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A problem in the one-fallacy theory

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Title: A Difficulty in the One Fallacy Theory

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In my One-Fallacy papers, I analyze the fallacy of incomplete evidence as resting on an equivocation on the relative term 'probable'.

I give the example: (Powers 1995 p. 299)

1. On Monday I go out and look at crows. All the crows I see are black.
2. I conclude that its probable that all crows are black.
3. On Tuesday I see a white crow in front of me.
4. I conclude that the crow in front of me is probably both black and white.

The problem is that 'all crows are black' is probable relative to Monday's evidence but is no longer probable on the new Tuesday evidence of the white crow.

So I reduce the fallacy of incomplete evidence to a fallacy of equivocation, in accord with my One Fallacy theory that says that all real fallacies are fallacies of equivocation, in the broad sense of fallacies that trade on some ambiguity or other.

And, according to me, reasoning from incomplete evidence is only a true fallacy if it is covered by the equivocation on 'probable' or some other similar equivocation.

For instance (leaving out the word 'probable' and supposing it is not unconsciously supplied by the reader).

1. I observe on Monday crows that are all black.
2. I conclude that all crows are black.
3. On Tuesday I see a white crow.
4. I conclude that the crow is both white and black.

This reasoning wouldn't be true fallacy but only a nakedly bad argument if the mistake of failing to reexamine statement 2 in the light of 3 were not covered by the ambiguity of 'probable', according to my theory.

For me then, naked reasoning from incomplete evidence is *not* a fallacy because though it is bad reasoning and so 'fallacious', it does not appear to

be good and so is not a *fallacy* in the true sense. I call it a 'mere stupidity'.

So, in my papers, I derive the fallacy of incomplete evidence from the fallacy of equivocation, and I regard naked reasoning from incomplete evidence to be merely bad argument and not true fallacy.

It is strange then to discover that in my dissertation, where I first developed the

One Fallacy theory, I actually explain the apparent validity of fallacies of equivocation in terms of underlying reasoning involving incomplete evidence, and since this underlying reasoning is explaining equivocation, it is itself naked, not covered by any equivocation.

This strange peculiarity is the germ of the difficulty I wish to discuss here. The difficulty breaks down into two parts.

The first part is that there is at least a sound of circularity in deriving the fallacy of incomplete evidence from the fallacy of equivocation and then turning around and explaining the fallacy of equivocation in terms of reasoning involving incomplete evidence. Of course, there is no real circularity if the reasoning underlying equivocation is not itself the *fallacy* of incomplete evidence. But it is hard to see how the naked incomplete evidence reasoning underlying equivocation could explain how the latter appears valid unless the former itself appears to establish that validity. And if the former, though actually bad reasoning, *appears* to establish something, then it must be a *fallacy*. So, after all, the basic fallacy wouldn't be equivocation, but naked reasoning from incomplete evidence. And then my One Fallacy theory would collapse into a different theory, which I call the disorganization theory of fallacy, in which the basic fallacy is (naked) incomplete evidence. But I don't want to hold that theory.

The second point of the difficulty arises if I somehow succeed in explaining how incomplete evidence can explain equivocation without itself being a true fallacy. So it is not a fallacy but it explains how real fallacies appear to be good arguments

But Sally Jackson (1995) has a theory of fallacy quite different from mine. I do not say her theory is wrong and mine is right, but rather her theory concerns a notion of fallacy much larger than mine. She is explaining mistakes people commonly fall into; I am looking for a narrower notion, more that of a sophism that a sophist might give. So, many of her 'fallacies' are not for me true fallacies.

But when she explains how her fallacies appear good, she uses reasoning from incomplete evidence as the explanation. She doesn't actually use the phrase 'incomplete evidence', but that is what it amounts to. This raises the difficulty that if she explains her fallacies in the same way I do, then how can I, in any *principled* way, say that her fallacies aren't really fallacies (in my sense), given that they are explained in the same way? And then my theory threatens to

collapse outward into hers. But her theory isn't the theory I'm trying to maintain.

Let me begin by explaining what happened in my thesis (Powers 1977) that got me into this problem.

I was trying to build a metaphilosophical theory. So I wanted to be able to discuss philosophical debate in an epistemological manner. Unfortunately, my epistemological terminology seemed to go awry.

I maintain that philosophy is basically a *deductive* enterprise. Philosophers support their views with arguments that they purport to be *proofs* of those views.

But I certainly wished to describe philosophy as a dialectical enterprise in which there are opposing views with opposed reasons for these views, and in which one view becomes better established because its pile of reasons becomes more weighty than the other side's pile of reasons.

But it seems that I cannot really give such a picture. Suppose one side is the right one and the other is wrong. Then all purported proofs of the second view must be fallacious and so give no reason at all for that view; they only appear to be reasons. That side has no reasons. Some of the arguments for the other side however may be correct. So they really do prove that view. So one view is proven and the other has no reasons. The discussion is over.

We are left with a picture of a mathematician with a theorem arguing with an irrational lunatic with no reasons at all, instead of a picture of a dialectical situation with reasons on both sides.

To avoid this disaster, I introduce a distinction between the concepts of 'reason' and 'rational' involved in the above discussion, which I call 'reason 1' and 'rationality 1' and another set of concepts, which I call 'reason 2' and 'rationality 2'.

From a rationality 2 viewpoint, a fallacious argument which *appears* to be a proof and whose fallaciousness is not seen *does* give a reason for accepting its conclusion, though only a prima facie reason. After all, there is reason to accept the conclusion because there appears to be a proof (proof 1) of that conclusion and it seems the conclusion must be true.

Contrariwise, an argument which actually *does* prove (prove 1) its conclusion will not establish that conclusion with certainty 2, for there may be other arguments which equally appear to prove the opposite, and we may reasonably 2 suspect that the argument which *actually* is a proof but which we do not know for sure is a proof contains some hidden fallacy.

Thus the dialectical nature of philosophy is restored.

I backed up the possibility of my distinction by reflecting on the relativity of the

concept of 'rational' and concepts related to it.

Thus an action of taking a certain road may be reasonable for me given my desire to go to Toledo and my belief that this road leads to Toledo. But the very same action would be unreasonable relative to the fact that my evidence does not support my belief

that this road goes to Toledo and anyway my reasons for wanting to go to Toledo are crazy and self-destructive.

In a similar way, the concept of rationality 1 is a concept of what would be rational if we were conceptually clear and saw clearly the true logical properties of arguments we were dealing with, while the concept of rationality 2 relates to the question: how is it reasonable to proceed when we have trouble accurately distinguishing between real proof and pseudo-proofs?

At this point I considered the various fallacies I was familiar with from Copi and decided that only the fallacies of ambiguity really had an appearance of goodness. The others were either nakedly bad or not even clearly fallacious.

So a rational 2 person would be taken in only by bad arguments whose badnesses were covered up by ambiguities.

But now I began to worry about my concept of rationality 2.

I began to worry that rationality 2 would not be an epistemologically interesting concept if it is just the concept of a belief being rational relative only to some other arbitrarily accepted false belief. For instance, my belief that I should kill you might be very reasonable but only relative to my other belief that you are a three headed gila monster from Mars who has come to Earth to wipe out the human race. But this kind of reasonableness wouldn't be epistemologically interesting.

But suppose for instance I was temporarily inclined to accept that rivers must have feet on the basis of a typical equivocation argument; rivers run, but whatever runs has feet; therefore rivers have feet. Wouldn't this amount to accepting a conclusion on the basis of the completely arbitrary and false assumption that 'runs' is univocal in the argument in question?

In answer to this problem I argued that fallacies of equivocation could be reconstructed as derived from underlying arguments which I called broken backed arguments, and these underlying arguments involved no arbitrarily accepted false premises and no arbitrarily accepted bad inference rules.

My example (p. 37-38) of a broken backed argument was the argument about the black and white crow, considered naked of any covering ambiguity. The first statement is that on Monday all the crows I saw were black. This is a true premise.

The second statement is that all crows are black. This is a justified - justified 1-

inference from the first premise taken alone.

The third statement is that there is now a white crow in front of me. This is in this example, a true premise. The final conclusion is a rational 1 - because deductively valid - conclusion from the previous two statements if they are not challenged.

So, in a sense, the argument involves no arbitrarily false premise and no arbitrarily accepted bad inference rule. I define a broken backed argument as an argument in which each step is either a true premise or is a statement derived from other statements by a rational 1 inference, rational 1 if those other statements are granted and no *other* statements are taken into account.

But then we can explain the acceptance of a fallacy of equivocation as based on an underlying broken backed argument.

I look at the premise that rivers run. In the back of my mind I recall cases where the word 'runs' is used and there is a question of whether rivers run. In all those cases 'runs' is applicable to rivers. I conclude that 'runs' is *always* applicable to rivers. I then look at the second premise and forget the cases I considered earlier and instead consider cases where 'runs' is used and feet are in question. In all these cases 'runs' implies having feet. I then conclude that 'runs' always implies feet. I then look at the conclusion. I forget the concrete cases of the use of 'runs' and remember only the conclusions that 'runs' *always* implies having feet and is applicable to rivers. Therefore rivers must have feet.

So the concept of rationality 2 does not involve arbitrary false premises or bad inference rules.

Let me note here that the inductive structure of the broken backed argument underlying the equivocation about running rivers is somewhat similar to the following:

1. On Monday I look at crows. They are all black and small. Focusing on color, I conclude that all crows are black.
2. On Tuesday I forget about Monday. I see crows which are white and large. I conclude all crows are large.
3. On Wednesday, I hear a crow but do not see it. I recall the *conclusions* of the previous days. I conclude that the crow I hear is both black and large.

But I have never seen a large black crow, and the evidence of the first day refutes the conclusion of the second, and vice versa.

So at this point I have based the fallacy of equivocation on a broken backed argument, an argument which reasons to conclusions which are probable only with respect to a proper subset of all the evidence I have. And it is here that I have fallen into the difficulty that I am worrying about in this paper.

The first part of the difficulty is that since I explain the manifest apparent validity of the equivocation in terms of a psychological process in the back of the mind which is reconstructible as a broken backed argument, the background broken back argument must convince me of the validity of the foreground equivocal argument. Yet despite this I wish to say that the background argument is not a true fallacy, only the foreground argument. But how can I say this?

Perhaps we can get a clue by looking at the difference between my treatment of the supposed fallacy of begging the question and the treatment which would be given by the disorganization theory of fallacies, which accepts incomplete evidence as basic.

My own theory says there is a no such fallacy as begging the question. A naked example wouldn't be a fallacy, but just a stupidity, an argument with a nakedly unsupported premise. An equivocal example wouldn't really be question begging because the unsupported premise would be conflated with some true premise, and would in effect be *derived* by equivocation from that premise, rather than being itself an ultimate premise. But I do give an explanation of why question begging occurs on Aristotle's list. Though it isn't really a fallacy, it's an important aspect of fallacies.

The argument about rivers running is an argument -- that is , a discourse intended to convince. But for logicians it is not really *an* argument but a conflation of several arguments. One of these, the principle reading, is invalid but has true premises, and it is nakedly invalid when clearly stated: Rivers flow, what moves by feet has feet, therefore rivers have feet.

But two others are valid but have a question begging premise. One is, rivers flow, whatever flows has feet (question begging!) therefore rivers have feet. The other is: rivers move by feet (question begging!) whatever moves by feet has feet, rivers have feet.

So question begging isn't a fallacy but it is an important component of fallacies.

But the disorganization theory allows for a quite different account of begging the question. At one time the evidence supported P. So I believed P. Later, from P, I derive Q. Later the evidence changed so that P was no longer supported. But I looked for a way to reinforce my belief that P, I recalled that Q, and I derive P from Q, forgetting that Q itself was originally derived from P. Thus, I have derived P from Q, which was derived from P. So I have derived P from itself at one remove. And this is question begging.

It is also reasoning from incomplete evidence. In this example, Q is supported only by P which is supported by its original evidence but not by the total evidence as it now stands. The supporting effect of the original evidence has been undermined by further evidence.

Now this sort of disorganized question begging certainly does happen in real

life. It happens to unsophisticated ordinary people. One sees students for instance more or less openly engaging in it. It even undoubtedly happens to professional philosophers, though usually over a period of time rather than openly and blatantly. So it is a fallacy of a sort, a disorganization fallacy.

Still I do not want to call this sort of thing a true fallacy, a fallacy of the sort that Aristotle was trying to get at in his *Sophisticated Refutations*.

Suppose I fall into this disorganized reasoning in my own mind over time. I now argue that since Q, therefore P. But who could I give this argument to? I could give it to a fellow traveler whose belief in P is wavering. I could remind him that he like me, believes Q and therefore should believe P. This argument would work. But I can't really give my argument to a neutral observer -- I can argue that Q therefore P. But when he asks "and what again is your reason for Q in its turn?" I have no adequate answer, lest my question begging become open and blatant. It is essential to my argument that I do not remember the source of Q.

This kind of argument seems good if you experience it only part by part, but if you look at it as a whole, all pulled together, it doesn't look good at all. It doesn't look good if you actually get to *look* at it. In brief, it doesn't *look good*. That's why I don't want to call it a true fallacy.

A sophist can't give an argument like this, for instance in a sophistical exhibition.

In his dialogue, the *Sophist*, Plato wishes to equate sophists and mere rhetoricians. For Plato a rhetorician gives emotional harangues with no real argument content at all. For me, though, a sophist is a professional philosopher, misusing his philosophical skills. Plato however, pretends that there is no essential difference. The only difference is that the rhetorician gives lengthy long-winded speeches whereas the sophist gives short, punchy arguments. (Sophist 268b)

But for me, this difference between sophists and rhetoricians is enough. Disorganization fallacies cannot be given by sophists. There isn't enough time to get lost in a short punchy argument. In a three or four hour speech, or a long book, or over the years, there is.

And broken backed arguments, uncovered by ambiguity, are generally of this sort. They are correct part by part, in a sense, but not correct as a whole. So if they are experienced over time and part by part they will seem correct throughout, but if seen as a

whole, they look as bad as they are. They just don't *look good*. They aren't true fallacies, in my sense.

Thus, in the example about the black and large crow, the inference from the white and large crows to the largeness of all crows doesn't look good if you

remember the black and *small* crows of the previous day.

And in the black and white crow example, the inference from Monday's black crows to the blackness of all crows doesn't work if you are already aware of the next day's white crow.

And in the argument underlying the equivocations, the concrete cases of usage of 'runs' that support the idea that 'runs' applies to rivers refute the other generalization that 'runs' always implies feet.

But of course in that case, the equivocation is done quickly, and the underlying argument works quickly. But the underlying argument is in the back of the mind, in the background. It is not explicitly formulated and illuminated by the light of full consciousness. It is the more or less unconscious thinking that is disorganized in a way full consciousness couldn't be. And that is my explanation of how a disorganization fallacy that isn't a true fallacy can nevertheless explain the apparent goodness of a true fallacy.

The distinction between an argument that somehow appears to be good and an argument that *looks good* will also play a role in my solution to the problem about Sally Jackson's theory. I now turn to this problem. Let me first exposit the essential features of Sally Jackson's theory.

As I say, Jackson accepts the full range of usual fallacies, many of which I reject. Unlike, however, other current fallacy theorists, she does not surrender the traditional definition according to which a fallacy must *appear* to be a good argument. And since she explains *how* her fallacies appear to be good to some people, her theory is not one I can easily dismiss as being about the different subject matter from my own. And her explanation of how her fallacies sometimes appear to be good is very similar to my own explanation of how equivocations appear to be good, so her theory becomes a particular problem for me.

Ordinary people are busily engaged in the hustle and bustle of life. They aren't university employed intellectuals with lots of time and mental energy to spend on logical matters. They just don't have the time or the mental energy to spend constantly examining every argument that comes their way. So they adopt a second best procedure.

By way of analogy, suppose you have a lot of dishes to wash and only a limited time. The best way to wash a dish is to use soap as well as water. However if you try to wash every dish the best way, you won't have time and will only get half way through the dishes. So you choose the second best way. Generally you only rinse the dishes, using soap only on particularly dirty ones. This way you get all the dishes somewhat washed.

One might say that the second best way is, in these circumstances, really the best way after all.

In the same way, the ordinary person does not have time and mental energy to invest in examining every argument in a full scale logical way. So they adopt a second best procedure which is perhaps best, given their limitations.

When the ordinary person is presented with an argument, he first considers the person *giving* the argument. If that person is disreputable in some way, this is a danger signal and the ordinary person will then subject the argument to full scale examination. But suppose the arguer is respectable.

Next the ordinary person considers the argument's conclusion. If that conclusion is obviously false or improbable or highly controversial, that too is a danger signal and leads to full scale examination.

And there may be other sorts of danger signals.

But suppose there is no danger signal.

The ordinary person then presumes that the argument is most likely a good one, but should be subjected to further tests.

What happens next depends on what type of argument is in question: an argument from authority, a syllogism, or some other type.

For each type, logicians have a full scale examination procedure, we may suppose, for distinguishing good from bad arguments of that type. The ordinary person however, does not have time or mental energy for these full scale procedures. So he applies a partial procedure of his own, which lets through correct arguments and rejects many but not all incorrect arguments.

What this procedure is depends on the type of argument. Jackson discusses arguments from authority at greatest length. However I find the logician's views here to be problematic and the difference between good and bad problematic. It will be more convenient here to discuss the case of syllogisms where the difference between good (valid) and bad (invalid) is clear, relatively at least.

Consider this invalid example: (Jackson, p. 264 *ff*)

Some A is B

Some B is C

Some A is C

Suppose this argument is given by a respectable person, and has a plausible conclusion and exudes no other danger signals.

Then the ordinary person goes through his logical check procedure. First, he applies the rule of quality. If both premises are affirmative, the conclusion must be

affirmative also. If one premise is negative, the conclusion must be negative. And only

one premise can be negative. Notice that our example passes the test.

Next, the ordinary person applies an all/some rule. This rule says that if both premises are universal, the conclusion must be universal and if at least one premise is particular, the conclusion must be particular. Our example passes this test as well.

Jackson derives these rules from psychological research indicating what kinds of syllogisms people fall for.

Since the example passes these tests, the ordinary person concludes it is valid. Thus he concludes that the example is a valid syllogism. So the syllogism appears valid to this person, though it is not valid. So, for this person, it is a fallacy he falls into.

For other types of argument, other similar procedures are used. This is basically Jackson's theory.

Now let us make some observations.

In telling the story above, I have talked about 'the ordinary person' as if everyone went through the same procedure. But, of course, not every ordinary person accepts the example syllogism as valid. As Jackson reports, if you give the syllogism to a large number of people, lots of them will accept it as valid. But some of them won't. Why don't they?

Some of them perhaps check an extra danger signal which causes them to more carefully examine this syllogism. Perhaps some of them find syllogistic evaluation easy and so don't find full evaluation to take time and energy. But the most interesting case would be someone who saw no danger signal and found logical evaluation difficult but went ahead and gave a full evaluation anyway. He thus discovers the logical truth: that the syllogism is invalid. Would this mean that he was in a sense *irrational*?

For Jackson is clearly describing the procedure underlying the syllogistic fallacy as in some sense a *rational* procedure, tailored to the practical limitation of time and energy. Let us call this procedure rational 3. She admits, though, that this procedure does not live up to full logical standards. It is not rational 1. In effect, then, although this terminology is mine not hers, she is distinguishing between rationality 3 and rationality 1. Just as for me, a fallacy is an argument, rationally 2 thought to be rational 1, when it isn't, so for her, a fallacy is an argument rationally 3 thought to be rational 1, when it isn't.

So if the person above thoroughly examines the syllogism and finds it invalid, he is irrationally 3 conducting an examination which is not called for by any adequate reasons, and spending inordinate time and energy. So his very

realization that the fallacy is invalid is a symptom of his *irrationality* - irrationality
3.

The situation is paradoxical but not really a paradox. It is somewhat analogous to the case of a policeman who, without probable cause, conducts an unreasonable search and seizure and thereby uncovers the key evidence which unravels the whole mystery.

Another observation about Jackson's theory.

We recall that in my thesis, I said that the broken backed argument underlying fallacies was fallacious, but I never considered there whether it was itself a fallacy. Strangely enough, in her paper, Sally Jackson never clearly considers whether the procedure leading to the acceptance of the syllogism fallacy is itself a fallacy or even whether it is fallacious.

I suggested earlier in my paper that this procedure is in effect fallacious reasoning from incomplete evidence, in a way I shall describe shortly. It is quite possible for Sally Jackson to take the view that, for her, incomplete evidence *is* a fallacy, and she accepts that fallacy as basic and uses it to explain other fallacies, much as I accept equivocation as basic and use it to explain other fallacies that I accept. It's possible for Jackson to adopt this view but I don't think it fits best with what she says.

Before considering other possibilities, let me first explain why the procedure seems to be fallacious reasoning from incomplete evidence.

In the situation Jackson is envisaging the person knows which syllogism is in question. It is not a case where the person doesn't know what syllogism it is, but only knows certain features of it.

In his reasoning, however, he considers only certain features: the respectability of the arguer, the plausibility of the conclusion, the fulfillment of the quality rule and the fulfillment of the all/some condition. It is probable, considering only these features, that the syllogism is a valid one. If these were the whole of the person's evidence, we would have a legitimate reasoning from limited evidence, rather than fallacious reasoning from so-called incomplete evidence. For in incomplete evidence, it isn't really that one's

evidence is incomplete, but rather that one only uses a proper subset of one's evidence, one uses one's evidence incompletely.

But the person knows what the syllogism is. Therefore, it seems that there are facts in the person's evidence set which the person has not considered and which undermine his conclusion. It is a clearly visible fact about the argument, uncovered by

any ambiguity, that both premises are particular, since they start with the word 'some'. Moreover, in applying his all/some rule, the person must have looked

right at these very words. But this fact that both premises are particular logically entails that the syllogism

is one which has an invalid syllogistic form. Again, it is a fact that the term B occurs as the predicate of an affirmative statement and as the subject of a particular statement in the premises. This fact too, guarantees invalidity. So I think the procedure is fallacious reasoning from incomplete evidence.

Here Jackson might wish to toy with the idea that perhaps the reasoning is not fallacious. She might argue that it is unfair to take the person's evidence set to be all the evidence visible in the argument. Since the person is arguing under time constraints, we should consider the relevant set to be the set of evidence the person has time to consider, that is, only the evidence the person actually does consider in the procedure. Thus, the person's reasoning would be legitimate reasoning from limited evidence rather than fallacious reasoning from so-called incomplete evidence.

But I think in the end this alternative line of thought is too heroic. It is just too implausible to try to maintain that the fact that both premises start with 'Some' is not after all part of the person's evidence set.

So if the procedure is *fallacious* is it also a *fallacy*?

Here I think Jackson will want to say 'No'. Her story is that the ordinary person more or less consciously decides to forego a fully logical procedure and adopts a logically imperfect procedure in order to save time and energy. So the person is not under any illusion that his procedure is better than it is. So there is fallacious reasoning but no illusion of anything else, so there is no *fallacy*.

There is a complication here. Suppose a first person, seeing no danger signals, goes through the procedure, which is fallacious, and accepts a fallacious syllogism, the one we're looking at. Suppose a second person, also seeing no danger signals goes through the very same procedure, but accepts a syllogism which turns out to actually valid, such as Some A is B, all B is C, therefore Some A is C. But then, since the second person follows exactly the same procedure as the first person, which was fallacious, it seems the second person is also reasoning fallaciously, even though he accepts an actually valid syllogism. And I think this is right. The procedure is fallacious regardless of whether the syllogism is, except when danger signals trigger full scale examination.

One might try to evade the conclusion by saying that, a person may try his best to murder someone and yet by sheer luck fail, since the victim lives, so the person is not guilty of murder after all. Similarly if the procedure by sheer luck arrives at a true conclusion instead of a false one, it escapes the crime of fallaciousness. I do not think this line of thought is very plausible but if it succeeds, then the *first* person's procedure will not only be fallacious, but a fallacy as well. For he *thinks* he has lucked upon a *valid*

sylllogism and so he *thinks* he is by luck avoiding fallaciousness. So he reasons fallaciously but it appears to him he is not. So there is a full fledged fallacy.

Well, these observations relate to some unclarities about how Sally Jackson's theory is supposed to go.

I now turn to the problem that Jackson's theory poses for my own theory.

My observations above only serve to bring out that Jackson's theory is very similar in structure and in some of the motivations for its distinctions to my own theory. Her theory is in many ways the same kind of theory as mine. But her theory seems much more general and inclusive. Why don't I just give up my theory and adopt hers?

Because she calls things fallacies that I just don't think are real fallacies.

Consider the syllogism. This syllogism appears to be valid to someone who goes through the procedure. But it still doesn't really *look* valid. It doesn't look like a valid argument. It conspicuously and openly fails to have a universal premise. Its middle term is all too visibly in two undistributed positions. There is no set of properties P which it appears to have and which are sufficient for validity. The ordinary person in Jackson's account fails consciously to consider any set of properties adequate for validity. The person does not really take the time to *look* at the argument.

Contrast the argument about rivers running. Here the evidence not adequately examined is hidden in the back of the mind; it is not conspicuously visible before us.

It may be said that the argument about rivers running also *looks* bad. It has that obviously false conclusion and therefore looks unsound. True. But it doesn't follow that it doesn't also look sound. It looks like it has true premises and as if it is valid. Therefore it looks good (sound), though it may also look bad (unsound). There are conflicting appearances. Still, in one of these, it looks good. It looks like it has all the features required for goodness.

I might note that there is generally a difference between something's appearing to someone to have a property and its looking like it has that property. For instance, someone gives me a wax apple. It *looks* like an apple. But then someone gives me a pear and tells me in a very authoritative and convincing manner that this fruit is an apple with

a funny shape and a yellowed skin. It appears to me that it must be an apple. Still, it doesn't *look* like an apple. It looks like a pear.

From my point of view, the people who follow Jackson's procedures aren't fooled by arguments because those arguments *look* like good arguments. Rather they don't really look at the argument but only take note of certain

features, ignoring others nakedly present. Their so-called fallacies aren't true fallacies at all.

Of course someone who accepts an invalid syllogism as valid *might* actually be committing a true fallacy, in my sense. The psychological researches don't really tell us what is going on in the mind of the person accepting the syllogism.

According to me, there are no formal fallacies, for there are no formal ambiguities in formal languages. But a formal argument *could* be translated into ambiguous ordinary language and the fallacy committed in ordinary language.

I have elsewhere speculated on why Aristotle invented his theory of syllogisms. Hamblin notes that in ancient Greek the fallacious argument "All men are animals, all horses are animals, therefore all horses are men", can be phrased in the style "Man is animal, horse is animal, therefore horse is man", and thus it looks like the valid simple identity argument "Cicero is Tully, this is Tully, therefore this is Cicero". Note that the fallacy here is a version of affirming the consequent and also of the problem of the one and the many. The man and horse are the many, the animal is the one.

I speculate (Powers, unpublished) that Aristotle developed his theory of syllogism in order to reinforce the distinction between categorical statements and simple identity statements. He wished to distinguish the logic of syllogisms from the logic of corresponding simple identity arguments. And it turns out that the *necessary and sufficient* criterion for the validity of those corresponding simple identity arguments is the rule of quality.

So this suggests a speculation according to which ordinary people making mistakes about syllogisms *may* be committing true fallacies after all. They somehow translate the syllogism so that it looks like a simple identity argument, apply the *complete* logical rule for the validity of the latter, and thus think a syllogism is valid if and only if the syllogism fulfills the quality rule. Their extra rule about all and some would then play the role of an extra danger signal, leading to more careful consideration and causing them to see through their fallacy. Perhaps they translate our example syllogism into something like "A's are B's and B's are C's, so A's are C's" or "Sometimes A's are B's and B's are C's, so sometimes A's are C's".

I say ordinary people *might* be doing this. If they are, they are committing true fallacies. If they aren't there's no true fallacy there.

Still, one may think that in distinguishing arguments that look good from ones that merely appear to someone to be good, I am merely straining at a gnat and picking a mere subclass of fallacies treated by Jackson in her more general theory.

Let me therefore try to motivate this gnat.

Consider the ancient sophists. The sophists were not mainly interested in proving arbitrary false conclusions. They were mainly interested in establishing the doubtfulness of reason itself and logic itself. They gave arguments which appeared to be impeccable

examples of reason and yet which arrived at obviously false conclusions or even contradictions. Thus they appeared to refute reason itself.

But how could a sophist make use of fallacies in Jackson's sense? He couldn't. Her theory doesn't allow a fallacy to have an obviously false conclusion! I might note that I recently was reading a book on mathematical sophisms. The authors actually define a mathematical sophism as an argument that appears to prove an obvious absurdity, such as a contradiction or that $1 = 2$.

But suppose we suspend that part of Jackson's procedure which rebels at obviously false conclusions, and use the rest of her procedure. We might then come up with the following (uncovered by any ambiguity):

Some men are animals

Some animals are non men

Some men are non men

But a sophist couldn't make any use of *this* argument *to refute logic itself*. For this argument nakedly fails to satisfy logical rules. Where is the universal premise?

Nor would Aristotle in the *Sophistical Refutations* be very interested in fallacies of Sally Jackson's sort. Aristotle knows that the sophists are trying to prove contradictions and refute logic itself. He is defending logic, in my view. His interest is in the arguments of sophists, not the mistakes of ordinary people.

Plato in the *Sophist* (267b) rehearses the point that to be a good sophist, you first need to be a good logician. This is essentially a Socratic point. Plato wrongly rejects this point by trying to equate sophists with mere rhetoricians. But the point is true. If ordinary people are incompetent at logic, they don't know how to make their arguments look good, and are incompetent to commit any real fallacies.

Finally, there is the role that the concept of fallacy plays in my metaphilosophical theory. In my theory, philosophers support their theories by performing their dialectical duties. They have to give what look like proofs of their theories and disproofs of their

opponents' theories. But they also have to *explain* the apparent goodness of their opponents' arguments. They need to claim that their opponents are committing *fallacies*. A fallacy therefore has to be an argument that can

plausibly be attributed to a philosopher. A Philosopher is, generally speaking, a person who is paid by a university to spend his time and energy examining his own arguments. I cannot plausibly ascribe to my opponent the practice of not taking the time and energy to examine his own arguments as to clearly known logical requirements. Sally Jackson's theory does not seem to be a theory of the sort of fallacy I need.

And those are the reasons my theory is not Sally Jackson's theory.

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