

CRITICAL THINKING

Problem Set #4: Dispute Analysis

Although I strongly suggest that you write out answers to all these problems, you do not have to turn in any written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to do these types of problems, for questions on the weekly quizzes and exams will primarily be drawn from the problem sets. The solutions to these problems will be provided, so you can check your own work and seek help from me as necessary.

We will devote considerable time to these types of problems during the next in-class workshop. In order to make that workshop productive, please make a solid start on them. That way you can use the workshop to address the difficulties you are facing.

I have included an advanced logic puzzle for your own entertainment.

Instructions

Each of the following problems presents a dispute with two opposing viewpoints. For each, (1) indicate the disputed statement, (2) specify each disputant's position concerning that statement along with the reasons (if given) each offers to justify their respective positions, and (3) explain whether the dispute is primarily (A) obviously genuine, (B) merely verbal, or (C) apparently verbal but really genuine (it will only be *one* of these).

If it is type (A), then explain whether the dispute is over beliefs, attitudes, or both. If it is type (B), then indicate the ambiguous key word or phrase and explain how each disputant understands that key word or phrase differently. Or, if it is type (C), then indicate the ambiguity and explain why resolving that ambiguity is not likely to resolve the dispute, being clear to explain whether the dispute concerns beliefs, attitudes, or both.

Problems

- A.** "Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own conceit."
[Prov. 26:5]

B. "Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also be like unto him."
[Prov. 26:4]
- A.** "Our country: in her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong!"
[Stephen Decatur, toast at a dinner in Norfolk, Virginia, April 1816]

B. "Our country, right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right."
[Carl Schurz, speech in the U.S. Senate, January 1872]
- A.** "A bad peace is even worse than war."
[Tacitus, *Annals*]

B. "The most disadvantageous peace is better than the most just war."
[Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagia*, 1539]
- A.** A stitch in time saves nine.

B. Better late than never.
- A.** Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

B. Out of sight, out of mind.
- A.** "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."
[Eccl. 9:11]

B. "But that's the way to bet."
[Jimmy the Greek]
- A.** "For that some should rule and others be ruled is a thing not only necessary, but expedient; from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule. . . . It is clear, then, that some men are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right."
[Aristotle, *Politics*]

B. "If there are some who are slaves by nature, the reason is that men were made slaves against nature. Force made the first slaves, and slavery, by degrading and corrupting its victims, perpetuated their bondage."
[Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 1762]
- A.** "War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to face it."
[Benito Mussolini, *Encyclopedia Italiana*, 1932]

B. "War crushes with bloody heel all justice, all happiness, all that is Godlike in man. In our age there can be no peace that is not honorable; there can be no war that is not dishonorable."
[Charles Sumner, *Addresses on War*, 1904]
- A.** "Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained."
[James A. Garfield, 1880]

B. "Education is fatal to anyone with a spark of artistic feeling. Education should be confined to clerks, and even them it drives to drink. Will the world learn that we never learn anything that we did not know before?"
[George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man*, 1888]
- A.** "Belief in the existence of god is as groundless as it is useless. The world will never be happy until atheism is universal."
[J.O. La Mettrie, *L'Homme Machine*, 1865]

B. "Nearly all atheists on record have been men of extremely debauched and vile conduct."
[J.P. Smith, *Instructions on Christian Theology*]
- A.** "I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country than by improving its agriculture, its breed of useful animals, and other branches of a husbandman's cares."
[George Washington, letter to John Sinclair]

B. "With the introduction of agriculture mankind entered upon a long period of meanness, misery, and madness, from which they are only now being freed by the beneficent operations of the machine."
[Bertrand Russell, *The Conquest of Happiness*, 1930]
- A.** "Whenever there is, in any country, uncultivated land and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right."
[Thomas Jefferson]

B. "Every man has by nature the right to possess property of his own. This is one of the chief points of distinction between man and the lower animals."
[Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891]

Problem Set #4: Dispute Analysis (Continued)

13. **A.** "The right of revolution is an inherent one. When people are oppressed by their government, it is a natural right they enjoy to relieve themselves of the oppression, if they are strong enough, either by withdrawal from it, or by overthrowing it and substituting a government more acceptable."
[Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 1]
B. "Inciting to revolution is treason, not only against man, but against God."
[Pope Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, 1885]
14. **A.** "Language is the armory of the human mind; and at once contains the trophies of its past, and the weapons of its future conquests."
[Samuel Taylor Coleridge]
B. "Language—human language—after all, is little better than the croak and cackle of fowls, and other utterances of brute nature—sometimes not so adequate."
[Nathaniel Hawthorne, *American Notebooks*, 1835]
15. **A.** "How does it become a man to behave towards the American government today? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it."
[Henry David Thoreau, *An Essay on Civil Disobedience*, 1849]
B. "With all the imperfections of our present government, it is without comparison the best existing, or that ever did exist."
[Thomas Jefferson]
16. **DAYE:** Pete Rose was the greatest hitter in the history of baseball. He got more hits than any other major league player.
KNIGHT: No, Barry Bonds deserves that title. He hit more home runs than any other major league player.
17. **DAYE:** Despite their great age, the plays of Sophocles are enormously relevant today. They deal with eternally recurring problems and values such as love and sacrifice, the conflict of generations, life and death—as central today as they were over two thousand years ago.
KNIGHT: I don't agree with you at all. Sophocles has nothing to say about the pressing and immediate issues of our time: inflation, unemployment, the population explosion, and the energy crisis. He plays have no relevance to today.
18. **DAYE:** Bob Jones is certainly a wonderful father to his children. He provides a beautiful home in a fine neighborhood, buys them everything they need or want, and has made ample provision for their education.
KNIGHT: I don't think Bob Jones is a good father at all. He is so busy getting and spending that he has no time to be with his children. They hardly know him except as somebody who pays the bills.
19. **DAYE:** Amalgamated General Corporation's earnings were higher than ever last year, I see by reading their annual report.
KNIGHT: No, their earnings were really much lower than in the preceding year, and they have been cited by the Securities and Exchange Commission for issuing a false and misleading report.
20. **DAYE:** Business continues to be good for National Conglomerate, Inc. Their sales so far this year are 25 percent higher than they were at this time last year.
KNIGHT: No, their business is not so good now. Their profits so far this year are 30 percent lower than they were last year at this time.
21. **DAYE:** Ann is an excellent student. She takes a lively interest in everything and asks very intelligent questions in class.
KNIGHT: Ann is one of the worst students I've ever seen. She never gets her assignments in on time.
22. **DAYE:** Tom did it of his own free will. No pressure was brought to bear on him; no threats were made; no inducements were offered; there was no hint of force. He deliberated about it and made up his own mind.
KNIGHT: That is impossible. Nobody has free will, because everything anyone does is inevitably determined by heredity and environment according to inexorable causal laws of nature.
23. **DAYE:** Professor Graybeard is one of the most productive scholars at the university. The bibliography of his publications is longer than that of any of his colleagues.
KNIGHT: I wouldn't call him a productive scholar. He is a great teacher, but he has never produced any new ideas or discoveries in his entire career.
24. **DAYE:** Betty finally got rid of that old Chevy and bought herself a new car. She's driving a Buick now.
KNIGHT: No, Betty didn't buy herself a new car. That Buick is a good three years old.
25. **DAYE:** Dick finally got rid of that old Ford of his and bought himself a new car. He's driving a Pontiac now.
KNIGHT: No, Dick didn't buy himself a new car. It's his roommate's new Pontiac that he's driving.
26. **DAYE:** Helen lives a long way from campus. I walked out to see her the other day, and it took me nearly two hours to get there.
KNIGHT: No, Helen doesn't live such a long way from campus. I drove her home last night, and we reached her place in less than ten minutes.
27. **DAYE:** Senator Gray is a fine man and a genuine liberal. He votes for every progressive measure that comes before the legislature.
KNIGHT: He is no liberal, in my opinion. The old skinflint contributes less money to worthy causes than any other man in his income bracket.
28. **DAYE:** The University of Winnemac overemphasizes athletics, for it has the largest college stadium in the world and has constructed new sports buildings instead of badly needed classroom space.
KNIGHT: No, the University of Winnemac does not overemphasize athletics. Its academic standards are very high, and it sponsors a wide range of extracurricular activities for students in addition to its athletic program.
29. **DAYE:** It was in bad taste to serve roast beef at the banquet. There were Hindus present, and it is against their religion to eat beef.
KNIGHT: Bad taste, nothing! That was the tastiest meal I've had in a long time. I think it was delicious!
30. **DAYE:** Don't ask your wife about it. You ought to use your own judgment.
KNIGHT: I will use my own judgment, and in my judgment, I should ask my wife.

Note: There may a lot of exercises here. Do not feel obligated to do all of them. I often assign many exercises so that you have plenty of opportunities to practice the skills these exercises are trying to impart. I suggest doing just enough of them so that you are confident that you could use these skills on a quiz or an exam.

Problem Set #4: Dispute Analysis (Continued)

Logic Puzzle

Mr. Majnun likes to take his son and daughter to the shooting range to practice firing their guns at targets. Miss Ayah, who is Majnun's sister, likes to come along with them as well. The following statements are true of this group of four people:

1. One person out of these four is the best target-shooter.
2. One person out of these four is the worst target-shooter.
3. The best target-shooter and the worst-target shooter are the same age.
4. The best target-shooter's twin and the worst target-shooter are of the opposite.

Questions: Which two are the twins? Which one is the best target-shooter? Which one is the worst target-shooter?

These questions have definitive right answers that can be fully justified without any guessing.