

Philosophy 3304 Introduction to Logic
Logic and World Views

I. Thinking and Thinking About Thinking

A. Every human being thinks and thinks continually, but we do little thinking about our thinking.

B. Why do we do so little thinking about our thinking?

1. Thinking about our thinking will reveal who we really are and we don't want to know who we really are.

2. Thinking about our thinking is contrary to our primary nature as "sensual-perceptual beings" and thus requires a new set of skills

a. Analytical

b. Linguistic

c. Social

d. Logical

II. Background Logic

A. Manifest logic: the external part of thinking actually spoken or written

B. Background (hidden) logic: a large substructure of background thought upon which the lines of arguments and logic are based.

C. Background logic is often revealed by extended dialogue about an issue in which "each reasoner explores the conflicting background thinking surrounding the beliefs of the other"

1. Arguments that to one seems compelling the other finds weak

2. Most are largely unaware of the substructure of belief and thought that underlies what we overtly assert (manifest logic)

D. Reasons why background logic or beliefs are ignored:

1. Formal schooling did not teach us to explicate them

2. The myth of scientific objectivity precludes the bias of background logic

3. Favoring syllogistic reasoning over the Socratic method (or the scientific over the philosophical method for arriving at truth)

- a. The nature of the socratic method (informal, disputation, examination, etc.)
- b. The socratic method, like philosophy itself, is relegated to the periphery of life, is considered irrelevant, pedantic, and unintelligible, and consequently "the background logic of everyday beliefs and thought is rarely systematically explored."
- c. The decline of philosophy and the ascendancy of science with its refined, technical procedures, such that many philosophers attempt to establish a scientific method for philosophy.
- d. The alleged omniscient method of science has given way back to a philosophic method in the last 20 years because scientific training does not prepare one for most daily basic tasks, fragments education and life, leads to as much irrationality as non-schooling does.

e. On the positive side, or to the credit of the philosophic, socratic method, the ability to think comprehensively, which formal reasoning cannot do, is necessary for the crucial, complex problems we face in everyday life. But still, for the most part, today's schooling leaves little room for this and consequently:

"People leave school with few of the skills necessary to plumb the background logic of their own beliefs and thought, and so with few convictions, and little sense of the many contradictions that underlie their thoughts, words, and deeds. Most importantly, they lack the ability to strip off surface language and consider alternative ways to talk; little sense of what it would be to question basic labels and categories on the basis of which inferences and meanings are multiplied." 63

E. The consequent megaproblem of "UNCRITICAL THOUGHT"

1. Most people unconsciously internalize their worldviews of their peer group and society with no awareness of alternative ways of looking at things.
2. Utterances are accepted at face value or misunderstood.
3. Most people are uncritically submissive to daily social rituals and authority figures
4. Most reduce complex situations to the simplest aspects, do not know how to clarify and explain an issue, or sympathetically

understand points of view with which they disagree (instead, they dehumanize and resent ideological opponents).

5. Reasoning is infantile at best.

6. Teaching critical thinking to a rational society is one thing; teaching it to a society that thinks it is rational when in fact it is unconsciously irrational is another. In the latter, there is no impetus to probe beneath the surface of public discourse.

7. "When the most fundamental logical structures, the most basic concepts, assumptions, beliefs, inferences, and category-decisions are typically unexpressed, unconscious, and irrational, then the problem of background logic assumes new proportions and the language games implicit in everyday life are in need of a fundamental reconstrual." 64.

8. Such a society is not a free society, for even though it may think it has freely chosen its outlook, it has not. "People cannot be said to have freely chosen what they do not recognize to exist." 64.

III. Some Principles about Background Logic

A. The importance of world view: all human behavior is intelligible to us finally only in terms of background concepts, distinctions, values, meanings, associations, assumptions, purposes, and goals. This background or worldview is embedded in concrete forms of life (i.e., behavior, so Wittgenstein), is received through socialization, is mostly held unconsciously, and there is little encouragement to discover it.

B. The inconsistencies between worldviews and practice

C. Three important categories of background logic influence our point of view or worldview as individuals. Each of these languages are selectively internalized to define our philosophy, our world view, and constitute the filter through which we interpret or construct our experiences:

1. Natural languages such as English, French, German (Whorf hypothesis)

2. Technical languages (biology, zoology, anthropology, math, etc.)

3. Social languages (social practices that shape the meanings fostered in social situations, the sociocentric logic of our peer group or culture)

IV. Four Dimensions of Background Logic in Every Instance of Reasoning

- A. The dimension of our thinking temporally prior to what we have expressed. We decide on our purpose, and how to describe what is the central issue or problem. In other words, each act of thought presupposes some "pre-thinking."
- B. The dimension of our thinking logically presupposed by what we have expressed. Once we formulate our thinking, we must recognize that that thinking has been based upon foundational concepts and assumptions, a substructure. This is also called the "inner logic," or the "infralogical" constructs underlying opposing points of view (which are called "manifest logic").
- C. The dimension of our thinking implied by what we have expressed. Here we explore the (expressed or unexpressed) implications and consequences of what is said. There is a direction to our thought and ideas.
- D. The dimension of our thinking that is developed when our thinking is challenged. Any line of reasoning conflicts with other lines of reasoning. How might our thinking be defended or revised when challenged by others? What are the strengths and weaknesses of an argument? A point of view will not be fully understood or appreciated until it is challenged and even superceded by another.
- E. Analogy: these four domains of background logic can be compared to meeting a new person: we learn something of their prior lives, their deeper thoughts, where they are headed, how they respond to challenges from others.

V. Toward a Richer Understanding of Background Logic

- A. What is background logic in one situation may become manifest logic in another situation or context.
- B. An essential characteristic of the critical mind is its passion to penetrate, explicate, and assess competing background logics.
- C. There is no way to exhaustively formulate the full extent of your own or another's background logic (just as there is no way to describe all aspects of any one person).
- D. A taxonomy of background logic distinctions must be developed to distinguish finely between the background logics of technical languages, social languages, and natural languages.

E. Summary: We should be cognizant "of the extent to which we are reasoning within the technical concepts of a specialized discipline, within the concepts implicit in our cultural relationships and experience, or the concepts implicit in the natural languages we speak. Of course, our reasoning might use concepts from all three of these dimensions simultaneously. Critical thinking requires sensitivity to the conceptual problems that may arise from this blending of domains." 71

VI. Background Logic and Language Games

A. Every interpretation of language usage is a complex act in which we respond to cues that reflect three variously related background logics: that of the egocentric individual, that of the social group (the socio-centric mind), and that of the natural language itself.

1. Language games associated with the egocentric or individual mind. Idiosyncratic meanings may develop in our minds (as the psychoanalyst tries to discover) without our awareness of the development (e.g., the meanings of weight loss and food)

2. Language games associated with the social group which manifest at least two levels, the surface level and the hidden level. A business party might exemplify this arrangement, a party that looks like a social party on the surface, but is actually another business setting.

B. There are three modes of living that represent different values and different skills of analysis with respect to decoding language usage.

1. Naive idealizers, non-critical thinkers who tend to accept the ideology of their society as descriptive of reality.

2. Rationalizers who penetrate the surface level and identify meanings and pay-offs for selfish purposes.

3. True reasoners, the genuinely fair-minded, critical thinker who has a passion for social disclosure on the basis of an analysis of presuppositions underlying human interaction and experience and who use their critical skills for social justice purposes. In the final analysis, their activity is a moral one.

Conclusions:

Your World View and Your Life

- Unformulated but lived?

- Formulated but not lived?
- Formulated and lived?