

Tonk

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Some years ago A. N. Prior started a controversy about the meanings of logical connectives.¹ Although the dispute has long since died down, I believe that its real points have not been understood. Yet, as I shall try to show, these are of continuing interest.

I I begin with brief summaries of [11] and [1]. My neglect of [13] does not stem from disrespect. I believe that insofar as they are both clear and right [13] and [1] are at bottom alike, and that the attempt to extract further insights from [13] would take too long.

In [11] Prior attacks the idea that there are certain ("analytically valid") inferences "whose validity arises solely from the meanings of certain expressions occurring in them". For example, the inference from a conjunction to one of its conjuncts is supposed to be valid purely in virtue of the conjunction symbol ('&' or 'and'). As Prior explains:

For if we are asked what is the meaning of the word 'and' . . . the answer is said to be *completely* given by saying that (i) from any pair of statements *P* and *Q* we can infer the statement formed by joining *P* to *Q* by 'and' . . . and that (ii) from any conjunctive statement *P*-and-*Q* we can infer *P*, and (iii) from *P*-and-*Q* we can always infer *Q*. ([11], ¶2)

Prior expresses doubts about this view of 'and', suggesting that an expression "must have some independently determined meaning before we can discover whether inferences involving it are valid or invalid". He finds these doubts confirmed by his observation that if the proffered account of 'and' is correct, we may make *every* inference analytically valid. To do so we introduce the connective 'tonk' according to the rules

*Fred Schmitt helped me.