

## IPFA09 - Argument summary 2

On the following pages, you'll find two short arguments in orange rectangles.

- (1) Put each argument into premise-conclusion form, using language as close as possible to the original author's. The goal here is to present the author's reasoning as *accurately* as possible. Your summary shouldn't need more than 8 steps.
- (2) If you feel that the original language is unclear or the author left out an important assumption, give an additional version of the argument, again in premise-conclusion form. The goal here is to present the author's reasoning as *clearly* as possible. Your summary shouldn't need more than 8 steps.

Email your summaries to me (dhicks1@nd.edu) as a Word (DOC or DOCX) file by 5pm on **Thursday, September 17**. You don't need to worry about the rules for turning in papers for this assignment.

I simply cannot believe that; I think that, on reflection, one can see that, purely in the abstract, the argument does not follow. What about probability, for instance? If it were *certain* that threatening some dreadful thing would prevent some great crime or suffering, would that really leave the threat as morally no better than the dreadful deed which I wouldn't need to perform? I am not suggesting that such certainty exists in the case of nuclear deterrence. The point is simply whether the argument works in the abstract.

In fact, the people who use the argument often do not seem to think that it does work purely in the abstract. Rather, they start to bring in various considerations about Russian intentions, about American crimes, about how tolerable conditions under communism are, and so on – which does show that other considerations make a difference. And if other considerations do make a difference, then the very short argument about the morality of deterrence can't be as good as it looks. That argument either settles the question very quickly, or it does not settle it at all. I think it doesn't settle it.

4

The following passage comes from St Augustine's *Confessions*. It is discussed in R. J. Fogelin's *Understanding Arguments*.

I turned my attention to the case of twins, who are generally born within a short time of each other. Whatever significance in the natural order the astrologers may attribute to this interval of time, it is too short to be appreciated by human observation and no allowance can be made for it in the charts which an astrologer has to consult in order to cast a true horoscope. His predictions, then, will not be true, because he would have consulted the same charts for both Esau and Jacob and would have made the same predictions for each of them, whereas it is a fact that the same things did not happen to them both. Therefore, either he would have been wrong in his predictions or, if his forecast was correct, he would not have predicted the same future for each. And yet he would have consulted the same chart in each case. This proves that if he had foretold the truth, it would have been by luck, not by skill.

we call Reason, is equally valueless if it is the result of causes. Hence every theory of the universe which makes the human mind a result of irrational causes is inadmissible, for it would be a proof that there are no such things as proofs. Which is nonsense.

But Naturalism, as commonly held, is precisely a theory of this sort. The mind, like every other particular thing or event, is supposed to be simply the product of the Total System. It is supposed to be that and nothing more, to have no power whatever of 'going on its own accord'. And the Total System is not supposed to be rational. All thoughts whatever are therefore the results of irrational causes, and nothing more than that.

## 8

Galileo's *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences* is full of neat arguments which provide excellent and instructive exercises for our purposes. Here is a short extract from *First Day*.

Aristotle declares that bodies of different weights, in the same medium, travel (in so far as their motion depends upon gravity) with speeds which are proportional to their weights, [assuming that they have the same shape]; . . . [but] if it were true that, in media of different densities and different resistances, such as water and air one and the same body moved in air more rapidly than in water, in proportion as the density of water is greater than that of air, then it would follow that any body which falls through air ought also to fall through water. But this conclusion is false

Is Aristotle's thesis refuted by this argument? (The reader will find that the original context draws out many lessons from this argument.)

## 9

In Chapter 8 we considered a remarkable argument taken from Galileo's *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*: if one assumes that the lighter a body is the faster it falls one gets a similar contradiction, so it follows that bodies of different mass must fall with the *same* acceleration. Here is another argument, this time from *Third Day*, which shows – if it is successful – that the velocity of a falling body *cannot be proportional to the distance fallen*.