

> *which is supported by "some rabbits are pets for children and leads*

> *to the true conclusion Some pets for children are white which is*

> *also a true statement about reality.*

>

> *Maybe you thought "argument" was meant to imply some type of dispute*

> *which has nothing much to do with a statement. An argument is a series*

> *of statements in logic without the implication of a dispute involved.*

>

> *My "reason lies" in being educated.*

>

Tautological means circular.

> *Rabbits are often white. (true premise)*

> *Some rabbits are pets for children. (supporting premise)*

> *Some pets for children are white.*

Some white pets for children are rabbits.