Assignment 3

Title:
Revising Arguments

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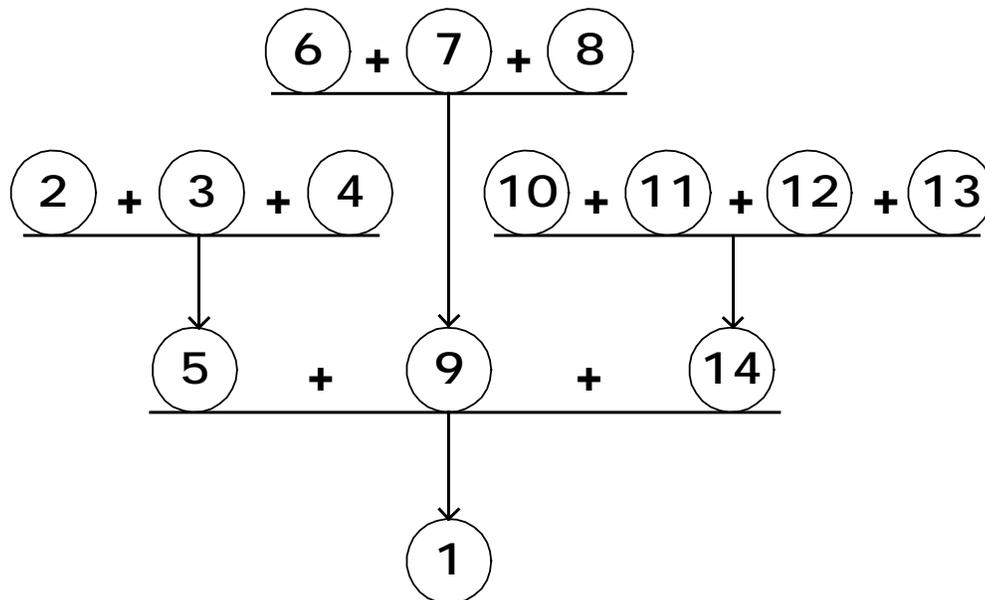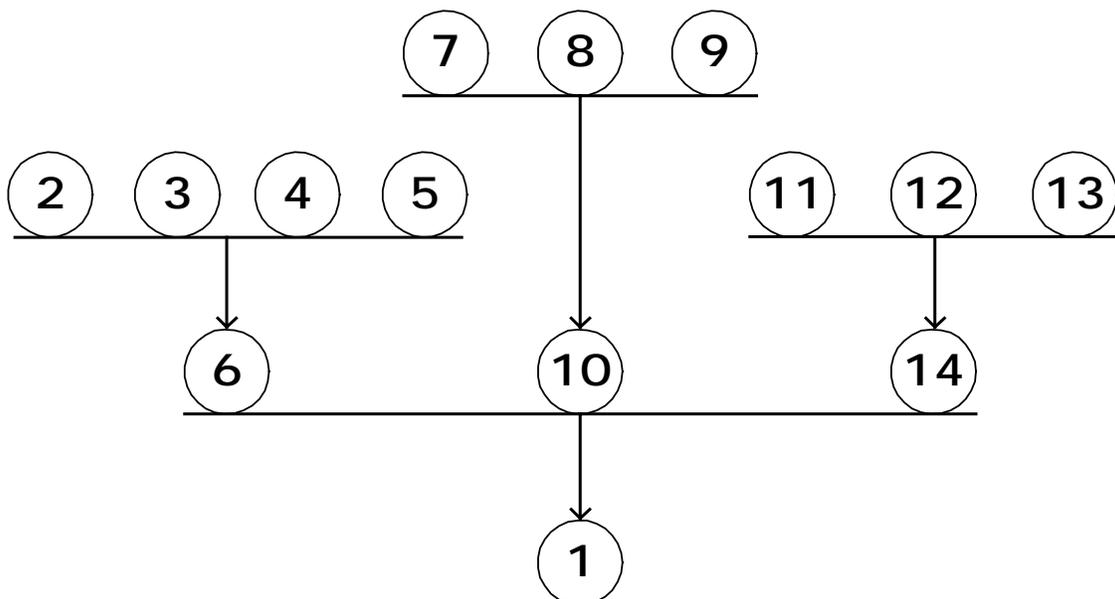**Date Submitted:** 28 August, 2003
Word Count (Part B): 844

Part A
   1) Objectivity is impossible.

2) To be objective is to remove bias and influence from our thought and justification processes and our selves entirely.

3) Being objective makes us fair and equitable.

4) People should try to be fair and equitable to each other.

5) Humans continuously strive to be objective.

6) Different languages express the same thing in different ways.

7) There are different dialects of the same language which express the same thing in different ways.

8) Written and verbal representations of language are biased by the features of that language such as the words which are and are not available within it.

9) All methods of communication (output) are biased.

10) Our perceptions are biased by the world in which we live and the events we have experienced in the past.

11) Our senses can be fooled by deception and mistaken perception.

12) Different people can perceive the same thing in different ways.

13) Our own observations and definitions of truth are based on our senses.

14) All processes of observation (input) are biased.

1) **Blogs will become a major source of information on the web.**
2) A frequently updated website, organized chronologically, is called a web log, or blog for short.
3) There are hundreds of thousands of personal sites based around a blog-style on the Internet already.
4) The culture surrounding blogs appears to be one of full disclosure and complete sharing of information.
5) Blogging allows people to communicate with a wide group of people, via the Internet.
6) Blogs provide open access to information that is not available via other online sources.
7) Blogs make it very easy to keep a website updated.
8) People update their blogs sometimes multiple times a day.
9) Most 'official' online news sources are subject to some sort of editorial process, which means it is slower to update the information on them.
10) Blogs contain more timely information than other sources.
11) There are hundreds of thousands of bloggers online.
12) There are existing and developing tools to support blogging.
13) Blogs are being used in business settings for knowledge management and news distribution.
14) Blogs are gaining widespread (mainstream) acceptance.

Part B

Unattainable Objective

Despite our best efforts, objectivity truly is impossible for humans. Mankind has long striven to be objective, indeed our very culture is based on the idea that objectivity is an 'ultimate goal' that we should all aim towards. Looking at what we are, as humans, however, allows us to realise that to be truly objective is beyond our current means, due mainly to the fact that all of our 'input' and 'output' methods (to borrow terms from a computing analogy) are biased in some way or another. When we realise that we cannot escape these factors, we realise that humans simply cannot be completely objective.

Being objective requires that we remove all bias and external influences from our thought and justification processes and our selves entirely. By doing this, we can attempt to understand the "permanent ahistorical matrix or framework" (Bernstein, cited in Allen) which underpins everything in the tangible world. By understanding this ahistorical framework, we believe that we can be completely fair and just to all involved in all situations, which is seen as a positive outcome. Moving towards a world full of equity and supposedly empty of classes or social hierarchies (removing inequities in the form of race, sex, religion), objectivity and therefore complete fairness is seen as the required state of being. Since we are trying to be fair and equitable to each other then, we should try to be objective, to avoid biases and influences, which may otherwise make us act unjustly or unfairly.

Now consider for a moment, a situation which would require objective observance to come to a reasonable conclusion. In this situation, we have a motor vehicle accident where two cars have collided at an intersection with traffic lights. Objectively speaking, one driver is most likely at fault. Now each driver may consider themselves to be objective, and come to the conclusion that the other driver is the one that is at fault. Factors interfering with each of their thought or decision-making processes may in fact be affecting their objectivity, meaning that a driver who is colour-blind doesn't realise he has been through a red light, a drunk driver thinks he is going below the speed

limit, or the perspective of both drivers may mean that they each think they look carefully around the corner before proceeding. These examples illustrate the fact that our methods of observation; our input methods, are in fact not even objective in themselves. All of our senses possess the potential to be deceived, damaged, or just mistakenly interpreted by our brain. This lack of objectivity immediately throws into question the accuracy of any convictions we may hold as to the objectivity of our own conclusions, which are based on these senses.

Going back to our two drivers involved in the motor-vehicle accident, we may then observe them communicating with each other, discussing the cause of the accident. The colour-blind driver may refer to the 'darker' light, or the 'top' light, since he may not have a perception of red and green. The drunk driver may slur his words, making it difficult for the other driver to understand what he is saying. The men may describe their actions using words like 'not too fast', 'slowly' or even 'carefully'. All of these words are open to interpretation, especially given that an accident has already occurred. Just how careful is 'carefully', and how slow is 'slowly'? The drivers may be intentionally using these words to try to affect the decision-making of the other driver, or they may have modified meanings of these words in their own minds ('not too fast' might mean within 10km/hr of the speed limit for a young, reckless driver), which means that the two men can't really communicate on the same level, since they are effectively speaking a different language.

Language, in both written and verbal forms, contains a variety of biases which cannot easily be avoided. Words such as 'racist', 'lowly', 'slow' and 'old' carry connotations that can only be fully understood in relation to the context in which they are used. Different languages, even different dialects of the same language, can have very different meanings of these and other words. So assuming that we *could* observe anything objectively, or make an objective decision, then it appears that we could not actually communicate it (in written or verbal form) to anyone else. Languages, our only real method of 'output' are inherently biased by the very words that make them up, and the meanings that they carry.

Although we may continuously strive to be objective, in the hope that this will elevate our understanding of the world and thus reveal the ultimate truths of existence, we are constantly hindered by the facts that all of our 'input' and 'output' methods are inherently biased, in ways we cannot escape or avoid. We cannot observe anything truly objectively, and if we could, we could not communicate either our observations, or conclusions drawn from such observations in an objective fashion. Humans clearly cannot be objective, due to the very nature of being human.

References

Allen, M. (2003). *Reading 1.2 - Reasoning has a History*. Retrieved June 19, 2003, from http://webct.curtin.edu.au/web-ct/courses/302048_a/arolam1r2.html#object (authentication required for access)