

Truth, Logic and Dialogue

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Abstract


In this talk I will review various philosophical conceptualisations of the notion of 'truth', by way of then sketching a conception rooted in the American Pragmatist tradition; one that seeks to clarify concepts in terms of the effects they have on practice. In particular, I will advocate for a conception of truth as a norm that (implicitly) motivates enquiry and dialogue with the purpose of resolving conflict and uncertainty. For this, arguably, is how truth functions in practice. I suggest that this conception provides a compelling case for formalising non-monotonic logics in terms of normative constraints governing the contents of, and relations between, speech acts in certain kinds of dialogue. I then review how argumentative characterisations of non-monotonic reasoning, and their generalisation to distributed reasoning via dialogue, are a strong candidate for such formalisations. Finally, I will point to how such conceptualizations of truth and non-monotonic reasoning might help address contemporary concerns about the post-truth world we find ourselves in now, as well as efforts to ensure beneficial rather than harmful impacts of Artificial Intelligence.

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