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Volume 46

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Questions, Inferences, and Scenarios
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Questions, Inferences, and Scenarios

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Preface

The importance of questions is beyond doubt. But the degree of attention paid to them in logic and linguistics is still less than they deserve. For decades research on questions focused on their representation as well as the answerhood problem. The priorities started to change in the 1980's. Generally speaking, research on how questions *function* (in inquiry, dialogues, reasoning, issue management, and so forth) gradually overshadowed research on what questions *are*. This change in perspective has been initiated by Jaakko Hintikka with his Interrogative Model of Inquiry.

The interest in questions and questioning is currently growing. In particular, questions became a full-fledged category in dynamic epistemic logic (cf. e.g., Minică (2011), van Benthem and Minică (2012), Peliš and Majer (2011)), and in belief revision theory (cf. Olsson and Westlund (2005), Enqvist (2010)). Theories of questions became indispensable constituents of dialogue theories (cf. Ginzburg (2012), Asher and Lascarides (2003)). Logic of questions attracted attention of the adaptive logic community (see e.g. Meheus (2001), De Clercq (2005), Batens (2007)). And, last but not least, research on questions is an important part of the inquisitive semantics programme (cf. e.g. Groenendijk and Roelofsen (2009), Groenendijk (2011)).

This book presents an *inferential* approach to the logic of questions.¹ The core part of it is *Inferential Erotetic Logic*, that is, to speak generally, a logic which analyses inferences which have questions as conclusions and gives an account of *validity* of these inferences. The idea originates from the late 1980's. The monograph Wiśniewski (1995) summarizes results obtained until the early nineties. Many things have happened since then. Although the core insights have remained unchanged, a more general account of Inferential Erotetic Logic was elaborated and some applications became known.

The book consists of three parts.

The chapters included in the second part, with the exception of the last one, provide an introduction to Inferential Erotetic Logic. An attempt was made to express the basic ideas as simply as possible. Moreover, the account presented is

¹ The logic of questions is sometimes labelled *erotetic logic*, from Greek “erotema” meaning “question”.

more general than that taken in the 1995 monograph. In particular, we operate within a setting that does not presuppose Classical Logic and model-theoretic semantics.

The setting is described in the first part of the book. It is called *Minimal Erotetic Semantics*. The name is a telling one. The assumptions are really minimal, but still enable us to introduce some important concepts pertaining to questions and questioning.

As might be expected, the conceptual apparatus of Inferential Erotetic Logic has found successful applications in the area of problem solving. But, somewhat unexpectedly, the area of applicability has extended to proof theory. The last chapter of Part Two, and the whole of Part Three are devoted to these issues. Chapters 11 and 12 are rather technical due to the fact that they include some material that is published here for the first time. The remaining chapters are written in a more relaxed way. However, we always give the reader an indication as to where to find proofs and other technical details.

I am very grateful to Dorota Leszczyńska-Jasion, Paweł Łupkowski and Mariusz Urbański for their valuable comments which enabled me to improve earlier versions of this book. I am especially indebted to Jonathan Ginzburg for encouragement, criticism and help. Needless to say, all errors are mine.

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