

THE VALUE OF TRUTH

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Abstract. This paper deals with the question whether truth is valuable and, eventually, what kind of value is applicable to it. First, I describe a trend of 20th century philosophy – ‘veriphobia’ – that challenges the value of truth. Then I use two arguments loosely based on the distinction between object-language and meta-language to show that veriphobia ultimately fails to make sense of its claims. With the value of truth regained, I discuss the matter of cognitive and pragmatic truth value, presenting arguments both against the view according to which the cognitive value of truth is intrinsic to truth itself and the view according to which truth is pragmatically valuable. In the end I propose a new way to understand the cognitive value of truth.

Keywords: truth, value, ‘veriphobia’, object-language, meta-language, cognitive truth value, pragmatic truth value.

I. ‘Veriphobia’

Many philosophers, such as Richard Rorty, Stephen Stich, Jane Heal (Haack 1996:57), among others, regard truth as a worthless label attached to propositions, as having nothing to add to the content of a belief, as a mirage which is virtually unattainable by researches and scientists, and as a linguistic tool in the hands of tyrants. I will unite these positions, notwithstanding their differences, under the term ‘veriphobia’¹: *the doctrine that truth is not valuable* due to various reasons, including (but not limited to) its apparent unattainability, its semantical redundancy, its knowledge friendly (and therefore, allegedly, power hungry) character, its tendency to put the knowledgeable above the ignorant, etc. One would not be terribly wrong to say that currently ‘veriphobia’ dominates

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¹ The term is borrowed from Pascal Engel (Engel & Rorty 2007:1).

continental philosophical thought, the best example of the case being post-modernism's Jean-François Lyotard (Lyotard 1984:45), Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1983:6) and Michel Foucault (Foucault 1980:131) (and, of course, the tradition that follows in their wake).

II. Non-specialized vs. specialized truth theories

Even if one would readily grant credit to 'veriphobia', there remains an aspect of truth that cannot be cast aside using any kind of specialized argumentation/narrative whatsoever, namely the intuitive necessity to deal with truth-related matters in one's ordinary everyday life. Philosophers could construct all sorts truth-related argumentation and/or narration (including, of course, the 'veriphobic' sorts) and this would do little to alter and even less to eliminate the everyday 'truth' and 'truth'-related usage. And since this usage is serving (at least) the needs of communication, it cannot possibly be without any value whatsoever. This latter point appeals to a certain intuition of value, namely that what is being used (in this case the word 'truth' and its semantic relatives) is valuable in some way or another. If one wants to challenge this claim, she should 1) stop using truth-related vocabulary in her everyday life and 2) alter/eliminate this vocabulary for *all* other speakers as well. I consider 1) as highly unlikely and 2) as impossible. Then, taking the 'invulnerability' of the truth predicate in everyday language to be a strong, stable premise, I shall try to present counter-arguments against the core features of all veriphobic positions. In order to do that, I shall adopt certain useful abbreviations:

FTT – folk truth theory: with this term I refer precisely to the philosophically inert amorphous congregation, loosely formed around the everyday usage of truth-related vocabulary: "Tell me the truth", "What he told them was not true", "It is true that that she was there the other day", etc. By the term "folk" I imply that FTT is not theory proper, but rather a quasi-theory that fails to meet the standards generally attributed to theories proper: explicitness, structure, coherence, etc.

STT – specialized truth theory: by this term I refer to all philosophical truth theories. All typologies of inflationist truth theories in the field of philosophy are typologies of STTs, i.e. all theories that aim at specifying the nature of truth are STTs. Certain conservative deflationist theories can also be treated as STTs – for

instance, Paul Horwich's minimalism – since they do not reject the function of the truth predicate.

VT – veriphobic theory: this is a kind of theory that relies on specialized argumentation in order to establish explicitly or implicitly that truth is not valuable. In addition to postmodernism and neopragmatism, certain radical deflationist theories (such as the one proposed by A. Ayer, for instance) can also be counted as veriphobic in the sense that they attempt to show that the truth predicate is obsolete.

VT is obviously a hard nut to crack: is a VT a special case of STT or is it something completely different? It resembles a STT by virtue of its non-folk characteristics (academic origin, specialized terminology and argumentation, etc.) yet it is hardly a STT proper since it does not take truth to be an acceptable philosophical topic at all.

III. Meta-language

One way to make sense of the distinctions between FTT, STT and VT is to loosely apply Alfred Tarski's formal languages-related distinction between object-language and meta-language to FTT context, i.e. to natural language, and consequently to STT and VT context. It is a move that Tarski himself seems to allow when he writes:

“It should be noted that these terms ‘object-language’ and ‘meta-language’ have only a relative sense. If, for instance, we become interested in the notion of truth applying to sentences, not of our original object-language, but of its meta-language, the latter becomes automatically the object-language of our discussion; and in order to define truth for this language, we have to go to a new meta-language – so to speak, to a meta-language of a higher level. In this way we arrive at a whole hierarchy of languages.” (Tarski 1944:3 50)

Then:

1. FTT would be the non-explicitly delineated meta-language that would be used to define the status of object-directed statements (which would form our basic object-language). We all have an abundance of trivial examples for FTT instantiations.

2. STTs usually define FTT cases along different lines: what underlays truth-related vocabulary (the problem of the nature of truth), what is the function of the truth predicate, how is this function realized, etc. Clear-cut cases of such STTs are Aristotle's correspondence-resembling theory (*Metaphysics*: 1011b25), John Austin's correspondence theory (Austin 1970:122) and Paul Horwich's minimalism (Horwich 2005:175, 176). Then a STT would be a theory with meta-FTT status – it would define certain FTT cases.

3. VTs criticize the validity of STTs. Post-modernism VTs, for instance, tend to attack STTs globally under the “power hungry” accusation (Foucault 2007:43, for instance). Radical deflationists see STT endeavors as consequences of linguistic misunderstanding (Ayer 1946:87). The neopragmatist Richard Rorty argues that the concept of truth is ontologically void since “we have no criterion for truth other than justification” (Rorty 1998:2). It seems then that a VT would generally be a theory with meta-STT status since it deals in defining the limits of STTs. To my knowledge a VT that aims *explicitly* and *succeeds* to alter/eliminate the “wrong”, “harmful”, etc. everyday life truth-related vocabulary is yet to be expounded.

IV. The post-VT argument

All the three abbreviations then refer to different levels of meta-language: FTT is level 1 (meta-language defining basic object-language), STT would be level 2 (meta-meta-language with respect to basic object-language and meta-language with respect to FTT) and VT would be level 3 (meta-meta-meta language with respect to basic object-language, meta-meta language with respect to FTT and meta-language with respect to STT). Each one of these levels allows one to make claims about the truth value of the statements contained within the preceding level. I shall attempt to exemplify this:

(P1) “His statement that P was true because P” (FTT)

(P2) “P1 is true because truth is correspondence between statement and state of affairs” (STT)

(P3) “P2 has no value since it aims at defining truth and truth need not be defined for it is but a conceptual tool that the power hungry use as to oppress and control their subjects; thus truth is to be feared and rejected.” (VT)

It seems then that VT gains the philosophical 'higher ground' due to its superior meta-meta-meta status: it literally has the last word and, along the Tarski's lines, we should claim that VT is semantically richer than its object language. Yet an important question remains: what do we need in order to *accept* (P3)? The first response that comes to mind is that accepting (P3) would largely depend on the other claims that a particular VT endorses. For instance, if it still allows some statements to be true in certain manner, (P3) could turn out to be one of those statements. Yet such position would not be VT proper, but rather a STT, since VT by definition rejects the value of truth – no statements can be true since ascribing truth to a statement is not valuable. Then we should add another line to the example:

(P3.1) "Since truth is to be rejected no statements can be labeled as true (i.e., the predicate 'is true' is harmful/void/redundant/meaningless, etc., and thus – not valuable." (VT)

Now it turns out that (P3) & (P3.1) are neither true nor false since they are stated within a theory that rejects the need of the truth predicate. So if we continue the series with another "post-VT" meta level that defines (P3) & (P3.1) it could look like:

(P4) (P3) & (P3.1) have no truth value. (post-VT)

The acceptability conditions of (P3) & (P3.1) then turn out to be quite unclear. It is not the case that we accept only true statements; we tend to accept well justified statements although they can possibly be false. Yet we do accept such statements only if we preserve an epistemic attitude according to which the statement in question *could be true*. It is precisely this attitude that is cast down by a VT since no statement *could ever be true*, including the statements used to expound the particular VT. I do not imply that VT is thus shown to be self-contradictory from a purely logical point of view; rather, I claim that VT does not offer a plausible manner in which one could rationally accept the very statements that constitute a particular VT.

V. The pre-VT argument

Every definition of a statement or, more generally, every type of treatment of a statement relies on the treated statement being asserted. Thus we can formulate a contingency chain in the example given above: (P1) is contingent on object language, (P2) is contingent on (P1), (P3) is contingent on (P2), etc.

However, this contingency is not necessarily *only* a matter of the treated statement being asserted. Taking for granted that language has (at least) a communicative function, asserting a statement has to rely on certain motives, i.e. if one asserts a statement one has to find value either in the statement being asserted or in the assertion itself. I have already stated that I take the value of FTT for granted and for philosophically unassailable because of the fairly obvious (and daily confirmed) value in asserting statements about the world and then defining the status of these statements.

The case with STT and VT however cannot be that uncomplicated – their value cannot be defended simply by appealing to intuitions and everyday life practice. Yet, since both STT and VT are composed of statements (such as: “*Truth is correspondence*”, “*Truth is matter of conventionally applied meanings*”, “*Truth cannot be valuable since the truth predicate does not add anything to the meaning of a given sentence*”, “*Truth is socially destructive since it is a legitimation of power asymmetry*”, etc.), it seems plausible enough that these statements are somehow valuable; why assert them otherwise? Their value, of course, could have nothing to do with truth: a VT statement for instance might be valuable since it “*demythologizes*” the concept of truth (Rorty & Engel 2007:12) and thus creates conditions for social equity. However, in the light of the contingency chain explained above, a value-related problem for VT emerges and it goes like this:

1. VT statements that deny the value of truth in various manners are indirectly contingent on FTT statements (this would mean that STT statements are directly contingent on FTT statements and VT statements are directly contingent on STT statements) that are valuable in terms of their truth-defining function.
2. Thus it turns out that FTT contingent VTs end up denying the truth-related value of FTT statements that ultimately serve as VTs' objects. At times such attacks are explicitly directed towards particular STTs (the usual victim tends to be the correspondence theory), but the denial of the value of truth that follows is global (e.g. Rorty 1994:xvii & *ibid.*:153).
3. The *raison d'être* of the objects in question is precisely their truth-related value: if truth was really not valuable, the objects of VT would not be available, i.e. FTT statements would have never been asserted because, since truth is not valuable, speakers would not have had any motives for asserting them.

4. So if VT is correct its objects are (counterfactually) unavailable.

5. But VT is meta-language and so it relies on its objects (in this case – STT statements and, consequently, FTT statements) in order to function at all. Without FTT statements to be treated within STTs and consequently without STTs to be treated within VTs, all VTs fail.

This contingency problem for VT often goes unnoticed precisely because the contingency relation between VT and FTT is mediated by STT. Thus theorists defending the value of truth usually defend a particular STT that is “under attack” by VT proponents (see for instance Moser 2002:11). Such defense can never be entirely successful because STTs, as philosophical theories proper, rely on argumentation, and, broadly speaking, no philosophical argument is ever invulnerable to another argument, series of counter-arguments or implicitly persuasive narration that could simply deny the premises of the attacked argument in favor of radically different premises of their own (as often happened in the continental tradition with what could be generalized as radical antirealist approaches – G.W.F. Hegel, F. Brentano, E. Husserl, etc.). Here I propose that the value of truth can only be defended conclusively when it is defended not immediately with regard to a STT, but by appealing to FTT, as I have attempted above, since FTT is plausibly “invulnerable”² to philosophical argumentation and/or narration. The two FTT-based anti-VT arguments I have considered here could be used by STT proponents in order to show that what VT tries to accomplish (1) makes its acceptance irrational and (2) makes it incapable to fulfill its role as meta-language, i.e. to treat, criticize, etc. STTs. Then the debate on truth can uninterruptedly proceed among STTs only.

VI. Cognitive vs. pragmatic truth value

Now that there is a considerable deal of certainty over the fact that truth is valuable it remains to be seen what kind of value we are talking about. The debated possibilities are, classically, cognitive (represented currently by value

² It would be useful to repeat here the conditions that one should fulfill as to deny such invulnerability: 1) stop using truth-related vocabulary in her everyday life and 2) alter/eliminate this vocabulary for *all* other speakers as well.

turn epistemologists, for instance) and pragmatic value (represented by pragmatists, for all their differences). The former could be identified with the view that truth is by itself a value to be attained. This view is advocated by the representatives of the recent so called 'value turn' in epistemology and could be traced back to the Aristotelian doctrine of intellectual virtues. In this context, truth is the ultimate goal of intellectual virtues and as such is *goal in itself* (i.e., its value is *intrinsic*) and *not goals-as-means-to* (its value is not *extrinsic*). The prominent contemporary epistemologist Ernest Sosa makes this position clear when he says: "Rational beings pursue and value truth (the true, along with the good and the beautiful)." (Sosa 2001:49). Or let us consider Jonathan Kvanvig's formulation, which is even more explicit: "...the value of truth is not in its capacity to further other interests we might have, but it's rather intrinsic to truth itself" (Kvanvig 2003:40).

A notable problem with the truth-as-value-in-itself position is that it presupposes a distinction between what Kvanvig calls 'true belief', on the one hand, and 'empirically adequate belief', on the other (ibid.:40). The point of this distinction is to reduce the pragmatic relevance only to the empirically adequate belief and thus preserve the cognitive value of true belief. The assumption is that empirically adequate beliefs might turn out to be untrue (ibid.:42) and so we must accept that there are beliefs which are more valuable than merely empirically adequate beliefs, namely – true beliefs. What is problematic here is the impossibility to actually refer to a true belief and then to an empirically adequate belief in order to give this distinction a precise meaning. In other words, empirically adequate beliefs might at the same time be true beliefs yet we could never know that and vice versa – beliefs that are supposedly true could be merely empirically adequate and yet we could never know that. For an empirically adequate belief turns out to be untrue only by virtue of another empirically adequate belief; there is no alternative to that since we, humans, are creatures of experience and we do not have non-experientially related beliefs. Therefore the distinction between empirically adequate beliefs and true beliefs is untenable.

The obvious response here would be an appeal to a certain form of apriorism or nativism: humans do have beliefs (e.g., the ones represented in mathematical propositions) that do not need evidence (and therefore experience) in order to be justifiable. If so, beliefs that do not need evidence for their justification might turn out to be the much sought after true beliefs. Yet, if one

would grant this, and also that certain true beliefs are indeed metaphysically (that is, non-ascertainably) more valuable than merely empirically adequate beliefs, we arrive at an important question: is every true belief equally *intrinsically* valuable as every other? For there seem to be truths that are, if not completely worthless, then so much less valuable than others. Ernest Sosa also seems to disagree with such equality:

“At the beach on a lazy summer afternoon, we might scoop up a handful of sand and carefully count the grains. This would give us an otherwise unremarked truth, something that on the view before us is at least a positive good, other things equal. This view is hard to take seriously. The number of grains would not interest most of us in the slightest. Absent any such antecedent interest, moreover, it is hard to see any sort of value in one’s having that truth. ... *More plausible seems the view that, for any arbitrary belief of ours, we would prefer that it be true rather than not true, other things equal.*” (Italics – D.I) (Sosa 2003:156).

So whatever beliefs we might have, be they the most insignificant, trivial, etc., we prefer for them to be true rather than untrue. This move seems to successfully defend the intrinsic value of truth since it allows true beliefs to retain their basic value, no matter what further *instrumental use* a particular true belief might have. However, this is only superficially the case since what is actually being defended here (as it is obvious from the above quoted passage) is the intrinsic value of true belief and *not the intrinsic value of truth itself*. Of course, this seems only necessary, for if we didn’t believe in a truth, it would not have any value whatsoever, intrinsic or extrinsic alike. In Sosa’s case, it seems, there is neither need nor plausible technique for separating truth from true belief and stating: *The truth of the belief that P is intrinsically valuable even without the belief that P*. Thus what is intrinsically valuable on Sosa’s account could only be a monolith true belief and not truth as such. Yet if we value our *true beliefs* we are no longer in the position to value *only* truth since the truth of a belief (and, transitively, the value of that truth) is only presented for our discussion by the belief.³ It seems,

³ A simple argument for this case would be Franz Brentano’s classical objection against the correspondence theory of truth – one cannot compare a belief and its object as to ascertain that the belief is indeed true since all that one has is the belief (Künne 2003:127).

then, that we have to assume that the belief in a particular true belief is value-inert: having no value of its own, it is intrinsically valuable since it 'inherits' its value from the value of the truth by virtue of which it is a true belief. That is, if we want to follow Sosa, we have to assume that believing truthfully has certain sort of inherent value that is irrelevant to why the true *belief* was formed in the first place and what its role for cognition and behavior, either in short or long term, might turn out to be.

Arguably, taking this to be the case is not philosophically viable enough; for even if a true *belief* is non-intentionally formed, it is always relevant pragmatically since its formation inevitably affects behavior in a particular situation concerning a specific belief (in Sosa's 'grains counting' example that is also evident). In fact, following Ludwig Wittgenstein's and Gilbert Ryle's famous forms of methodological behaviorism, one could maintain that belief is essentially nothing more than the disposition to behave in a particular way. Thus a true belief, as far as it is a kind of belief, cannot be intrinsically valuable; it can only be valuable in terms of evaluating particular behavior, described as a result from a belief-like attitude, according to certain criteria/standards.

Even if 'belief' is not taken in this rather non-conservative fashion, a much more 'mainstream' approach is applicable. Beliefs, as genuine proposition-like internal states of a system, for instance, are formed always as goals-as-means-to and not as goals in themselves. To claim that believing is valuable intrinsically, as goal in itself, is highly counterintuitive and many examples from human experience can be adduced against it; thus I consider such claim as nonsense. Then, no matter what properties a belief possesses, if valuable at all, it is always non-intrinsically valuable. So even though truth is claimed to be valuable by itself, since, as a property of a belief, it is contingent on its bearer, it cannot be even clearly conceived of in this 'by itself' manner, let alone branded as 'intrinsically valuable' as if it is in some mysterious non-explicit way detachable from belief value.

It is crucial to note that I do not endorse here a logical impossibility to separate truth from belief; on the contrary, such separation will play an important part in the solution I have to offer. What I do claim is that it is not possible to *discuss* the value of truth separately from the value of belief while considering *true beliefs* (as Sosa does in the above quotation, for instance), i.e., before drawing a certain distinction between truth and belief while at the same

time allowing them to come together in order to constitute knowledge, for instance.

Let me elaborate more on that point. The truth of the belief that *P* is not available for discussion without discussing the belief that *P*; that is, (1) *P* being true belief whose truth we can discuss in terms of the latter's value as to claim that this value is intrinsic is contingent at least on (2) *P* being formed as a belief and (3) *P* being presented in a discussion (it is important to note that (2) & (3) are necessary but, clearly, not sufficient conditions for (1)). In other words, in the same way in which a belief requires truth as to be true, a truth requires a belief as to be available for discussion (on its value, for instance). Why then pretend to analyze the value of the truth of the belief that *P* as if it is independent from the value of the belief that *P*? On the other hand, why pretend that by discussing the value of true beliefs one is actually discussing the value of truth as if one is no longer discussing true beliefs but truth itself? Hence the conclusion is: since beliefs cannot be intrinsically valuable and since truths are "belief-carried", they cannot be intrinsically valuable as well. This conclusion could be rendered invalid if:

(1) We are ready to accept that belief is value-inert, as Sosa seems to do, and ignore:

(a) the implications that goal-guided belief formation, etc., might have for the value of truth; for instance,

(a.1) when I have formed my belief only because it was expected to have instrumental/pragmatic relevance and I ascribe to it truth and this truth being valuable only because it fulfilled this expectation, or, put in a slightly different formulation, when I consciously strive for my beliefs to be true as a goal as means to another goal and eventually judge them to be true and, consequently, valuable beliefs according to the outcome of my belief-guided attempts to attain the second goal.

(a.2) when I do not desire to believe truthfully and yet I still desire to believe because of the pragmatic consequences of my believing (e.g., in order to remain in/achieve a certain state of mind, perform certain task, behave in a certain way, etc). This latter point bears comparison with an analogy that Sosa makes as to clarify his idea of how is truth valuable:

"Just as we want our food nutritious, so we want that our beliefs be true, other things being equal. ... I can want food that is nutritious, in this

sense: that if, for whatever reason, perhaps because I find it savory, I want to have – with my next meal, or just regularly and in general – bread, I would prefer that my bread be nutritious; which does not mean that I want, in itself and independently of its being otherwise desired, nutritious food simply for its nutritive value.” (Sosa 2003:157)

But why should this necessarily be the case? I can easily conceive of a situation in which I do not prefer my bread to be *both* savory *and* nutritious – when I’m on a diet, for instance; then I could still want my bread savory and yet I would not want it nutritious. The same goes for truth – I might not want *some* of the beliefs I wish to entertain (for certain reasons) to be true since they already might be good enough for me in terms of my give-and-take relationship with the environment or since I might get emotionally hurt, etc.

(b) the philosophical analysis of beliefs as behavioral attitudes whose value is determined non-intrinsically, and

(c) the fact that truth and belief are to a great extent merged in *true beliefs* and require special work to analyze correctly in terms of value.

(2) We are ready to ignore the problem that arises if we discard the notion that belief is value-inert and ascribe different values to truth and belief in a particular true belief, thereby accepting that the value of true belief is to be determined by two different kind of values – the value of truth and the value of belief, which could turn out to be incompatible in any number of cases.

Clearly, none of these outcomes is philosophically viable to a sufficient degree. To summarize the position that asserts intrinsic value of truth and my objection to it:

1. It seems that there is no need (and no immediately clear way) to distinguish truth from a true belief when dealing with true beliefs in order to declare that the value of truth or true belief is intrinsic.
2. However, if so, there is no way to present a discussion of the value of the truth in relation to a particular true belief without actually discussing the belief.
3. Thus truth and belief seem to be intertwined when discussing true beliefs, rendering the value bearer unclear.
4. As a consequence, discussing truth (and its value) is always contingent in certain manner (but not exclusively) on a truth-bearing belief.

5. It is then methodologically sound to discuss the value of true belief not only by taking into account “truth” (the property) but also “belief” (the property bearer).
6. If this methodological remark is accepted, then we have to look *also* into how are beliefs valuable in order to determine how are true beliefs and possibly truth valuable as well.
7. But beliefs are always valuable as goals-as-means-to and not as goals in themselves, that is, beliefs are always non-intrinsically valuable.
8. And so, since beliefs matter for determining the value of true beliefs, true beliefs cannot be intrinsically valuable as well.

The problem as it is put here can be solved by finding a minimalist approach to distinguish between truth and belief when discussing true beliefs. This would allow one to analyze the value of truth in a relative separation from the value of belief and true belief and possibly reach different conclusions. I shall return to this point in the last section of the paper; before that, however, we need to take a brief look at the classical opposition to the view that truth is intrinsically valuable.

The intrinsic value of truth view can be sharply contrasted with the pragmatic approach to the value of truth according to which the latter is *goal as means to* and nothing else. To believe truthfully (and maybe justifiably, to give tradition its due) or to know is always pragmatically relevant, the standard pragmatist assumption being that knowledge (and of course truth as its constituent) is a condition for “*beneficial interaction with sensible particulars*” (James 1987:871). It is a quite complex matter to define more precisely the loosely used by William James term “beneficial” and it is even harder to justify that definition philosophically. However, defining pragmatism in a plausible way is the least serious problem for the pragmatic view on the value of truth. Having in mind *any definition of knowledge* (including the first formulation of the tripartite definition in Plato’s *Theaetetus* 201c), truth itself is not even nearly enough as to generate pragmatic results and therefore it is not possible to ascribe to truth pragmatic value. *For what counts pragmatically could not possibly be a mere truth*; again, this truth needs also to be believed, and probably justifiably⁴ believed as

⁴ Externalist accounts of knowledge like the ones proposed by the American philosophers R. Nozick and A. Goldman need not take justification as constituent of knowledge. However,

well, or, to put it succinctly, *what counts pragmatically is knowledge*. As situated cognitive agents we need beliefs and justification of these beliefs in order to eventually gain a particular truth and to be able to attain it intentionally, systematically and intersubjectively. Truth is unknowable without believing and thus it is not valuable in any manner. At the same time, there is no knowledge which is not co-constituted by truth.

VII. The cognitive value of truth revisited

What then is the value of truth *as a constituent of knowledge*? We could conceive of this value as a cognitive value – truth is valuable cognitively because (alongside with other constituents) it constitutes knowledge. This replaces the reference of the term ‘cognitive value’ in the following way: since truth serves to constitute knowledge and since this service is indeed valuable enough, we do not need to assume that truth is only cognitively valuable when it is intrinsically valuable. This allows us to retain the cognitive value of truth without appealing to the views of the ‘virtue turn’ representatives. Interestingly, along these lines, the value of truth is still *goal as means to* yet it cannot possibly be labeled ‘pragmatic’.

However, then the pragmatist could respond in the following way: even if we take truth to be non-pragmatically valuable as a constituent of knowledge, if knowledge in its turn is only pragmatically valuable, is it not the case that the cognitive value of truth is reduced to the pragmatic value of knowledge? No, I maintain, because even if we grant the assumption that knowledge has but pragmatic value, the cognitive value of truth is a condition for knowledge and not an immediate condition for the pragmatic value of knowledge. Therefore, despite the fact that the cognitive value of truth is crucial for what turns belief into knowledge, it is nevertheless irrelevant to what makes a particular knowledge pragmatically valuable.

Let us consider certain counter-arguments against my position. The first possible move for the pragmatist is to take the value of truth as pragmatic in the very constitution of knowledge. Then it would seem that the pragmatist suggests that all truths are by themselves pragmatically valuable; that is, they are valuable

including in or excluding of justification in relation to the definition of knowledge is not relevant to the present discussion. My point here is valid irrelevantly of how exactly justification is dealt with.

in this manner even before they constitute knowledge. This is an obvious fallacy since it is inconceivable for a non-believed (and therefore unknown) truth to be pragmatically valuable. The second possible move for the pragmatist could instead hold that truth is not valuable as constituent of knowledge and since in this case only knowledge retains (pragmatic) value, truth loses any value at all. But surely this cannot be the case; for if truth had no value at all, why would it be a predominantly undisputed desideratum for the definition of knowledge? The third option for the pragmatist is to maintain that truth only has value after it is believed and can bear implications for behavior, which amounts to asserting that true belief is pragmatically valuable. Even if we grant this assumption, the pragmatist gains nothing out of it since truth is still needed at a sublevel and still has to be valuable at this sublevel in order to constitute true belief. Then we could apply the same schema as in the case with knowledge – truth has cognitive value as far as it constitutes (alongside with belief) true belief, but it has nothing to do with what makes a belief pragmatically valuable or not.

Therefore, since truth cannot possibly be pragmatically valuable before it constitutes knowledge together with other desiderata, it cannot be without value for it is clearly a necessary condition for knowledge (which in its turn could be pragmatically valuable), and cannot have the same value as either true belief or knowledge (since it has to be valuable in some way before the constitution of true belief/knowledge), one is justified in accepting that the value of truth is cognitive, yet not in the problematic Aristotelian manner suggested by the representatives of the 'value turn'.

In summa, if so conceived, cognitive value is no longer identifiable with intrinsic value. Truth is not intrinsically valuable for it serves as means to an end (true belief or knowledge), so it seems plausible to label the value of truth as extrinsic. However, since truth bears no relevance to behavior, performance, action, etc. before it constitutes true belief or knowledge, this particular kind of extrinsic value is clearly not identifiable with pragmatic value. It turns out that the value of truth is extrinsic and at the same time cognitive in the following sense: it is extrinsic as far as it serves as a constituent of an X that is distinct from the value-bearer (i.e., truth) and it is cognitive as far as the constituted X is of a cognitive character, namely – true belief or knowledge.

An appropriate objection (similar to the one that I have raised above against the intrinsic account of the value of truth) can be raised against this view – what is truth as a constituent of true belief/knowledge (i.e., what is truth *before*

it constitutes true belief/knowledge)? The very assumption that there is belief-independent truth which can later on become property of belief is unwarranted since truth is only represented/made available for discussion in a (true) belief. Thus belief-independent truth is inconceivable. My answer to this objection is that it is vital that truth keeps certain sort of conceivability while 'detached' from belief since otherwise it would turn out that truth is only conceivable as an *inherent, already-there* property of beliefs. This would be problematic both on cognitive and pragmatic grounds since it would destroy the notion of investigation as means of *attaining* truth for our beliefs. Indeed, such notion requires the assumption that truth is *attainable* and not *already attained* in an uncertain number of beliefs which we cannot in any manner distinguish from false beliefs. Presently, I am not able to suggest how this belief-detached conceivability of truth should be treated in particular. What I insist on is that such conceivability is necessary from a non-skeptical point of view (i.e., from an epistemological perspective that admits the possibility of either true belief or knowledge) and as such is abductively plausible.

VIII. Conclusion

I consider this text as a sound defense of the view that truth is valuable. No VT can be acceptable to its readers if it does not offer a solid response to the argumentation presented here. On the other hand, the discussion on the kind of value that truth possesses can only have a preliminary character: it suggests that currently there is no sufficiently plausible and clear account of that matter yet it does not go all the way to offering one. Nevertheless, a portion of this task was accomplished, namely – the disentanglement of the association between intrinsic and cognitive, on the one hand, and extrinsic and pragmatic value, on the other. What remains to be seen is how *exactly* the suggested cognitive-yet-extrinsic value of truth can be defended in the face of the strong premise that truth is only available as a property of a belief and as such cannot have a value of its own.

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