

Philosophy of Logic

by

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What is logic?

Logic is the application of the Law of Non-Contradictions to two or more propositions.

What is the Law of Non-Contradiction?

It is the premise that a thing is what it is and is not what it is not. A tree, for example, is a tree and is not a non-tree. A table is a table, and is not a non-table.

This principle has been stated in a well-known formula: *A is not non-A*. The letter “A” can stand for any statement whatsoever. If a statement represented by the letter “A” is true, then the same statement cannot be false under the same circumstances.

Who invented this formula?

The Greek philosopher Aristotle was the first to state the Law of Non-Contradictions in a formula. Other people before him thought about logic but since he was the first to formulate it, we refer to it as *Aristotelian Logic*. This does not mean, however, that the Greeks invented logic. They merely formulated its laws in comprehensible terms. After all, people were capable of logic before the Greeks.

What other kinds of logic exist besides Aristotelian?

No other kind of logic exists. This is provable by the following considerations:

It is impossible to think about anything at all without starting with the Law of Non-Contradiction. Any attempt to do so leads to insanity.

No other kind exists because reality exists. If we deny that reality exists, we are already insane. The affirmation that reality is not unreality, is simply the Law of Non-Contradictions as it relates to existence itself. Thus, the Law of Non-Contradictions is not something we apply *to* reality. It is something taken *from* reality itself. Therefore any attempt to escape the Law of Non-Contradictions is trying to escape reality. That is insanity.

All endeavors to invalidate Aristotelian logic must start with Aristotelian logic. This is argues in circles. Those who attempt this, ironically end up validating Aristotelian logic.

Any attempt to prove a superior logic, falls into the same dilemma. A person must start with the Law of Non-Contradictions to think about anything at all, including logic itself. By doing so, they default to the absolute validity and sufficiency of the Law of Non-Contradictions to establish what is true. If the original logic is absolutely valid and sufficient, why would there be a need for a new one?

The only way to escape Aristotelian logic is to affirm that contradictions are acceptable. If we try to prove this, we contradict ourselves. We only make fools of ourselves.

Is it possible that God might think some other way than this?

God knows He cannot both exist and not exist at the same time. By His own declaration, *I am God and there is none else*, He uses the Law of Non-Contradictions. Essentially this means *God is not non-God*. If the Law of Non-Contradictions is invalid at any point, how can we say the above statement about God is absolutely true?

It must be kept in mind that logic is linked to existence itself. By saying something is true, we are simply affirming it exists. Likewise, saying something is not true is asserting that it does not exist. God cannot escape the logic of His own existence any more than we can.

Doesn't this make logic greater than God?

No. It proves only that the Law of Non-Contradictions is intrinsic to existence itself. Logic is a part of God just because He exists.

Even if we were to propose that God might have some other form of logic, we are still locked into the one we have, for the reasons stated above. It is a mute question whether God thinks differently. He has created us in this way, with this reality. We cannot think any other way and remain sane.

We must conclude He does not want us to think about Him using any other logic than the Law of Non-Contradictions. For the same reason, it is not valid to consider the truths He has revealed, using in any other form of logic.

Isn't God's logic superior to man's?

To answer, let's distinguish between logic and reason. Logic is an absolute, and refers to the consistent application of the Law of Non-Contradictions. Reason, in turn, refers to the relative ability to manipulate the Law of Non-Contradictions. Some people are better at reasoning than others. They make fewer mistakes in logic. When we talk about *logic*, we are referring to the consistency of arguments. When we refer to *reason*, we are talking about a person's ability to arrange arguments consistently.

The answer to the above question, therefore, is two-fold. If we are talking about logic, then God's logic is not superior to man's, because logic is intrinsic to reality itself. But if we are talking about *reason*, then the answer is different. God's ability to reason is obviously superior to man's because He makes no mistakes. He knows everything, and therefore does not think on the grounds of false presuppositions.

What about paradoxes? Do they prove the Law of Non-Contradictions is not always valid?

A paradox is two propositions that appear to be contradictory but on further examination is found to be compatible. Thus, paradoxes are not contradictions.

What about mysteries? Do they prove the Law of Non-Contradictions is sometimes invalid?

No. A mystery is nothing more than a lack of information.

What about antinomies? Do they prove that the Law of Non-Contradictions is sometimes invalid?

An antinomy is two propositions which are mutually exclusive, but which someone holds as both being true at the same time.

Antinomies differ from paradoxes in that the latter only appear to be contradictions, but are not. An antinomy is a real contradiction.

Antinomies do not prove that the Law of Non-Contradictions is invalid simply because they do not exist. If they *did* exist, we would conclude that nothing is knowable with certainty. No argument could ever be declared false, no one could ever be caught in a lie, anything whatsoever may be affirmed, no false answers on exams. The terms *reason* and *logic* would lose all meaning. Claiming antinomies truly exist, leads down the same road to insanity as any other kind of contradiction. All contradictions lead there.

From a purely emotional standpoint, it would be convenient to access a fantasyland where contradictions are acceptable whenever our arguments are found to be invalid. No such place exists.

Smalling's articles and essays are available at www.smallings.com