

Re: syllogism

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.logic/2004-10/0252.html>

From: Acme Diagnostics (*LFinezapthis_at_partpostmark.net*)

Date: 10/06/04

Date: 6 Oct 2004 01:52:06 -0500

lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net (Lester Zick) wrote:
>On 5 Oct 2004 07:41:11 -0500, "Acme Diagnostics"
><LFinezapthis@partpostmark.net> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:
>
>>Sorry I was vague, but didn't know your context. I was expecting
>>perhaps a real-life example, i.e. an actual example from your
>
>Acme, let me give you my real life take on analogical reasoning
>versus syllogistic inference <snip>

But we've already stated our respective dogmas on the ambiguity of language, and of middle terms. I then attempted to examine these using examples. I thanked you for one example which I analyzed somewhat, to which you did not respond. I presented several examples in my last post to which you did not respond; however I thank you again for your response to the "Snuffles" (contrived) example previous to that.

You previously stated (paraphrase) that you didn't like examples to make arguments, or similar. Unfortunately, I'm at the opposite extreme. I depend entirely on examples to validate philosophy and my philosophical activities have largely been devoted to gathering them.

In contrast, you continue with more dogma. The paragraphs start with an argumentative proposition, then continue as if that proposition was agreed to, and contain more argumentative propositions. That's why I call it dogma. IMO it does not rise to what I would call argumentation responsive enough to be productive for learning, though of course it has many other uses.

Thus, at this point, I feel we are just using one another's posts basically to make our speeches. I appreciate that, I do it a lot (as here <g>). It is necessary to have a starting point for analysis. But I've published my dogma enough. I instead need to learn through applying the dogma to experience to test it. That typically involves examples.

There remain a few statements of interest to me, which I'll comment on.

*>As noted previously, conclusions are invariably reached before
>premises. <snip>*

That was not agreed to. "Invariably" makes it a universal, easy to refute. Thus the remainder of the paragraph became moot.

*>No one under any circumstances in my estimation discovers
>anything syllogistically. <snip>*

It may be a minor avenue of discovery, but I have a lifetime of examples to refute that. Given the apparent problem with examples, we'll just have to agree to disagree.

*>Those who advance arguments first need to reach some conclusion
>via analogical reasoning but then demonstrate that conclusion by
>advancing subordinate premises demonstrating that conclusion. In
>other words, he needs to resolve the critical path supporting his
>basic conclusion.*

We agreed that that often happens, maybe usually happens. We made distinctions which are now missing, e.g. how accomplished reasoners are, who does that expecting successful results, subjects that have good empirical tests like battles as opposed to politics, etc. If our continuations do not include distinctions already agreed to, or if we are not responsive to determine agreement, then it is difficult to arrive at tests of our ideas.

<snip about "reality" or "what is real." – comment below>

*>(If you don't mind I'll skip most of the material below because
>it doesn't raise substantially different issues. If I miss
>something important, please put it back on the table.)*

Please excuse my snippage of material that I found not to raise substantive new issues as well. (Said with a grin – I hope you are not taking this too seriously. We've established basic philosophical differences, now we've just argued them too long. Time for a beer. <g>)

*>Believers, true believers, non believers, it's all the same to me.
>They all think and they all think in the same way mechanically.*

IMO, you must have an exotic definition of "think" to make that statement. Replacing that with "reasoning," true believers reason by faith. Others reason by logic and empirical facts. I've asked for a third choice many times, none has been forthcoming. Why I keep asking. But it seems you are saying there is no faith v.

logic or faith v. science distinction.

>>I gave two examples where words were not ambiguous. I have
>>designed and implemented inventory systems, though I didn't want
>>to introduce something with which all readers may not be familiar.
>>Anyway, syllogisms work spectacularly and there is no language
>>ambiguity (unreliability) problem. Having run three business, I
>>can report that language ambiguity is seldom a problem in that
>>activity (ignoring "purposely vague" as in lawyering). I've
>>talked to a person who held the Navy speed record for carrier
>>flight deck operations during a period of wartime and thus was
>>sent around the fleet to organize same. I asked him precisely
>>this question, exact quote: "Was there any problem with the
>>ambiguity of language?" His answer, again an exact quote,
>>"Absolutely not." (Then explained why, involving "The cost of
>>being wrong" and "Special words within a task.")
>
>Let me put the problem of word and concept ambiguity to you this
>way,

Sorry, that is not responsive but instead ignores those examples and introduces a new block of dogma which I snip for reasons stated.

>(By the way, the only way certainty in the
>military arises is through simplification and fiat. I should know
>[ref: Lester Zick, grad. U. S. Naval Academy, 1966]. It's how
>they can be wrong despite always being right.

That is an excellent credential. A *tough* job completed!
I don't know about certainty in the military, but I do know something about reliability. I asked the aforementioned expert how many carrier landings without a (serious) accident (peacetime) and he estimated 10,000. Don't know what it is today or when you went to school, but it is certainly some high number. That would be impossible if there was a problem of ambiguous terms in the incalculable number of syllogisms involved in that many landings that must work correctly. I will also use this example to refute any claim of the lack of an objective reality. If each person involved had different versions or reality, or even perception, or if there wasn't a common reality for all of them, those planes would be crashing all over the place.

True, the universe could have been created 5 minutes ago, or Usenet could be my delusion. All of logic is certainly a construct in the Great Scheme of Things, something that's been known for thousands of years (I'm told). That's useful for defining limits or boundaries. Beyond that, trying to define "Existence" is simply an unproductive use of thinking time. It may be fun to think about as evidenced by the threads in many groups, but I just don't have that time. I don't think our

technology on this planet is anywhere near that stage of technological development, assuming it ever will be. The extreme variety of guesses attendant to the "Drake Formula" thread just completed in rec.arts.sf.science evidences this, and that is confined to just **this** meta-universe. <g>

>>*Yes, in inventory, carrier operations (including high technology), or oil-spots in driveways, etc., those middle terms are explicit.*

>*Well, yes and no.*

What does that say? You continue on economics, but that is not included in the above list. I've already agreed in a previous post that economics as an area typified by the lack of good tests (mainly because all other things do not remain equal.) and thus subject to ambiguous terms (and other things). So your continuation next remains unresponsive.

>*People make middle terms explicit in economics, but they don't always make the right choice of middle term. Economics is one of those absolutely subjective realms of value where value is some objective measure of utility but no one can tell for certain just whose utility or what. That's why we need a free flow of capital to determine the most productive uses.*

You say economics is subjective, but then state a **highly** argumentative opinion as fact. You would get little but argument about that in most groups where that is usually discussed. Coupled with your "ambiguity of language" argument, you might be accused of holding that ambiguity of language is a problem only when others use it, not you. That is a well-known trap of unobjectivity. That is a well-known kook unfalsifiability device. One off-hand example doesn't evidence much, but nevertheless.

>>*and after-hours bullsessions talking with bartenders. The conversations are indeed insightful. However, I must say, conversations with hookers and strippers have been even more*

>*I also learned a lot about human nature playing pinochle in the park.*

Very good! I stand corrected. <g>

Thanks for your time, and nice to know you. I'm sure you have no more interest in continuing this discussion than I. But, as I always do, I will give you that last word in our discussion if you like. Good luck with your investigation into consciousness, mind, free will, etc.

Larry

Re: syllogism