

Abstract

Logic, Reasoning, and the Analysis of Questions

by

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I defend each of the following claims:

- 1) that the matter/form distinction will not do as a means of accounting for the subject matter of logic. It is generally assumed that it is possible to distinguish the subject matter of the logician from the subject matter of the reasoner by claiming that the logician is concerned only with the "form" and not the "matter" of reasoning. I show that if the logician attempts to use matter/form distinction for this purpose, it is not possible to explain how it is that inductive logic, modal logic and deontic logic are taken to be fields of logic.
- 2) that the concept of validation conditions for assertions and settlement-conditions for questions will do as a means of accounting for the subject matter of logic. In order to support this claim I
 - a) make clear in what sense it is reasonable to talk of assertions as having "validation-conditions",
 - b) make clear in what sense it is reasonable to talk of questions as having "settlement-conditions",
 - c) make clear in what way the validation-conditions for assertions relate to the settlement conditions for questions, and
 - d) make clear how it is that the concepts of validation-conditions for assertions and settlement-conditions for questions are relevant to a theory of

inference. This clarification paves the way for a recognition of the fact that the logician is already engaged in exploring the validation-conditions for certain classes of claims, though the use of the matter/form distinction and the truth/validity distinction obscures this fact.

3) that if logic is concerned to develop tools for the evaluation of reasoning and if reasoning consists in the attempt to support, justify, substantiate, or validate a claim by advancing evidence which bears upon that claim, then a) the truth/validity distinction and b) the deductive/inductive reasoning distinctions are misleading and oversimplified dichotomies which stand in the way of, rather than facilitate, the development of tools for the evaluation of reasoning.

4) that it is possible (though not ordinarily profitable) to cast any line of reasoning into "valid" deductive form. I claim that such a reconstruction of reasoning (or the possibility of such a reconstruction) bears little relation to both the problem of dividing reasoning up into types and the problem of evaluating reasoning (in the sense of determining whether the evidence advanced is both relevant and sufficient). Reasoning, it is claimed, is properly divided up into types, not upon the basis of whether or not "premises" entail a conclusion, nor upon whether or not evidence is conclusive or not, but rather upon the basis of the kind of claim that is made (and so upon the basis of the kind of validation-conditions which are relevant).

5) that the task of the logician (insofar as logic is concerned to develop tools for the analysis and evaluation of reasoning) is that of explicating the area of "the logic of language" which has been called "the logic of questions and assertions". I claim that there is an intimate relationship between meaning, validation, and proof, and that the intersection of these concepts comes in the assertion-making function of language. I argue that one cannot separate the tasks of clarifying precisely what a reasoner is claiming from the task of determining what is relevant to the substantiation of that claim, and so, that one cannot determine whether the evidence advanced is relevant and complete until one is clear as to what is relevant to the claim at issue, i.e., until one is clear as to the validation-conditions of the claim at issue.