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In addition to the misconceptions of relevance and presumption that we have covered in our previous lessons, there are several patterns of incorrect reasoning that arise from inaccurate use of language. An ambiguous word, phrase or sentence has two or more different meanings. The conclusion between the proposals included in one argument will undoubtedly take place only if we are careful to use the exact same meaning in each of them. Misconceptions of ambiguity are all associated with the confusion of two or more different meanings. The ambiguity of ambiguity trades on the use of an ambiguous word or phrase in one of its meanings in one of the sentences of the argument, but also in the other its meaning in the second sentence. Really exciting novels are rare. But rare books are expensive. So really exciting novels are expensive. Here the word rare is used differently in the two premises of the argument, so the connection they seem to establish between the terms of imprisonment is false. In its more subtle phenomena, this misconception can undermine the reliability of otherwise valid deductive arguments. Amphiboly Amphiboly can occur even when every term in the argument is non-ish, if the grammatical design of the sentence creates its own ambiguity. A reckless motorist Thursday struck and injured a student who was running across campus in his pickup truck. So it's not safe to jogs in your pickup truck. In this example, the premise (actually heard on the radio transmission) can be interpreted in different ways, allowing malleable conclusions to be concluded. The accent of the Accent Misconception arises from the ambiguity produced by the shift of the oral or written accent. So, for example: Jorge passed his assignment on time today. Thus, Jorge usually turns in his assignments late. Here the premise may be true if read without inflection, but if it is read with great strain on the last word, it seems to imply the truth of the conclusion. The composition of the Composition Misconception includes the withdrawal from assigning a function to each individual member of the class (or part of a larger whole) to owning the same feature of the entire class (or whole). Every course I took in college was well organized. So my higher education was well organized. Even if the premise is correct for every component of my curriculum, in general it could be a chaotic mess, so this reasoning is flawed. Note that this is different from the misconception of the opposite of an accident, which is mis-summarized from an unusual particular case (as in My Philosophy the course was well organized; so the college courses are well organized.). For the confusion of the composition, the decisive fact what even when something can really be said about every single part, it doesn't follow that the same can be said for the whole class. Division Similarly, the division's delusion involves insing from assigning certain functions to the entire class (or whole) to owning the same function of each of its individual members (or parts). Ocelots are now dying out. Sparky's an ocelot. So Sparky is now dying out. While the premise is correct for the species as a whole, this unfortunate fact does not reflect poorly on the health of any of its individual members. Again, be sure to distinguish this from the delusion of an accident that mistakenly applies the general rule to an atypical particular case (as the Ocelots have many health problems, and Sparky is an ocelot; thus, Sparky is in poor health). A significant point of confusion in separation is that even when something can really be said about the whole class, it does not follow that the same can truly be said about each of its individual parts. Avoiding misconceptions The informal misconceptions of all seventeen varieties can seriously hinder our ability to come to the truth. Whether they are committed inadvertently in the course of a person's own thinking or deliberately used to manipulate others, each can be persuaded without providing a legitimate basis for establishing the truth about its completion. But knowing that misconceptions gives us some protection anyway. If we can identify some of the most common patterns of mis-reasoning, we are less likely to slip into them ourselves or be deceived by anyone else. When the meaning of a word or phrase shifts during a dispute, there is a misconception of ambiguity. Equivocation (edit source editing) It may be helpful to start this section by viewing this Khan Academy video on misleading ambiguity. Ambiguity is a delusion that occurs when the meaning of an ambiguous term secretly switches during reasoning. An ambiguous term is used with one meaning at the beginning of the argument, but is then used with another meaning later in the argument. Since many words have more than one literal meaning, there are many possibilities of this delusion to occur. The misconception takes the following form: X is Y (meaning 1). Y (meaning 2) is w. So X is w. In this example: the pen is light. That the light can't be dark. Thus, the pen cannot be dark. The same argument uses two different meanings of the word light. In the background the word light is used to mean not heavy and in the middle term light is used in its optical sense. Since the two definitions are not related, the premise does not constitute a conclusion, even if the same word is used throughout. Ambiguity is often to form jokes, such as the joke of Mae Wests: Marriage is a wonderful institution, but I'm not ready for the establishment, or the standard Henry Youngman: Take Wife... please. Ambiguity is more harmful and consistent when it is used to promote a false conclusion, for example, you can hear the argument: Because it is called the theory of evolution, evolution is nothing more than an unproven assumption! Rejecting evolution as theory only is a misconception based on the incorrect definition of the word theory. This is erroneous because it balances two different meanings of the word theory. In the first use, the theory refers to a scientific theory that is a reasonable explanation of some aspects of the natural world, which is acquired by the scientific method and is repeatedly tested and confirmed by observation and experimentation. In the second use, the theory refers to a preliminary idea formed by speculation. A similar misconception is evident in this example: You have faith in science, and I believe in God. This misconception exploits the fact that faith is often used to mean trust, that is, has good reason to be confident in something because of its past activities - this argument is an attempt to equate science with religion, when in reality science does not require faith (meaning firm faith based on spiritual fears, not proof.). Amphiboly (edit the source of editing) Amphiboly misconception occurs when syntax ambiguity allows you to use one value indoors and another value to use in a conclusion. This misconception is similar to ambiguity, but uses ambiguous grammatical constructs rather than an ambiguous word. A sign that does not allow smoking can be interpreted as meaning that smoking is allowed, but is also permissible to smoke, since smoking is not specifically prohibited by ambiguous language. As is the case with ambiguity, amphiboly can be used to create jokes such as Groucho Marx wit: I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How it got into my pajamas I don't know. Unambiguous language is particularly consistent when they appear in political documents, legal documents, contracts or constitutions. For example:... Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution: No person shall be held liable for the death penalty or other infamous crime except for the submission or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases involving the land or navy or militia when they are indeed in service during war or public danger... It is unclear whether the expression is attached when on active duty during war or public danger only to in the militia or to all in the land or navy, or in the militia. This indistrosufability is of great importance, especially for someone in the land Navy, which has been charged with a crime in peacetime. The emphasis of the edit source Misconception accent (also called accent, or misleading accent) is a type of ambiguity that arises the meaning of the sentence changes, making an unusual verbal accent or when in the written passage it remains unclear on which word the accent should have fallen. Consider the different meanings of the reason emphasis change in this simple example: (I didn't take the test yesterday. (Someone else did.)) I wasn't on the test yesterday. (I didn't get it.) I wasn't on the test yesterday. (I did something different with it.) I wasn't on the test yesterday. (I took another one.) I wasn't on the letter. This can mean either that one sent the letter again, or that one has a sense of resentment towards it. If you had come to the conclusion falsely, based on the suggestion that the speaker had sent the letter again, then you would have misused the accent. By interpreting the confusion more broadly, it may involve distortions caused by the cited passage being taken out of context. This is often done maliciously in politics, for example: in 2000, during the Republican primary campaign in the United States, George W. Bush's campaign was screened by advertisements, including a warning from John McCain's conservative hometown newspaper that it is time for the rest of the country to learn about the McCain we know. The newspaper (Arizona Republic), however, went on to say: There is a lot out there to admire. After all, we supported McCain in his past running for office. The composition (editorial) may be useful to start this section by watching this video of the Khan Academy on Misconception Compositions. The confusion of the composition arises when a conclusion is made about the whole, based on the characteristics of its constituent elements, when, in fact, there is no basis for withdrawal. There are actually two types of this misconception, both of which are known by the same name (due to the high degree of similarity). The first type of composition error occurs when a person causes from the characteristics of an individual class member or group to a conclusion regarding the characteristics of the entire class or group (taken as a whole). More technically, the reasoning will look like something like this. Individual things F have characteristics A, B, C, etc. So (the whole) class of things F has characteristics A, B, C, etc. This is erroneous because superstars may not be able to play together very well, and therefore they can be a lousy team. It is also a delusion to argue if someone gets up from his seat in cricket match, they can see better. So if everyone get up, they can all see better. The second type of composition misconception is made when it is concluded that what is true of parts of the whole should be true to the whole without proper justification for the claim. More officially, the line of reasoning would be as follows: Thus, O has a P. property (where the P property is one that is not distributed from parts in general.) This kind of reasoning is erroneous, because it is impossible to conclude that simply because parts of a complex whole have (or lack) certain properties that all they are parts has these properties. This is especially clear in math: the numbers 1 and 3 are both odd. 1 and 3 parts 4. However invalid is the conclusion number 4 is strange. Here are more examples of confusion: the human body is made up of cells that are invisible. That's why the body is invisible. Both sodium and chlorine are harmful to humans, so any combination of sodium and chlorine, such as table salt, will be dangerous for humans. Arguing this is that since everyone can make a profit by consuming a large share of the total total resource such as fish from the sea, it is good for everyone to consume large proportions, leading to the tragedy of the commons. Department Editing Source It may be helpful to start this section by watching this Han Academy video about the Division's misconceptions. The confusion of separation occurs when logically there is a reason that something true for the whole should be true for all or some parts of it. Misconception takes on the following form: Object O has a P. So all parts of O have a P. property P. (Where property P is one that is not distributed from the whole in its part.) For example: 2nd class in Jefferson Elementary eats a lot of ice cream Carlos is the 2nd grader in Jefferson Elementary So Carlos eats a lot of ice cream Appointment edit the source Become vigilant for the rhetoric, listening to the rhetoric, reading persuasive materials, reading convincing materials. Identify a specific example of the ambiguity of the arguments presented. What is the specific ambiguity of the ambiguity used? Identify the premise and conclusion if they exist. Identify the evidence for each room, if any. Throw this argument in the form of specific relevance misconceptions studied here. Identify the missing information that will be required for a strong argument. Remake the argument in real form if possible. Links edit to edit the source from quotes Robert E. Junior and Howard Pospel, Assumptions and Conclusions: Symbolic Logic of Legal Analysis (Prentice-Hall, 1997), p. 11. Kogi, Irving M.; Carl Cohen (June 20, 2001). An introduction to logic. Prentice Hall, page 647. ISBN 978-0130337351. Section 4.4 A3. - Kogi, Irving M.; Carl Cohen (June 20, 2001). An introduction to logic. Prentice Hall, page 647. ISBN 978-0130337351. 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