ISSA Proceedings 2002 – Is There A Topical Dimension To The Rhetorical Example?

1. Introduction

Everybody who has an interest in (rhetorical) argumentation knows that *examples* play a decisive part in human persuasion. Few types of arguments are so common and versatile as the example, which is emphasized especially by the fact that we meet examples both in the context of genuine rational argumentation (*logos*) as well as in emotionally directed persuasion, where they can be used even in relation to both the audience (*pathos*) and the speaker (*ethos*)(for ethos see Garver 1994: 152-162). Thus the example recurrently appears to be a crucial effect, which functions are difficult to ignore – whether the focus is narrow argumentatorical or broad rhetorical.

I will, however, in this paper narrow down the focus and solely discuss the various rational functions of the example, i.e. the genuine argumentative functions held by the example. At this point it should be noted that this focus does not imply that the emotive functions of the example are secondary compared to the rational, or that I, in any way, understand the rational functions of the example to be basic functions, to which the emotive functions of the example can be reduced. When I focus on the rational functions of the example it is due to the observation that a too narrow comprehension of the example seems to prevail; a comprehension which causes that a particular function of example, which I shall term the *topical* function, is often mixed up with other functions of the example or overlooked.

One explanation to this narrow comprehension of the example – however, not further discussed in this paper – appears to be found in the way the example is traditionally addressed. In the majority of approaches to the example, the example seems primarily to be uncovered and defined in respect to its *method* rather than its *function*; the focus is primarily set on *the way* in which examples do *what they do* and only secondarily on what they do. Examples of this approach can be found in the typical literary comprehension of the example, in which the

example is primarily defined through a demarcation to other figures of speech based on comparison, such as analogy or metaphor. The primary focus is that there is a difference between an example's narrative form of comparison and an analogy's discursive form of comparison, or that the example diverges from the metaphor because it generally holds an explicit marker of comparison, which results in a decreased interest in the overall *function* of these comparative mechanisms. What do they do? A similar focus on method can be seen also in the traditional logical and rhetorical approaches to the example, though in a slightly different manner. In the majority of these approaches the focus is not on example qua example, but rather example qua induction, which directs the interest towards the *methodological* differences between genuine induction and generalization based on examples. In this approach too, *the way* in which examples do *what they do* and not what they do becomes the primary focus. It is clarified that the example yields generalization in a different manner, not if the example holds other functions than generalization.

It is in relation to these methodological focus, that my examination of the function of example must be perceived. In this paper I will argue, that by separating the different functions of the example we will have to ad a topical comprehension of example. In order to support this statement, it seems necessary however, first to take a closer look at the (two) functions the example has traditionally been granted. Therefore I will firstly reconstruct the above mentioned logical and rhetorical approach to the example. Because this approach is concerned with in which way the example can constitute an inductive movement, I term this conceptualisation of the example the *logical example*. From this I will turn to another traditional function of the example in which the ability of the example is to *illustrate*, rather than to generalise. In this comprehension it is emphasized that the example, by showing abstract principles concretely, holds an interpretational function – which is the reason why I term this comprehension of the example the *hermeneutic example*. From this I leave the traditional comprehensions of the example and argue that the example, besides being able to generate and illustrate *general* principles, can also influence *concrete* conditions. An example can also be applicable in pointing a concrete problem in a certain direction, and thereby influence which of the numerous aspects of the problem should be made significant and which can be ignored. As these reflections basically belong to the domain of invention and furthermore, this domain is managed by the discipline named the Topics, I term this comprehension the

topical example.

2. The Logical Example

The comprehension of the example as a logical effect can be traced back to Aristotle. In both *Organon* and the *Rhetoric* Aristotle continuously employs a parallelism between rhetorical reasoning and logical reasoning, which, for instance, can be seen in the following passage where he, after having determined that reasoning is either inductive or deductive, states as follows: "The means by which rhetorical arguments carry conviction are just the same; for they use either examples, which are a kind of induction, or enthymemes, which are a kind of syllogism," (Aristotle 1997: 71a; see also: 1994a: 1355a11, 1356b8, 1400b1). Thus Aristotle transfers to the rhetorical register the two movements of logic, the inductive *epagoge* and the deductive *syllogismos*, hence rhetorical reasoning basically becomes an inductive and a deductive movement respectively, which is now simply termed *paradiegma*, when a generalization is constituted on a particular fact and *enthymema*, when a particular fact is deduced from a generalization.

This reading of the example, as Aristotle has it, appears to be found on the assumption that rhetoric is the *organon* of the practical field of knowledge. Whereas logic handles inferences within the scientific and theoretical sphere – in Aristotle's terminology: where things *cannot* be other than they are – rhetoric handles inferences within the problematic and practical sphere, where things *can* be other than they are (Aristotle 1994b: 1139a5; 1994a: 1357a12). When Aristotle uses two parallel registers of inferences, which each holds a deductive and an inductive movement, it is due to the more fundamental condition that he employs two different fields of knowledge: one theoretical, one practical; one handled by logic and one handled by rhetoric. Thus rhetorical reasoning supplements logical reasoning, because the former mentioned is adjusted to the practical sphere characterised by contingence and lack of regularity as opposed to latter. Aristotle states: "The necessary result then is that the enthymeme and the example are concerned with *things which may, generally speaking, be other than they are...*" (Aristotle 1994a: 1357a13, italic added).

In this comprehension the function of induction and example thus becomes the same. What varies is *the method,* namely the *way* in which the generalization is conducted. As the induction is employed within an area characterised by necessity and regularity the induction enables generalizations in accordance with

the scientific demand for many, repeated observations. A biological generalization such as *all human beings are mortal*, can be supported by an infinite number of particular incidents, namely every single death of a human being**[i]**.

Otherwise with the example. The generalizations of the example have to be supported qualitatively rather than quantitatively, as the sphere in which the example is employed is not constant, but variable. For instance a generalization such as: *a person aiming at a tyranny asks for a bodyguard* is not supportable by an infinite number of particular conditions. At the most a generalization like this is supportable by a few representative occurrences, e.g. *After Pisistratus asked for a bodyguard he became a tyrant, not to mention Theagenes of Megara, where just the same was the case* (Aristotle 1994a: 1357b19). Thus the example is understood as a kind of *qualitative* induction in which the *fewer* number of particular references is compensated by the fact that they are plausible in connection with the circumstances and the audience. Whereas induction is generalization based on *valid inference* the example is generalization based on *audience adherence*.

This logical conceptualisation is important because it explains how we actually use the example in various ways to establish generalizations. For instance we generalize in a 'Sokratic' way when we use comparisons to guarantee our generalizations (Aristotle 1994a: 1393b4), or when two to three actual manifestations of a relation (i.e. one takes medicine in order to get well; a sailor sails in order to earn money) force us to accept the relation as being a general rule (one acts generally to obtain a benefit which exists outside of the actual act) (Plato 1983: 467c ff.). Similarly, we generalise based on precedents in judicial relations, thus one past case becomes constituent to rule (Cicero 1993a: I 49; Perelman og Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 351). Not to mention that we generalise by means of testimony, which 'backs' the rule, so to speak, *after* it has been operational. Thus Aristotle notes that the example is often employed *after* the generalization. He writes: "if they stand last they resample evidence, and a witness is in every case likely to induce belief. Wherefore also it is necessary to quote a number of examples if they are put first, but one alone is sufficient if they are put last; for even a single trustworthy witness is of use." (Aristotle 1994a: 1394a9). Hence, the example not only distinguishes itself from the induction by the number of particular instances, but also by the process with which the generalization is conducted. In other words, the logical comprehension of example clarifies that the example is often employed inductively and that this inductive function is an important function of the example being a rational

argument**[ii]**.

3. The Hermeneutic Example
The question is now which other functions the example holds apart from the generalizational? One answer is found by studying the work *Rherorica ad Herenium*, in which the outline of another well known conceptualisation of the example is found. In a lengthy excursus the author of this work initiates a discussion of the pros and cons, respectively, of historical examples versus constructed examples: should one, being Greek, use examples from former speakers and poets or should one rather construct new examples, as doing so would facilitate adjusting the examples to the actual circumstances. What is of interest in this discussion is to a smaller extent the actual dispute and to a further extent the various understandings of the example which are reflected in the author's account of pro et contra. According to the author of *Rhetorica ad Herenium*, the Greeks reasons for preferring historic examples are rooted in the logical example comprehension, as shown above; more precisely in the comprehension of the example being evidence based on testimony. Especially when the example acts as testimony, it is important that the example originates from an established and authoritative source, which historic examples of course do better than constructed examples. Against this the author of *Rhetorica ad Herenium* objects: "First and foremost, examples are set forth, not to confirm or to bear witness, *but to clarify.*" ([Cicero] 1964: IV5, italic added). The problem of the Greeks reasons to use historic examples hence is not the statement that historic examples contain more authority than constructed examples, but the actual assumption that the function of the example is to *prove* something.

With the above objection the author of *Rhetorica ad Herenium* takes part in transcending the logical comprehension of the example. What he points out is that appealing to a particular instance is not always motivated by a wish to generalise, but that the purpose is *explanation*, if anything. For that reason the author of *Rhetorica ad Herenium* chooses to distinguish between testimony and example: "The difference between testimony and example is this: by example we clarify [demonstratur] the nature of our statement, while by testimony we establish its truth." (([Cicero] 1964: IV5-6). Thus, though example and testimony have been based on particular instances in common, they do not for that reason hold the same function: whereas the function of the testimony is to secure the operational rules of reasoning, the function of the example is *to point out* particular

circumstances, which *show* the rules (cf. the etymology for "demonstrate").

A similar reasoning appears to be behind the ambiguous analysis of the example by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. In *The New Rhetoric* Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca distinguish between; on the one hand what they term *examples*, which – in accordance with the logical example comprehension – are particular instances employed to generalize. On the other hand what they term *illustration*, in which the function of the particular instance is not to guarantee the rule, but to make it present and comprehensible to the audience and the current context. They state: "Whereas an example is designed to establish a rule, the role of illustration is to strengthen adherence to a known and accepted rule, by providing particular instances which clarify the general statement..." (Perelman og Olbrechts-Tyteca 1971: 357, italic added). Also to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca particular instances hence contain a double function, namely a function apart from the generalizational. Thus, what they stress by supplementing the example with the illustration is that particular instances are also employed in circumstances in which the operational rule *is* non-controversial and accepted, and where the function of appealing to a particular instance cannot be the generalization in itself. In the case of the illustration the function of the particular instance is rather to be found in the ability to *concretise* a rule, by which the rule is made both comprehensible and present. In other words, when an illustration appeals to a particular instance the function is not to guarantee, but rather to *apply*; i.e. concretely showing the general.

Many things appear to indicate that apart from the logical function the example also holds, in a wider term called a *hermeneutical* function. Apart from being usable for establishing general principles they are also usable for *interpreting* general principles. Terming this function of the example hermeneutic is thus due to the fact that in this conceptualisation the example can be placed within the limits of the fundamental principle of hermeneutic, which points out that comprehension is an interplay between part and whole, i.e. concrete application of the general and vice versa. Furthermore, because the example represents an interaction of the general and the particular it can be perceived as a kind of explanatory mechanism which works in accordance with the principal: Show don't tell!

Like the logical conceptualisation of the example unveiled a fundamental function of the example, so does the hermeneutical conceptualisation of the example. Apart from the generalizational function, we recurrently appear to employ the

example to show and explain the general by means of the particular. At this point the teaching situation can be mentioned, in which the example is often employed to make the subject easy to grasp; e.g. the contradiction principle can be explained by following: it is not possible to say both that "the earth is level" and "the earth is round". Likewise, we know the hermeneutical function of the example from dictionaries and other works of reference, in which the meaning af a word or a rule is often followed by an example of the word or rule in usage. In other words, the hermeneutical conceptualisation of the example clarifies that we use the example for other things than generalization, and that the hermeneutical conceptualisation of the example thus represents another important function of the example as a rational effect**[iii]**.

4. The Topical Example
The above conceptualizations of the example seems to describe the functions traditionally ascribed to the example. Typically, the example is understood in relation to Aristotle's inductive frames of comprehension or as a hermeneutic function aiming at comprehension. Or as *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* has it: "Aristotle's definition should be broadened, however, since *example* has long been used not only to *prove* but also to *clarify*...." (Lyons 2001:278). Now the issue is whether it might be necessary to broaden the comprehension of the example even further. In the following I will argue that besides the logical and the hermeneutic functions of the example, a topical function of the example also exists, and that in order to uncover this, the example must be comprehended in relation to the inventive sphere of argumentation, in which a case or problem is organized and shaped.

The area in which the traditional comprehensions of the example are too narrow, is in their one-sided focus on the level of rules and principles. The effect of the example is recurrently comprehended in relation to rules and principles, thus the level of an argument termed *the major* by the traditional syllogistic vocabulary, and the *warrant* in Stephen Toulmin's reformed vocabulary (Toulmin 1997: 98ff). That this is the case in the logical comprehension of the example appears obvious. As we noted above, the focus in this comprehension is the example's ability to move from part to *whole*, consequently being an argument, which is employed to constitute a general rule or principle, as e.g. the above mentioned rule: *A person aiming at tyranny, asks for a bodyguard*. The same appears to be the case with the hermeneutic comprehension of the example, as the example normally explains and illustrates rules or principles, as for instance the principle of contradiction. In

this comprehension an example is an explanatory mechanism, which, by moving from *whole* to *part*, concretizes an abstract principle or unintelligible rule. In other words, the logical and the hermeneutic comprehensions of the example are both effects, which influence, in a phrase termed *relational statements*, thus statements of the type: all X are Y; after X, Y normally occurs; Y is an instance of X etc.

It is exactly in this focus the topical comprehension of the example differs from the logical and hermeneutic comprehensions of the example. It appears reductive to comprehend the functions of the example in relation to rules and principles exclusively, as the example likewise influences particular instances. Apart from the generalizational examples, which move from the *particular to the general*, and the illustrating example, which move from the *general to the particular*, there are also examples which move from *one particular instance to another particular instance*, from "part to part".

Terming this "part to part" comprehension of the example a breakaway from tradition is, however, a qualified truth. Consequently, it appears necessary to add yet another remark to the tradition. Even Aristotle mentions that, contrary to the induction, the example is not a movement from "part to whole", but from "part to part" (Aristotle 1994a: 1357b19; 1996: 69a ff.). The exact meaning of Aristotle's statement is a controversial issue, not least as Aristotle, in other passages, draws a parallel between example and induction, which, as a well-known fact, is not a movement from "part to part", but from "part to whole", as we encountered above. When this type of the example can yet be comprehended within the limits of the logical comprehension it is due to the fact that it is normally presented as a generalizational movement, which, however, does not stop at the generalization, but applies the generalization to a new particular instance, enabling the actual generalization to be implied (e.g. see: Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca Perelman 1971: 353-4; Grimaldi 1972: 89 (note 12), 104-105; Benoit 1980). Consequently, an example can act as an argument which moves from *part* to *whole* to *part*, but in which only the particular instances are explicit, which is the reason why this kind of example is termed a "part to part" example. As illustrated by Aristotle's example above: a "part to part" example moves from the explicit statement: *After Pisistratus asked for a bodyguard he became a tyrant* – via the implicit generalization: *A person aiming at tyranny, asks for a bodyguard* – to the explicit conclusion: *When Dionysius ask for a bodyguard he is aiming at tyranny* (Aristotle 1994a: 1357b19). According to this reading a "part to part" example must be

perceived as an unpronounced combination of an inductive and a deductive inference**[iv]**.

The reason I mention this Aristotelian "part to part" comprehension of the example, is because I wish to distinguish my topical comprehension from it. My claim, that the example is also applicable to influencing particular instances, must not be comprehended within the frame of this unpronounced and compressed, and ultimately logical, type of example. It is of interest that a case and context interpreting function can be ascribed to the example, when it moves from "part to part". Furthermore, by comprehending "part to part" in this light we move away from the logical sphere in order to comprehend the example as an effect within the frame of the pre-logical domain of topic – which, as a well-known fact, also forms a fundamental part of rationality and argumentation, though overlooked at times**[v]**.

As all cases at starting point can make a majority of topoi functional, it is in an argumentative perspective vital which topoi are emphasized and which are disregarded. Is the case to be understood according to topos X, whereby all characteristics, associations, and connotations of X are made topical, or is the case rather to be comprehended according to topoi Y, Z, or Q etc., whereby their characteristics, associations, and connotations, respectively are made topical. Now the issue is that, apart from being able to generate and illustrate general rules and principles, the example is likewise able to influence these reflections specific to the case. Connecting a well-known case to the actual case thus influences the audience to comprehend the actual case in the same way as the well-known case (the example), whereby the actual case is drawn towards a specific interpretation rather than towards an equally obvious interpretation. Hence, emphasizing a similarity between the actual case and the case of the example enables a "part to part" example to act as a kind of reason for the actual case and situation to be comprehended in a certain way: As case A (the actual case) *resembles* case B (the chosen example), and case B is a matter of X, case A, likewise, becomes a matter of X. It is in this comprehension that the example holds a topical function, as the purpose of connecting the particular circumstances is to apply a frame of comprehension in which the desired topos is predominant. The function of the topical example is to establish the terms in which the actual case is to be approached and interpreted.

The function of the topical example becomes even clearer if related to the

hermeneutic example. At first glance it appears that there is a conjunction between the hermeneutic and the topical example, as both hold an interpreting function. The conjunction only being apparent is, first and foremost, due to the fact that the purpose of the topical example is to interpret how a particular case is to be understood rather than to interpret a general rule or principle. Or put differently by once again turning to the syllogistic vocabulary: the purpose of the topical example is not to influence the major, but the minor, as the minor (at least in a practical reasoning) contains a *concrete statement*; i.e. a statement containing a proposition which, unlike a relational statement, specifically connects to an actual context. When the example is employed topically the function is, in other words, to show that one specific topos rather than other possible topoi should determine the complement of the minor (does: *human being* or maybe rather: *man, Athenian, philosopher*, or *midwife* constitute the most favourable complement in a given situation, to exemplify with a well-known minor).

Add to this, that the topical example differs from the hermeneutic example by interpreting in an *intentional* way. The purpose of the topical example is not so much the actual comprehension that the example delivers, but the perspective through which the case is comprehended. Whereas the consequence of replacing one hermeneutic example with another possible hermeneutic example is that the underlying principle becomes more or less comprehendable, at the most, the consequence of replacing a topical example with another possible topical example is that the case is comprehended in a qualitatively different way. The choice of which topical example is used in a given case is not due to neutral choices, but to intentional choices; the purpose is not to make something comprehendable, but rather that something is comprehended in a particular way.

When I term this comprehension of the example topical it is inspired by Giambattista Vico and his emphasis on the fact that logic (as well as all of its practical variations) does not represent all of the argumentatoric and rational sphere. Vico points out that logic (critica) must be supplemented by topic (topica) and, furthermore, that topic (topica) always comes before logic (critica) because, in order to be able to employ the various reasoning of logic to a particular case, we must clarify the actual case, first of all. What is the totality of aspects of the case? And which of these are fundamental? (Vico 1997: 26ff. For a phylogenetic perspective see also: 1998: 246ff.) Terming the current function of the example topical is hence to emphasize that the example can also influence the "pre-logic"

phase of a (practical) course of reasoning, in which the function is, not to argue *based on* a set of premises, but to argue for a set of premises**[vi]**. As especially Gramaldi has argued, understanding the topic as a static storage of argumentative "places" is too narrow, as topic rather represents the ability to think in a problem orientated manner (Grimaldi 1972: 115-135); a problem orientated manner, which the example is an instance of, when applied topical.

Like the logical and hermeneutic conceptualizations of the example uncovered important functions of the example, so too does the topical comprehension of the example. The example actually appears to functionas a topical effect in a number of incidents, which can be illustrated by the use of examples and comparisons applied by the Bush Administration in connection with September 11. Without taking a position on whether or not the response of the Bush Administration was justified, it appears safe to say that the Bush Administration was interested in interpreting the incidents as a genuine war, in which armed response was a natural reaction. One way in which this war topos was supported was by exemplifying the current incidents with the 1941 incident on Pearl Harbor, namely the incident which in reality, and not least symbolically, made the USA enter the Second World War; comprehend September 11 as you comprehended December 7, 1941, thus as the day on which somebody declared war on the USA; comprehend September 11 as a day on which the USA was forced into using military power. The same appears to be the case in a number of less drastic cases, e.g. when opponents of abortion exemplify an abortion with the killing of a handicapped person, whereby abortion is made an issue of killing rather than, for instance, the preferred topos of the supporters of abortion; women's right to decide for themselves. The advertising trade often expound products by means of topical examples, e.g. a brand of ice cream which is identified by connecting it to a car; comprehend Underground ice cream, as we comprehend Volkswagen's new bubble, namely as more than just a car and as a product in a league of its own**[vii]**. In other words, the topical conceptualization of the example clarifies, that, apart from using the example generalizational and explanatory, we also employ the example to explain the "true" connection of a concrete case, and that the topical comprehension of the example thus points out yet another important function of the example**[viii]**.

5. Conclusion
The example is a fundamental and broad effect. If we, rather than focusing on the methodological characteristics of the example – i.e. in which way the example

distinguishes from induction, analogy, or metaphor – examine the function of the example, it becomes evident that the traditional comprehensions are too narrow. The functions of the example cannot be explored adequately by the traditional bipartition of the example, in which is distinguished between whether the example generates or illustrates general rules and principles, as the example also influences concrete circumstances. Adding together the connections which exist between particular and general circumstances, we find that the example holds not two, but three possible connections: in addition to the ability of the example to move from *part to whole* and from *whole to part*, it is also capable of moving from *part to part*, from one case and situation to another case and situation. Consequently, the example is to be comprehended in connection with three different conceptualizations, which each emphasizes a genuine function: firstly, the example can be interpreted within the frame of the inductive movements of logic, in which the function is to generate rules and principles. Secondly, the example can be interpreted within the frame of hermeneutic, in which the function is to illustrate rules and principles. Thirdly, the example can be interpreted within the frame of topic, in which the function is to dictate to which topos, and thereby frame of interpretation, a concrete case must be ascribed.

Even though these three functions of the example are not always clearly separable at the practical level, they represent three very different argumentative functions at the theoretical level. In an argumentative connection it is not enough to know the form and pattern of movement of a certain type of argument, as, all in all, it is more important to know *why* this type of argument is employed. In this paper I have argued that, in order to be able to clarify these questions in connection with the example, we have to separate and analyze the different functions of the example. Only if we do so, it becomes possible to determine why a given example is included in a practical context of argumentation: Is the function of the example to establish a generalization? Or maybe to show a generalization concretely? Or is the function to present the actual case parallel to the way in which the example is presented?

NOTES

[i] It is important to note at this point that it is not the validity of the induction which is being discussed. An (empirical) scepticism about arguing that "all human beings are mortal" – many are not dead yet – is irrelevant in the current connection; moreover it is an anachronism in relation to Aristotle (Lloyd 1977: 127).

[ii] Besides the above see also: Benoit 1980; Kennedy 1980: 69-70; Corbett 1990: 68-70, 131-2; Ong 1994: 141, and McAdon 2001: spec. 142 + appendix 1, who however, regards the consideration to the audience rather than the contingent field of knowledge as the reason behind the more simple form of the example.

[iii] Besides the above see also: McGuire 1982; Horner 1988: 87, 163-170; Nash 1989: 55ff.; Ramirez 1995: 256-262, and McCroskey 2001: 183-184. Add to this that Benoit (1980:190) sees tendencies of the hermeneutic example comprehension in Aristotle's work (Aristotle 1997: 157a).

[iv] It is important to mention that Gerard Hauser and Scott Consigny have argued for an alternative comprehension of the Aristotelian "part to part" example. According to Hauser it is not an unpronounced "part to whole to part" inference, but rather an: "... unmediated inference from part of a genus to another part of a genus." (Hauser 1974). This comprehension of the "part to part" example does not, however, cause a break away from the inductive frames of comprehension to Hauser. Rather than breaking away from the induction, Hauser expands the comprehension of induction whereby it can comprise his comprehension of the "part to part" example also. Unlike Hauser's basis in induction, Consigny base his comprehension on the deliberative speech and its focus on the future. The example becomes useful especially when focus is set on the future, as it can explain a prospective situation from a past situation (Consigny 1976). The comprehension of the example which I term topical in this paper has certain similarities to Hauser's and especially Consigny's interpretation of the example. However, one difference is that Hauser and Consigny – exactly because they found their comprehension of the example in induction and the deliberative speech – do not recognize that an unmediated part to part movement is interpretational as a pre-logic and thus topical argument, which both anticipates the induction and transcends the different genres of speech.

[v] It is here worth to mention that Aristotle and Cicero assign topic – and the initial uncovering of case and situation which it enables – an equal position in the argumentatoric and rational sphere as logic. Cf. Aristotle's definition of logos (1994a: 1356a6) and Cicero's explanation as to why topic is a necessary discipline (Cicero 1993b: 6).

[vi] Note that this comprehension of topic is based on the specific topoi, which, unlike the more well-known general topoi representing inference mechanisms, represents "angles" through which the subject can be approached. See Aristotle 1994a: 1358a22 and Grimaldi 1972: 115-135.

[vii] The example has been taken from a Danish billboard in which the Danish

high quality ice cream Underground Ice Cream visually is compared with various established products, e.g. Volkswagen's Bubble and the famous chair, the Egg, by the architect Arne Jacobsen. The idea of analyzing ads as examples is inspired by McGuire 1982.

[viii] As this topical function of the example constitutes a non-logical, but rational form of persuasion (logos) it is tempting to take it one step further and classify it as the genuine rhetorical function of the example. Without pursuing this statement any further I might add that topic (qua specific topoi) unlike quasi-logical arguments, appears not to be parasitic to other subjects and disciplines, which enables the arguments, that the topical dimension of arguments constitute the genuine rhetorical approach to the field of argumentation. See Gabrielsen (1999; 2000/2001 and 2001).

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