Book Review


The 11 papers in the collective volume ‘Ways of Argumentation’ (‘Formen der Argumentation’), edited by the German philosopher and argumentation theorist G.-L. Lueken, stem from a variety of theoretical and institutional backgrounds, although philosophical perspectives dominate. Most of the contributors – including the editor, who has written an important book on incommensurability as a problem for rational argumentation1 – are distinguished scholars in the field of argumentation theory and analysis, both in the German-speaking and Anglo-Saxon world.

Most of the papers were originally written for quite different purposes. Four of them (that is, those written by Chr. Lumer, K. Lorenz, B. Strecker, O. Scholz) were first presented at the workshop ‘Logic and Argumentation’ at the University of Leipzig, Germany in April 1996, organized by G.-L. Lueken. Four others appear for the first time as (revised) German versions of English originals which have already been published elsewhere (A. Deppermann, F. Kambartel, M.H. Salmon/C.M. Zeitz, H. Wohlrapp). Finally, three papers have been especially written for this volume, namely, those by G.-L. Lueken, P. Stekeler-Weithofer and N. Rescher.

The papers are grouped together in four sections. The first two sections contain theoretically orientated contributions dealing with the relationship of logic and argumentation theory (Lueken, Lumer) and the establishment of (logical) rules of argumentation (Kambartel, Lorenz, Stekeler-Weithofer). The papers in the last two sections are empirically orientated contributions, which deal with semantic, hermeneutic (Strecker, Deppermann, Scholz) and pragmatic analyses of argumentation (Wohlrapp, Rescher, Salmon/Zeitz).

Lueken’s article ‘Paradigmen einer Philosophie des Argumentierens’ (‘Paradigms of a Philosophy of Argumentation’) opens the volume with a classification of recent studies in argumentation according to a threefold distinction between a logical, a forensic and a dialogical-pragmatical paradigm, respectively (pp. 17ff.). Lueken criticizes the reductionist tendencies within the logical paradigm, but also the danger inherent in both the logical and the forensic paradigm – the latter is exemplified with van Eemeren/Grootendorst’s Pragma-Dialectics – to see everyday argumentation as inherently deficient. Therefore, Lueken argues for the third alternative. In this approach, too, rules for argumentative dialogues are developed which should enable the discussants to free themselves from the pressures of individual and/or group interests and to improve a thesis until all potential objections are met. But the dialogical-pragmatic approach in the sense of Lueken is characterized by a less normative and more

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dynamic view of the dialogue rules, which can always be challenged and changed during an ongoing discussion.

In the second article (‘Argumentationstheorie und Logik’ – ‘Argumentation Theory and Logic’), the German philosopher Lumer develops his earlier work on the theory and analysis of argumentation\(^2\) to deal with the controversial issue whether formal logic and argumentation theory are two independent fields of research or could be treated as (sub-)components of one and the same theory. Lumer criticizes reductionist attempts from both sides, but insists that argumentation theory presupposes formal logic, but not the other way round. Moreover, Lumer defends a monological view of argumentation (p. 55). He then sketches an overview of the functions of an argumentation theory, among them, the development of a theory of deductive and non-deductive forms of argumentation. Non-deductive forms of argumentation have to be described according to criteria of adequacy (‘Adäquatheitsbedingungen’), which are relative to specific situations and have to be distinguished from criteria of validity (‘Gültigkeitsbedingungen’), which are context-independent (p. 61).

The German philosopher Friedrich Kambartel tries to establish a theoretical distinction which is often neglected in discussions about the (lack of) preciseness in everyday language and languages for special purposes, namely, the distinction between ‘Strenge und Exaktheit’ (‘Rigour and Exactness’). On the one hand, ‘exactness’ (‘Exaktheit’) is defined by Kambartel as the property of an expression \(a\) in a language \(L\) to have its use determined by semantically invariant messages (where semantic invariance can be absolute or relative to some standard situations). Moreover, the use of \(a\) in \(L\) is schematically controlled by formal rules (p. 82). On the other hand, ‘rigour’ (‘Strenge’) is defined as a type of preciseness which is typical for ‘reason’ (‘Vernunft’). According to Kambartel, reason typically does not try to idealize away specific contexts and situations of language use, but tries rather to take into account all relevant problems, all relevant standards of rationality and to transcend group-specific perspectives of problems within given situations (p. 84).

In the next two articles, the German philosophers Kuno Lorenz (‘Sinnbestimmung und Geltungssicherung’ – ‘Determination of Sense and Guarantee of Validity’) and Pirmin Stekeler-Weithofer (‘Schlüsse, Folgen und Begründungen’ – ‘Inferences, Conclusions and Justifications’) try to show that the rules of formal logical systems ultimately have a pragmatic basis. Starting from elementary (speech) acts, Lorenz systematically develops pragmatic and semiotic functions of (more) complex linguistic expressions and utterances. In his view, arguments are to be defined as linguistic means to justify or challenge the conviction of a discussant in a dialogue, who thinks he or she has found a winning strategy establishing the truth of a statement (p. 106). Stekeler-Weithofer insists on the fact that justifications cannot be reduced to deductions within a formal system. Justifications within everyday argumentation and languages for special