Are Enthymemes Arguments?

ROY A. SORENSEN*

Although there is disagreement as to how 'enthymeme' is to be defined, there is a consensus that all enthymemes are invalid arguments.[1] Some commentators are sympathetic to the view that invalidity is also a sufficient condition. However, most deny this in order to avoid counting raw non sequiturs as enthymemes. Since the following argument is invalid but not a raw non sequitur, it is the sort of argument most theorist's would wish to count as an enthymeme.

(A) 1. <u>All arguments missing a premise are enthymemes.</u>
     2. This argument is an enthymeme.

Since the premise and conclusion share extralogical constants, it qualifies under relatedness based definitions of 'enthymeme'. Since everyone agrees that the missing premise is 'Argument (A) is missing a premise', definitions that require that the missing premise be salient are also satisfied. Indeed, it is not difficult to find an argument much like (A) that qualifies as an enthymeme even as the term is defined traditionally, that is, as an incompletely stated *syllogism*:

(B) 1. <u>All arguments missing a premise are enthymemes.</u>
     2. All of the arguments written in room 204 of Smith Hall between 10:25 AM and 10:30 AM on January 27, 1986 are enthymemes.

A valid AAA-1 can be obtained by adding the premise 'All of the arguments written in room 204 of Smith Hall between 10:25 AM and 10:30 AM on January 27, 1986 are arguments missing a premise'. Although (B) is not directly self-referential, the fact that it was the only argument written within the specified interval ensures that it is contingently self-referential.

Since self-reference is associated with numerous philosophical difficulties, the reasons offered above for regarding (A) and (B) as enthymemes are not com-

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