

Logic and Feminism

PIKSI 2022

What's the Problem?

"That women are not logical is one of the recognized conventions of social life. It is one of those understandings we might say, often enough referred to if rarely stated definitely, made the foundation of allusion or hint if not so often uttered outright. It certainly is not often stated in so many words" —Edward Hale, "Women and Logic" 1913

"Here's the problem, I know how to stand up to a man who's unfairly trespassed against me and the reason I know that is because the parameters for my resistance are quite well-defined, which is: we talk, we argue, we push, and then it becomes physical. If we move beyond the boundaries of civil discourse, we know what the next step is. That's forbidden in discourse with women and so I don't think that men can control crazy women. I really don't believe it." —Jordan Peterson, (YouTube) 2017

Feminist Criticisms of Formal Logic



Adversariality

Adversariality: A Case Study

Adversary Paradigm: adversariality as the "gold standard" of philosophical engagement.
What's our goal in philosophizing and what methods achieve that?

Background ○○	Complaining about Logic ●○○	Non-Classical Logics ○○○	Complaining About...? ○○○	Changing Institutions ○○○
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Classical Validity

Validity

- ▶ Recall: An argument is valid when there is no case in which the premises are true and the conclusion is false.
- ▶ Valid or invalid?
- ▶ Cat is from Minnesota. But Cat is not from Minnesota. Therefore, the Earth is flat.

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Beyond Classical Logics

- ▶ Two responses:
 - ▶ *Extensions of classical logics.*
 - ▶ *Alternatives to classical logics.*

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Extensions of Classical Logics

Extending Classical Logics

- ▶ Approaches that add new operators or mechanisms to classical logic.
 - ▶ Often modal logics, or other logics that represent *intensional* features of language (that's not a typo)!

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Alternatives to Classical Logics

Alternatives to Classical Logics

- ▶ Approaches that reject and replace some features or mechanisms of classical logic.
 - ▶ Reject the assumption that every sentence is either T or F
 - ▶ Reject the assumption that a sentence can't be both T and F
 - ▶ Reinterpret some of the logical operators (like the conditional)
 - ▶ Reject the idea that an argument with inconsistent premises is valid

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Bothered by an institution? Think about the structures!