

## INTRODUCTION

For a number of years now I have studied issues in informal logic and argumentation theory in parallel with aspects of Hilary Putnam's philosophy. For a roughly similar amount of time I have been puzzled by the failure of theorists within these respective areas of inquiry to forge interesting and revealing connections between the obviously similar questions and concerns of these areas. Of course, in one respect this lack of shared research interests is not entirely unexpected – it is more the product of the type of disciplinary divisions that exist within the humanities in general and within philosophy in particular than it is the product of any type of conceptual inadequacy on the part of the theorists who are working within these disciplines. However, in another respect the continuing separation of such transparently related areas of inquiry can only result in their mutual conceptual impoverishment. A more interdisciplinary examination of concepts such as truth and argument is not timely so much as it is urgent. It is hoped that the papers contained in this issue of *Philosophica* will go some way to at least initiating such an examination.

In *Exemplifying an Internal Realist Model of Truth*, Mark Weinstein proposes an internal realist account of truth that avoids the pernicious consequences of sociological and relativistic conceptions of this notion through a framing of truth according to objectively definable standards of inquiry. The wider context in which this account of truth is motivated is complex and spans much of Putnam's philosophy and of the work of informal logicians. Putnam, Weinstein claims, correctly demonstrates through deliberations that are metamathematical in nature the failure of mathematical and other formal approaches to capture significant philosophical notions – the demonstration, premised on the Löwenheim-Skolem theorem, of the indeterminacy of the reference relation between theories and their models is a case in point. This same conclusion of the inadequacy of formal and mathematical approaches, this time to model

key argumentative concepts, should already be evident to informal logicians, given the transparent failure of the attempt to capture 'complex argumentation' by means of 'standard formal models'. However, in rejecting formal approaches and metamathematical theorising, Putnam, Weinstein contends, has rejected too much and, specifically, 'does not explore the possibilities of flexible model-theoretic construction as a device for clarifying problems of the sort that he is concerned with'. Such construction, Weinstein argues, makes possible a non-standard account of truth, the essential properties of which is that it is based on a form of empirical inquiry – Weinstein opts for that of physical chemistry – that has a 'prima facie relation to truth', it is capable of capturing the 'dialectic of theory change' and is 'normatively compelling' and has a sufficient level of articulation to permit the elaboration and criticism of its underlying structure. This alternative account of truth has both a general philosophical result – the generation of an inquiry-based, non-relativistic yet context-sensitive realism – and a more specific informal logical result, in that it complements the theory of fallacies and is a 'necessary adjunct' to a theory of reasoned dialogue.

In *Hilary Putnam on the End(s) of Argument*, Groarke and Groarke apply Putnam's pragmatist epistemology to two interrelated issues about the 'end' of argument in informal logic. The first sense in which these theorists intend the term 'end' is most accurately characterised by the ancient Greek term *telos* and describes the purpose or goal to which argument is put. This sense of the term, Groarke and Groarke contend, is naturally pragmatic: 'Arguments are *tools* which further the ends of individuals and groups' (italics added). It is the neglect of the pragmatic character of argument, these theorists argue, that makes some informal logicians conclude that it is unclear how we can bring argument to an 'end' – the second sense of this term. The termination of argument appears problematic for the reason that philosophy's impulse to abstract theorising makes it seem that an inference from the premises of an argument to its conclusion is only possible given an implicit premise (IP) – an 'associated conditional' – to the effect IF PREMISE 1 (P1) AND PREMISE 2 (P2), THEN CONCLUSION (C). However, the inference from P1 AND P2 AND IP to C is itself only possible given a further implicit premise, that IF P1 AND P2 AND IP, THEN C. The infinite regress that is thus established is the basis of longstanding sceptical challenges in philosophy. This same regress, Govier argues, vitiates Johnson's

commitment to a dialectical tier in argument. In his turn, Johnson identifies an infinite regress in the informal logical theory of deductivism. Groarke and Groarke argue that this regress is not eluded by Johnson's rejection of the 'premise plus inference' conception of argument. A way out of this regress, they contend, is to be found in Putnam's pragmatist epistemology, specifically its emphasis on conventions of argumentation that are founded on considerations of practical utility.

In *Evaluating Fallacies: Putnam's Model-Theoretic Legacy*, I argue that it is now commonplace in fallacy inquiry for fallacy theorists to view most, if not all, of the so-called informal fallacies as reasonable or plausible forms of argument within certain contexts of use. However, even as these theorists proceed to develop *pragmatic* standards of fallacy evaluation, many of them, I contend, continue to harbour doubts about the rational merits of use-related notions in the evaluation of fallacies. Thus we find theorists rejecting user-relative concepts like acceptance on the grounds that these concepts are normatively 'too weak' for the task of fallacy evaluation. I relate the fallacy theorist's rejection of user-relative notions in fallacy evaluation to this theorist's quest for *metaphysical* standards of evaluation. These standards, I contend, come about through the fallacy theorist's assumption of a metaphysical standpoint in fallacy evaluation. This standpoint creates a dissatisfaction within us for our mundane rational standards of argument evaluation, leading us both to reject these standards and to reject as fallacious any argument that conforms to these standards. I demonstrate this latter type of rejection in the case of an examination of how fallacy theorists have proceeded to evaluate the argument from ignorance fallacy. The same metaphysical standpoint that I am claiming underlies our rational evaluation of the fallacies is revealed and challenged by Hilary Putnam in his model-theoretic argument against metaphysical realism. That argument concludes with a charge of referential indeterminacy against the metaphysical realist. This indeterminacy is effectively dissolved, Bas van Fraassen contends, on a pragmatic conception of language, the essential feature of which is its emphasis on the roles of user and use in language. I will argue that it is only when we have developed truly a pragmatic conception of *argument* with a similar emphasis on users and use that we will be able to overcome the metaphysical standards that continue to dominate the evaluation of fallacies.

In *Putnam, Truth, and Informal Logic*, Jeffrey Kasser and Daniel Cohen pursue a concept of truth that is both consistent with Putnam's reflections on this notion and, importantly, performs a significant normative function in the task of argument evaluation. A central Putnamian idea for Kasser and Cohen is that our practices of inquiry and argumentation are primary in developing a notion of truth. However, this same notion of truth permanently transcends those practices and, in so doing, is distinct from rational acceptability. Kasser and Cohen chart Putnam's long-standing preoccupation with the concept of truth, a preoccupation that has seen Putnam reject his former metaphysical realist position and then subsequently critically engage with Richard Rorty on the significance of this rejection. A Rortyan conception of truth, Putnam contends (and Kasser and Cohen agree), fails to adequately capture the truth concept that underlies our rational practices of conversation and inquiry, practices that 'do not construe truth along the lines of "could be justified to ourselves at our best"'. While Putnam has wrestled and, indeed, continues to wrestle with the varying emphases of different conceptions of truth, a similar struggle, Kasser and Cohen contend, is evident in informal logic and argumentation theory between the different notions of truth implicit in logical, dialectical and rhetorical conceptions of argument. A logical conception of argument, and specifically the logical argumentative concepts of validity, consistency, entailment and contradiction, are 'an expression of argumentation's internal aspiration to transcendence' in truth. The rhetorical tradition of argument, for which there is a 'sense that there is no deeper grounding than our common practices of reasonableness', captures the importance of locating 'a practice-transcendent account of truth within our practices of argument and inquiry'. By embodying central features of the argumentative tradition, Putnam's emerging concept of truth can usefully inform the development of a notion of argumentative truth and receive essential validation from the operation of this notion within one of our key rational practices.

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