WRITING ESSENTIALS IN STYLE & COMPOSITION Week 6: Logical Argument

We will now prepare to write a clear and concise logical argument. Let's begin by defining some necessary terms.

LOGIC:

- 1. the science that investigates the principles governing correct or reliable inference.
- 2. a particular method of reasoning or argumentation: *We were unable to follow his logic*.
- 3. the system or principles of reasoning applicable to any branch of knowledge or study.

All words signify, but different kinds of words signify in different ways. Nouns and verbs signify differently; when they are brought together, they make a sentence:

-Pigs (noun)

-fly (verb)

-Pigs fly. (sentence)

Some sentences can be true or false while others cannot:

-Pigs fly.

-Chickens lay eggs.

-Go home!

-Why did the chicken cross the road?

Sentences which can be true or false are statements or propositions.

Some statements are **affirmations** and some are **negations** (i.e. some say that such and such IS the case, and others say that such and such IS NOT the case).

A premise is a statement and one of the steps in your process of reasoning to a conclusion.

A conclusion is a statement which follows from two or more premises.

A **syllogism** is an argument made up of three propositions. The first two propositions are called Premises, and the last the Conclusion.

Aristotle maintained that all sound reasoning can be reduced to the form of a syllogism: All humans are mortal. All Greeks are humans. Therefore, all Greeks are mortal. All reasoning from premises, all proof, can be reduced to this form. Of course, the propositions which make up the syllogism do not always stand in this order, and sometimes one of them may be omitted. Thus in the argument: 'he ought to be supported by the state, for he is an old soldier,' the conclusion stands first, and one premise is wanting entirely. It is easy to see, however, that the real argument when properly arranged is equivalent to this:

All old soldiers ought to be supported by the state. He is an old soldier. Therefore he ought to be supported by the state.

"If A is predicated of all B, and B of all C, A must be predicated of all C... Similarly also, if A is predicated of no B, and B of all C, it is necessary that no C will be A." –Aristotle, Prior Analytics (Book I, Chapter 4)

Some example of syllogistic framework:

All B are A. –major premise All C are B. –minor premise Therefore all C are A. –conclusion

No B are A. –major premise All C are B. –minor premise Therefore no C are A. –conclusion

NOTE: The conclusion will be true only if both premises are true. Thus two things must be distinguished in a sound argument:

1) the reasoning is valid (i.e. a conclusion necessarily follows from the premises)

2) the premises are true, necessarily leading to a true conclusion

In class exercises:

1) Think of examples of sound arguments which contain two premises and a conclusion. Then think of examples of arguments that are not sound:

a) because the reasoning is not valid (i.e. the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises)

b) because one premise is not true.

Now, as you read read the following article from Thomas Aquinas, think about the following:

- What is the format of the argument?
- Do you find the format clear, confusing?

- Are you convinced by his reasoning? Why or why not?
- Can you pick out each premise and how he arrives at his conclusion?

Reading 1: Summa Theologiae: First Part of the Second Part by Thomas Aquinas Question 96, Article 5: "Whether all are subject to the law?"

(source: https://www.newadvent.org/summa/2096.htm#article5)

Objection 1. It would seem that not all are subject to the law. For those alone are subject to a law for whom a law is made. But the Apostle says (1 Timothy 1:9): "The law is not made for the just man." Therefore the just are not subject to the law.

Objection 2. Further, Pope Urban says [Decretals. caus. xix, qu. 2]: "He that is guided by a private law need not for any reason be bound by the public law." Now all spiritual men are led by the private law of the Holy Ghost, for they are the sons of God, of whom it is said (Romans 8:14): "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Therefore not all men are subject to human law.

Objection 3. Further, the jurist says [Pandect. Justin. i, ff., tit. 3, De Leg. et Senat.] that "the sovereign is exempt from the laws." But he that is exempt from the law is not bound thereby. Therefore not all are subject to the law.

On the contrary, The Apostle says (Romans 13:1): "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." But subjection to a power seems to imply subjection to the laws framed by that power. Therefore all men should be subject to human law.

I answer that, As stated above [in previous articles] ... the notion of law contains two things: first, that it is a rule of human acts; secondly, that it has coercive power. Wherefore a man may be subject to law in two ways. First, as the regulated is subject to the regulator: and, in this way, whoever is subject to a power, is subject to the law framed by that power. But it may happen in two ways that one is not subject to a power. In one way, by being altogether free from its authority: hence the subjects of one city or kingdom are not bound by the laws of the sovereign of another city or kingdom, since they are not subject to his authority. In another way, by being under a yet higher law; thus the subject of a proconsul should be ruled by his command, but not in those matters in which the subject receives his orders from the emperor: for in these matters, he is not bound by the mandate of the lower authority, since he is directed by that of a higher. In this way, one who is simply subject to a law, may not be a subject thereto in certain matters, in respect of which he is ruled by a higher law.

Secondly, a man is said to be subject to a law as the coerced is subject to the coercer. In this way the virtuous and righteous are not subject to the law, but only the wicked. Because coercion and violence are contrary to the will: but the will of the good is in harmony with the law, whereas the will of the wicked is discordant from it. Wherefore in this sense the good are not subject to the law, but only the wicked.

Reply to Objection 1. This argument is true of subjection by way of coercion: for, in this way, "the law is not made for the just men": because "they are a law to themselves," since they "show the work of the law written in their hearts," as the Apostle says (Romans 2:14-15). Consequently the law does not enforce itself upon them as it does on the wicked.

Reply to Objection 2. The law of the Holy Ghost is above all law framed by man: and therefore spiritual men, in so far as they are led by the law of the Holy Ghost, are not subject to the law in those matters that are inconsistent with the guidance of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless the very fact that spiritual men are subject to law, is due to the leading of the Holy Ghost, according to 1 Peter 2:13: "Be ye subject . . . to every human creature for God's sake."

Reply to Objection 3. The sovereign is said to be "exempt from the law," as to its coercive power; since, properly speaking, no man is coerced by himself, and law has no coercive power save from the authority of the sovereign. Thus then is the sovereign said to be exempt from the law, because none is competent to pass sentence on him, if he acts against the law. Wherefore on Psalm 50:6: "To Thee only have I sinned," a gloss says that "there is no man who can judge the deeds of a king." But as to the directive force of law, the sovereign is subject to the law by his own will, according to the statement (Extra, De Constit. cap. Cum omnes) that "whatever law a man makes for another, he should keep himself. And a wise authority [Dionysius Cato, Dist. de Moribus] says: 'Obey the law that thou makest thyself.'' Moreover the Lord reproaches those who "say and do not"; and who "bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them" (Matthew 23:3-4). Hence, in the judgment of God, the sovereign is not exempt from the law, as to its directive force; but he should fulfil it to his own free-will and not of constraint. Again the sovereign is above the law, in so far as, when it is expedient, he can change the law, and dispense in it according to time and place.

Assignment:

- Write two paragraphs, each paragraph containing at least one argument. Your first paragraph will argue for a position and will have at least one argument (containing at least two premises and a conclusion). Your second paragraph will argue against the position and will have at least one argument (containing at least two premises and a conclusion).
- For example, in the first paragraph argue that Canada is the greatest country in the world. Then in the second paragraph argue that Canada is the worst country in the world.
- When you are planning, write out two very clear and short syllogisms which will be the foundation of each argument. Then you will expand on these by adding more support.

Invention:

First syllogism:

Second syllogism (arguing the opposite of the first syllogism):

Supporting evidence and details for first syllogism:

Supporting evidence and details for second syllogism: