Stewart Shapiro (Ohio State University)

PLURALISM AND RELATIVISM FOR LOGIC

My purpose is to articulate a number of different senses in which one can be a pluralist and/or a relativist concerning logical consequence. I propose, first, that logical consequence is either polysemous or it denotes a cluster concept. In other words, there are a number of different notions that go by that names, often run together, or else there are several aspects of the notions, with varying weights. The different notions, or aspects, of consequence, turn on matters of modality, semantics, effectiveness, justification, rationality, and form. Second, most of the articulations of the pre-theoretic notions(s) of logical consequence make essential use of a boundary between logical and non-logical terminology. This suggests a sort of relativism/pluralism explicitly noted by Bernard Bolzano and Alfred Tarski: logical consequence is relative to the logical/non-logical boundary. An argument may be valid on one collection of logical terms, invalid on another. Third, it is possible that at least some aspects of the notion of logical consequence are vague: there may be borderline cases of valid arguments. If so, we have to turn to what the correct account of vagueness is. On some theories of vagueness, consequence ends up as relative to something, such as a sharpening or a conversational context, and on others, we end up with a kind of pluralism. Finally, there are a number of interesting and important mathematical theories the employ a non-classical logic, and are rendered inconsistent if classical logic is imposed. This suggests a fourth kind of relativism/pluralism: relativity to structure.