

# Arguments and Closure

Trenton Merricks

## 0. Introduction

### The Musk Argument:

1M. Elon Musk is one of the richest people in the world.

2M. If Elon Musk is one of the richest people in the world, then he did not die of a heart attack thirty seconds ago.

Therefore,

3M. Elon Musk did not die of a heart attack thirty seconds ago.

**Closure Principle One (CP1):** Suppose that you believe a claim because it is the conclusion of an argument, you know that that argument's premises entail its conclusion, and you are justified in believing (or know) that that argument's premises are all true. Then you are justified in believing (or know) that claim.

## 1. The Musk Argument, the Zebra Argument, and the BIV Argument

### The Zebra Argument:

1Z. The animal before me at the zoo is a zebra.

2Z. If the animal before me at the zoo is a zebra, it is not a mule disguised as a zebra.

Therefore,

3Z. The animal before me at the zoo is not a mule disguised as a zebra.

### The BIV Argument:

1B. You have hands.

2B. If you have hands, then you are not a brain in a vat.

Therefore,

3B. You are not a brain in a vat.

## 2. The Krusky Argument

### The Krusky Argument:

1K. Elon Musk is one of the richest people in the world.

2K. If Elon Musk is one of the richest people in the world, then any evidence against Musk's being one of the richest people in the world is misleading.

Therefore,

3K. Any evidence against Musk's being one of the richest people in the world is misleading.

### 3. In Defense of Closure Principle One

- you are justified in believing that the animal before you at the zoo is a zebra.
- you are justified in believing that if the animal before you at the zoo is a zebra, then that animal is not a mule disguised as a zebra.
- you are *not* justified in believing that that animal is not a mule disguised as a zebra.

**Closure Principle One Plus (CP1+):** Suppose that you believe a claim because it is the conclusion of an argument, you know that that argument's premises entail its conclusion, and you are justified in believing (or know) that that argument's premises are all true. That argument has additional features  $X_1 \dots X_n$ . Then you are justified in believing (or know) that claim.

### 4. Three Points Regarding Contextualism

- Sentence 1: 'I know that Elon Musk is one of the richest people in the world.'
- Sentence 2: 'I know that if Elon Musk is one of the richest people in the world, then he did not die of a heart attack thirty seconds ago.'
- Sentence 3: 'I do *not* know that Elon Musk did not die of a heart attack thirty seconds ago.'

### 5. The Preface Argument

**Closure Principle Two (CP2):** Suppose that you believe a claim because it is the conclusion of an argument, you know that that argument's premises entail its conclusion, and you are justified in believing (or know) that each of that argument's premises is true. Then you are justified in believing (or know) that claim.