

Introduction to Logical Reasoning

Lecture #7

Dispute Analysis

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Disputes: Beliefs and Attitudes

Disputes over beliefs (facts): When the parties disagree over what they take to be the *correct facts* of some given situation.

Disputes over attitudes (values): When the parties disagree in their *evaluations* or *prescriptions* for some given situation.

Of course, many disputes may involve disagreements over both beliefs (facts) and attitudes (values).

Disagreement 1

A: Key West, Florida is much more beautiful than Doha, Qatar.

B: No it isn't. Doha is way more beautiful.

Disputed statement: Key West is more beautiful than Doha.

Positions: **A** affirms this statement, whereas **B** rejects it.

Dispute type: This is best described as a dispute over *attitudes* concerning an *evaluation* of Key West: **A** is more positive about Key West than **B**.

Note: When a dispute is over attitudes, be clear whether the attitudes involve evaluations or prescriptions (or both), and what they are about.

Disagreement 2

A: You really should move to Key West, Florida.

B: No I shouldn't. I should stay right here in Doha.

Disputed statement: **B** should move to Key West.

Positions: **A** affirms this statement, whereas **B** rejects it.

Dispute type: This is best described as a dispute over *attitudes* concerning a *prescription* for **B**: **A** claims **B** should move, whereas **B** denies this.

Disagreement 3

A: Key West, Florida is further south than Doha, Qatar.

B: No, it is Doha that is further south.

Disputed statement: Doha is further south than Key West.

Positions: **A** denies this statement, whereas **B** affirms it.

Dispute type: This is best described as a dispute over *beliefs* concerning a simple geographic fact about the relative location of the two cities.

Note: When a dispute is over beliefs, be clear what facts are involved.

Analyzing a Dispute

Remember, a dispute is always about something!

This means that when analyzing a dispute, the first thing you do is clearly identify the statement that is in dispute. This is the statement that one party is affirming while the other party is denying it. It is the source, or crux, of the parties' disagreement.

With this statement identified, the dispute will be much easier to analyze because you can constantly refer back to that specific statement.

Disagreement 4

Analyze the following dispute:

A: Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

B: Out of sight, out of mind.

Disputes and Ambiguity

Merely verbal dispute: When the disagreement between the parties rests primarily on different understandings of a word or phrase. The conflict is resolved by having them agree on how they should use this word or phrase.

Disputes and Ambiguity

Obviously genuine dispute: There is a very real disagreement between the parties (either in belief or in attitude or in both), and it does not rest on any confusion concerning ambiguous words or phrases.

Disputes and Ambiguity

Apparently verbal but really genuine: There is some ambiguous word or phrase without a shared understanding, but resolving that ambiguity is not likely to settle a deeper, but all too real, disagreement (either in belief or in attitude or in both) between the parties.

Disagreement 5

A: Qatar is the most prosperous country in the world, just look at its GDP.

B: No, Qatar is not so prosperous. That GDP number is extremely inflated.

Disputed statement: Qatar is the most prosperous country.

Positions: **A** affirms this statement by appeal to GDP, whereas **B** rejects it by denying the veracity of that GDP figure.

Dispute type: This is best described as an *obviously genuine* dispute because there are no ambiguities. It is a dispute over *beliefs* concerning the economic facts about Qatar's GDP. This *may* also be a dispute over *attitudes* concerning an *evaluation* of Qatar: **A** approves of Qatar more than **B** does.

Disagreement 6

A: Qatar is the most prosperous country in the world, just look at its GDP.

B: No, it is not. The life expectancy of the average Qatari is lower than that of the average Albanian.

Disputed statement: Qatar is the most prosperous country in the world.

Positions: **A** affirms this statement by appeal to GDP, whereas **B** rejects it by appeal to life expectancy.

Dispute type: This is best described as *apparently verbal but really genuine*. There is a verbal dispute over the ambiguous word “prosperous”, which is used by **A** in the sense of *wealth* and by **B** in the sense of *health*. However, the real dispute here is over *attitudes* concerning an *evaluation* of Qatar: **A** approves of Qatar much more than **B** does.

Analyzing a Dispute

During a dispute, the parties may offer *reasons* or *evidence* (premises) in order to justify their respective positions (conclusions).

This means that when analyzing a dispute, you should consider any reasoning each party gives to justify their position concerning the disputed statement.

With the respective rationales of the parties identified, the dispute will be much easier to analyze because you can determine whether these reasons suggest whether an ambiguity is involved or not. These reasons may also help identify the type of any potential genuine disputes.

Disagreement 7

Analyze the following dispute:

A: Majnun lives a long way from campus. I walked out to see him yesterday and it took me three hours to get there!

B: No, Majnun doesn't live a long way from campus. I drove him home last night, and it took only ten minutes.

Disagreement 8

Analyze the following dispute:

A: The people who built the pyramids were slaves because they were forced to do the work.

B: No, they were not slaves. They were given food, clothing, and lodging while they worked.

Next Class...

We will have an in-class review session for **exam #1**.

The exam itself is this Thursday (September 19TH). It will cover the material from units #1 and #2. It will be in **lecture hall 1202** and begin promptly at 3:30PM. Show up and be seated by that time.

In the meantime, keep practicing this material!

Otherwise, please do not forget to turn in your response to the Lecture #7 Questionnaire on your way out.