@VerbalSiegeEngine's (VSE's) ongoing discussion problems, demonstrated by selected quotations from Discord conversations, with comments by Justin Mallone

Made by Justin Mallone on January 4, 2020

Note: Quotations are selective, not complete. Messages may be grouped together if they appear to have a common theme/idea, even if they were separated by lines of discussion in the original chat. Quotes may be indicated by a ">" here when they were indicated some other way in the original chat.

Example of Discussion Problem: The "Principle of Falsification"

December 28, 2019, in #off-topic on the FI Discord Server

https://discordapp.com/channels/304082367384745994/659937634369404968/660549503824429071

VSE: Popper's Principle of Falsification (PF)
Given a scientific hypothesis H and some evidence E then ~E falsifies H iff H ⊨ E.

Alan Forrester: It should be called VerbalSiegeEngine's principle of falsification since it isn't a principle that Popper held.

VSE: @alanforr Offer a formulation of the principle of Falsification then if you disagree with that.

Alan Forrester: @VerbalSiegeEngine You want me to give an account of something that doesn't exist? You're insinuating that Popper held this principle. Provide a quote of Popper giving such a principle. As for your Wikipedia quote, that is the Wikipedia principle of falsification since it's written by Wikipedia not Popper.

VSE: @alanforr LMAO

VSE: @Shadow Starshine You should read the response above if you need a good laugh.

Justin's Comment: This is not a charitable and friendly reaction.

Justin Mallone (quoting Alan): > Provide a quote of Popper giving such a principle.

VSE: The SEP article seems to agree with me. What do you think that means?

Justin Mallone: that you like appeals to authority quite a lot?

Justin's Comment: A less combative and still true reply might have been something like "that misunderstandings of new ideas are common."

VSE: @JustinCEO Lol. I'll take an appeal to the SEP anyday over an appeal to someone's awful blog.

GISTE: It means that you treat SEP as an authority on what Popper said.

Justin's Comment: Note that GISTE is getting at similar content as Justin but is more neutrally written

Justin Mallone: we're big on primary sources here, since you're so sure you are giving an accurate account of what you describe as Popper's views, and since you regard yourself as knowledgable about philosophy in general and this topic in particular this should be trivial for you to do

Justin's Comment: Note, in addition to the obviously flaming re: awful blog, that VSE doesn't challenge the claim he appealed to authority, and essentially appears to concede it, if taken literally. I think this was a flippant/flamey comment though, and that he wouldn't actually concede that he appealed to authority if you asked him about this.

GISTE: nobody asked you to take an appeal to anybody's blog. you're being dishonest. @VerbalSiegeEngine

VSE: @GISTE Curi's blog gets referred to constantly.

Alan Forrester: It gets referred to because curi makes some original arguments and provides actual quotes from material he is discussing and criticising. You do neither of those things.

GISTE: So?

VSE: You all appeal to its assertions as though they're arguments

GISTE: And you believe that why?

VSE: @GISTE I read it.

GISTE: The statement "I read it." does not explain why you believe that I and others in this group "appeal to its assertions as though they're arguments"

VSE:
Everyone here says "nuh uh". When I ask for what you all understand the principle to be I get a lot of "I don't know". I ask why it's wrong I get "it's wrong because".

There are no arguments to be had here. It's quite sad.

Despite the fact that **nobody can explain what Popper held** my arguments are somehow wrong.

AnneB: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/popper/
If anyone wants to see what the SEP says about Popper, this is a link. Section 3, The Problem of Demarcation, is relevant.

VSE (quoting from SEP, quotes indicated by > at beginning of paragraph):

> Popper accordingly repudiates induction and rejects the view that it is the characteristic method of scientific investigation and inference, substituting falsifiability in its place.

Then it says:

> Popper has always drawn a clear distinction between the logic of falsifiability and its applied methodology. The logic of his theory is utterly simple: if a single ferrous metal is unaffected by a magnetic field it cannot be the case that all ferrous metals are affected by magnetic fields. Logically speaking, a scientific law is conclusively falsifiable although it is not conclusively verifiable.

Note the logical problem I posed arises directly as a result of the second paragraph.

Justin Mallone:

> Popper accordingly repudiates induction and rejects the view that it is the characteristic method of scientific investigation and inference, substituting falsifiability in its place.

That's horrifying wrong IMHO.

Popper didn't repudiate induction and then replace it with falsification

re: falsification being some central thing to Popper, this is a common misunderstanding that has been addressed by e.g. certain bloggers you guys aren't big fans of, and is kind of thing that causes people here to have demanding, serious scholarly standards re: things like Popper quotations

Popper thought that the characteristic method of growth of knowledge, including scientific investigations, was conjectures and refutations, or more colloquially guesses and criticism

Justin Mallone:
VSE would you concede in principle that if someone has a very novel view; re some topic on which there is an established view for say 2000 years, that there might be widespread confusion re: the novel view, even assuming good faith efforts to try to understand the novel view?

VSE: @JustinCEO If it is presented cogently.

By cogently I mean what Shadow says. It should be clear and offer some motivation as to why it has merit.

Shadow Starshine: I would say no unless some preview of its merit is shown

Otherwise I'd just be listening to people high on lsd all day

Justin Mallone:
You seem to be responding to something other than what I tried to get across. I'm going to charitably assume the fault is mine, since you both misunderstood me, and make another communication attempt.

Justin Mallone:

Suppose somebody makes a breakthrough in some field - not necessarily philosophy, whatever field. Suppose the breakthrough overturns the very long established wisdom in that field. Yes or no: would you concede that widespread misunderstanding of such a breakthrough is something that might happen, is a possible outcome?

Justin Mallone (rewriting a portion of the previous message in response to criticism re clarity):

Rewrite: Would you concede that widespread misunderstanding of such a breakthrough is a possible outcome? Yes or no, please.

Justin Mallone:

Anyways re: Popper

We think such a scenario happened with him. Meaning that there were widespread misunderstandings

Ongoing, persistent

i don't expect you to find that convincing by itself

But

one thing to consider

Is if you limit yourself to SEP/Wikipedia stuff, and the scenario we describe is true re: misunderstandings, how will you find out you're wrong? OTOH, there's an easy way to check if we're off base. You could try to find a significant conceptual error in the FI account of Popper's views. Since you've got SEP and Wikipedia on your side, which, as I think SS pointed out earlier, should have references to Popper material, it should be like shooting fish in a barrel for ya'll

Re: who can offer the FI account, I consider curi and Alan the Popper experts writing publicly. I've read maybe half a dozen of Popper's books and done extensive discussion but I'm more an of Objectivist.

oh, i mean using quotations btw

primary source

Justin's Comment: Didn't see a direct reply to this

Note that I had in mind using SEP/Wikipedia to find quickly find Popper material to criticize, and use direct quotes of Popper when trying to refute Popper. That's one method they could try. But as we saw in the January 4 discussion in #off-topic, there is heavy heavy resistance to using quotes.