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THE DIFFERENT ROLES OF DEDUCTION IN COMMUNICATION[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article is concerned with a distinction between two epistemic roles that, according to Michael Dummett, deductively valid arguments could play in communication. This means the distinction between: a) arguments that purport to explain, and b) arguments that purport to persuade. The article is also concerned with a resulting shift in the appropriate approach to these roles of arguments. In this respect, for example, an idea emerges which traditionally any realistic-minded author would have automatically dismissed as unthinkable, but which is now relevant. This is the idea of *circular justification of knowledge as something rationally acceptable*. The distinction also leads us to the view that we do not need anyone to convince us that the rules of correct deduction are valid. In fact, we are already convinced of the validity of the forms of inference that guide us at the moment we think about the deductively valid arguments. There should consequently be no authentic context in which we need to be persuaded of their validity. The present article attempts to reflect critically on the distinction between the epistemic roles of arguments, and on the resulting shift in the methodology, by making four critical objections to its presentation.

Keywords: Argumentation, communication, deduction, Michael Dummett, explanation, knowledge, logical necessity, persuasion, proof, validity.

Michael Dummett's philosophical theses are often the subject of critical debates.[2] In this article, I would like to focus on one aspect of his thought that remains outside the main focus of the debates. I am referring to the distinction between the different roles that deductive arguments can play in communication and also the resulting shifts in the appropriate approach to

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[2] B. Weiss, *Michael Dummett*, Princeton University Press 2002.

them. Dummett comes up with these suggestions in article *The Justification of Deduction*.[3]

Although this aspect of Dummett's thought has remained almost hidden from the mainstream discussion, its significance is nonetheless considerable. In this respect, the idea emerges which traditionally any realistic-minded author would have automatically dismissed as unthinkable but which is now relevant. This is the idea of "a circular justification of knowledge as something rationally acceptable."[4] I probably do not need to point out that "moving in a circle" was seen as a logical defect by default. It was considered a beginner's error to do so without realizing that we are relying on what we have yet to justify (or to first justify the former using the latter to subsequently justify the latter using the former). What needs to be added is that the automatic perception of a circular justification as an error that we are unaware of for some reason is no longer valid.

As an idiosyncratic example, Paul Boghossian promotes the view that "circularity as something rationally acceptable" is an intrinsic condition of a theory of logical knowledge, in that the latter should not be conceivable without the former. He asks: "...since logic will inevitably be involved in any account of how we might be justified in believing it, how is it possible for us to be justified in our fundamental logical beliefs?"[5] Since neither rational intuition nor naturalized epistemology can, in his view, provide a satisfactory answer, the viable path for the realist should ultimately be the very process of rule-circular justification.[6]

In this article, I start from the assumption that the formulation of this controversial view was primarily made possible by Dummett's doctrine of the roles of deductive arguments, which I intend to reconsider here. It is within this philosophical doctrine that circularity first seems to have penetrated, metaphorically speaking, into "serious discourse" (otherwise as a defect). The distinction of different roles for forms of argument in speech thus seems to be an important "philosophical event," which is why it should receive our critical attention.

I will discuss Dummett's distinction between a) arguments that purport to explain and b) those that purport to persuade. I will also outline the background, without which this distinction cannot be understood. At the same

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[3] M. Dummett, *The Justification of Deduction*, in: Truth and Other Enigmas, Duckworth, London 1978.

[4] T. Williamson, *Blind Reasoning*, in: Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LXXVII, 2003; P. Boghossian, *Blind Rule-Following*, in: Mind, Meaning and Knowledge: Themes from the Philosophy of Crispin Wright, C. Wright, A. Coliva (eds.), Oxford University Press, New York 2012.

[5] P. Boghossian, *Knowledge of Logic*, in: New Essays on the A Priori, P. Boghossian, C. Peacocke (eds.), Clarendon Press, Oxford 2000, p. 229.

[6] P. Boghossian, *How are Objective Epistemic Reasons Possible?*, in: Reason and Nature: Essays in the Theory of Rationality, J. Bermúdez, A. Millar (eds.), Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002; C. Wright, *Intuition, Entitlement and the Epistemology of Logical Laws*, Dialectica, 58, 2004.

time, I will try to reflect critically on it by making some objections to its presentation

I

The main goal of Dummett's investigation is usually referred to as the justification of deduction. What is it supposed to mean? In short, we want to know why, if it is either p or q, and it is not p, it must be q. Presumably, once we have a clear idea of which segment of knowledge we are concerned with, we should have some idea of what justification lies within it. However, Dummett recognizes that this is an extremely complicated task in the case of deduction. The difficulty of the question is already given by the fact that it grows out of multiple levels of reflection.[7] Next, I will discuss three different levels in the context of which we can ask about the deduction:

The first level is referred to as unproblematic. It is the level of basic logical analysis – always taking place within a formal system – where doubts about a rule are resolved through the presentation of a series of steps that is consistent with a certain set of requirements, i.e. proof. A particular form of argument either becomes an objectively valid rule, or it does not, based on the construction of a series of steps that is consistent with a certain sum of requirements.

The second level is metalogical. It is above the level at which individual theorems are proved. This is a level where we ask whether a formal system is consistent, correct, decidable, etc. What are being examined here are not the rules of valid inference but rather the properties of the systems that allow us to generate them. Again, a doubt about some formal property cannot be resolved other than by constructing a series of steps that is consistent with some set of pre-given requirements, and the existence of the property is either objectively proved or not.

The third level is transcendental: "But there is yet a third, deeper, level: that at which we require an explanation not of why we should accept certain forms of argument or canons for judging forms of argument, but how deductive argument is possible at all."[8] Here we start from there being a deduction around us, and we ask question: *How is something like logical necessity possible?* Dummett recognizes that at this level there is a tension between two qualities that should be associated with deduction. On the one hand, there is the notion of the form of argument as something "necessary" that we have the right to demand of others – and of ourselves; on the other hand,

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[7] M. Dummett, *The Justification of Deduction*, op. cit., p. 297.
[8] Ibidem.

there is the notion of the form of argument as something "enriching" that expands our present horizons.

The solution to this tension should lie in the development of an adequate theory of meaning. Dummett strongly believes that semantics has a methodological priority over everything else. This means that the solution to the tension between deductive inference as something both "binding" and "enriching" is based on the modelling of an adequate theory of meaning for deductive systems. At its core, there should be a compelling model of the meaning of logical constants. This, according to Dummett, is the proper philosophical response to the outlined difficulty.

II

Even with the distinction of three levels at which deduction can be doubted; we still do not have enough insight when trying to justify it. From Dummett´s perspective, we are missing something important. The main problem is that there is not one notion of logic but rather two non-trivially distinct notions operating side by side. This considerably complicates efforts to transparently justify deduction. Within communication, there are two contexts in which different perspectives on the investigation of valid inference are at work. The first is a component of the standard practice of mathematical logicians. We will speak here of the "logical notion" of logic. The second is a part of an attitude that was supposedly prevalent among analytic philosophers at the time Dummett wrote *The Justification of Deduction*. We will speak of the "philosophical notion" of logic.

First of all, there is the "standard practice of mathematical logicians." Its constitution is based on the fact that we attempt to define two parallel concepts of logical consequence: syntactic and semantic. Despite the fact that the second concept takes priority over the first: "The ideal is to establish their extensional equivalence."[9] The actual proof of extensional equivalence between the two concepts should consist of two steps: i) proof of completeness of the system, which completes the definition of the syntactic concept; and ii) proof of correctness of the system, which completes the definition of the semantic concept. By the proof of completeness, we can demonstrate that any valid inference that can be expressed in the language of the system can be reduced to operations with primitive rules of inference. By the proof of correctness, we can justify the validity of the primitive rules. Dummett repeatedly stresses that these series of steps are not properly seen as two proofs among other proofs but rather that they represent two "constitutive acts" for the practice as a whole.

[9] Ibidem, p. 290.

As it has been said, this view is not the only one. According to the viewpoint held by Willard Van Orman Quine, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Nelson Goodman, and others, the premises of the previous understanding are suspect. Indeed, there is a short series of steps that shows the validity of, for instance, the *Modus Tollens*, according to which ´non-*p*´ must be true, if ´if *p*, then *q*´ and ´non-*q*´ are both true. But this short series of steps can only convince someone who already accepts the primitive rules of propositional logic, of which the above rule, is a derivative. Without this willingness, one can hardly talk about justification at the first— unproblematic—level.

Of course, the philosophical doubts do not stop there. The series of steps that shows that, for example, propositional logic is correct—i.e. its primitive rules are valid—appears from this perspective to be necessarily circular. Within its framework, we have no choice but to rely (again) on the structure of the deductive argument. There seems no other way than the "deductive" one, or inferential one, according to Dummett's interpretation. It follows from this that when we construct a proof at the second—metalogical—level; we should automatically be in a circle or fall into an infinite regress. Because of this, a series of steps that shows a formal system to be correct seem to be "a purely technical exercise" with no claim to the role of justification that is attributed to it among logicians.

As Dummett reveals, what emerges as a constitutive part in one framework is relegated to the periphery of interest in the other. What has a privileged position among logicians is among philosophers just "one technical matter among many." There is a gulf of misunderstanding between the two sides.[10] Dummett does not hide his sympathy for the first view of logic, which he refers to as the "natural way of understanding." He also does not hide his aversion to the other. This means that although he is a philosopher, he rejects the philosophical viewpoint. This perspective, according to him, has no tangible meaning. Paradoxically, he does not doubt that the theses of Willard Van Orman Quine, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and others are supported by interesting arguments and a remarkable number of examples.[11] He doubts something else—their credibility.

In addition to rejecting the "philosophical notion", Dummett shows his dissatisfaction with the situation in which we have one communication—and within it two functioning notions of logic. This dissatisfaction was probably the main motive for writing his article. The author is irritated by the possible

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[10] B. Hale, *Basic Logical Knowledge*, in: Logic, Thought and Language, A. O´Hear (ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002; P. Boghossian, *Blind Reasoning*, in: Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume LXXVII, 2003; C. Wright, *Rule-Following without Reasons: Wittgenstein´s Quietism and the Constitutive Question*, in: Wittgenstein and Reason, J. Preston (ed.), Ratio, 20, 2007.

[11] W.V.O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, Harvard University Press 1953; L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Blackwell 1953; N. Goodman, *Fact, Fiction and Forecast*, Bobbs-Merrill 1955.

implications of the philosophical notion for standard logical analysis. Because of the possible destructive effects of speculative questions on everyday practice, he does not like such a thing. Since progress in this respect is important for him, he considers it almost his duty to eliminate the implications of the "notion." He does not, however, concentrate his attention on constructing counterarguments that would problematize one philosophical doubt after another. (Such counterarguments might bring only temporary satisfaction.) His ambition is to find a solution in the true sense: i.e. to eliminate the very possibility that the implications of speculations about circularity—whether they are coherent or not—might affect ordinary logical practice.

An elegant tool for meeting this goal is the doctrine of the roles in which arguments occur in speech. As a direct consequence, the interference of these doubts with standard practice should be ruled out. This is the motive behind the analysed distinction, without which it cannot be properly appreciated.

III

Dummett acknowledges that some doubts about logical knowledge have a point. Despite his clearly stated preferences, he has no trouble recognizing that between steps in the proof of the correctness of propositional logic, for example, there may be forms of inference that are presented in standard practice of mathematical logicians as constituted by that proof. This is the circular movement of which philosophers speak. Dummett acknowledges the legitimacy of this suspicion, but what he does not acknowledge is a motivation of this suspicion. After identifying "the difficulty" in the constitutive act for the practice, he does not stop—as is usual among philosophers—and he analyses the problem further.

According to Dummett, the circularity we encounter with regard to proof of the correctness of propositional logic is "not of the usual kind."[12] On closer examination, we find that this is not a mistake of inattention where we have overlooked something, but something else. In fact, the problem we are encountering should be a consequence of our efforts to explain, and of the form in which such a thing is done. According to the author, we usually explain something we are already convinced of—something which we believe. In such situation, we are not trying to convince someone of a new truth. On the contrary, we seek to construct premises from the conclusion which we all agree upon.

[12] M. Dummett, *The Justification of Deduction*, op. cit., p. 295.

The opposite of what this activity is all about is the context in which we are trying to persuade someone of a new truth with a deductive argument. At this point, circularity—for example, the circularity that philosophers say we encounter at the second level—would already be a serious obstacle that would effectively invalidate our attempted argument.

As a result of rethinking these issues, Dummett concludes that it will be useful to distinguish explicitly between the two contexts in which deductive arguments "come to speech." He recognizes that different goals are pursued through them in these contexts, so the demands that are made on them should be adjusted. Here, Susan Haack's profound insight cannot be overlooked: "Dummett´s distinction concerns, not the form of an argument, but its epistemic role."[13] The point here is not to divide the arguments—although there are certain common characteristics—but to distinguish their functions.

a) The first context in which we encounter argumentation is the effort to explain to others, in a form of deductive argument, a proposition that is known to all, i.e. "an explanatory argument." For example:

P1: If something has less specific weight than water, it floats on it.

P2: Ice has a lower specific weight than water.

C: Ice floats on water.

This means that we face an unproblematic conclusion, while adding to it premises that we might not have agreed on before. According to Dummett, we explain the truth of the conclusion by constructing premises that might not have seemed reasonable beforehand. We therefore do not proceed as in a logical deduction—from the truth of the premises to the truth of the conclusion—but rather vice versa: from the conclusion that is given to us to the premises that we complete.

This has several implications, such as the fact that the concern about circularity is no longer of interest in this context. In explaining something we agree on by constructing premises that we may not all agree on, such a suspicion is simply not "essential." On the contrary, what is essential is the fact that in explaining by means of a deductive argument the direction of interpretation determined by epistemology may go against the direction of interpretation determined by logic. There seems to be nothing dramatic associated with this. However, there could be such implications for the philosophical speculations.

b) The second context in which we encounter argumentation is convincing others who are reluctant to accept a certain conclusion with a deductive argument, where the latter should justify it, i.e. "a suasive argument." For example:

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[13] S. Haack, *Deviant Logic, Fuzzy Logic: Beyond the Formalism*, University of Chicago Press 1996, p. 194.

P1: That which moves either moves in a place where it is or in a place where it is not.

P2: But it does not move in a place where it is, much less in a place where it is not.

C: So there is no movement.

Statements that do not raise serious doubts stand out as premises of the argument. We are presenting a new—and perhaps controversial—truth as a consequence of the usual and uncontroversial premises. Such an argument proceeds in accordance with logic – from the truth of the premises to the truth of the conclusion—and could not have in the place of the premises any statements that are justified circularly. According to Dummett, someone who is reluctant to accept our new view could hardly be persuaded by such claims. (Instead, most probably, we would strengthen him in his own beliefs.)

For this reason, the direction of epistemology must be consistent with the direction of logic. It is therefore the reverse of the previous case, where we did not need agreement on the premises for our strategy to have any hope of success.

IV

Why did the distinction between the roles of a) and b) emerge? Does Dummett consider it important with respect to the needs of clear classification, or does he pursue a different intention?

Once we are familiar with the difference between the roles of a) and b)—and the implications that should follow from it—we can then ask other questions: What does the philosopher who suspects the logical notion of logic of circularity actually wants? Is he looking for an argument that will convince him of something, or one that will explain something? Does the originator of doubt about the proof of the *Modus Tollens*, for example, really want to be convinced of the validity of the rule? Dummett answers that he does not. He wants to have explained to him something that he already believes—and is demonstrably guided by. This is the basis of the motive of the distinction under consideration. If Dummett is right in doing so, and philosophers do not want to be persuaded about the validity of the forms of reasoning they are questioning, then their suspicions of circularity—regardless of their coherence and adequate support by illustrations—should ultimately be out of context. That should be the nature of these questions: they are asked in the wrong place.

Analytic philosophers seem to misunderstand the position we are in when we seek to justify deduction. We are not in the position of convincing

someone of the need to accept the proof of the *modus tollens* or to follow it in reasoning. According to Dummett, we are in a state in which our real task is to put forward an explanation. We should therefore seek to explain the knowledge of the validity of the rule in question, that is, to construct an argument that shows what makes the proposition representing the rule necessarily a true proposition: "Such an argument will, of course, be deductive in character, but that will not rob it of its explanatory power."[14]

Here, Dummett warns his reader that ever since he/she began to think about deduction, he/she had been embedded in a stream of deductive reasoning. On that basis, he/she should have had no trouble accepting the thesis that an argument that stands on circularly justified premises can explain something. Nor should he/she have had any principled difficulty accepting —despite how we standardly view the deductive argument—that an argument of this sort is a justification of deduction. Given that we trust valid forms of inference all the time—and without this trust there would be nothing else—this should be acceptable. As Haack sums up: "...the justification of deduction requires only what he calls an explanatory argument, an argument the role of which is to explain the truth of its conclusion; and whereas a suasive argument is objectionable if circular, an explanatory argument may be quite satisfactory despite circularity."[15]

V

So far I have mostly reconstructed a selected aspect of Dummett's thought. I will now concentrate on a critical reflection on the difference between a) and b). The critique shall be twofold: firstly, I will present two doubts of my own about the presentation of this distinction, and secondly I will present two arguments that come from the philosophical literature about circularity as something rationally acceptable.

Before stating the critical objections to the plausibility of the distinction, I will once again summarize the most important points it entails. Dummett's philosophical doctrine leads us to the idea that we do not need anyone to convince us that the rules of correct deduction are valid. It is as if there was not the slightest need for the activity of persuasion that logical forms are "logical." Quite opposite, creating the appearance of such a need is "without credibility." Of course, this view is contrary to the traditional view of the role of philosophy within our culture. Several authors believe, with complete self-evidence, that something like doubt—and persuasion—makes sense

[14] M. Dummett, *The Justification of Deduction*, op. cit., p. 296.
[15] S. Haack, *Deviant Logic, Fuzzy Logic: Beyond the Formalism*, op. cit., p. 192.

wherever normativity and rules are found.[16] Dummett questions the obviousness of such an assumption. According to the doctrine of the epistemological roles of arguments, we are already convinced of the validity of the forms of inference that guide us at the moment we think about the justification of deduction. This is demonstrated in our actions! There is consequently no authentic context in which we need to be persuaded of their validity.[17]

What follows are some critical remarks: When we look at ourselves in the light of reasoning about the justification of deduction, we could not help ourselves but to notice that among the rules that guide us—as if we were blind—there are rules of correct deduction. From the fact that we are (as if automatically) guided by them, Dummett concludes that we are convinced of their validity. I have doubts about this. I agree with the premise of this argument, but I have doubts about whether it is a reason for accepting his conclusion.

On the basis of a description of someone's actions, it does not seem possible to automatically conclude something about their beliefs. I am not alluding to the problem of other minds but to our being subject to many rules and laws which we are, for example, unable to reproduce correctly (i.e. we make mistakes in explaining them despite the fact that we follow them correctly), or we have no idea that we are subject to them. I do not know in what sense it could be said that we are convinced of such rules and laws.

I am not sure how one could say that I am convinced of a grammatical rule for a foreign language that I use—intuitively—correctly; however, I can only explain its operation with errors. The same is true of, for example, the laws of association, which I am completely unaware of because I have not noticed that my physiology operates on their basis. Submission to such norms is demonstrated by our actions, and yet it is hard to interpret them, under these circumstances, as a consequence of our beliefs about them. (I cannot imagine a context in which the driving force that guides us in associating would be referred to as a belief.)

This means that there should not be a causal link between the fact that someone is subject to a norm—as shown by their actions—and the fact that they are convinced of its validity. The latter fact cannot be projected into reality whenever the former is encountered. At the same time, Dummett's presentation of the distinction between a) and b) seems to rest to some extent on the existence of such a causal link. I claim that it is also problematic to that extent. That is the first objection.

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[16] R. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in: The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, vol. II., Cambridge University Press, London 2005; P. Boghossian, *Fear of Knowledge, Against Relativism and Constructivism*, Clarendon Press 2006; D. H. Pritchard, *Epistemic Angst: Radical Skepticism and the Groundlessness of our Believing*, Princeton University Press, 2015.

[17] G. Schönbaumsfeld, *The Illusion of Doubt*, Oxford University Press 2016, pp. 107–129.

Although the distinction between a) and b) is not about the internal structure of deductive arguments, but about their roles in communication, something is still said about their structure in sketching it. The second objection concerns just that.

The analysed distinction is based on the idea of deductive reasoning as a process or a procedure in which we go from something to something (e.g. from something controversial to something accepted or vice versa). It must be acknowledged that the idea of deduction as a process or procedure is still a popular notion that can even be found in several logic textbooks (especially those influenced by the thinking of Immanuel Kant).[18] The question, however, is: Is it an adequate notion?

Dummett speaks without the slightest doubt of logical inference in persuasion being directed from the truth of the premises to the truth of the conclusion (as opposed to the epistemological direction in explanation, which is the opposite). From my perspective, this is a misleading analogy. The term "direction" that Dummett uses inevitably conjures up the idea of a path. This is a problem. A valid inference does not represent a procedure, a path, or a process. Such an inference resembles something more like a "whack on a table." It comes before us all at once—as a whole. (It is not given to us as something where it makes sense to distinguish a direction.)

If, like Dummett, we do not care about the context of the discovery of a particular rule, but the context of justification, then deductive reasoning comes before us solely as something that bears no resemblance to the process from something to something. Why is this? We must remember that in a valid deductive argument, the conclusion is already fully expressed when the premises are expressed. In other words, the conclusion is before us literally at the very moment we have written the last word of the last premise of the argument. (Although it is not there yet, it is actually already there.) In this peculiar phenomenon lies in a sense the function that logical necessity performs in speech.

Therefore, I ask: What is the point of talking about the direction of logical inference under such circumstances? What use is "direction" as a term? What is the point of talking about premises as more or less controversial as the conclusion if the latter is already completely expressed the moment we have written the last word of the last premise? Maybe I am missing something important, but I must confess that I can find no satisfactory answer to these questions. That is the second objection.

The other objections to the presentation of the distinction are not the result of my reasoning. Both they belong to the family of argumentative strategies referred to as "Bad Company," but each has a different motive. The first seeks to show that the circular reasoning is a fundamentally unpromis-

[18] I. Kant, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*, Hackett Publishing, 1977.

ing affair; the second attempts to find the most robust formulation of the circular argument. In any case, the ability to justify more than we want to (which is the point of bad company) seems to be the biggest difficulty with the idea of circular justification of knowledge as something acceptable.

The first critical remark I came across was from Haack. In thinking carefully about the doctrine of the functions of valid inference—and otherwise convinced that epistemology should take methodological priority over semantics—she discovered a problem. She writes: "But even if it were true that we do not need to be persuaded that deduction is justified, because we believe it already, there would still be a serious difficulty with Dummett's strategy: that it would work equally well in the case of any universally accepted belief."[19] This means that the analysed reasoning strategy indiscriminately provides equally good foundations for all commonly held beliefs. It seems devoid of the ability to set criteria and distinguish between such beliefs. In other words, it has no normative potential in this respect; it has literally nothing to add.

Haack also writes: "The trouble with circular argument is not just that it is not persuasive – which is, as Dummett points out, no trouble to someone who doesn't need persuading; it is also that it is undiscriminating."[20] Here she points out that circular justification of knowledge, as considered in *The Justification of Deduction*, has—in addition to its inability to persuade, which Dummett speaks about quite a lot—another feature (the inability to disqualify) which, on the contrary, he does not even mention. However, this is not something that can be separated from activity of this kind, nor is it a detail that can be overlooked. The inability to disqualify certain commonly held beliefs as false, incorrect, or wrong is a problem worth contemplating. By virtue of our chosen strategy of justification, we are in danger, for example, of finding ourselves in company with beliefs we have no desire to be in company with; i.e. we are in bad company. At the same time, it means that we are unable to choose for ourselves the society we want to be in and thus need *ad hoc* restrictions to get there. According to Haack, this causes embarrassment.

These are just some of the issues that, according to the philosopher, arise in the presentation of the distinction between a) and b).

A different version of this argumentative strategy is presented by Boghossian. He argues that the circular justification of deduction in the form under consideration has one serious problem without whose elimination, it is not possible to speak of its cognitive value. The problem lies in the fact that in the process of justification, in which we assume at least one step in accordance with the rule being justified about, we are ultimately able to

[19] S. Haack, *Deviant Logic, Fuzzy Logic: Beyond the Formalism*, op. cit., p. 196.
[20] Ibidem.

justify about anything we want. In other words: "...a grossly circular argument is able to prove absolutely anything, however intuitively unjustifiable."[21] Although Boghossian attempts to distinguish different versions of the coarseness of circular arguments, he ultimately finds that they are all infected by the aforementioned difficulty. He concludes: "...it will nevertheless be true that we will be able to justify all manner of absurd rules of inference. We must confront the charge that unconstrained rule-circular justifications keep bad company."[22]

At first sight, the problem here is formulated more radically than in the previous case. It is not that a certain procedure cannot choose between generally accepted beliefs, but that in certain circumstances it cannot choose at all. In Boghossian, however, the problem is formulated so it also has a guide to the solution. Haack offers no such thing. In this respect, the more radical objection to circularity is actually more accommodating (since it also contains an explicit warning that the problem lies in the limitlessness of such justifications). Moreover, Boghossian agrees with Dummett on the fundamental belief that semantics should take methodological priority over everything and on the fact that the decisive role regarding the justification of deduction will ultimately be played by the model of the meaning of logical constants which is more plausible.

Unlike Haack, Boghossian did not arrive at the thesis that "unrestricted rule-circular justifications cannot effectively choose" in order to just remain at this point. Instead, his question is: How do we eliminate this problem? "The question is whether there is some intuitively plausible constraint that they should be made to satisfy that will repel the bad company."[23]

He finds an answer to this crucial question in the form of a methodological principle, which he adopts into his own epistemological theory under the label "*RC*".[24] In its framework, the term "genuinely meaning-constituting rule" plays a key role. Here, it should probably be added that Boghossian does not come up with his own solution in connection with the explanation of the meaning of logical constants, the plausibility of which should – as was stated above – decide everything. He puts his trust in the project of the "Conceptual Role Semantics" as one of the directions of modern semantics, of which he himself is a prominent advocate. The "rule that genuinely constitutes meaning", which he relies on as a term for the formulation of the *RC*, is explicitly borrowed from this theoretical framework.[25]

According to *RC*, the circular deductive argument provides a justification for the belief that a rule is logical if – and only if – that rule does actually

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[21] P. Boghossian, *Knowledge of Logic*, op. cit., p. 245.
[22] Ibidem, p. 247.
[23] Ibidem, p. 248.
[24] Ibidem, p. 250.
[25] Ch. Peacocke, *A Study of Concepts*, MIT Press 1992.

constitute meaning. In no other case is such an argument applicable. Even if we probably cannot in general separate rules that constitute meaning from those that do not, we still normally know the agent of what we are talking about. Because of this, bad company should be eliminated.

CONCLUSION

I believe that the introduction of *RC* solves the difficulty that was raised by Boghossian. We really should no longer be able to justify via a circular argument everything we want against the backdrop of this limitation. At the same time, I think that this only gets rid of bad company in the form we encounter in Boghossian. I cannot imagine how the outlined strategy would work for a less radical version, according to which we can justify everything that is generally accepted just as well. I do not see how the expression of a "rule that genuinely constitutes meaning" could help us in such a case. (Anything that is accepted in this sense in general may, after all, seem to be one that genuinely constitutes meaning.)

Therefore, we find ourselves in difficulty when we want to present the methodological principle mentioned above as a solution to Haack's objection too. Even after its intervention, we cannot effectively answer the question of how to navigate among commonly held beliefs whose justification requires at least a step in accordance with them. We simply don't know. It thus follows that Haack's objection to Dummett's way of justification of deduction is not, in fact, eliminated by *RC*.

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STRESZCZENIE

Niniejszy artykuł dotyczy rozróżnienia między dwiema epistemicznymi rolami, które, według Dummetta, dedukcyjnie ważne argumenty mogą odgrywać w komunikacji. Oznacza to rozróżnienie między a] argumentami, które mają na celu wyjaśnienie, a b] argumentami, które mają na celu przekonanie. Artykuł dotyczy również wynikającej z tego zmiany w odpowiednim podejściu do tych ról argumentów. W związku z tym, na przykład, pojawia się idea, którą tradycyjnie każdy realistycznie myślący autor automatycznie odrzuciłby jako nie do pomyślenia, ale która jest teraz aktualna. Jest to idea cyrkularnego uzasadniania wiedzy jako czegoś racjonalnie akceptowalnego. Rozróżnienie to prowadzi nas również do poglądu, że nie potrzebujemy nikogo, aby nas przekonywał, że zasady poprawnej dedukcji są ważne. W rzeczywistości jesteśmy już przekonani o słuszności form wnioskowania, które kierują nami w momencie, gdy myślimy o dedukcyjnie ważnych argumentach. W związku z tym nie powinno istnieć żadne autentyczne środowisko, w którym musielibyśmy być przekonani o ich słuszności. Niniejszy artykuł jest próbą krytycznej refleksji nad rozróżnieniem między epistemicznymi rolami argumentów i wynikającą z tego zmianą metodologii, stawiając cztery krytyczne zastrzeżenia wobec jej prezentacji.

Słowa kluczowe: argumentacja, komunikacja, dedukcja, Dummett, wyjaśnienie, wiedza, konieczność logiczna, perswazja, dowód, trafność.

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