# ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Tacit Dimension In Argumentation

*Actual act-performing thinking is an emotional volitional thinking, a thinking that intonates, and this intonation permeates in an essential manner all moments of a thought's content.* – Mikhail Bakhtin, Toward a Philosophy of the Act.

"The twentieth century has been a time of extraordinary change in every branch of philosophy and the social sciences, above all epistemology," Stephen Toulmin writes in a recent essay (1995: ix). This change, he goes on to say, amounts to the "abandonment" and even "death" of the "Cartesian program of 'modern philosophy'" that influenced our understanding of knowledge from, roughly, 1650 to 1950, and was marked by "excess individualism" (1995: xiii, xv).

Toulmin's work, I believe, has contributed much to bringing about that change, for his reconception of reasoning offers an alternative to the "three underlying assumptions" that he identifies as supporting the Cartesian "research program." These are:

1. the certainty axiom, which holds that knowing is building "demonstrably certain" systems;

2. the representation axiom, which holds that knowing begins in the "inner theater" called "the mind"; and

3. the individualism axiom, which holds that knowing is a "personal and individual accomplishment" (1995: x).

In this paper I propose that these three assumptions work to suppress a tacit dimension of argumentation that is crucial for developing a post-Cartesian understanding of rationality. This tacit dimension is acknowledged by Toulmin, Rieke and Janik (1984) as "the general body of information, or backing, that is presupposed by the warrant appealed to in the argument" (1984: 26). The source of this information, they go on to say, is the "culture that forms our initial values, attitudes, and expectations" and thereby "equips us. . .with ways of thinking and reasoning whose underlying basis or backing is not always made explicit" (1984: 66). Typically, these implicit contributions are presumed to be less rational than

the explicit information, evidence, testimony, principles and rules which provide the data, claim, and warrant of an argument. This paper is part of a larger project which argues, contrary to that presumption, that both tacit and explicit contributions be evaluated without hierarchical preference in argument analysis.

A crucial step toward doing so is showing how factors that often are dismissed as less rational (or even irrational) function as the Backing component of an argument as analyzed by the Toulmin Model. Both Toulmin in *The Uses of Argument* (1958) and Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik in *An Introduction to Reasoning* (1984) say relatively little about Backing. This neglect, I believe, enables the survival of a crucial building-block of the Cartesian program – the dichotomy of fact and value – within Toulmin's influential and on-going rethinking of reasoning. My aim here is to contribute to the development of a post-Cartesian understanding of rationality that was initiated by Toulmin, Chaim Perelman and others, by explicating and respecifying the nature and role of Backing as the tacit dimension of argumentation. **[i]**

This dimension provides the cultural, emotional, and volitional impetus for everyday argumentation. These factors are often dismissed as merely incidental to the setting of an argument – which is to say, they are all too easily categorized as outside of rationality.

Acknowledging them as the content of Backing enables us, instead, to identify and evaluate them as providing (in Bakhtin's words) an "intonation that permeates in an essential manner all moments of a thought's content" (1993: 34). Correlatively, this recognition of Backing as the tacit dimension requires respecifying Warrant as the explicit rules and procedures that justify connections among elements within an argument.**[ii]**

I begin with a brief consideration of the first and second axioms that Toulmin identifies as underlying the Cartesian program. I find that the Toulmin model provides powerful alternatives to both of these "underlying assumptions." I then look more closely at the third ("individualism") axiom, and find remnants of this assumption remaining within Toulmin's reconception. It's present in relation to that aspect of the Toulmin model – Backing – which typically creates particular difficulties in explication and application.

My hope, then, is that explicating and respecifying both Backing and Warrant will offer the positive side effect of making the Toulmin Model an even more useful means for argument analysis.

*1. The Certainty and Representation Assumptions*

The Cartesian axiom that's most evidently rejected in Toulmin's understanding of reasoning is the assumption that "'knowledge' ideally takes the form of a deductive system" with "demonstrably certain" components. In his words, this axiom declares that if 'knowledge' is to have any claim on our intellectual loyalty or attention, its building blocks (at least) must be demonstrably certain, so that, for Descartes as for Plato, 'knowledge' ideally takes the form of a deductive system, such as the classical Greeks created for geometry (1995: x).

Early in An Introduction to Reasoning we read that "the critical study of argumentation or reasoning, with which this book is concerned" requires that we "see what kinds of features make some arguments strong, well founded, and persuasive, while others are weak, unconvincing, or baseless" (1984: 11). The focus in this work on diverse features that move us toward the goal of strength and persuasiveness, and correlative disinterest in deductive systems that guarantee certainty, is quite in keeping with Toulmin's reflection in The Uses of Argument on the "the ideal of deduction" as containing a "conflict of usage" between "customary idiom" and "the professional usage of logicians" (1958: 122). Should we (he asks there) accept customary usage that speaks of Sherlock Holmes' reasoning as deductive? Toulmin is willing to leave that question as one that he "is not yet ready to determine," and to do so on the basis of "the conviction that a radical re-ordering of logical theory is needed in order to bring it more nearly into line with critical >practice" (1958: 122, 253).

This "radical re-ordering" of theory turns our attention from the interconnected set of dualisms (deduction/induction, certain/undecidable, professional/customary, theory/practice) that underlie the certainty axiom. Instead, it calls us to attend to "certain conditions" within which arguments are "strong, well founded, and "persuasive" (1984: 82, 11). In effect, Toulmin changes the question rather than attempting to introduce new directions from within an entrenched conversation. This reorientation replaces "professional" logic's valorizing of deductive certainty without denying the appeal of that ideal. It is important to appreciate that Toulmin offers us an alternative to a tradition – one that dominated thinking about reasoning from Plato to Descartes, although it has been attacked in diverse ways within our century – rather than proposing an overall refusal of the claims of certainty, or a reversed hierarchy that sends epistemic anarchy to the head of the table previously occupied by deductive certainty. In so doing, he allows for a value that can be acounted for within an

argument's Backing.

The second axiom Toulmin identifies as underlying the Cartesian program has been taken up extensively by other theorists who, in diverse ways, reject a representational conception of knowing.

In his words, this second axiom decrees that Any account. . .of 'knowledge' must accommodate itself to accepted ideas about the physiological mechanisms in the knower's sensory nerves and brain. So, most plainly in John Locke's writing, the picture took hold of the Mind as. . .'inner theater'. . .(1995: x).

Toulmin explicitly rejects this second assumption, which I call the "representation axiom," in the course of presenting his case for the "re-ordering" of both logic and epistemology. Here again, his strategy is one of changing the question. Understanding reasoning as a "critical practice," he maintains, makes "mechanisms" for reproducing a theoretically-posited external world in a likewise theoretically-posited 'inner theater' irrelevant. He proposes this alternative question as a replacement of the tradition originating in Locke (and retained, I would argue in contemporary cognitive science):

The question 'How does our cognitive equipment (our understanding) function?' must be treated. . .as equivalent to. . .'What sorts of arguments could be produced for the things we claim to know?' – so leaving aside the associated psychological and physiological questions" (1958: 254).

This shift from reproductive "equipment" to a particular sort of productive activity ("critical practice") prompts a shift away from scholarly traditions that explain events in terms of causal (physiological) or perhaps semi-causal (psychological) mechanisms. These modes of analysis are replaced, in The Uses of Argument, by "the reintroduction of historical, empirical and even – in a sense – anthropological considerations into the subject [logic] which philosophers had prided themselves on purifying. . .of any but a priori arguments" (1958: 254). In comparison to his extensive development of an alternative to the "certainty axiom," however, Toulmin has done relatively little in the way of developing an alternative to the "representation axiom."

The first step toward doing so would be recognizing that this axiom, along with the "certainty" axiom, typically is present as part of the Backing of everyday (mundane) arguments, despite the efforts of contemporary theory to discount it. This direction for respecifying the representation assumption is suggested by Toulmin's recognition that "a reasonableness may be generated. . . .in a communicative environment" that relies upon "procedures of reasoning [which]

are inherently embedded in particular cultures" (1984: 209-210). Because of this "inherently embedded" quality, we can (and even, should) question the extent to which useful analysis can be achieved through extracting arguments from their "practical situation," translating them into "the logician's abstract symbols," and then returning them to their origins for "a final judgment of the validity or invalidity of the argument" (1984: 210). That three-stage process of extraction, translation, and return was needed for a particular division of scholarly labor in which "epistemology was thought of as including both psychological questions. . .and physiological questions. . .as well as questions of a logical kind" (1958: 254). Within that conception, intellectual labor on logical questions had to be "purified" of a posteriori elements endemic to psychology and physiology.

But Toulmin's "radical re-ordering of logical theory. . .to bring it more nearly into line with critical practice" (1958: 253) redistributes the intellectual property of those labors: "Epistemology can divorce itself from psychology and physiology, and logic can divorce itself from pure mathematics: the proper business of both is to study the structures of our arguments" (1958: 257). The "avalanche of changes" set off, says Toulmin, by Dewey, Mead, Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Collingwood and Wittgenstein all support just such a relocation of efforts.

For these theorists understand all knowledge as socially and culturally situated. . .So everything to do with knowledge.

. .has to be understood as acquiring its 'meaning' in the public domain. . .Correspondingly, in the analysis of communication and argumentation, the barriers that the seventeenth-century philosophers had erected to separate logic from rhetoric were at last dismantled. So, patterns of communication. . .took their place alongside the structure of formal scientific inferences, as topics of epistemological inquiry (1995: xi-xii; Toulmin's emphasis).

Perhaps the proper conceptual space for both epistemology and logic, then, is not psychology, physiology, or mathematics – scholarly territories for the study of psyche/mind, the physical functions of living organisms, or formal systems– but disciplines that study the "communicative environment" in which arguments, "inherently embedded in particular cultures," originate?

Rhetoric, for instance, has always situated its study of persuasive argumentation in "the public domain." Does this dismantling of seventeenth-century barriers enable philosophy to relocate there and add a distinctive voice to that often disorderly discourse? Could philosophers choose that rather busy neighborhood, rather than becoming "kibitzers" in conversations conducted in more secluded

literary environs? Perhaps back-fence (and even, front yard) conversation with rhetoricians who study argumentation provide alternative assumptions for conceptions of reasoning other than those of the "Cartesian program of 'modern philosophy'" – the abandonment and death of which should not, many of us believe, mean the abandonment and death of all and any conceptions of reasoned action and thought.

Critically analyzing and disowning the "certainty" and "representation" assumptions are conditions for relocating our epistemic labors in a communicative "public domain." But there is a another assumption which is more subtly pervasive in both mundane and scholarly thinking, has received far less attention from argumentation theorists, whether domiciled in philosophy or rhetoric, and which may well provide the most persuasive source of resistance against relocating philosophy within "the public domain." I find that this third assumption remains entrenched in Toulmin's work.
We need now to consider it, both it itself and as it remains effective within his reconception of argument.

## 2. The Individualism Assumption

The assumption that I call the individualism axiom is, I believe, far more ingrained in our thinking and acting than is believing that what we know is, or even could be, a representation of what is the case – much less, a representation that can be counted on with certainty.
Thus, this is the most difficult axiom to criticize. In Toulmin's words, this axiom is: The true locus of 'knowledge' is personal and individual, not public or collective: The possibility of knowledge is intelligible to Descartes (say) only insofar as he can recognize what is 'known' as part of his own knowledge (1995: x).
This assumption within mundane reasoning is inadequately addressed by Toulmin's references to theory (such as developed by Mead and Wittgenstein) that "treats all knowledge as socially and culturally situated"; as having a "primary locus [that] must be collective, not individual" (1995: xii). Nor is it rejected (as are the representation and certainty axioms) as he draws upon those theorists in developing his reconception of reasoning. Rather, this assumption remains effective within Toulmin's "radical re-ordering of logical theory" (1958: 253) as a remnant of the Cartesian program, and may well be responsible for certain difficulties we have in using and teaching that "overall pattern for use in the analysis of arguments" (1984: 40) that we commonly call the Toulmin Model.

These difficulties instigate the respecification effort that I undertake here.

A closer look at the individualism axiom reveals four subsidiary assumptions, only some of which are rejected in Toulmin's reconception:

a. the private-public dichotomy assumption, which retains modern culture's separation between matters that are taken to be "personal and individual" in contrast to "public or collective";

b. the explicitness assumption, which implies that intelligibility requires knowers to "recognize" all of what is known, so as to claim "what is 'known'" as what is owned by that knower;

c. the possession assumption, which holds that knowledge is a possession;something which that knowing subject "has"; and

d. the subject-based assumption, which incorporates a priority of knowing subject in relation to known object and so continues the implicit and subtle analogy to "owner" and "owned" patterns within the culture's economic life.

The first of these aspects (the private-public dichotomy) may be the most attacked aspect of contemporary theorizing. The conviction that "the personal is political" is both a political rallying call and the core of a good deal of sociopolitical theory that relies on that major thesis of feminist theorizing. Dividing "private" and "public" spheres can support a neo-conservatism that limits reasoned change to the "public" domain while reserving the "private" for more aesthetic and even playful endeavors, as in, for instance, the work of Rorty and Derrida. That same division also supports efforts to limit the incursion of "public" structures of domination into "private" areas of freedom; Habermas' work would be an example.

In all of these manifestations, the legitimacy of a public-private dichotomy is problematic. Fortunately, then, this component of the individualism axiom isn't present in Toulmin's general analysis of the structure and use of argument. Despite his advocacy of topic-specific reasoning, Toulmin does not impose a public-private dichotomy upon the multiple subject areas he discusses. Nor does he specify that argumentation partners exemplify either "private" or "public" qualities.

Neither the "possession" nor the "subject-based" components of the individualism axiom are evident in Toulmin's explication of an argument's Claim or Grounds. Certainly, argumentation requires arguers; which is to say, people engaged in particular sorts of dialogical interaction. But these dialogical subjects bear little

resemblance to Cartesian egos whose existence is affirmed on the basis of the knowing (i.e., doubting) that they do. Toulmin analyzes the uses of argument and the nature of reasoning without attention to the origins or existential status of the "who" that's engaged in dialogue.

If he, or we, wished to extend what he says about the activity of argumentation into proposals about the nature of arguers, those proposals would proceed more coherently and plausibly along lines set out (say) by George Herbert Mead, than along those of Rene Descartes. For Mead, there is interaction among the entities, human and otherwise, that populate the world; society forms on the basis of certain sorts of interactions; mind develops as social interaction is reflected upon in symbolic form; and the self who is the subject – or more accurately, the agent of knowledge – emerges from that process.

Rather than knowledge being a possession of a subject (self), Mead's analysis takes the self to be a by-product (so to speak) of particular kinds of social activity. We are closer, in this analysis, to the deconstructionist claim that "language speaks man," than we are to construing language or knowledge within a framework of "possessive individualism" (to borrow C.B. Macpherson's phrase), which has its philosophical roots in a Cartesian or Lockean conception of the thinking subject. This is not to say that Toulmin gives any support to contemporary theorists who reduce the (human) subject to a construct of language. But it is to say that Toulmin's "radical re-ordering of logical theory" (1958: 253), in relation to the Grounds and Claim of an argument, isn't vulnerable to contemporary criticism of any and all conceptions of rationality as dependent upon a Cartesian ego.

Matters are more difficult when we consider that criticism in relation to Warrants. Subject-specificity here takes on a dual sense of being specific to both subject-matter, and to subjects/selves who are lawyers, judges, scientists, artists, or managers – that is, who are what they are by virtue of possessing particular knowledge.

"Field-dependence," after all, means restriction to those who reside in that field, by virtue of possessing specific knowledge. Yet, this possession isn't (in the words of the public-private axiom) "personal and individual." It is, rather, "collective," and thus "public."

It allows for normed discourse within particular, limited universes of discourse, and thus enables such discussion to appear to be more orderly than mundane discourse. Warrants are generally available to all members of the community

(collective) which forms a specialized "public domain." Indeed, one of the contributions of Kuhn's work was to make us aware of the extent to which education, and especially graduate education, is at least as much a matter of informing new members of a community of what "counts" as a Warrant, within that scholarly neighborhood, as it is a matter of handing over parcels of knowledge to each neophyte.

Perhaps more importantly, insofar as the members of a specialized community speak, reason, and argue as members of that limited population – that is, within the subject-specific boundaries of the law, the arts, the sciences, or management – the ideal of reasoning embedded in modern culture decrees that they set aside their interests in, and reliance upon, membership in other collectives. For instance, structural engineers in discussion (even, argument) about the relative strength, durability, or economy of particular building materials do not, typically, apply Warrants that speak to aesthetic or (non-mandated) ecological considerations. This "typically" is an important Qualifier, for it serves to remind us that what counts as a Warrant, even in normed discourse communities, is a dynamic (rather than fixed) matter. There is a sense, then, in which Toulmin's analysis of reasoning, at the level of Warrants, presumes a knowing subject who possesses knowledge. Yet the extent to which Toulmin's theory is "subject-based," and takes knowledge to be a "possession" of those subjects, falls far short of what is assumed in the axioms that support the "Cartesian program of 'modern' philosophy."

Thus far, I would argue that the Toulmin Model provides an understanding of reasoning at work in argumentation that withstands contemporary criticism which focuses on a Cartesian model of reasoning.

This defense of Toulmin's alternative is weakened, however, when we turn to the "explicitness" assumption. Warrants must be explicit, in that statements of them must be recognized by discourse partners as justifying a proposed connection between some Grounds and a Conclusion. Warrant, Toulmin emphasizes, "is more than a repetition of. . .facts: it is a general moral of a practical character, about the ways in which we can safely argue" in regard to particular facts (1958: 106). He also explicates Data (Grounds) and Conclusions as argument elements that must be explicitly recognized.

Only one element in Toulmin's analysis of an argument can function without the arguing subject's explicit recognition of it as knowledge that he or she possesses: . . .a bare conclusion, without any data produced in its support, is no

argument. But the backing of the warrants we invoke need not be made explicit – at any rate, to begin with: the warrants may be conceded without challenge, and their backing left understood (1958: 106).

Toulmin goes on to discuss various situations in which Backing must be explicitly recognized as knowledge that the arguing subject possesses, (e.g. 1958: 111-12, 116-17). Yet he does not retract his acknowledgment that Backing, insofar as it functions effectively yet implicitly – which is to say, insofar as it enables us (or perhaps leads us) to accept a Warrant "without challenge" – resists the individualism axiom. More precisely, it resists the assumption that intelligibility requires knowers to "recognize what is 'known' as a part of his [or her] own knowledge" [1995: x; quoted in context earlier), with the implication that all of what is known must be so recognized – "owned up to," as we often say.

This acknowledgment that Backing can function implicitly and differently than Warrant enables us to understand how it is that the participants can accept the Grounds and Warrants of an argument, without accepting its proposed Conclusion – and yet, not be charged with failure in their commitment to reasoning. Understanding Backing in this way surely goes beyond Toulmin's explication – although it does so in a direction that, I'd argue, is grounded in his admission that Backing can remain implicit, although Warrants must be explicit.

*An Introduction to Reasoning* provides support for this notion of implicit Backing that functions differently from explicit Warrants. "Our first task" in analyzing the structure of arguments, Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik tell us, "is to recognize how arguments, or trains of reasoning, are constructed out of their constituent parts: claims, reasons, and the rest" (1984: 12). Then they say, in relation to their example of a mundane conversation about the likely winner of the Super Bowl: When we analyze a conversation. . .as an exchange of opinions accompanied by a probing of the foundations of those opinions. . .we are able to scrutinize and criticize the rational merits of the arguments presented. . .[which] have to do with the reliability and trustworthiness both of the facts, grounds, evidence, testimony, and so on put forward as contributions to the argument and also of the links between the different elements in the argument" (1984: 13).

The respecification that I advocate here takes this "and so on" be Backing, while Warrant does the explicit work of substantiating "the links between the different elements." If that is an acceptable interpretation, then Backing (the "and so on") provides implicit support for the "reliability and trustworthiness" of the elements

that are linked by Warrant, rather than supporting Warrant. In other words, Backing functions in conjunction with, "presupposed by," but differently from an argument's Warrant: Aside from the particular facts that serve as grounds in any given argument, we. . .need to find out the general body of information, or backing, that is presupposed by the warrant appealed to in the argument (1984: 26).

Warrants, on the other hand, range from descriptive statements to normative rules: the questioner asks for warrants, that is, statements indicating how the facts on which we agree are connected to the claim or conclusion

now being offered. . .and so are implicitly relied on as ones whose trustworthiness is well established. . . . .a general, step-authorizing statement is called a warrant (1984: 45-46).

This relatively clear delineation is muddied, however, when Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik note that Warrants in some fields are "exact and reliable decision procedures," while in others, "it may be harder to articulate all the warrants employed in argument, in the form of explicit laws, rules, or principles"; rather, the warrants may be a matter of a specialist's "own accumulated but inarticulate 'experience'" (1984: 52-53).

Indeed, throughout *An Introduction to Reasoning*, we are given characterizations of the Warrant and Backing that continue, and I would argue even intensify, the difficulties for understanding these concepts that are posed by their introduction in The Uses of Argument.

Backing and Warrant are composed across a spectrum of human activity: from inarticulate experience, to cultural values, to traditional practices, to implicit norms, to explicit rules, to facts stated in propositional form. Often, deciding which is doing what is perilously close to an arbitrary labeling. The result is that these crucially innovative aspects of Toulmin's conception of reasoning are burdened with too broad a range of tasks and too indistinct a division of labor, combined with an apparent reluctance to recognize and explore the extent to which the Backing comprises domains of human activity that exceed the philosophical agendas of most modern

philosophical thinking about epistemology and logic.

Various remarks about Backing suggest a similar range of possibilities from explicit to implicit support. In the interests of brevity, I'll quote only one passage that's especially suggestive for the conception of Backing I want to propose:

We grow up in a culture that forms our initial values, attitudes, and expectations.

It equips us also with ways of thinking and reasoning whose underlying basis or backing is not always made explicit. . . Each side takes it for granted that the other party understands words and phrases in the same sense. . . An important part of sound reasoning therefore consists of 'critical thinking' and this involves being prepared to ask questions about the underlying backing for those ways of thinking and reasoning our culture has drilled into us and normally takes for granted (1984: 66-67).

*3. Directions for Respecification*
My response to the difficulties posed by too broad a range of tasks and too indistinct a division of labor, then, is to respecify Warrant and Backing in accord with a very suggestive analogy given early  on in *An Introduction to Reasoning:* . . .if a complete argument is designed to produce a particular result, then the facts or grounds which go into the argument are like the ingredients of a cake or casserole. The warrant is then the general recipe used to combine those ingredients into the finished product (1984: 47).
Correlatively, Backing would be the already effective practices that instigate choice of the particular "ingredients" ("facts or grounds"), the combination of which is justified by Warrant, toward particular ends.
More directly stated, my proposal is to respecify Warrant as those explicit "statutes, precedents, and rules," "general laws of nature," and "general statements" which "authorize the inferences by which different collections of specific information. . .are put forward as rational support for claims" (1984: 56). These must be field-dependent: the bread bakers' rule of a tablespoon of yeast to a pound of flour will not authorize anything in regard to brewing coffee, composing music, choosing structural materials, or voting for a president. Moreover, Warrants may be limited to only some situations within a field: the rule for yeast in breads will not help us to know the proper proportion of baking powder to flour in a cake, or salt to water in a pickle brine.

Respecifying Backing is a more difficult task, for doing so means acknowledging that it encompasses domains of human activity that exceed the philosophical agendas of most modern philosophical thinking about epistemology and logic. In terms of the recipe analogy: there's no need to argue that cooking requires both ingredients and recipes, and there's little need to argue that explicit recipes are preferable to implicit recipes if we value a high probability of accomplishing palatable results. However, issues of how we choose certain foods and certain

ways of eating, rather than others, typically are not considered part of the cook's business. Yet these choices are the implicit foundation of any cooking activity, and remain as an "intonation" within that activity.

In other words: Grounds there must be, whether we're making arguments or coffee. But there must be something else also: an impetus and exigency for making either, and that isn't a matter of information/ingredients, or rule/recipe, or argument/product. Explicating that impetus or exigency takes us into a largely inarticulate domain – which is to say, beyond the explicit ingredients of the situation in which reasoning occurs, and into an inexplicit, nonlinguistic, and yet indigenous context of traditions, values, customs, habits, emotions, needs. . .and so on.

This is a domain that has been investigated extensively by a multitude of critics of the Cartesian program: Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, Polanyi, and MacIntyre come particularly to mind in that connection. Without minimizing the diverse and distinct value of each of those inquiries, I want to emphasize one common characteristic: they resist the "individualism axiom," and in particular, the assumption that explicit knowledge, possessed by individuals, is all that is, or should be, relevant to the analysis and evaluation of arguments. There are many clues and hints throughout what Toulmin has to say about reasoning's Backing that, if followed out, would lead him to join in that resistance. But he pulls back, so to speak, at the very brink of the tacit dimension of the "and so on." In terms of the recipe analogy, Toulmin's reconception of reasoning stops short of investigating the cultural exigencies for choosing particular ingredients and ways of engaging in culinary culinary activity, in order to produce particular products and results rather than others.

The domain of retreat is most clearly indicated when we read in An Introduction to Reasoning that evidently reasoning could not exist in the absence of language. Both claims and all the considerations used to support them must be expressed by some kind of linguistic symbol system" (1984:201). Respecifying Warrant and Backing as explicit and tacit components of argumentation enables argument analysis to recognize the vital contributions of both explicit, linguistically-expressed "claims and considerations," and the tacit dimension of cultural exigencies that provide the impetus for argumentation and remain within any instance
of argument as a persistent "intonation" of what is implicitly common among the

participants. We cannot translate this inherently implicit, inarticulate, and pervasive body of "what everybody knows" into explicit linguistically formulated information and rules without distorting mundane argumentation into the purified domain of formal logic.**[iii]** Acknowledging that this body of knowledge functions as Backing resists that distortion, and furthers Toulmin's contribution to a post-Cartesian conception of reasoning.

NOTES

**[i]** This respecification endeavor takes its impetus from Harold Garfinkel's focus on everyday reasoning as embodying a rationality that is pragmatically effective, although resistant to formalization. See, e.g. Garfinkel (1967) and Pollner (1987). Garfinkel's insight is that people are not 'judgmental dopes.' Subsequent ethnomethodological studies (i.e., empirical studies of the methods used in actual instances of reasoning as it occurs in various contexts) reveal that our pragmatic reasoning enables communicative negotiation of the complex decisions that must be made in everyday situations. In so doing, we rely on 'what everybody knows' about the practices endemic to mundane reasoning. Although much of that knowledge can be linguistically formulated, representational language cannot encapsulate the complexity with which we negotiate the adjustment of general practices to particular situations. In other words, language functions indexically to invoke domains of pragmatic competence, rather than functioning referentially (representationally) to designate particular information. For further work that develops this conception of communicative reasoning, see (e.g.) Langsdorf (1993), (1995), (1998).

**[ii]** The recognition of Backing as a tacit dimension of cultural values takes up certain implications of Toulmin's characterization. But it is an interpretation (rather than explication) of Toulmin's reconception, which relies upon certain commonalities in Husserl's project of tracing logic to the 'life-world,' Heidegger's identification of the 'forestructure' that informs situated knowing, Gadamer's account of 'prejudice,' Wittgenstein's attention to the 'forms of life' that supply an 'inherited background' of implicit rules for our practical activity, MacIntyre's identification of experiental traditions and communal narratives as supporting situated practice, and Polanyi's conception of tacit knowing. It is offered in order to extend Toulmin's work (in Toulmin (1958) and Toulmin, Rieke & Janik (1993)) in a direction that I believe is compatible with his later work on moral reasoning and that clarifies and reinforces the value of the Toulmin Model for argument analysis.

**[iii]** In speaking here of 'distortion' I do not mean to imply that information is altered, either carelessly or unethically. Rather, the issue is that failing to recognize the distinctive nature and role of affective, cognitive, valuational, and volitional components that dynamically inform (i.e., ongoingly constitute and are constituted by) the context of argumentation in contrast to informational components composing the Data, Claims, and Warrants of an argument encourages understanding the former as cognitively inferior to the latter; as less rational or even irrational. In other words, habits congenial to 'the Cartesian program of modern philosophy' encourage reducing the former dimension to the latter and this, I propose, is a distortion of the former's character.

REFERENCES
Bakhtin, M. (1993). Toward a Philosophy of the Act. V. Liapunov
(Trans.), M. Holquist and V. Liapunov (Eds.). Austin: University
of Texas Press.
Garfinkel, H. (1967). Studies in Ethnomethodology. Englewood
Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.
Langsdorf, L. (1993). Words of Others and Sightings/Citings/-
Sitings of Self. In: I. Angus & L. Langsdorf (Eds.), The Critical
Turn: Rhetoric and Philosophy in Postmodern Discourse, Carbondale:
SIU Press.
Langsdorf, L. (1995). Philosophy of Language and Philosophy of
Communication: Poiesis and Praxis in Classical Pragmatism. In:
L. Langsdorf and A.R. Smith, (Eds.), Recovering Pragmatism's
Voice: The Classical Tradition, Rorty, and the Philosophy of
Communication. Albany: SUNY Press.
Langsdorf, L. (1998). Refusing Individuality: How Subjects Are
Made Into Selves. Communication Theory 10, 322-346.
Pollner, Melvin (1987). Mundane Reason: Reality in Everyday and
Sociological Discourse. NY: Cambridge University Press.
Toulmin, S.E. (1958). The Uses of Argument. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.
Toulmin, S.E. (1995). Foreword, in Rethinking Knowledge, ed. R.F.
Goodman & W.R. Fisher. Albany NY: SUNY Press.
Toulmin, S.E., R. Rieke & A. Janik (1984). An Introduction to Reasoning,
2d. ed. NY: Macmillan.