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But that simply isn't true; rethinking truth in argumentation

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Title: "But That Simply Isn't True!", reconsidering truth in argumentation.
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Can we require truth?

What determines the goodness of an argument? For ages two aspects were considered important: truth of the premises and validity of the inference. Under the influence of the dialectical shift in logic over the last thirty years, both these two requirements have been questioned. The validity-requirement was proven unavailing in analyzing fallacies and thus failed as a criterion for the goodness of arguments.1 *Begging the question* is perfectly valid and yet fallacious, whereas some forms of the *ad hominem* make too much sense to be bad. I shall not discuss validity here, and concentrate on the other problematical requirement: truth of the premises. For many informal logicians and their dialectical sisters truth was too stringent, too strong, and too misleading a requirement to be of much use. Too stringent because the truth-value of premises is often indeterminable; we may call this the pragmatic objection. Too strong because many arguments should not convince people where they in fact do; we may call this the empirical objection. Too misleading because many premises are neither true nor false; we may call this the non-cognitive objection. For good reasons, acceptablity is preferred to truth. It is much easier to determine the acceptability of a premise than its truth; acceptable arguments are supposed to be more directly convincing; and acceptability can easily handle the non-cognitive objection (a premiss can be acceptable for different reasons than being true). Hence, as a criterion for argument-goodness the acceptability-requirement is supposed to perform better.

In spite of the energetic conclusions of many informal logicians, however, truth dies harder than expected. Recently, it has been argued that truth cannot be ignored when it comes to argument-assessment. Ralph Johnson, for instance,

joins Derek Allen, and retraces steps in re-acknowledging the relevance of the truth-requirement. There is ample reason to do so. The three objections mentioned above may show limitations to a categorical requirement of truth, but do certainly not disqualify an occasional usefulness of the criterion. After all, the truth-value of many premises *is* determinable, even if not of all. Likewise, even though sometimes we are convinced by false arguments, usually the falsity of a premise is an indication of the badness of an argument. In the same way, the truth-value of many premises *is* decisive, even though some premises may have none. In other words, the pragmatic, as well as the empirical, as well as the non-cognitive objections to the truth-requirement leave sufficient space to allow truth a less prominent, but still an important role to play.

Yet truth cannot replace acceptability completely again. Allen and Johnson merely want to recognize `premise-truth as a criterion of argument goodness in

one important sense and premise-acceptability as a criterion of argument goodness in another important sense' (Allen, 1998, 1). Viewed in this way, both requirements are complementary to each other. The truth-requirement is the ideal, but if this is too much to ask for, we can do with the acceptability-requirement. Still, combining the two requirements is not without difficulties. Ralph Johnson speaks about The Integration *Problem*. It is a problem because the two requirements are not necessarily coherent: `a premise may be true but not acceptable; a premise may be false but acceptable' (Johnson, 1998, 1). As Johnson shows, developing this thought may bring us in the unwelcome position resembling `the old theological doctrine of the two truths: something may be true in philosophy which is not true in theology' (Johnson, 1998, 2). Some argument may be good in the light of the truth-requirement, but not in the light of the truth-requirement, or vice versa.

I am not convinced that we have an important problem facing us. Indeed, I welcome the return of truth in argumentation-theory, but this rediscovery of truth may be of little use if it invites yet another problem. If truth is invoked to serve the problem of argument-assessment, it had better be unproblematical itself. We may observe moreover that, at least negatively, truth and argument-assessment are closely linked: `but that is simply not true' is rather apt to indicate the badness of an argument. Seeing an Integration *Problem* regarding our requirements betrays a metaphysical presupposition resembling a theological doctrine much older and more persistent than the doctrine of two truths Johnson wants to evade: the idea that Truth is One. This doctrine holds that the cosmos forms a coherent unity. It is perhaps the most unchallenged idea that survived the ages down from the ancient Greeks up till today. To show the link to the Integration Problem, as well as to show a way out, it is useful to quickly sketch the history of this metaphysical presumption.

The ancient Greeks used the notion of *Logos* to refer to the order of being as such. Forming a structured unity, human being could gain knowledge of it in virtue of its faculty *nous.* Human rationality, *logos,* had essentially the same structure as the *Logos* of the universe and thus shared in the order of being itself. There is an important philosophical consequence to this idea: knowledge does not pose a *problem*. Although the mechanism of knowledge could be explained, there was no need to defend the possibility of it. All this changed with the so-called `turn to the subject' of modernism. Descartes' methodical doubt was symptomatic for a problem that only came into being in the 17th century: how can we be sure that human knowledge is in tune with the real world of being itself? This uncertainty is also present in Kant's fundamental distinction between the accessible *phenomenal* world, and the *noumenal* world of the Ding-an-sich. This latter realm, albeit containing the real truth of being, was no longer directly accessible for human knowledge. The logos no longer formed a unity. The structure of being itself and the structure of human thinking were no longer the same. It could be hoped, however, that they were still *identical*. That is: that human rationality did not so much partake, but nevertheless reflected the structure of being itself. If so, the lost world of being itself could indirectly be reconstructed by rational endeavors. This idea

demands that human thinking can produce absolutely necessary truths, because only necessity leaves no room for the `real' truth to be different. A minimal condition is that human thinking itself yields an unambiguous unity. Kant, to be sure, recognized this requirement, but he did not postulate it. `There is no metaphysical proof', Onora O'Neill summarizes Kant, `that all aspects of our thinking and doing can be integrated into a single, systematic unity'(1992: 284). For Kant, unified rationality was an ideal to strive for. For us, after two centuries of striving, the fruitfulness of such a quest may have become questionable. Human thinking only seemed to have been diversified. But if human rationality cannot yield a single systematic unity, the very possibilities for a Kantian-like epistemology become rather slim. What remains of an indirect access to the unity, if it remains unclear where the door is? Indeed, what warrants the idea that there is something behind the doors in the first place? If we fail to achieve a unifying rationality, all we have are perspectives.

The legacy of modernism, and of Kant in particular, is that the `real' truth is set at a distance and that we only have access to the world as it appears to us. It is this presumption, also, that underlies the idea that something can be both acceptable and false, or not acceptable while true. Truth and falsity are aspects of the noumenal world, so to say, whereas acceptability is a matter of the phenomenal world. Only under this presumption, it makes sense to hold that human rationality yields acceptable conclusions that are nevertheless `really' false, or vice versa. Johnson's Integration Problem involves the idea that acceptability and truth are as separated as the noumenal and the phenomenal worlds.

It is here that my worries begin. If acceptability and truth are kept separated as is presumed in the Integration Problem, truth seems to become vain, and acceptability becomes incorrigible. In more Kantian terms: if we cannot talk about the *noumenal* world why mention it in the first place? The thing in itself becomes superfluous if it remains inaccessible for human knowledge. If so, the *phenomenal* world is all we have. But lacking the noumenal world, the phenomenal world coincides with any particular perspective.

This problem haunted modern philosophy, as it cherished the Kantian distinction between noumenal and phenomenal world. Even today, a semi-Kantian spirit pervades contemporary philosophy. It is hardly too bold to say that all positions distinguishing the real world and mere human interpretation, (including hermeneuticists, Wittgensteinians, Quineans, and constructivists) apply Kant's basic structure. The terminology has changed: the notion of theory-ladenness of perception is the key-word nowadays. The world is not accessible directly, but only via the classifications of our own perspectives, `language-games', webs of belief, networks, or what have you. We cannot know the world directly, but have to interpret it, and can do so only via our background; our `theory'. Clearly, the structure is basically Kantian.

Yet, the problem remains that `theories' merely form different perspectives. Kant's hypothesis of a unified ideal rationality has not been corroborated.

Human rationality is perspectival, and consequently our interpretation of the real world is not unambiguous. Can we live with this ambiguity or do we need to resolve it? Philosophers tend to opt for the latter: they have not stopped seeking for criteria to solve perspectivism. The Integration Problem shows the same desire: it comes forth from the wish to find criteria by which arguments univocally can be assessed. Some perspectivism may be acknowledged: people do not always agree on things. In fact, for contemporary dialectical logic this is essential because initial dissensus is what gets the argument going. But dissensus is still seen as an unwelcome situation that is to be overcome by argumentation. The requirements of truth and acceptability have normative roles to play: to solve rather than to settle the disagreements.

For this purpose, the notion of acceptability is not sufficient. What is acceptable, after all, depends upon the very perspective one is taking. As Allen says: `a premise is acceptable just in case it is reasonable to accept it' (Allen, 1998, 2). But precisely what is reasonable to belief is up to the standards of one's perspective. It is perfectly suitable for an Azande to belief in witchcraft, (unreasonable as it is to reject something that pervades ones entire culture). A western philosopher, however, is likely to hesitate accepting spell putting and sorcery, (jeopardized as his professional integrity would be were he to engage in *Merlinesque* practices). The problem, of course, is that reasonability cannot transcend the limitation of the perspectives themselves. Although inner-perspectival reasonableness is practically often all we need, it is not sufficient to warrant its own normative force. It cannot establish the `betterness' of any position over others, as there is no general reason to prefer the one to the other. Neither is it possible to criticize perspectives effectively. As inner-perspectival reasonableness simply disqualifies anything that does not cohere with it, no position is liable to substantial criticism from outside. This latter consequence is perhaps more disturbing than the former. We may be able to live with the idea that no perspective stands out over others, but it is hard to swallow that it would be impossible to reject some of them. We do not need to be infallible ourselves, as long as abhorrent perversions can be disqualified.

If a normative answer is called for to decide in perspectivism, many philosophers think that we need a higher-order `reasonableness': rationality. This conviction is also broadly present in contemporary logic. Now the question of acceptability shifts from inner-perspectival *reasonableness* to intra-, or perhaps meta-perspectival *rationality*. The idea is that despite the differences in perspective, there is still much in common and this shared basis suffices to find rational points of departure. Establishing the commonality, however, requires a third neutral logical role of some `unbiased observer', or an `impartial judge', or an `ideal analyst'. The third role is needed, because the respective positions of the arguers themselves bias their perspectives on the commonality. What we need is a neutral opinion, to exercise an unbiased rational verdict on the arguments brought forward. Typically, of course, the logician herself is supposed to be in the position to occupy this position. The issue of argument-assessment is to be seen in this light as well. Participants of a discussion bring forward premises and perform the discussion, but it is the

logician who determines which are the good arguments. Are they acceptable, or even true? Both the requirements of truth and acceptability are instruments for this task of the logician. But what account warrants such a normative status to logicians? Does it need a theologian to remind us humbly that logicians are only human themselves with their own respective perspectives? Or shall we follow Johnson's suggestion and just quote Hamblin: `it is not the logician's particular job to declare the truth of any statement, or the validity of any argument'(1993, 244)? Many logicians, also of dialectical inclination, will consider this thesis much too extreme. But Hamblin is not radical at all. He merely observes that the logician's verdict is either observant, or becomes an element in the discussion itself. By remaining external, however, the logician's opinion is irrelevant for the discussion in progress. By becoming an element within the discussion itself, it loses its neutrality.

Still, even if we acknowledge that the logician's role is perspectival as well, it is often considered important for normative reasons that, at least, there *is* a rational solution to all disagreements. There must be an *ideal* notion of rationality to `cover' inner-perspectival reasonableness. If this were not the case, it is feared, the whole concept of normativity would be in jeopardy. If we want to counter navel-gazing relativism, it must *in principle* be possible to select the true perspective, even if practically we can not identify it. Surely, this move is of no avail when it comes to the normative problem of conflicting perspectives. In fact, it redoubles the epistemological problem of modernism. It faces the problem of how ideal rationality relates to the truth it is supposed to reflect, but it also poses the question of how to select the content of the *rational* solution when different perspectives opt for different *reasonable* solutions. Here again, the ideal rational solution remains external forever on, irrelevant to our human endeavors, or becomes an element in our discussions, thereby leveling down to one of the perspectives in position.

If we need some ideal anchorage of normativity, we might as well take truth itself. Perhaps, truth has played this philosophical role all along. In face of the impossibility to gain access to the world itself, there is hardly any need for a notion of the noumenal world, were it not to provide for some ultimate norm. If, however, the idea of the truth of being itself provides for the ultimate constraint that cannot be established by any perspectival account, it is clear why it cannot be dropped. It is our only hope to withstand relativism. If the perspectival approach is unavoidable, we still need truth to account for a suitable notion of normativity. From this perspective, it comes as no surprise to see the truth-requirement reemerging again. Acceptability as an inner-perspectival notion, is not strong enough to provide for constraint. Neither in rejecting some theses that are, or seem, acceptable under certain circumstances, nor in correcting theses that are in fact accepted, the notion of acceptability suffices. We need the requirement of truth to do so. But if truth is to perform this constraining role it must be independent from the acceptability-requirement. And yet, this gives rise to the Integration Problem: something can be acceptable and yet be false, or be not acceptable despite its truth.

What is Truth?

Requiring truth where it can be attained makes sense. If you can have truth, why settle for anything less? The problem is, can we indeed have it? And in what sense is truth available?

Requiring that a premise is true, seems to involve only the assignment of the truth-predicate to a premise. For such an assignment, it must be possible to give good reasons, or perhaps the absence of good reasons not to assign the truth-predicate may suffice. In either sense, assigning the truth-predicate is a consequence of argumentation, and depends upon the goodness of the supporting argument. If this were all there is to it, there were no reason to drop the truth-requirement. But, this is not at all what is involved in reestablishing the truth-requirement. The requirement is supposed to establish the goodness of arguments, not to depend upon it. If truth-assignment depends upon the goodness of arguments, only the acceptability-requirement can be called in to warrant the normativity we need. But the truth-requirement was dug up to do the reverse: to be able to challenge acceptability where needed.

The truth-requirement does not merely concentrate on the truth-predicate, but on the ontic role of truth. The Integration Problem betrays the faithfulness to a semi-Kantian truth of being itself. Although it may be acceptable to think that some premise is true, (on the basis of which the truth-predicate is assigned!), it may still be the case that the premise really is false, in virtue of the `real' truth of being. In order to give rise to this very possibility, we must distinguish between different `moments' of truth. First of all, the truth-predicate as it is assigned, secondly, a notion of ontic truth of being itself, and thirdly also the relationship between the two. This last `moment' of truth is quickly recognized as correspondent truth: a thought is true if there is a fact corresponding to it. Distinguishing three moments of truth invites confusion, and I propose to discuss the issue in different terms. For the predicative truth, I shall be speaking about `thoughts', deliberately bypassing a discussion on the problem of truth-bearers. Speaking about the ontic truth of being itself, I shall be speaking about `facts'. I shall reserve the term `truth' for speaking about the relationship between the two: when there is a fact corresponding to a thought.

It is sometimes claimed that the correspondence theory of truth is the oldest and the most intuitive theory of truth. Is it not true that true thoughts somehow relate to facts? To my mind, the idea that truth has something to do with a relationship between thoughts and facts, is obvious. `Snow is white' is true if, indeed, snow is white. What is much less obvious, however, is that this relationship fits a correspondence theory of truth.2 At issue, namely, is not merely a correspondence between thoughts and facts, but a *normative direction* between facts and thoughts. The decisive idea behind the correspondence theory of truth is that thoughts are true (or false) *in virtue* of facts. As Quine says: `no sentence is true, but reality makes it so' (1970, 10). The point of the correspondence theory of truth is not so much the link between thoughts and facts, but that thoughts depend normatively upon facts.

It is not hard to see that it is this feature of the correspondence theory that is at issue in re-establishing the truth-requirement as well. The acceptability-requirement ranges over thoughts. Some set of thoughts makes a specific premise acceptable. But we can make mistakes in thinking something to be true: the facts are different. A thought is false if there is no corresponding fact of the matter, and this makes it possible to re-establish truth as to constrain acceptability. It may also be seen that the whole discussion on the relative strengths of truth- versus acceptability-requirements as such, takes place with a general correspondence understanding of truth. Indeed, Johnson's Integration Problem only makes sense when acceptability and truth can come into conflict, i.e. when thoughts and facts can fail to correspond.

The problems of the correspondence understanding of truth are enormous. The very idea of a realm of ontic truth seems either to demand the eternal master-plan of God the Creator, or else remain a persistent but unsupported presumption. Lacking sufficient theological backup, there is not much that supports the idea that Truth is One, nor indeed that there is anything like the real truth of being itself. This, however, is a theological issue and as much as semi-Kantianism depends upon it, this is not the place to dwell upon it. Instead, I shall call attention for two related problems that make cashing out the normative direction of the correspondence understanding of truth difficult, if not impossible.

The normative direction from facts to thoughts demands that we can give an account of mind-independent facts that are as such differentiated. The matter of mind-independence, to be sure, does not hint at the realism/idealism debate. Richard Kirkham shows that it is possible to combine idealism and a correspondence theory of truth. The mind-independence concerns the idea that facts are normative for thoughts, and that consequently they must be independent of the thoughts that express them. Facts must also be differentiated as such. That is: they must have an identity of their own, enabling them to correspond to differentiated thoughts. The thought that snow is white, demands as a corresponding fact that snow is white, and not for instance that snow is frozen water. But how to distinguish the fact that snow is white from the fact that snow is frozen water? How, in other words, can facts be individuated? The problem lies in the demand that a specific thought must correspond to a specific fact. This demands that facts can be individuated without relying on the thought they are supposed to make true. But it seems that only by investigating statements that express facts we can identify them. If this is so, the individuation of facts depends upon the use of words, and thus of thoughts. This is not to suggest, obviously, that the notion of facts becomes a mere matter of words, but it is to deny that language-independent facts can account for the correct use of words, and thus that facts can make thoughts true.

Basically, the idea is quite established, but not sufficiently sunk in. The very Kantian turn made direct access to facts inconceivable, and only by using some form of language `facts' are identifiable. It is merely taking seriously the dogma of contemporary philosophy that we cannot get out of our skins and that

we cannot evade the use of language. This semi-Kantian point, although arguably the widest accepted philosophical doctrine today, makes the basic idea behind the correspondence theory of truth impossible. Only when we can somehow compare thoughts and facts in a neutral way, we could establish the correspondence between thoughts and facts. But if the semi-Kantian theory-ladenness of perception makes any sense, it is precisely denying that such an option were feasible.

This brings us to the second problem: objective comparison. It is surprising to see that contemporary logic depends so much upon the objectivity of the onlooker's position, also in its informal and dialectical branches. True, after the dialectical turn, it is widely acknowledged that different discussants may accept different positions. Dialectical logic acknowledges perspectivism. But the *logician* is still supposed to be in the position to ask whether it is rational to take either one of the perspectives. And this task presupposes that, at least regarding the respective positions of the discussants, the logician is able to get a neutral view. The idea of an unbiased judgement is also crucially involved in the Integration Problem. Only if the real truth-value can be decided upon, it makes sense to contrast it with the fallible acceptability. Only under the presumption that some unbiased analyst is able to distinguish normatively between what is acceptable from some specific standpoint and what really is true the Integration Problem makes sense. What contemporary logic seems to forget is that the analyst is as perspectival as any other and that such a neutral comparison is, after the semi-Kantian turn, by definition impossible.

If it is impossible to make sense of the notion of mind-independent differentiated facts, and if no objective comparison between facts and thoughts is possible, it is impossible to maintain the idea that facts make thoughts true. That is not to say that the notion of either facts or thoughts is superfluous. Nor to say that truth should be dropped. What should be dropped, however, is the normative direction of the correspondence theory of truth. Precisely in this respect the so-called `deflationary' theory of truth distinguishes from the correspondence theory. The deflationary theory of truth says that there is nothing that makes sentences true, but nevertheless maintains that the truth-predicate is important.3 Rather than describing mind-independent facts, deflationary truth aims at expressing mind-dependent acceptance. The truth-predicate marks the acceptance of a contested thesis. It does not require the normative notion of ideal acceptability, but merely uses opinions that have been accepted already.

Acceptance of a disputed thesis is marked by acknowledging its truth, that is, by affirming the appropriateness of the assignment of the truth-predicate. Being thus convinced of its truth, one is committed to it which means that one can be called to defend it. In this sense, we may say that truth marks the transference of epistemic responsibility. There may be nothing more to truth than this. But there is no need to defend such a wide philosophical thesis to see the usefulness of the deflationary notion of truth for argumentation-theory. A deflationary notion of truth marks the closure of argumentation, or at least,

some form of closure. When argumentation starts with a thesis being disputed, as argumentation theory says today, than argumentation stops when the dissensus is resolved. The arguments brought forward by the proponent aims at convincing the opponent of the reasonableness of the thesis involved. If she succeeds in doing so, the opponent may accept that *x* is (indeed, contrary what he initially thought) true. There are other closures of argumentation: turning one's back to each other, grudgingly giving in, surrendering. But accepting truth is the best result one can get. Argumentation aims at truth, even though it often has to do with less.

Clearly, deflationary truth is of a quite different nature than presumed in semi-Kantianism. Most important: it is not considered to be One. Truth is the result of argumentation, and different arguments may yield different conclusions; different truths. This is not the doctrine of two truths, but indeed of many truths. Its function is not to provide access to some primordial realm of an eternal order of being. Its function is to provide for something much like Allen's basic premises: `every argument has at least one premise it does not defend'(Allen, 1998, 1). But the status of these basic premises is not derived from their correspondence with some fact, nor from their alleged acceptability by rational standards, but from the fact that factually they are not challenged. The basicality of premises derives from the mere fact that mutual acceptance makes defense senseless. But such acceptance is often the result of other discussions.

Despite the important difference in understanding the nature of truth, deflationary truth is nevertheless normative as it involves epistemic responsibility. It does not reflect the real nature of being. But this is not a great loss. Precisely because the real nature of being is not reflectable and cannot serve as normative ideal in any sense, we do not need it. All we have are the results of arguments, and the lack of anything more than this undoes its second-rate status. The doctrine that Truth is One is dropped completely, not only in the epistemological sense that it is hard to gain access to it, but also in the sense that it provides an ideal standard. The problem of skepticism fades away when it is ontic rather than epistemic. When no absolutes can be attained there is no need to worry that we cannot attain them.

Solving the Integration Problem

Saying that facts cannot be normative for thoughts, -indeed, suggesting that the normative direction is vice versa-, leaves us with the problem of how to assess arguments. If, as I have maintained, truth is a consequence of arguments, we still face the problem of how to determine the goodness of arguments.

We may first of all observe that the goodness of arguments is not a matter of requirements. Both the requirements of acceptability and truth were designed to assess arguments. But, as we have seen, they both presuppose a correspondence account of truth. Favoring a deflationary understanding of truth denies the need for external requirements. All we need for argument-assessment is *acceptance.* Rather than trying to overcome perspectivism by

seeking some intra- or meta-rationality, or even by appeal to the transcendent truth itself, we may radicalize perspectivism.

Dropping the normative hierarchies of truth and acceptability, all we have is the perspectival notion of acceptance. People simply have opinions and we can use them to convince them of theses they do not as yet accept. In essence, this is the old rhetorical device of audience-orientation. But we should see that it is a dialogical matter: both participants should orient themselves to one another. Dialogico-rhetorical audience-orientation goes both ways: both participants must orient themselves to the standards of the adversary. Not only must the Proponent defend her thesis when called for, the opposition of the Opponent must be reasonable as well. The reasonableness of either position is up to the respective adversary to decide. Both participants of any discussion face, in principle, burden of proof for their positions. Both proposing and opposing may be called for defense, (although such a call is not at all moments in the discussion strategically wise).

The idea is that the particularities of the respective perspectives balance one another. We need no commonality of any kind or a normative hierarchy if this idea flies. P's perspective yields a strategy to convince O, but this strategy only works by the standards of O's perspective. At the same time, however, the reasonableness of O's standards is under the control of P's perspective. The two perspectives yield a balanced normative structure that is local but very strong in nature. This is roughly how it works. O, having her own background, questions *t*. P, having his own background, is committed to *t* and wants to convince O. He can achieve this end only when O indeed will come to accept *t*, and he needs to address O's background to find supporting arguments. Thus, his task is to find premises that are in fact accepted by O. If O leaves a premise unchallenged, this premise is *ipso facto* a basic premise. There is no defense needed, because there is nothing challenged. Yet, O can decide not to accept some premise. Such a move may evoke a question of P: `why don't you accept *x*, (you accept *y* don't you? (and *x* and *Y* are analogous cases))'. O may, thus, be called to show the reasonableness of her opposition and can do so only by acknowledging the standards of her adversary: P. The expression `but that just isn't true!' annihilates all argumentative force in as far as the adversary is committed to the falsity of the argument advanced. But clearly, making such a bold statement brings along burden of proof and may be in need of defense. Only when the falsity of the premise at issue can be proven to the respective adversary, it is wise to use such a counter-argument.

Such a dialogico-rhetorical normative structure plays on the perspectival standards of the participants themselves. The question of premise-assessment is not something to be decided externally, but only makes sense within the discussion itself. We have no need for any truth-requirement or acceptability-requirement as distinguished from the question of whether some premise is accepted. Such a radical perspectivist approach can make sense of an inner-perspectivist notion of goodness of arguments. It yields, but does not demand truth.

This is a very far cry from thinking that an argument can be good without the audience knowing it to be good. Allen argues even that `it is perfectly conceivable that an argument with true premises not known to be true by the arguer or by the audience should be logically adequate'(Allen, 1995, 219). I willfully admit not to be able to conceive so perfectly: I fail to see the adequacy of irrelevance. Only when the logician is in the position to isolate specific premises as not merely true, but really true, it is conceivable that we can make sense of `true premises not known to be true by the arguer or by the audience'. But if the logician can isolate them, why not the arguers themselves? And if the arguers can be mistaken (as they apparently are in Allen's example), why not the logician? It takes a Russellian type of atomistic logic to make sense of Allen's proposals. But such a type of logic was precisely what was left behind in the dialectical turn. This may have been a big mistake, but it takes good arguments to show the mistake. And a mere repetition of the outdated truth-appeal is not good enough.

In adopting a dialogico-rhetorical approach, and its subsequent deflationary notion of truth, we lose the possibility that the logician occupies an onlooker's perspective that is normative regarding discussions in progress. What is gained is that the Integration Problem is not a problem. Seen from a dialogico-rhetorical perspective, the problem is misleading from the start. A true premise can be not-acceptable, and a false premise acceptable, only under the assumption that the respective real truth-values are hidden. But if they are hidden, why bother about them? Only when the allegedly real truth-value can be exposed, it makes sense to take it into account. And obviously, exposing truth is relevant for acceptability. As soon as the falsity of a premise is exposed, its initial acceptability vanishes, or vice versa. The truth-value of a premise is one of the main reasons for its acceptability, but this simply to say that truth and acceptability are not completely independent from each other as is presumed in the Integration Problem. The same conclusion suggests itself when we see *how* truth constrains acceptability as it is supposed to do. It is not the mere truth-value that provides the necessary force to constrain acceptability. Only when the truth-value is recognized as such, a mistaken presumption can be corrected. Only when a mistake is shown to be mistaken, it is possible that truth corrects acceptability, this puts truth under the guidance of acceptability itself. Or rather perhaps: of acceptance. In any way, truth and acceptability cannot remain two distinguished realms but this undercuts the very possibility for the Integration Problem. This is good news: there is not much of an Integration *Problem*.

Still, obviously, betting on dialogico-rhetorical acceptance does not yield infallible conclusions. Rather than saying that an acceptable premise can be *false*, however, we might say that we can be *mistaken* in accepting something. The difference between those two ways of putting it is the difference between a static situation and a dynamic process. Seen from a correspondence theory of truth, a premise can be acceptable and false at the same time. From a deflationary perspective, this is nonsense. We can be mistaken, however, in that an accepted premise can turn out to be false, but it needs argumentation

to show this. A mistake is not a thought that does not correspond to a fact, but is simply a better argument contrariwise. Only arguments can show arguments wrong. If, as I think it does, a dialogico-rhetorical approach provides for a sufficiently strong notion of how the goodness of arguments is determined within argumentative praxis, we can conclude to the idea that argumentative acceptance yields truth. If so, the Integration Problem is solved.

Conclusion

Dropping truth from the study of argumentation has been too hasty. There is ample reason to maintain truth, especially when it comes to premises. Truth, however, can not be required as a criterion to assess to goodness of arguments. Rather, truth marks the acceptance of theses that are no longer challenged and that thus may perform a basic role in other arguments. Truth, thus, plays in *internal* role in a discussion, rather than an external one in assessing arguments from an onlooker's perspective.

The demand of an unbiased, external, neutral judgment is the source of much confusion. It presumes a logical position that escapes perspectivism, but if such position were attainable, we would not have the problem it is designed to solve. After the modernist Kantian turn, moreover, we cannot appeal to the truth of being itself, and we must acknowledge perspectivism. But if we do so, no privileged position for the logician herself is conceivable. This takes the modesty to admit that even the logician's position is only *a* perspective. Acknowledging this, however, frees us from the demand to exercise normative control over discussants. The logician may elucidate arguments, may give advice, or train people in argumentative techniques, but her task is not to provide for argumentative normativity. It is not up to the analyst to decide what is acceptable. It is up to the respective adversary which argument is accepted.

If my dialogico-rhetorical proposal provides for a sufficiently strong notion of inner-dialogical normativity, the goodness of arguments is something that is determined within the discussion itself. Both participants contribute to the normative field that is erected between them, -either in advancing or accepting argumentative moves-, which means that the resultant conclusion is indeed a product of both their perspectives. The result is truth. Or rather: the transference of epistemic responsibility for some thesis formerly not accepted. Questioning the thesis initiated the discussion in the first place. Accepting it's truth closes the discussion.

Endnotes

1Cf. Hamblin, 1993; Govier, 1987.

2Cf. Kirkham, 1995, 133f.

3The deflationary theory of truth should be distinguished from the redundancy theory of truth. They are easily confused because both think some aspect of truth is superfluous. The latter rejects the truth-predicate redundant, the former

denies the usefulness of the idea of ontic truth.

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