

Re: Tautologies and Empirical Truth

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.cognitive/2004-10/0883.html>

From: Lester Zick (lesterDELzick_at_worldnet.att.net)

Date: 10/30/04

Date: Sat, 30 Oct 2004 15:45:44 GMT

On Sat, 30 Oct 2004 06:01:05 GMT, "Stephen Harris"
<cyberguard1048-usenet@yahoo.com> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>
> "Lester Zick" <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> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:
>>
>>>
>>> "Lester Zick" <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> 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.*

And my question concerned where your reason lies with respect to my true observations concerning tautologies and not your observations with respect to white rabbits and children's pets.

Regards – Lester