ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Renaissance Roots Of Perelman's Rhetoric

Everyone here, I dare say, is aware of the stature of *The New Rhetoric* (as the *Traité de l'argumentation* came to be known in its English incarnation) has these days in the field of argumentation theory, of the elegance of Perelman's critique of cartesian formalism, of his re-positioning of the question of what constitutes reasonability, and of the consequent enhancement – perhaps the rehabilitation – of a discipline that many found suspect: rhetoric. You are all no doubt aware as well of the sorts of reservations Perelman's ideas have elicited, chiefly in the area of his notion of the "universal audience" or, indeed, of his radical audience-orientation in general. Of these I shall have nothing to say because my concern is a rather different one from those expressed in the vast majority of critical response to Perelman.

Nothing I have seen in the critical literature pays much attention to two important subjects treated by Perelman in the *Traité: loci* and figures. I do not know why this is so. It may be that his interpreters of record understand these things better than I do. But it is nevertheless exceedingly strange that they should ignore them, since they constitute by far the greatest part of Perelman's discussion. On the very face of it, therefore, a look at Perelman's treatment of loci and figures seems very much in order. His book, he tells us in the very first pages, was to be a study of the discursive methods of "securing adherence", methods that extend beyond the "perfectly unjustified and unwarranted limitation of the domain of action of our faculty of reasoning and proving" imposed by logic (p.3). His rhetoric is accordingly a method both of inquiry and of the means by which we can articulate the reasons for our decisions. The study of these discursive means centers on the loci of preference (NR pp.83-114/ TA 112-153) and *schèmes argumentatifs* (187-450/251-609) based on the loci (p.190/254f.), and on the verbal devices of eloquence in all its forms, devices ordinarily relegated to the realm of ornamentation and devalued as mere device (pp.167ff., 450f./ 225ff., 597f.). The primary subjects of the *Traité* are in short invention (not judgement, as so many

want to claim) and expression.
Since time is short (and the argument is long), I will restrict myself to a brief examination of the resemblances between Perelman's treatment of loci and Renaissance "place-logics" – particularly the place logic in the *De inventione dialectica* of the great Renaissance humanist, Rudolph Agricola.

Let me begin with a sketch of Perelman. A locus, Perelman tells us, is "a premiss of a general nature"; the sum of all loci constitutes a storehouse or *arsenal* "on which a person wishing to persuade another will have to draw, whether he likes it or not" (84/113). Perelman treats of two sets of loci: loci of the preferable (amplifying on those in Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1.7) and loci which enable one to establish *liaisons* between facts. Loci of the preferable break up into two large "families": those centering on "quantity" (the whole is preferable to a part, the common to the rare, etc.) and those centering on "quality" (the unique is preferable to the normal, etc.). Loci for establishing liaisons between facts Perelman divides into associative loci and dissociative loci. Associative loci include what he calls quasi-logical "schemes" (tautology, transitivity, etc.) and another set centering on relations of succession (cause/effect, means/ end, etc.) and of coexistence (act and person, symbolic relations, all of which are derived from the "structure of the real"); and those loci which enable one to "establish the structure of the real" (example, analogy, etc.). Dissociative loci turn on stipulations as to the character of facts as real or apparent, as latent or manifest, as constructed or given, etc., which enable one to counter or transcend arguments based on associative loci. Association and dissociation are always mutually interactive.

Since Perelman calls these loci "premisses" and "argumentative schemes", one might be tempted to equate them, respectively, with "premisses" in syllogisms or enthymemes (or perhaps with Toulmin's "warrants") and with something like inferential schemata in logic. No doubt, a *locus* of preference which one might express as "the whole is preferable to the part" could be so construed, and it is easy to fabricate a syllogism using that locus as a major premiss or as a warrant. But that is not what Perelman is up to. To begin with, Perelman has little if any interest in syllogisms. At best, they might be seen as a sub-set of one of his "quasi-logical" loci, namely, transitivity. In reality, a syllogism (or enthymeme) is probably just one way, of many, of arranging an argument. Moreover, it is difficult to see how arguments from analogy, comparison, example, division, etc., could be

transformed into syllogisms without doing great violence to what Perelman has in mind. An idea of just what that was can, I think, be gathered from the comparison with Agricola I suggested before.

Agricola, who died young in 1485, is important in the history of rhetoric because he was the chief conspirator in a "semantic revolution" which re-inaugurated the classical Ciceronian view of invention as fundamentally rhetorical, breaking with the scholastic tradition beginning with Boethius which restricted commonplaces (as distinguished from particular places) to dialectic. Boethian dialectic, it will be remembered, was conceived as a universal verbal art whose application was restricted to specifically verbal acts – statements and arguments. Invention in Boethian dialectic discovered and provided the "maxims" (*maximae propositiones*) which could guarantee the validity of assertions made in disputation. This kind of dialectic ties invention to logical necessity, supplying the canons by which an argument may be judged as to its validity and, consequently, its truth. In the process, it removes dialectic from the realm of invention aimed at generating statements and arguments, especially ones based on imperfect knowledge of probabilities, when they are needed.
Agricola's dialectic, like Cicero's, is by contrast oriented toward invention rather than judgement. For Agricola, every disputed matter can be reduced to a question which asks whether a given predicate can be said to "inhere" in its subject. That is, Agricolan dialectic involves the analysis of subjects and predicates to discover – that is, "invent" – points of agreement (*consentanea*) or disagreement (*dissentanea*) between them. The nature of this analysis in invention can be seen by observing the application of loci – definition, genus, species, properties, adjuncts, etc. – to a proposition or question using the procedure Agricola called *ekphrasis* (*De inventione* 2.28, pp. 326ff. in the 1539 Cologne edition).

For example, we might consider the question "*An rhetorico petenda sint lustra in viam Achterburgwalensiem*? – loosely, "Should teachers of rhetoric frequent certain establishments (the *lustra*) located along the Oude zijds Achterburgwal?" The definition of the subject, "teachers of rhetoric", might be framed as "Good men skilled in teaching others to be good men skilled in speaking"; that of "those who frequent the lustra " as "Persons looking for a good time". No *consentanea* here, it would seem. As for genus, it may be allowed that both are animals. The species of *rhetorici*: Aristotelian, Ciceronian, Perelmaniac, Toulmaniac, and the rest. No comparable species of the predicate term exist (as, for instance,

"sailoring" is a profession – but perhaps there are different schools of sailoring? I don't know). As for property: of the *rhetoricus*, "lust for knowledge of the principles of rhetoric"; of the other, perhaps, the Latin name for which would be *lustrones*, just "lust". Do we see *consentanea* here? The next locus in Agricola's list is "parts" – arms, legs, head, and the rest in both the subject and predicate! So we seem to have some consentanea here. Under "conjugates": for the one, "rhetoricizing", I suppose; and for the other, "*lustrari*" – loosely, "hanging around houses of ill-repute".

Now I realize that some people don't see any difference here; but I will propose that these are dissentanea. Under "adjacents": for rhetorici, concern for civic virtue, uprightness of morals, love of hard work, wrinkled brow, paleness, and the rest. As to the lustrones, uprightness and paleness, but clearly not for the same reasons. So I think we have some dissentanea here. Skipping a few loci brings us to final cause: for rhetorici, producing a future generation of good men skilled in speaking; for lustrones – well, perhaps we don't have to go into that in detail, but lustrones usually don't aim at producing future generations, do they? And so one goes on in this procedure, generating, on the one hand discourse about teachers of rhetoric and, on the other, about lustrones. Agricola's system thus provides us with the sorts of things one can say about them. But – and this is crucial – unlike the case with Boethius, the Agricolan dialectician must have particular and concrete knowledge of both rhetoricians and lustrones in order to generate disourse about them.

Consider now how this kind of analysis discovers possible arguments bearing on the original question. Where we can see consentanea, we can develop liaisons on the basis of which we could argue that rhetoricians should hang around houses of ill-repute; or, on the contrary, that it wouldn't be appropriate for them to do that, on the basis of the dissentanea we have discovered.

I'll have to sum up this analysis without going through all twenty-four of Agricola's loci, I am afraid. But first, I want to point out that some of our possible consentanea involve considerable equivocation, which, of course, is a trick used by sophists, not dialecticians; and that the only solid *consentaneum* is to be found under "parts". And since the dissentanea seem to outweigh the consentanea – or so Agricola would conclude – there don't seem to be any grounds for arguing that rhetoricians should hang out in houses of ill-repute aside from the fact that they, like lustrones, have arms, legs, heads, and the rest. I hope no one here is

disappointed by this.

Like the loci of Agricola's place logic, Perelman's loci enable us to generate probable arguments aimed at creating or intensifying adherence by appealing to the liaisons among accepted facts and preferences. If we had time, I think I could show how Agricola's list of loci embraces most, if not all, of Perelman's loci concerning "facts". Agricola's understanding of "definition" as a topical resource subsumes most of Perelman's "quasi-logical" loci, for instance. What Agricola calls "*comparata*" (Inv. 1.24, pp. 132ff.) cover Perelman's "analogy" (371ff./499ff.), "illustration" (350f./481f.), and "model" (362ff./488ff.); his "*opposita*" (Inv. 1.26, pp. 154ff.) are Perelman's "complements" (240ff./315ff.), and so forth.

I hasten to add that I am not claiming that Perelman consciously drew on Agricola for his notion of loci, for he does not seem to have known the *De inventione dialectica* well. In a way, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca re-invented the wheel, as Perelman himself was aware – that seems to be what he means when he remarks in the introduction that his book was "mostly related to the concerns of the Renaissance" (p.5/6). Nor am I saying that a comparison with Agricola could prove exhaustive. Perelman's loci of preference have no counterpart in Agricola, but draw rather on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Topics*. And what Perelman calls "dissociation" might well have been rejected by Agricola as a fallacy.

The comparison with Agricola is useful, nevertheless, since it sheds light on other aspects of Perelman's rhetoric. Even the example I generated earlier turns up something crucial in both Agricola and Perelman: it is grounded on common knowledge, common assumptions, common ethical standards, perhaps, all of which are "pre-understood" and all of which are presumed in appealing to a particular audience – and audience, if anything, is the paramount element in Perelman's views.

It may also be argued that, just as in Agricola, the syllogism occupies a subsidiary position – if it holds any position at all – in Perelman, for whom the discoverable liaisons among facts are more subtle, much more flexible, and much more in the realm of accepted particular facts than the liaisons recognized as legitimate by logicians. I do not think this can be stressed enough. From what I have seen, most readers of *The New Rhetoric* have exhibited an almost uncontrollable temptation to assimilate Perelman's inventional method to some version of syllogistic procedure, ignoring the cautions he expressed in the last piece he published in the U.S. (QJS 70 [1984], pp. 188ff.) about the tendency to "Toulminize" his

rhetoric by turning it into an “informal logic”. In a way, it must be admitted that we are all afflicted by what Kenneth Burke called a “trained incapacity” in view of our inabilities to avoid reducing the notion of “argument” to the syllogistic model, indeed, to a peculiar version of that model long ago discredited.

This observation brings me to a final point of resemblance between Agricola and Perelman. Both, I think it can be said, found themselves at the center of a “semantic revolution”, the more recent of which is just beginning to gain momentum. A “semantic revolution” occurs when terms remain the same but their meanings change. A good example would be the term “dialectic”, which had undergone many; or “argument”, for that matter. The sense of “revolution” here is not, I should add, the sense in which revolutions tear down the old and replace it with something completely new; but an older sense of “revolution” – one evident in the reference to “The Glorious Revolution” of 1688 in England, wherein affairs “re-volved” back to an earlier state. In a sense, it is possible to say that, just as Agricola’s “revolution” carried him back beyond Boethius to Cicero, so Perelman’s has carried him back beyond Tarski and Frege, beyond Spinoza and Descartes and what Perelman calls a bourgeois preoccupation with evidence, to Agricola or to thinkers like Agricola, who “revolutionized” rhetoric during the Renaissance. It may be, I have come to think, that just as Agricola saw a need to reach back beyond Boethius, we will have to reach back beyond Descartes to Agricola if we wish to understand Perelman rightly.

ISSA Proceedings 1998 – “I’m Just Saying…”: Discourse Markers Of Standpoint Continuity

1. Introduction

Group discussion of a controversial issue confronts participants with intellectual and pragmatic challenges that in practice are inextricably entwined. Argumentation theory attends primarily to the intellectual challenges and provides conceptual tools for analysis of issues and arguments. Practical argumentation, however, is fundamentally a pragmatic, communicative process. The pragmatic work of discussion is not merely a distraction from the intellectual work of argumentation. Rather, it sustains the social matrix within which argumentation becomes possible and meaningful as a constituent feature of certain collective activities.

To understand the normative and pragmatic dimensions of argumentation in their intertwined complexity requires empirical studies of practical argumentative discourse along with analytical and philosophical studies of normative argumentative (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson, & Jacobs 1993). The present study attempts to contribute to the empirical side of this inquiry by describing and analyzing certain uses of a particular pragmatic device.

Specifically, the paper reports a discourse analysis of discussions among students in an undergraduate "critical thinking" course. Student-led discussions of two controversial issues (capital punishment and legal recognition of homosexual marriages) were audiotaped and transcribed. Examining discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1987) in the two discussions, we noted frequent uses of "I'm just saying" and related metadiscursive expressions (I'm/we're saying, I'm/we're not saying, etc.). Our central claim is that these "saying" expressions are pragmatic devices by which speakers claim "all along" to have held a consistent argumentative standpoint, one that continues through the discussion unless changed for good reasons. Through microanalysis of a series of discourse examples (see Appendix B), in the following sections we show how these discourse markers are used to display continuity, deflect counterarguments, and acknowledge the force of counterarguments while preserving continuity. In a concluding section we reflect critically on the use of these continuity markers with regard to a range of argumentative and pragmatic functions that they potentially serve.

2. "Saying" as a Marker of Standpoint Continuity

Speakers often use "saying" as a discourse marker in order to highlight a formulation of their continuing standpoint in contrast to some other idea with

which it might be confused. As in (1)19, the purpose may be simply to distinguish the speaker's main point from a subordinate element such as evidence. Often, however, the purpose is to dissociate the speaker's standpoint from some other, usually less acceptable, standpoint that in the context has been, or might plausibly be, attributed to the speaker. Rufus (1) describes some evidence he is about to present as "j'st some stats" as distinct from "our position we're sayin," which marks the immediately following discourse as a formulation of a continuing standpoint that the "stats" will be "speakin on."

Several turns prior to (2), a speaker had raised a challenge to the anti-capital punishment speakers by asking, "what about repeat offenders that have actually already been put in jail and gotten off and they were supposed to be reformed and come back and do the *same thing* again." A pro-capital punishment speaker first replied "that's our point" and went on to explain that a purpose of capital punishment is to ensure that convicted murderers will not murder again. There followed a brief digression initiated by another speaker's question about the meaning of a term. Will opens his turn in (2) by explicitly marking it as a reply to the original question about repeat offenders. He then marks a difference between what "we're all talkin about" and what "we're sayin." In the context of the original question and the subsequent speaker's explanation of the purpose of capital punishment, it might be inferred that opponents of capital punishment offer no means to prevent convicted murderers from killing again. Will's reply is that life imprisonment offers an equally effective means of prevention. By marking this view as what "*we*'re sayin" he implies that he and other anti-capital punishment speakers have been misunderstood by the pro side. "We're all" (proponents as well as opponents of capital punishment) "talkin about" convicted first degree murderers, who could be imprisoned for life rather than executed. Will emphasizes that his advocacy of life imprisonment as a solution to the problem of repeat offenders, contrary to what the recent context might suggest, is not an *ad hoc* shift in standpoint. Rather, he implies, it formulates a continuing standpoint that he and other speakers have *all along* been advocating.

In (3), Fran (accompanied by other, overlapping speakers) corrects what seems to be a factual error in Judy's prior utterance. Judy marks her response ("I'm saying") as a formulation of her standpoint, self-correcting ("he got twelve- if you had twelve) in order to emphasize that what the other participants took to be a factual error had actually been intended as a hypothetical conditional. As in previous examples, the implication is that Judy's standpoint has not changed at

all. She need not correct her error because she committed none. She marks her second utterance simply a reformulation of the point she has intended all along.
Stan, just prior to (4), had advocated "severe" life imprisonment – defined as solitary confinement – as an alternative to execution. In a heated exchange (4), Tina points out that extended solitary confinement is illegal. Stan replies to this objection by claiming that it is completely consistent with his standpoint ("Exactly" … "That's what I'm saying."). The implication is that Tina's objection requires no change whatever in Stan's position, because a change in the law has been a part of his continuing standpoint all along.

3. Variations of "Saying" and the Function of Progressive Aspect
Fred's "asking" (5), and Will's "making the point" (7), are used quite similarly to "saying" in earlier examples. Each marks the speaker's utterance as a formulation of a continuing standpoint that other speakers have insufficiently acknowledged or confused with some other, less acceptable, standpoint. As in earlier examples, continuity is marked as a way of emphasizing that what is being expressed is not a new or revised standpoint but is precisely what the speaker has been "saying" all along.
In example (6), Fred uses the past progressive "was saying" instead of the present progressive "saying." In another context, this usage might mark a *change* in standpoint (i.e., what I previously "was saying" differs from what I now "am saying"). In this case, although "was saying" refers to statements Fred made earlier in the discussion, the following context ("what I believe") strongly suggests that his standpoint has not changed. What *has* changed is that Fred now realizes he needs to "clear it up" – that the admitted unclarity of his previous formulation of his standpoint will be repaired by his current formulation. The standpoint itself is unchanged but, due to Fred's previous unclarity, has been misunderstood. In this context, Fred's "was saying" can be interpreted as a slightly more polite variation of "saying" as a marker of continuity.
Collectively, examples (1) through (7) indicate that it is specifically the *progressive aspect* (-ing) of these discourse markers that carries the implication of a continuing standpoint. A range of present progressive "speech act" verbs (such as "saying," "asking," "making a point," "talking about," "arguing," "claiming," etc.) can function similarly as discourse markers that highlight the continuity of an argumentative standpoint.

4. "I'm Not Saying … I'm Just Saying": Deflecting Counterarguments

“Saying,” when used as a marker of standpoint continuity, is often embedded in a larger discourse structure of the form “I’m not saying … I’m just saying.” Examples (8) and (9) illustrate uses of this structure.

In a series of exchanges preceding (8), Mary had argued that the death penalty will not deter people who, like many inner-city poor, “live life without hope.” Another speaker, citing a vivid example of a middle class man who chose a life of crime, argued that one’s “financial background” does not determine one’s choices. In (8), Mary generally concedes this view while claiming that it is not inconsistent with her continuing standpoint. Like speakers in earlier examples, Mary tries to dissociate her own standpoint from other, less acceptable views that other participants have implicitly attributed to her. Like Stan in (4) or Will in (7), Mary could have said something like “I agree that people should be held responsible for their acts, but I’m saying that penalties should take circumstances into account.” Instead, she presents a more elaborate series of statements of what she is “not saying,” followed by statements of what she “believes” and “thinks,” and concludes on the perhaps rather vague point that she is “j’s saying there’s so many things to consider.”

Like Stan and Will in the earlier examples, Mary does not merely concede counterarguments presented by others. The counterarguments, she implies, not only are not inconsistent with her standpoint but express precisely her own views. She thus concedes the validity of others’ claims while denying that any change in her own standpoint is thereby required. As compared to Stan and Will, however, Mary gives a more elaborate statement of the points conceded. The elaboration (accompanied by vocal emphasis and other signs of emotional intensity) emphasizes that Mary is not merely conceding these points but is expressing her own sincere, strongly believed, continuing views. With statements of what she is “not saying,” she emphatically dissociates herself from unacceptable views that others have apparently ascribed to her.

In contrast, Mary’s concluding statement of what she herself is “j’s saying” seems increasingly vague and tentative. This contrast is interesting. One plausible interpretation is that Mary is backstepping from her earlier standpoint while using the continuity markers as a smokescreen. Hesitation, nonfluency, and words like “think” and “just,” all discourse features that often function as hedges, could be cited in support of this interpretation. But “think” and “just” can also have other functions besides hedging claims. “I think” not only can express uncertainty but also marks an utterance as a formulation of the speaker’s own thoughts; thus

it can serve to strengthen the association between speaker and utterance. “Just” can be used to downtone or hedge a statement (“just an idea”) but it also has specificatory (“just before dawn”), restrictive (“just on Tuesdays”) and even emphatic (“just amazing!”) uses (Lee, 1991).

The multiple meanings of “think” and “just” provide for a range of subtleties and ambiguities in discourse. Mary in (8) downtones her formulation of a standpoint that other participants have criticized yet also insists that her standpoint is unchanged because it never entailed the claims that her critics have attacked. Mary’s “I think” slightly hedges the statement it marks but also emphasizes her personal association with it. Her “j’s saying” slightly hedges her concluding formulation of her standpoint but also works, in conjunction with the earlier “not saying” statements, to emphasize that her standpoint *never included* the extreme and unacceptable views that others have criticized. Her standpoint is held forth as absolutely continuous and unaffected by the counterarguments.

“I’m not saying … I’m just saying” is a structure frequently used to hedge a standpoint against actual or anticipated criticism while simultaneously asserting that the standpoint has been essentially continuous and remains unchanged. Peggy in (9) provides another example of this technique and also evidence of its normativity.

Previous to (9) another participant had cited a public opinion poll in which the majority of respondents had opposed legal recognition of homosexual marriages but had agreed that homosexual couples should be entitled to family benefits such as health insurance. A question was raised as to why the poll respondents might have held these seemingly contradictory views. In (9), Peggy replies that marriage has religious significance associated with the production of children. John interrupts her to ask about the implications of “this view” for heterosexual married couples who choose not to have children. John’s method of posing this question displays his special participation status as a discussion facilitator. Instead of responding directly to Peggy from his own standpoint on the issue, he objectifies Peggy’s discourse as “this view” and poses a question to the group as a whole. Although not explicitly directed to Peggy, the question implies a strong challenge to the view she had presented. Interrupting John, Peggy hastens to dissociate herself from that view. Using the “not saying … just saying” structure, she points out that she had not been expressing her own opinion but had been speculating on “probably what it was” – that is, on what the poll respondents had probably been thinking.

Peggy begins with “I’m just saying,” thus reversing the usual order of “not saying … just saying,” but corrects herself by restarting with “I’m not saying.” Her self-correction displays an assumption that the “not saying … just saying” structure is normatively expected. Her “oh yeah … yeah” overlapping John, followed by “I’m just saying” parallel’s Will’s “yeah … I agree … I’m just making the point” in (7). But the form of John’s question perhaps makes this response inappropriate. Peggy cannot agree or disagree with John because John has not presented his own standpoint on the issue but rather has posed a question to the group in his neutral role as discussion facilitator. Peggy then refocuses her reply to clarify her own standpoint, but this creates a structural conflict between the “yeah agree … just saying” and “not saying … just saying,” which her self-correction resolves in favor of the latter.

Other interesting variations of “not saying … just saying” in our data cannot be examined here for lack of space. In all cases, however, a close reading confirms that this structure is used to assert the absolute *continuity* of a speaker’s standpoint in response to actual or anticipated criticism. The speaker claims or implies *all along* to have been advocating not the problematic view (“not saying”) but only another, more acceptable, view (“just saying’). Although, as the speaker sometimes acknowledges, the criticism itself may be valid, it does not apply to the speaker’s continuing standpoint, which is different.

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5. “I just don’t think”: Going to the Limit of Acceptability

We have shown that discussion participants often use “saying” and related discourse markers to maintain the absolute continuity of their standpoints, even in the face of strong counterarguments. But, of course, we’re not saying that participants *always* do this … we’re just saying they *often* do! Discussion participants do sometimes acknowledge that counterarguments have affected their standpoints. In doing so, they are often at pains, however, to *minimize* this admitted change in standpoint. Most subtly, like Mary in (8), they may

acknowledge the strength of counterarguments by reasserting their continuing standpoint but in a more closely hedged or downtoned manner. Examples (10) through (12) illustrate a more explicit approach in which speakers acknowledge the force of counterarguments by shifting the range of their views to a point beyond which they continue to be unable to go. The persuasive force of a counterargument can move them just so far, but no further.

Tina in (10) confronts Judy with evidence directly contradicting Judy's claim that the death penalty has no deterrent effect. Judy stumbles momentarily then responds, not by challenging the evidence nor denying its relevance, but rather by falling back to a position that Tina's evidence no longer clearly contradicts. Notably, Judy does *not* formulate her standpoint with present progressive discourse markers like "just saying." Instead she uses simple present tense verbs (mean, think, say) to mark her discourse as what she *now* is saying in light of Tina's evidence, not what she *has been saying* all along. Unlike most speakers in previous examples, she does not attempt to maintain that her standpoint is absolutely continuous and unaffected by Tina's counterargument. Instead, she formulates a revised standpoint in terms of what "I jus don't think we can say." Tina's evidence refers only to murder, not to other violent crimes that are more numerous. On Tina's evidence, "we" can no longer claim that capital punishment has no deterrent effect but, try as we might to accept the opponent's position, we just can't say that "killing a few people" will solve the problem of violent crime in general. Judy's core anti-capital punishment position is thus preserved although admittedly revised in light of Tina's counterargument.

Jen in (11) emphatically agrees with the pro-capital punishment argument that crime should have consequences. However, unlike Stan (4), Will (7) , and Mary (8), all of whom also agreed emphatically with their opponents, Jen in this case does *not* formulate her agreement as completely consistent with what she has all along been "saying." Using simple present tense verbs (agree, make, mean, think), she marks her discourse as a statement of what she *now* thinks in light of the strong arguments in favor of capital punishment, not as absolutely continuous with what she has been saying all along. Although, she says, "I totally agree" with the need for consequences, "I just don' t think that [capital punishment is] teaching a lesson that we are trying to make known." The shift from simple present (agree, think) to present progressive (teaching, trying) in this quotation is significant. Jen uses it to distinguish her revised view from her core standpoint, which remains unchanged.

Although consequences are important, capital punishment is not the right consequence for murder because it sends the wrong message. Tina in (12) replies to Jen with a gesture of reciprocation. She "completely" agrees with "your point that two wrongs don't make a right." Executing murderers, she implicitly concedes, is morally wrong, but she goes on to argue that it is nonetheless pragmatically necessary. "We have no other option … There's nothing [else] we can do" or else the crime problem is "j's gonna SKYrocket" as it "has been [skyrocketing]" for decades. Like Jen (11), Tina (12) shifts from simple verb forms (understand, make, have), marking what she *now* thinks, to a progressive form ("has been [skyrocketing]") that marks continuity. In this way, she distinguishes the parts of her standpoint that have been revised under Jen's influence from her core pro-capital punishment standpoint, which continues unchanged.

Like "just saying" in earlier examples, "just" in examples (10) through (12) is used to place the speaker's standpoint in the acceptable range on an implied continuum of acceptable to unacceptable standpoints. This is what Lee (1991) refers to as a "specificatory" sense of just. "Just saying," however, not only specifies the speaker's standpoint but also usually downtones it. Lee (1991) would say in this context that the meaning of just is indeterminate between two simultaneous readings, specificatory and depreciatory. The downtoning implies that the speaker's standpoint is not merely acceptable but lies *well within* the acceptable range (hedging a claim usually makes it more readily acceptable). In contrast, the "just" of examples (10) through (12) has the properties of an "extreme case formulation" (Pomerantz 1986); it carries an emphatic sense along with its specificatory sense. In its specificatory sense, "just" locates the speaker's standpoint in an acceptable range extending "just" to the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable standpoints, but no further. In its emphatic sense, "just" implies that the speaker has shifted as far *as she possibly can* toward the opposing view. Her emphatic agreement with the opponent's "very good point" demonstrates her sincere and open-minded effort to accept as much as possible of what the opponent is saying. She has accepted *just* as much as she can, so much that her own position now extends from its continuing core to a point *just short* of unacceptability.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

In the terminology of grounded practical theory (Craig & Tracy 1995), this study has reconstructed certain techniques sometimes used by participants in argumentative discussions. The further development of a grounded practical

theory of discussion practices would require not only that a wider range of situations and *techniques* be studied but that the use of the techniques be critically assessed with regard to the practical problems that occasion their use and the *normative principles* that would warrant the application of such techniques to such problems. The limited space of this paper precludes much commentary on these issues, but we will venture a few preliminary remarks.

We noted at the outset that participants in discussions of controversial issues face intellectual and pragmatic challenges that in practice are inextricably entwined, and the examples presented give evidence that "saying" and related discourse markers of continuity are used to address both types of problems, usually simultaneously. Speakers usually mark their discourse as a formulation of their continuing standpoint in order to distinguish their standpoint from other ideas with which it might be confused. Discourse markers of continuity thus contribute to dialectical functions of *specifying and clarifying argumentative standpoints*, which must certainly be counted among the important intellectual tasks of discussion.

Continuity markers also reflexively acknowledge a *presumption of continuity* that seems essential to the rationality of argumentative discourse. Rational discussion requires that different standpoints on an issue be stated, argumentatively elaborated, and defended or revised in response to counterarguments. The process necessarily unfolds over time as participants present their claims, reasons, supporting evidence, criticisms, and refutations. The form of the process is not ideally linear but rather "discourses" along a meandering path shaped by unpredictable contingencies of discussion. The rationality of this discourse rests in part on the presumption that participants hold consistent standpoints over time. The particular utterances of each participant must be presumed to represent coherently related aspects of that participant's continuing, consistent standpoint. If, for example, a speaker states a general claim and then presents some facts, in order for other participants to make coherent sense of the discourse they must assume that the facts are intended to be consistent with the claim, or at least with the general standpoint that the claim represents. It is, of course, quite normal – even admirable – for people to entertain various views and to change their views for what they regard as good reasons. The presumption of continuity does not proscribe change but rather implies that change is rationally accountable. If the presumption of continuous standpoints were not upheld, if participants too often changed their standpoints capriciously, without good reason and timely announcement, rational discourse would be disabled. As

happened in Garfinkel's (1967) famous "breaching" experiments, in which he systematically violated or challenged the normal presumptions of social interaction, such a discussion would quickly devolve to chaos. Rational argumentation would become impossible. Garfinkel's ethnomethodology would suggest that this presumption of continuity is not only a logical consideration but pragmatically sustains the very possibility of a social order.

Issues that become controversial involve serious conflicts among people who hold different standpoints. Argumentation is a form of social conflict conducted in discourse (Crosswhite 1996). Not every discussion participant already holds a fully articulate, consistent standpoint. Perhaps in many situations, few participants do. Still, to participate in a discussion of a controversial issue reflexively acknowledges that different standpoints on the issue not only exist but seriously matter to at least some of those who hold them. To take standpoints seriously would seem to imply that one should have a standpoint of some kind – even if only a provisional standpoint or one of ambivalence, neutrality, or skepticism towards other standpoints – which one should try to make as consistent and well supported as possible and should change only when convinced by good reasons. On this reasoning we might speculate that discussion participants at least sometimes are *normatively expected to have standpoints*. We have noted in our data (but cannot present here for reasons of space) cases in which participants do seem to orient to such an expectation by, for example, reporting their lack of a definite standpoint in a manner suggestive of conversational "dispreference" (Pomerantz 1984). If this does occur empirically it suggests another pragmatic function of continuity markers; i.e. not just to clarify one's standpoint but to display, when something in the context might suggest otherwise, that one has a standpoint.

In our data, speakers typically use continuity markers to distinguish their standpoints from other, *less acceptable* standpoints. When a view has been criticized or contradicted by evidence, a speaker who markedly dissociates that view from his or her own continuing standpoint effectively claims not only *to be right* but, contrary to what others may think, *to have been right all along*. In conversation there is a structural preference for agreement over disagreement (Pomerantz 1984). Dissociating oneself from less acceptable standpoints creates opportunities for expressing and receiving agreement. It also protects one from the loss of face that results from being criticized or appearing to be wrong (Tracy 1997). These may not be among the more exalted pragmatic functions of

continuity markers, but they generally uphold the social matrix that sustains discussion and are often quite harmless by pragma-dialectical standards. Judy (3) and Peggy (9) not only correct what to us are obvious misinterpretations of their standpoints, they also show agreement with others and deflect criticism. Given that they actually were misunderstood, a dialectician should see little harm in this mixture of motives. Judy in (10), on the other hand, although she acknowledges the counterevidence and offers a relevant distinction in reply, perhaps insists too much on her own continuing rightness. And Stan in (3) might well be accused of using continuity markers merely as a smokescreen to avoid looking wrong while insisting on an untenable position. Moments after (3), the group responded to Stan's escalating vehemence with laughter, then digressed to another topic. In this case the assertion of continuity neither much displayed the virtues of critical thinking nor entirely protected the speaker from loss of face.

Thus it seems that pragmatic devices such as continuity markers can serve a variety of dialectical and conversational functions, with good or bad results depending on the case at hand. Sorting good from bad results and attempting to formulate the differences as normative principles is a goal for further critical inquiry.

Appendix A Transcription Symbols

Our method of transcriptions is based on the system used in conversation analysis (e.g., Heritage & Atkinson, 1987; Psathas, 1996).

Speakers are identified by pseudonyms. Special transcription symbols include:

, . ? punctuation follows intonation rather than syntax

:: prolonged syllable

– clipped syllable underline,

CAPS vocal emphasis, increased loudness

° decreased loudness

<> increased /decreased speech rate

hh .hh audible outbreath/inbreath

[ ] beginning/ending of overlap

= continuation of turn or absence of normal gap between turns

(1.0) one second pause

(.) brief, untimed pause

( ) transcriber uncertainty

(( )) transcriber comment

Appendix B Discourse Examples

(1) Capital Punishment, lines 130-132

Rufus: Oh (.) This is j'st- some stats (.) um (.) (j'speakin on) our- our position to – um (.) part of whuh our position we're sayin that (.) um that definitely does not deter criminals…

(2) Capital punishment, lines 224-230

Will: M'wuh to respond to your question about repeat offenders that wuh-(.) we're all talkin about people that uh- whuhwe've – that they-they've found guilty in- in a court of law uh firsh degree murder (.) so we're sayin they sh'd get life imprisonment so all- awnly way these people would uh be repeat offenders'd be if they escaped …

(3) Capital punishment, lines 373-383, simplified

Judy: I mean the- here's this jury I mean 'ts such a >*random thing*< you know, you get twelve different people in the Nathan Dunlap trial and he's in prison for *life.*

(.) …

Fran: He's on death row.

((multiple voices overlapping))

Judy: I'm saying he got twelve- if you had twelve different people on his jury, he is in jail for life rather than being killed

(4) Capital punishment, lines 926-933

Tina: You can't there's a law that says you cannot stay in solitary confinement.=

Stan: = Exactly there's[a law,]so they need to change=

Tina: so that's

Stan: = the law =

Tina: = ((high pitch, louder)) You ever seen "Murder in the First?"

Stan: ((high pitch)) That's what I'm saying we need to change the law:s. *Laws* need to change.

(5) Homosexual marriage, lines 486-492

Jim: … And so that- and that's the reason I think that interracial er-homosexual marriages will be recognized.

Lisa: Do you think they *should* be::

Fred: Yeah that's what we're asking. Are we:: we're not sayingthey're going- it doesn't matter about the future if they're going ( )

(6) Homosexual marriage, lines 765-766
Fred: Yeah. Well I guess- Let me clear it up. What I was saying (.) was this is my personal belief. …

(7) Homosexual marriage, lines 923-925
Will: Uhm, yeah I mean I I agree with- what you're saying I agree with what *you're* saying. But- but- I'm just making the point that …

(8) Capital punishment; lines 807-819
Male 1: They choose t' com*mit* the murder
((multiple voices))
Mary: I'm not saying that I'm not sayin that- that their murder is their act of murder is wro:ng. I'm not saying that n I'm not saying that they don't deserve some consequence for that .hh n'that- I do think- I think life in prison should be life (.)
in prison. (.) I believe in consequences=
Will?: = °exactly° =
Mary: = b't I don't think (.) .hh tha::t (.) I think there's a lot of: (.) p(h)olitics in it? I think there's a lot of (.) eh- uh- b't worse, what- I mean what we're discussing is like what brings them to murder an- an that sort of thing .hh but .h I'm j's saying there's sho many things to consider an- and .h it's .h (.)

(9) Homosexual marriage, lines 373-382
Peggy: Well uh one of the things I thought is: that uh (.) marriage was (.) initially started up by the church, uhm to s- legally recognize a family and the purpose of a marriage was to create children and (.) perhaps uhm the reason people don't want: uhm: gay marriages to be recognized is because (.) perhaps it encroaches on: a:: uhm: a religious aspect of: like well wait a minute, marriages were originally crea:ted to:: uh:: have children to raise:[(.)
John: Okay. Do we h[a-
Peggy: a family.=
John: = Okay. Do we understand that view? (.) So if we're gonna follow that view (.) there are a lot of married people (.) that get married (.) and do not (.)[*choose*]to have=
Peggy: oh yeah
John: = *chil*dren. So if we're gonna be consistent with tha:t,=
Peggy: = yeah.
John?: [(_____)

Peggy: I'm just saying I'm just saying na I'm not saying I agree with em I'm saying that's (.) probably what it was: yeah.

(10) Capital punishment, lines 531-547
Judy: We *use* the death penalty *now*, an it's *still* going up. Is the thing I mean we're *us*ing it but[( )]Texas=
Male: ((clears throat))
Judy: = they're knocking off people every *day* man they kill people like *hthaht* in Texas, .hh an it's *still* going up=
Tina: = And in the[e uh:]homicide rate has=
Judy: so what I mean is
Tina: = dropped every year n the past five years.
Judy: Has it? I=
Tina: = Yup, (.) in Texas it has.
Judy: B't I mean- eh- it's *not* only- the problem is not only *mur*der (.) in our society I mean .hh there's other violent crimes=aggravated assault, larceny, arson, j'st- other stuff going on .h and I jus don't think that we can say by *kil*lin a few *peo*ple every *year* it's gonna-it's gonna *help* anything I j'st (.) .h I mean maybe somebody can help me understand it cos I jus don't think it's gonna work.

(11) Capital punishment, lines 680-687
Jen: I agree with you, th't- th't you know you make °a° very good point like- (.) i- if nobody *knows* the consequence (.) I mean if the consequence isn't clear (.) what's gonna stop you.
Fred?: Mm hm=
Jen: Right? An I *to*tally agree with that b't I j'st don' think that-.hh that it's (.) teaching a lesson th't (.) we-(.) are trying tuh(.) make known.

(12) Capital punishment, lines 695-701
Tina: I completely understand your point th't two wrongs don't make a right (.) bu:t (.) a-we have? (.) *no*: other options right nowWhich we do *not* (.) There's- (.) There's nothing we can do b't if we don't- (.) if we don't *do* something .h *make* some- *make* the pum- *make* the consequences more severe, .h it's j's gonna *SKY*rocket as it *has* been for the past twenty thirty years.

NOTE
i. Parenthesized, numbered references refer to the numbered discourse examples in Appendix B. The transcription format and special transcription symbols are

defined in Appendix A.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Is Praise

A Kind Of Advice?

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will try to capture the fonction of the epideictic genre of the classical rhetoric from a linguistic point of view. This will be done by describing both praise and blame as peculiar varieties of "advices".

2. Aristotle on epideictic

According to Aristotle, the object of rhetoric is a judgement that the audience should perform on the matter that is presented by the orator. Each of the three rhetorical genres – i.e. deliberative, forensic and epideictic – requires a specific discursive activity of the orator and a specific judgement of the audience. This typology can be summarized as follows:

RHETORICAL GENRE	ORATOR	AUDIENCE
DELIBERATIVE	advice	decision
FORENSIC	accusation apology	judgement
EPIDEICTIC	praise blame	evaluation

In the light of this typology, one may observe that Aristotle's statements remain rather vague about the activity performed by the audience of the epideictic genre. In the deliberative genre, the audience's activity is a "decision", i.e. some kind of deontic activity. In the forensic genre, the audience's activity is a "judgement", i.e. some kind of epistemic activity. But what about the "evaluation" which is supposed to be the audience's activity in the epideictic genre? Aristotle, who seemed to be aware of this fuzziness, considered this "evaluation" as an aesthetical activity. Indeed, for him, the audience of the epideictic genre is in charge to judge the orator's talent. But this way out endangers the internal coherence of the whole typology. In the deliberative and the forensic genres, the matter of the judgement reduces to the object of the discourse (the action (not) to be realized or the innocence/guilt of the defendant). On the contrary, the matter to be decided on by the audience of the epideictic genre is discourse itself.

3. Contemporary theories

Perelman rightly underlined the fact that although epideictic discourses – of

praise or blame – have to do with matters that are not disputable (e.g. the greatness of the city, the authority of gods, the virtues of a dead person…), they nevertheless fulfil a function which is not merely aesthetical, since they are used to increase the communion of feelings concerning those values that are already endorsed by the whole community. In my opinion, Perelman implicitly referred to the ancient notion of homonoïa (i.e. concord, conformity, unanimity). As pointed out by Barbara Cassin, homonoïa is an effect created by discourse. In epideictic rhetoric, homonoïa could be seen as the emotion produced by amplification i.e. by the evocation of those prototypes of agents or actions that represent the values of the community. It should induce, in the mind of each citicitizen, a general disposition to some kind of political action. For example, Isocrates' Panegyric, praises the city of Athens; this praise provokes a homonoïa effect which is such that Athenians citizens are inclined to accept, and to engage in, a war on the Persians.

This conception entails that there is an essential link between the epideictic genre and the deliberative one. Indeed, both aim at triggering a certain type of decision that should precede a certain type of action. This relationship had already been noticed by Greek and Latin authors. It is emphasized in Pernot's book which directlyinspired me when choosing a title for this lecture: indeed, according to Pernot, praise is a kind of advice.

Pernot remarks that many discourses, like Isocrates' Panegyric, belong to a hybrid genre, partly epideictic, partly deliberative. In other words, such texts are basically symbouleutic (from sumboulê: advice) – i.e. the orator supposedly performs a deliberative activity – but they are grounded on an encomiastic matter (from enkômion: praise), so that the orator should also perform an epideictic activity. According to Pernot, this is the typical case in which we can see that praise is a kind of advice.

4. Two different kinds of advice

In the following, I would like to develop an approach which helps us to better capture the intuitive link between praise and advice. I will then illustrate my claim by analyzing a short political text. Ancient authors used to distinguis between different notions of "advice" – with a sophistication that we have lost nowadays. The first variety is sumboulê which concerns matters that still have to be deliberated, for example: "We must declare war on the Persians". The second one, parainêsis, has to do with matters that no citizen is allowed to discuss, since they are regarded as undisputable, for example: "We must honour our gods".

Although this crucial distinction has been aptly described by Pernot, it should be remarked that each type of advice leads the audience to a specific kind of "decision". Indeed, sumboulê, i.e. the deliberative advice, causes the audience to opt for a certain type of decision, viz. bouleusis. This decision is a rational one, and may be the result of a complex process of personal or collective reflection. On the contrary, parainêsis, i.e. the epideictic advice, leads to another specific kind of decision, viz. proairêsis. This is a kind of decision that does not follow from rational reflection, since it is presented by the orator as obvious and necessary and normally felt so by the audience.
In order to clarify this issue, let us consider an example which I owe to Marc Dominicy. If we ask to some person who saved Jewish children during World War II: "Why did you take this decision?", (s)he will certainly answer that (s)he necessarily acted so, because (s)he thought it impossible to act in another way. Indeed, it would be highly surprising to hear him/her say: "Well, I checked the pro's and the contra's and, finally, I took my decision". This indicates that the decision at hand was (or is presented as) an instance of proairêsis which concerns a matter that is not disputable. Indeed, according to our system of values the deontic principle "We have to save children from death" pertains to parainêsis, i.e. to the kind of advice that cannot be deliberated anymore.

5. A new typology
I will thus propose a new typology that I expose for the epideictic and deliberative genres:

RHETORICAL GENRE	ORATOR	AUDIENCE
Activity	advice	decision
Deliberative	sumboulê	bouleusis
Epideictic	parainêsis	proairêsis

Although I agree with Pernot that there is a systematic link between praise and advice, I think he was unable to account for it because he did not see that parainêsis leads to proairêsis and not to bouleusis.

Before coming to an illustration of my hypothesis, I would like to underline some important consequences of this approach. First of all, we may now formulate a general definition of epideictic discourse: «Epideictic discourse aims at provoking an emotive effect of homonoïa by accomplishing a particular kind of advice, that is parainêsis. Parainêsis is realized through praise or blame. Homonoïa directly

triggers, in the mind of the audience, a general disposition to acting, that will favour some particular type of non-reflective decision, viz. proairêsis.»
Thus, the homonoïa effect can only be got if the discourse provokes some emotion. This confirms Marc Dominicy's theory, according to which the epideictic genre is a specific instance of the poetical use of language. Indeed, the epideictic argument of amplification is often expressed by utterances which exhibit poetical features of rhythm, rhymes, parallelisms, etc. Dominicy claims that this formal patterning of arguments aims at giving rise to emotion. Unfortunately, I have no time here to develop Dominicy's theory, but I will keep as a postulate that there is a link between the poetical form of an utterance and its capacity to generate emotion.
A second consequence is related to the necessity that is attributed to this type of arguments. Since the matter which the argumentation deals with is not disputable, this leads to a kind of decision that imposes itself to the agent, a kind of decision without deliberation, i.e. a necessary decision.
Indeed, if we look at the structure of an epideictic argument, we will see that its Backing – to use Stephen Toulmin's expression – reduces to the evidence.

This entails a crucial consequence: this sort of argument cannot be discussed, because to discuss it amounts to denying the evidence. And it is well known after Aristotle that the one who challenges the evidence will be regarded either as a fool or as a deviant subject.

6. Formalizing both kinds of advice
In order to distinguish clearly between both kinds of advices, it is useful to formalize them within Toulmin's model.

Deliberative: sumboulê/bouleusis
Data D ————————- the ennemy threatens our country
———— therefore
Modal qualifier Q —— probably
———— unless
Rebuttal R ————– they are stronger than us
Conclusion C ————– we must declare war on them
———— since
Warrant W ————– attacking is better than defending
———— on account of
Backing B ————— he art of war

If we observe the pattern of the deliberative advice, it is interesting to notice that the components of Data, Warrant and Rebuttal represent the activity of deliberation. Indeed, the Data is the premiss of the argument, the Rebuttal contains the premiss of a putative counter- argument and the Warrant is the justification of the argument (the justification of the putative counter-argument remains implicit in the Rebuttal component). Finally, the Backing corresponds to the specific field to which the Warrant belongs. Let us now compare this pattern to the pattern of the epideictic advice:

Epideictic: parainêsis/proairêsis
Data D ————————?
————– therefore
Modal qualifier Q —- necessarily
————– unless
Rebuttal R ————— –
Conclusion C ——— we must honour our gods
————– since
Warrant W ————- ?
————– on account of
Backing B ————– the evidence

As we can see, the components which correspond to the different parts of the deliberative activity are lacking. The Rebuttal is necessarily empty, since, as I said earlier, this kind of argument is not open to discussion and, therefore, cannot generate any counter-argument.

These two argumentative patterns provide us with a formal criterion which establishes that the epideictic advice is parainêsis, namely an advice without deliberation. The Backing is the evidence, it is not embedded, as in the deliberative advice, in a specific field where the orator found the Warrant of the argument. Consequently, the one who challenges the Backing is either fool or deviant. Finally, the emptiness of the Rebuttal component automatically imposes necessity as the Modal qualifier, while a deliberative argument can only assign a certain degree of probability to its conclusion.

7. Illustration of the epideictic advice
I shall now illustrate these reflections by analyzing a short political discourse. As a political discourse – it is indeed a propaganda speech – it should normally

belong to the deliberative genre. But, as we shall see, it is, on the contrary, a typical case of epideictic discourse.

Towards the end of the 1983 election campaign in Great Britain, Neil Kinnock, leader of the Labour Party, pronounced a speech in order to win voters; this speech blames Margaret Thatcher:

"If Margaret Thatcher is re-elected as Prime Minister, I warn you…

I warn you that you will have pain – when healing and relief depend upon payment.

I warn you that you will have ignorance – when talents are untended and wits are wasted, when learning is a privilege and not a right.

I warn you that you will have poverty – when pensions slip and benefits are whittled away by a government that won't pay in an economy that can't pay.

I warn you that you will be cold – when fuel charges are used as a tax system that the rich don't notice and the poor cannot afford.

I warn you not to go into the streets alone after dark or into the streets in large crowds of protest in the light…

If Margaret Thatcher wins –

I warn you not to be ordinary.

I warn you not to be young.

I warn you not to fall ill.

I warn you not to get old."

First, we have to clarify an important feature of this discourse. As I just said, this is an example of blame. The link we have established between praise and a certain kind of advice (parainêsis) has a symmetrical structure in its negative version, so that we may similarly relate blame to warning. Indeed, warning is the negative version of advice: both are predictions, but advice forecasts some desirable state of affairs, while warning forecasts an undesirable state of affairs. This is the case with Neil Kinnock's speech: the blame on Margaret Thatcher leads to a specific warning.

Let me now analyze some aspects of this discourse. As we can see, the text is (poetically) organized as a litany. Except for the beginning, each utterance exhibits the form "I warn you", followed by a proposition (first part of the text) or an infinitive (second part). From an illocutionary point of view, this implies that we have a first series of assertive speech acts (I warn you that P): the speaker describes the disaster to come if the initial condition is realized (i.e. "if Margaret

Thatcher is re-elected as Prime Minister"). The speech acts of the second series (I warn you (not) to) are directives: the speaker warns the audience not to belong to a certain category if the initial condition is realized.

I would like to concentrate on the second type of speech acts because of their deontic character. Indeed, their propositional content should normally describe the state of affairs which the audience is supposed to decide to bring about. Now, if we look at the last four utterances, the state of affairs at hand ("not to be ordinary", "not to be young", "not to fall il" and "not to get old") cannot be brought about by the audience so that it is impossible to decide "not to be ordinary", "young", etc.

This leads us to a very important point for the analysis of the epideictic aspect of the speech: the orator does not say that the blamed subject (i.e. Margaret Thatcher) is bad, but he shows it by implicating the impossibility of living normally if Thatcher wins.

By his absurd warnings, he shows that Thatcher is against nature itself. Therefore, the real warning is not said in the speech, it is suggested through the evocation of a situation that is impossible to bring about. If the audience does not want to be constrained to an absurd requirement, they must refuse the initial condition, by avoiding to vote for Thatcher.

The fact that blame is not said but showed can be accounted for in my theoretical framework:

First, as I said earlier, the orator of the epideictic discourse may obtain the homonoïa effect that will lead to proairêsis by grounding his argument on the evidence. And, the evidence has not to be said, since it cannot be argued for or against. The evidence has to be showed.

Secondly, when blaming, the orator runs a risk that does not exist in the case of praise. Indeed, by incriminating someone publically, the orator runs the risk to look hateful because of his lack of magnanimity. As pointed by Francis Goyet, this is the reason why, the orator who wants to create the homonoïa effect will rather use conciliation than indignation. According to Goyet, the highest emotion is not said, it is showed; this corresponds to what he calls "the silent sublime" ("le sublime silencieux"). Showing is therefore better than saying when one tries to increase the homonoïa effect. Moreover, the orator's positive ethos is also highlighted because of his appearance of magnanimity.

Let us now make some remarks about the argumentative form of this speech. This is a typical case of amplification with many phonological repetitions, syntactic parallelisms and finally, the repetition of "I warn you" that gives a prophetical

aspect to the whole speech. As I mentioned before this poetical form of amplification is a major trigger of emotion, and specifically of that particular form of collective emotion, called the homonoïa effect.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the aesthetical component that Aristotle detected in the epideictic genre, relates to amplification and its purpose, viz., homonoïa as a persuasive effect produced by discourse. Nevertheless, it remains that the aim of the epideictic discourses is clearly political: they aim at creating a general disposition to action in the city. This disposotion will favour a particular kind of decision: proairêsis.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Calculating Environmental Value: The Displacement Of Moral Argument

They took all the trees and put 'em in a tree museum
And they charged the people a dollar-and-a-half just to see 'em
Joni Mitchell

"Big Yellow Taxi"

Rather, money endangers religion in that money can serve as universal symbol, the unitary ground of all action. And it endangers religion not in the dramatic, agonistic way of a "tempter," but in its quiet, rational way as a *substitute* that performs its mediatory role more "efficiently," more "parsimoniously," with less "waste motion" as regards the religious or ritualistic conception of "works."
Kenneth Burke

A Grammar of Motives
In May, 1997, Robert Costanza and a group of colleagues published in *Nature* the results of a meta-analysis of studies designed to measure the economic value of the environment. Perhaps due to the dramatic nature of their findings – they estimated the annual value of ecosystem functions and services at probably around $33 trillion in U.S. dollars compared to annual global gross national product of about $18 trillion – the report received considerable publicity, including coverage in the United States on National Public Radio and in the *New York Times* (Costanza, et al. 1997; Stevens 1997). Though the figures are stark, and probably startling to most, the fundamental argumentative strategy, the justification of environmentalism on purely economic grounds, a striking and

controversial departure from traditional appeals for the defense of the environment, is part of a quietly growing trend. Kenneth Boulding, in the 1960s, called for such an accounting as a way to talk about the "throughput" of what he characterized as the "cowboy economy" (Boulding 1970: 97). Eric Freyfogle's denominator is "free-market environmentalism," and he identifies as its purpose "to structure resource-use decision making so that decisions respond, not to bureaucratic mandates, but to the more disciplined signals of the market" (Freyfogle 1998: 39). Costanza and his colleagues illustrate this purpose in the opening sentence of their report: "Because ecosystem services are not fully 'captured' in commercial markets or adequately quantified in terms comparable with economic services and manufactured capital, they are often given too little weight in policy decisions" (Costanza et al.1997: 253; sa Breslow 1970: 102-103).

The co-authors of the report in Nature, in their individual productions, represent a substantial voice on the academic side of this trend (Costanza et al. 1997: 260), but this is not arcane academic theory. Paul Hawken, co-founder of Smith and Hawken, makes precisely the same argument from a commercial perspective. "In order for a sustainable society to exist, every purchase must reflect or at least approximate its actual cost, not only the direct cost of production but also the costs to the air, water, and soil; the cost to future generations; the cost to worker health; the cost of waste, pollution, and toxicity" (Hawken 1993: 56). As for political manifestations of free-market environmentalism, Freyfogle points to the U.S.

Clean Air Act of 1990 as a watershed moment in which the U.S. Congress, in an effort to use market forces to control industrial pollution, made air pollution permits a tradable commodity, and to the support of environmental groups, notably the Environmental Defense Fund and the Sierra Club, in the Edwards Aquifer debates of 1997, for a permit system for water use, termed "water marketing" (Freyfogle 1998: 37-38). David Brower, first executive director of the Sierra Club, confirms the economic emphasis when he asks: "So what's a tree worth? What's a bird worth? What's clean air worth? If we asked these questions, we'd get some startling answers – and if we had those answers we'd be careful to defend things that are so hard, so *expensive*, to replace" (Spayde 1996: 67, emphasis Brower's).

The motives behind free-market environmentalism as argumentative strategy can be usefully considered in two broad categories:

first, in the best tradition of Western rhetoric, arguments based on markets capitalize, if you will, on predispositions and values already held by the audience committed to democratic capitalism, exploiting a rich repository of enthymematic material;
second, especially in the form presented by Costanza and his colleagues, such arguments masquerade under the penumbra of precision, objectivity, and irrefragability associated with science. In other words, economics functions formally to ratify the scientific-mathematical-logical ideal, and it functions substantively in these arguments as agreeable confirmation of the values of capitalist culture. Both of these aspects are worth examining, particularly as they concern public argument of the most monumental importance.

1. False Economies and False Expediencies

Before turning to the form and substance of free-market environmental argument per se, it might be well to look directly at the nearly axiomatic general rhetorical wisdom that counsels meeting and beating the audience on its own grounds. Such a strategy is predicated on twin economies:
1. it is less difficult to persuade the audience of a conclusion based on premises they already accept than to have to persuade them of the premises and the conclusion that follows;
2. the resulting persuasion is most compelling when the danger that the premises can be denied or retracted is minimized.

There are, though, simple strategic reasons to be wary of the Siren song of momentary advantage when it calls us to change the bases of an argument. Because rhetorical traditions have been too little studied, we have a paucity of evidence regarding the ways in which public discourse becomes part of the context for future discourse (for notable exceptions, see McGee 1975, 1980a, 1980b, 1982; Condit and Lucaites 1993; Watts 1996; Darsey 1981, 1991, 1997; Jasinski forthcoming). Yet at least one incident in relatively recent U.S. political history suggests that the unrestrained urge to vanquish the enemy on its own ground in its moment of weakness may valorize principles that later, under altered conditions, arise to serve their original master's purposes with impunity, having publicly secured the assent of at least the two major parties to the debate.

No effective opposition was possible regarding the U.S. role in the Persian Gulf War because that role was so successful militarily. The political left, at the end of the war in Vietnam, surrendered grounds for moral criticism independent of

military outcome when, relishing the moment of U.S. defeat in Vietnam, it raided the rhetorical arsenal of the political right and seized the equation of victory and God's will to humiliate proponents of the war; not only had the United States lost, but by virtue of having lost, it had been wrong. The military defeat became, in the "God-on-our-side" logic that the Left had previously reviled, incontrovertible evidence of the turpitude of the effort. The strategy forsook a panoply of criteria, independent of the course of the war, that the Left had used with considerable success to create opposition to U.S. policy, in favor of a criterion that could only be applied post hoc and only for the purposes of punishing unregenerate "hawks." The equation, though, as the Left's co-optation of it demonstrated, is purely circumstantial. So almost two decades after the United States pulled out of Saigon, no one should have been surprised when George Bush, in an oddly unremarked on aspect of the rhetoric surrounding the Persian Gulf War, was able to declare that his one-hundred hour victory was, prima facie, evidence of U.S. rectitude, that the United States had finally recovered from its debilitating case of "Vietnam syndrome," and the Left was left with little to say. The logic had long been conceded.

The application to free-market environmentalism should be obvious. The environment is not protected by the general principle that good decisions should produce the greatest possible benefit for the lowest possible cost, rather once that principle has been acceded to, the fate of the environment hinges of the contingencies and vagaries of pricing at any given moment. The impact of such price variability on the argument presented by Costanza, et al. is evident when they propose that the value of environmental services should be calculated by comparison to what it would cost to duplicate them "in a technologically produced, artificial biosphere." Costanza and his colleagues conclude that, compared to our experience with manned space missions and with Biosphere II in Arizona, "Biosphere I (the Earth) is a very efficient, least-cost provider of human life-support systems" (Costanza, et al. 1997: 255). At whatever time, however, that we could produce those services more
economically with technological means, the water-filtering function of a wetland say, the natural wetland would, following Costanza's logic, necessarily be devalued, perhaps to such a degree that there would be no compelling reason to maintain it in the face of more economically viable uses. I believe the researchers may be acknowledging something like this when, in their caveat number twelve, they confess the following:

“Our estimate is based on a static ‘snapshot’ of what is, in fact, a complex, dynamic system. We have assumed a static and ‘partial equilibrium’ model in the sense that the value of each service is derived independently and added. This ignores the complex interdependencies between the services. The estimate could also change drastically as the system moved through critical non-linearities or thresholds (Costanza, et al. 1997: 258, emphasis added).”

2. Economics and the False Allure of Science

Beyond questions of advantage, free-market environmentalism raises questions regarding the fit between the epistemological status of the question and the form of the arguments used to address it. In the *Topics* and elsewhere Aristotle distinguishes three types of reasoning: demonstration, in which “the premisses from which the reasoning starts are true and primary, or are such that our knowledge of them has originally come through premisses which are primary and true;” dialectic, which “reasons from opinions that are generally accepted;” and contention, which “starts from opinions that seem to be generally accepted, but are not really such, or … merely seems to reason from opinions that are or seem to be generally accepted” (*Topics* 100a27-100b26).

In *On Sophistical Refutations*, he makes clear that “demonstration” is treated in the *Analytics*, while “dialectical” argument is the subject of the *Topics* (165a38-165b10). He further emphasizes this distinction between apodeictic knowledge and the probable knowledge of argumentation in describing the province of rhetoric, in which subjects are addressed “such as seem to present us with alternative possibilities: about things that could not have been, and cannot now or in the future be, other than they are, nobody who take them to be of this nature wastes his time in deliberation” (*Rhetoric* 1357a1-8). For Aristotle, there is a clear distinction between demonstration and argumentation.

Within an Aristotelian framework, such questions as those posed by Paul Hawken, who wants to know the costs of the air, water, and soil in a product, or David Brower, who wants to know the worth of trees, birds, and clean air, are not susceptible to treatment by demonstration. Such values cannot be determined with precision; they can only be assigned provisionally through argument.

Kenneth Burke reminds us that distinctions, including the distinction between demonstration and argumentation, imply hierarchies, differences in valuation, and Burke recognizes how demonstration has, in the West, been associated with the valuable, masculine qualities of hardness and rationality, while poetic, at the

other end of the discursive continuum, just beyond rhetoric and argumentation, has been correspondingly devalued as feminine and soft (Burke 1969a: 460; McCloskey 1989: 100). In recent work on the rhetoric of science, the puissance of this division has been attested to even as its validity has been challenged (see, for example, Davis and Hersch 1987: 53-54; Rorty 1987: 38; Rosaldo 1987: 87-89; Toulmin 1958: 40-41). Yet, while this work may enjoy increasing recognition among scholars, in the pedestrian world of political argument, "scientific proof" continues to function with an authority that moral argument does not enjoy, particularly in an age when the foundation for a common morality seems to have crumbled. It is perhaps out of an intuitive understanding of these differences that contemporary social movements have tended to shift the ground of their argumentative premises from traditional morality to the "science" of economics (Darsey 1997: 122-27, 175-98). The environmental movement in particular has exhibited both thoroughness and savvy in taking its battles into the economic arena as illustrated by green consumerism ("Politics at the Cash Register" 1996: 8-10; Council on Economic Priorities 1989), the use of shareholder issues for environmental ends (eg, Chubb and Allstate regarding liability for global warming, International Paper regarding the use of chlorine, Xerox in recognition of its environmentally responsibility policies), and efforts to encourage green business practices (see, eg, *The Green Business Letter* and *The E-factor: Bottom-Line Approach to Environmentally Responsible Business*). The various tactics are all part of a common effort to replace the "soft" sometimes mystical languages of aesthetics and pantheism with the "hard" language of the spreadsheet.

Costanza and his colleagues are eager partisans of this economic model of argument, and they drape themselves in the language of scientific precision throughout their report. Note these examples: "Figure 1 shows some of these concepts diagrammatically. Figure 1a shows conventional supply (marginal cost) and demand (marginal benefit) curves for a typical marketed good or service. The value that would show up in gross national product (GNP) is the market price *p* times the quantity *q*, or the area *pbqc*" (Costanza, et al. 1997: 257). Davis and Hersch (1987) quote Neal Koblitz's reaction to a similar use of equations in Samuel Huntington's *Political Order in Changing Societies*: "Huntington never bothers to inform the reader in what sense these are equations. It is doubtful that any of the terms *(a)-(g)* can be measured and assigned a single numerical value" (p. 59). Even the surprisingly lengthy treatment by Costanza and company of "Sources of error, limitations and caveats," normally an argumenation liability, is

intended to communicate to the reader the scrupulousness of the researchers' methods. Consider caveat number eleven (of twelve): "In general, we have used annual flow values and have avoided many of the difficult issues involved with discounting future flow values to arrive at a net present value of the capital stock. But a few estimates in the literature were stated as stock values, and it was necessary to assume a discount rate (we used 5%) in order to convert them into annual flows" (Costanza et al. 1997: 258). Every detail, even those that may seem to the layperson purely technical and involving only "a few estimates," has been, literally, accounted for.

Finally, there is the proliferation of categories: seventeen ecosystem services, and sixteen biome types. The biome types are divided broadly into marine and terrestrial, with marine further divided into open ocean and coastal marine, and coastal marine further subdivided into five categories, and so on, such that Table II (p. 256), showing the value per year in trillions of U.S. dollars for the ecosystem services of each biome type, has 272 independent data cells. I suspect that someone before now has already called attention to what might be labeled the digital watch fallacy, the notion that highly segmented measurements are tantamount to corresponding accuracy. The simple empirical observation that, in the age of the digital watch, the world runs no more precisely than it did before, that people are still habitually late to appointments that tend still to be marked in five-minute increments rather than seconds or hundredths of seconds, is sufficient to address this bit of hocus-pocus.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to refute Costanza and his colleagues when they conclude the total annual value of ecosystem services to be between $16 trillion and $54 trillion with a likely average of $33 trillion. "This is not a huge range," they assure the reader (Costanza et al. 1997: 259). Perhaps not – a few trillion here, a few trillion there. Costanza and his fellow researchers have a certain advantage of scale here. It is the same advantage that allows the housepainter to use a twelve-inch roller while the miniaturist is restricted to the single-hair brush, the same advantage that allows the jet engine mechanic to use a hammer to loosen a part while the jeweler is restricted to tweezers. A misplaced word in *War and Peace* passes beneath notice, but it would destroy a haiku. Precision may certainly be relative, but magnified to some unspecified degree, it ceases to be precision in any common sense of the term, Hegel's transmogrification of quality by quantity.

The question here is really whether or not Costanza and his colleagues have achieved a degree of precision adequate to any significant level of prediction and control. The relatively modest disclaimer that "there are differences between total value, consumer surplus, net rent (or consumer surplus) and $p \times q$, all of which are used to estimate unit values," its impressive display of rigorous-looking jargon aside, is inconsequential next to the defect of a tenet central to this and all other attempts to apply econometric exercises, the notion that human beings will respond to conditions as "rational" actors. Bertrand Russell, one of the founders of scientific positivism and hence one of the forefathers of behaviorism, confessed in his "Outline of Intellectual Rubbish," that he had failed to see any evidence that humankind was inclined to behave as a calculating machine, and Arjo Klamer pointedly brackets in the subjunctive "condition contrary to fact" the notion that economists and their subject are rational (Klamer 1987: 163-83). It is not so much the calculations of Costanza and his colleagues that stand or fall on this bit of fancy, but the consequences of those calculations.

There is a certain charm and generosity, a holdover of Enlightenment liberalism, in the faith of Costanza and his colleagues that human beings, provided with accurate, high quality information, will look at the balance sheet and make economically rational decisions to preserve the environment; it is the same vision of human rationality that supports game theory. Costanza and his colleagues are hopeful that their project will help to "modify systems of national accounting to better reflect the value of ecosystems services and natural capital" (Costanza et al. 1997: 259). Modifying systems of national accounting is, in itself, a matter only of interest to national bookkeepers, but this is not the end Costanza and his colleagues have in mind. It is their conception of *homo economicus* that allows Costanza and his colleagues to assume both that their audience will enthymematically complete the argument and provide the conclusion that properly modified systems of national accounting will yield better environmental policies and that the conclusion would, in real-world decision making, maintain. This mechanistic causality is made explicit in the statement of the second application of the project: to provide a model for project appraisal "where ecosystem services lost must be weighed against the benefits of a specific project. Because ecosystem services are largely outside the market and uncertain, they are too often ignored or undervalued, leading to the error of constructing projects who social costs far outweight [sic] their benefits" (Costanza et al. 1997: 259). Bad decisions are the result of bad or inadequate information; good information yields, mutatis mutandus, good decisions. Appealing as such an equation might

be, it requires subscribers to grant plausibility to the proposition that, thirty years after the first Earth Day raised our collective awareness of environmental factors, current corporate practices reflect simple innocence of environmental issues, that what might appear to be cupidity is really a manifestation of ignorance.

Economists have sought, over the years, to recover an increasingly unruly economic actor by creating increasingly inelegant equations, extending the variables that must be incorporated to the point of incalculability (Klamer 1987). Inasmuch as this effort seeks to rescue human conduct from the odious charge of irrationality, to provide some veneer of reason to the welter of activity, it is not so far from Michael Billig's argument extending social psychological notions of rationality. But the two projects are, in fact, quite different. While the economists seek to incorporate an ever-larger range of behavior under immutable reason, Billig criticizes the defalcation of reason by science and seeks to restore the artistic dimension to reason by restoring the integrity of the ancient rhetorical canon of invention, which Billig, following the sixteenth-century example of Ralph Lever, refers to as "witcraft" (Billig 1996: 9, 113, passim). Billig gives the lie to the hope of Costanza and all others who wish for a predictable human being, one who makes decisions based on the rationality described by the ratio of cost to benefit. In the manner of his muse, the ancient sophist and "father of debate," Protagoras, Billing reminds us that "witcraft involves reasons being framed cunningly to answer, and thereby contradict, other reasons" (Billig 1996: 115). For Kenneth Burke, the difference between Billig's project and the desperate stubbornness of the economists is the difference between a vocabulary of "positive terms" and one of "dialectical terms." Positive terms, the terms of demonstration, reduce "reference to terms of *motion*" (Burke 1969b: 183, emphasis Burke's). Human activity, however, is not about mere motion; it is about action and can only be fully comprehended, in Burke's view, through a complete account of each of the five terms of the dramatistic pentad.

One concrete instance suggestive of the interplay particularly of agent, scene, and purpose and revelatory of the inherent weakness of Costanza and company's econometric and scientific assumptions regarding human decision making lies in the incommensurable orientations in their study toward time. Value in the Costanza paradigm, even economic value strictly considered, must be calculated for two scenes: the here and now in which the agent and the agent's purposes exist, and the infinite and unforeseeable future, in which the agent will not exist

and will have no purposes.

"We must begin to give the natural capital stock that produces these services adequate weight in the decision-making process, otherwise *current and continued future human welfare may drastically suffer*" warn the authors (Costanza et al. 1997: 259, emphasis added). Regarding our obligations to posterity, Kenneth Boulding admits "It is always a little hard to find a convincing answer to the man who says, 'What has posterity ever done for me?' and the conservationist has always had to fall back on rather vague ethical principles postulating identity of the individual with some human community or society which extends not only back into the past but forward into the future. Unless the individual identifies with some community of this kind, conservation is obviously 'irrational'" (Boulding 1970: 99). But the problem of rationality is not solved simply by the identification by the agent of purposes in some future scene. Surreal as some theories of postmodernity or queer theory or other academic enterprises may be, Fellini would have found them no more marvelous, and undoubtedly far less cinematic, than the activity of the trader in Chicago in 1998, buying and selling baby pigs as yet unborn and corn that will not be planted until 2006.

3. Economics as False Environmentalism

The pretentious form of free-market environmental argument may, in the final analysis, be guilty of little more than an inability to deliver on its promise, of holding out the false hope that decisions regarding the use and management of the environment can be rationalized in ways that provide the greatest possible commonwealth for the longest possible term. The substance of economic argument may be more invidious.

Free-market environmentalism has been criticized for selling short moral appeal, of betraying the proper grounds of environmental argument in favor of a momentary, and ultimately false, expediency (Freyfogle 1998, 42-43). Costanza and his colleagues respond that "moral and economic arguments are certainly not mutually exclusive. Both discussions can and should go on in parallel" (Costanza et al. 1997: 255). It is not at all certain, however, that the two arguments can proceed happily in tandem, that particular argumentative grounds might simply be inapplicable to particular questions, nor on what basis we would chose between two differently grounded arguments should they come to different conclusions. The good "green" intentions of the global ecological accounting project are amply evident, but what would the Costanza and his colleagues say if the economic data refused to support "the right course"?

The tendency of economistic predictors of human activity to reduce action to motion in itself diminishes the possibility of ethical intervention (Burke 1969b: 185). The relentless language of commodity capitalism applied to environmental issues works to ensure that the diminished possibility of ethical intervention would not even be noticed. The shift from a conception of *elocutio* as the post hoc dressing for ideas to an integrated vision of invention and elocution is one of the great distinctions between classical and contemporary theories of rhetoric, and the relationship between language and perception has occupied some of the foremost minds of the twentieth century. For Kenneth Burke, language is symbolic action; it is the expression of an attitude; "and its essential function may be treated as attitudinal or hortatory" (Burke 1966: 44). It is worthwhile to note what attitudes are inculcated and waht actions are implied by the language of Costanza and his colleagues.

There is no mention in the "The Value of the World's Ecosytem Services and Natural Capital" of the grandeur of sunsets, the beauty of flowers, the adorability of baby koalas, or the exoticism of life on a coral reef, none of the verbal equivalent of Sierra Club calendar photos or World Wildlife Fund greeting cards. Instead, there is the unwavering focus on "the services of ecological systems and the natural capital stocks that produce them" (Costanza et al. 1997: 253). "Changes in quality or quantity of ecosystem services have value insofar as they either change the benefits associated with human activities or change the costs of those activities," the authors write, sounding as if they were writing a pamphlet on retirement annuities. "These changes in benefits and costs either have an impact on human welfare through established markets or through non-market activities," they continue (Costanza et al. 1997: 255). "A large part of the contributions to human welfare by ecosystem services are of a purely public goods nature. They accrue directly to humans without passing through the money economy at all," the reader is informed two pages later. (Costanza et al. 1997: 257).

The commodification of such basal things as "clean air and water, soil formation, climate regulation, waste treatment, aesthetic values and good health" (Costanza et al. 1997: 257) raises serious questions. By what theory of property, for example, do we privatize and parcel out these resources? Can anyone claim, in some Lockean sense, proprietary rights to some portion of the Earth's clean air by virtue of having mixed with it the sweat of their brow, thus making it an extension of themselves? And if this were the case, how would this be reconciled with the

rights of those who have mixed the sweat of their brows with the Brazilian rainforests, a significant source of the world's breathable oxygen, in the process of cutting those rainforests down?

Such legalistic conundrums, though, are dwarfed by the fundamental contradiction between the language of free market environmentalism and its professed aims. Economics is about choice, and choice is made necessary by scarcity; the ratio of scarcity to demand indicates value. Costanza and his colleagues summarize their economic interest in the environment in the following statement from the conclusion of their report: "As natural capital and ecosystem services become more stressed and more 'scarce' in the future, we can only expect their value to increase" (Costanza et al. 1997: 259). "Natural capital stocks," by this logic, only achieve the value necessary to come under the purview of free market principles through consumption, by which they are made scarce. Free market environmentalism, then, would seem to encourage crisis management of ecological resources. At moments of threatened scarcity and relatively high demand, and only at such moments the mechanisms of the free market would presumably exert some regulative power. (Though just how much depends on the ability of the science to predict empirical behavior, the subject of the previous section.) At moments of amplitude relative to demand, natural capital stocks would have little value and would thus have little impact on the operations of market systems; they would in effect, be irrelevant.

This criticism of free market capitalism is synecdochical to socialist criticisms of capitalism generally, but I am less concerned with the irrationalities of an economic system than with the vocabularies of use and consumption applied to the environment as part of an ostensible attempt to preserve or sustain it. If language is, as Kenneth Burke claims, symbolic action, reduction of the environment to "natural capital stocks" fairly begs us to buy low, sell high, and to demand a good dividend on anything we hold, which means to make it available to someone else for a price that reflects it scarcity. Such a vocabulary has the capacity to overshadow any parallel vocabulary. Though Costanza and his colleagues include "cultural services," services "providing opportunities for non-commercial uses," including "aesthetic, artistic, educational, spiritual, and/or scientific values of ecosystems" (Costanza et al. 1997: 254), the gesture is lost even as this category is subsumed under the heading "Ecosytem services and functions used in this study." About the propensity of vocabularlies of commerce to become monolithic, Burke notes: "But since purposes indigenous to the

monetary rationale are so thoroughly built into the productive and distributive system as in ours, a relatively high proportion of interest in purely 'neutral' terminologies of motives can be consistent with equally intense ambition. For however 'neutral' a terminology may be, it can function as rhetorical inducement to action insofar as it can in any way be used for monetary advantage" (Burke 1969b: 96).

The tendency of economic vocabularies to dominate is intensified as the consideration of environmental issues becomes increasing global. In the international arena, money becomes the lingua franca through which competing local valuations are adjudicated. We have begun to see such exchanges as First World countries try to provide incentives for preservation of one-world, spaceship earth, ecosystem resources. Again turning to Burke: "The incentive of monetary profit, like the One God [or the One Good, Burke would be the first to point out], can be felt to prevail as a global source of action, over and above any motivations peculiar to the locale. And it serves the needs of empire precisely because it 'transcends' religious motives, hence making for a 'tolerant' commerce among men whose religious vocabularies of motivation differ widely" (Burke 1969a: 44).

With the reduction of environmental resources to economic commodities, there is a concomitant reduction of criteria for the valuation of those resources. Stephen Toulmin has warned against the temptations of allowing a single criterion in any judgment to become sufficient: "accordingly [we may] be tempted to pick on the criteria proper for the assessment of things of some one sort as the proper or unique standards of merit for all sorts of thing, so dismissing all other criteria either as misconceived or as unimportant" (Toulmin 1958: 34). The force of an argumentative statement ("We should not squander our environmental resources"), Toulmin maintains, is field invariant, but the criteria ("because it will lead to increasing hardship" "because they are valuable in themselves" "because we are merely trustees of a divine gift") are field dependent. (Toulmin 1958: 36)**[i]** Given the trend I have suggested here, toward increased authority of the field of economics in environmental matters, economic criteria tend, ultimately, to crowd out or delegitimize all others, so that it is not longer a case of force being field invariant and criteria being field dependent, but rather of the force dependent on the single field with the authority to provide it with criteria. Freyfogle finds just an instance in the deification of efficiency over the communal deliberative process on environmental issues. "In practice," Freyfogle writes, "market mechanisms compete directly with other methods of communal decision

making, particularly those in which citizens make collective plans for their shared landscapes" (Freyfogle 1998: 42). Burke provides some insight into why, in such cases, "monetary reduction" wins: "In both monetary and technological rationalisms (the two major interwoven strands of industrial rationalism), we see an 'heretically efficient' overstressing of the rationalistic element that was in Christian theology. And this rational element underwent a progressive narrowing of circumference, in proportion as men became more exacting in their attempts to be 'empirical,' and developed the information and the concepts with which to be 'empirical' in this sense" (Burke 1969a: 91).

Not even Costanza and his colleagues are ready to live in the world their logic implies. For all of their quantification and quasi-scientific precision, the authors of "The Value of the World's Ecosystem Services and Natural Capital" cannot escape their own version of Gödel's ghost. A priori assumptions regarding the value of the effort announce themselves as "the sustainability of humans in the biosphere," "human welfare," "social fairness, ecological sustainability and other important goals," (Costanza et al. 1997: 253, 255, 258, 259). I am not ready to live in the world that follows from the form and substance of free-market environmentalist argument either. If we raise the argument back to the level of philosophical grounds, Costanza and his colleagues must give some credence to my empirical claim that their accounting of the environment does not comport with my experience of it. When I drive through the farm country of the midwestern United States, an area largely deprived of the geological, topographical and geographical features that attract great tourism, my sense is not of scarcity (though there is recognition in some areas of the disappearance of farmland) – if anything, the landscape suffers from a surfeit of commonness – but this in no way devalues the realization that Grant Wood, in his landscape paintings, got it absolutely right; there is a subtle but profound beauty here, of color and shape and texture, and the intersection of the agricultural and the industrial. Nor am I ready to concede that every act of demystification represents progress. The thoroughly sterile language that Costanza and his colleagues provide me to defend the environment seems shabby and impoverished compared to the ancient and deeply satisfying, if thoroughly unenlightened, language used in naming the Cathedral of Redwoods in Muir Woods north of San Francisco or St. Marks Wildlife Sanctuary in the Florida panhandle. The language of sacred space fits my experience in these places far better than does the language of air and water filtration values. Given what would be lost, Costanza and his colleagues

have not convinced me that their language would be, in the end, any more effective than this older language in preserving such space and might well be less so.

NOTE

i. At one point, Toulmin seems to equate the force of a statement with its moral (Toulmin 1958: 32), and cautions against the confusion of force with criteria (Toulmin 1958: 80-81), but he later refers an argumentative warrant as "a general moral of a practical character, about the ways in which we can safely argue in view of these facts" (Toulmin 1958: 106, emphasis Toulmin's).

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Argumentation And Children's Art: An Examination Of Children's Responses To Art At The Dallas Museum Of Art

Until recently, relatively little attention has focused on the role of argument in the visual arts. In the last few years, however, and concurrent with the attention given to argument in other disciplines, argumentation scholars have begun to theorize about the intersection of argument and art. In 1996, a special edition of *Argumentation and Advocacy* examined visual argument, with essays that speculated about the argumentative functions in visual art and political advertisements. In their introductory essay to that special edition, David Birdsell and Leo Groarke write: In the process of developing a theory of visual argument, we will have to

emphasize the frequent lucidity of visual meaning, the importance of visual context, the argumentative complexities raised by the notions of representation and resemblance, and the questions visual persuasion poses for the standard distinction between argument and persuasion. Coupled with respect for existing interdisciplinary literature on the visual, such an emphasis promises a much better account of verbal and visual argument which can better understand the complexities of both visual images and ordinary argument as they are so often intertwined in our increasingly visual media (Birdsell & Groarke 1996: 9-10).
Although there is no consensus as to whether or not there should be a theory of visual argumentation, the attention given to the concept in this special issue merits further consideration.
The parallels between the fields of art and argumentation are striking. Both are concerned with the theoretical and the practical. Argumentation is concerned with the philosophical underpinnings of the making and interpreting of arguments, as well as the practical side of teaching the construction of arguments for others' consumption. Art also must be concerned with the philosophy of the interpretation and construction of art works, as well as the practical and pedagogical aspects of teaching students to create art. Participants in both fields are also involved in the critical process, with the concomitant responsibility of speculating about the development of critical approaches and methodologies. Finally, and most relevant to this study, both are concerned with the realm of the symbolic.

In 1997, an exhibition at the Dallas Museum of Art celebrated the role of animals in African Art. Particular works in this exhibition were supplemented with "imagination stations," or sketchbooks with colored pencils, which allowed children to draw their reactions to this art. Children were guided by instructions developed by the education staff at the museum. These instructions asked the children to describe their reactions to the art and to put it into a context specific to their own backgrounds, such as asking the children to draw an animal that they were familiar with in a similar context to the one in the artwork. These sketchbooks were collected by museum staff, and provide the textual basis for this study.

This essay takes as its point of departure the assumption that visual art can be studied as argument. Although that assumption is certainly debatable, this essay begins by reviewing the literature and constructing three related argumentative

roles for visual art. The essay, in its second stage, describes the role of the museum as amplifier and intensifier of these argumentative roles. In the third stage, the essay describes the children's responses as detailed in the sketchbooks, and speculates about the role that such a participatory exercise might have for the fields of art and argumentation. Finally,the essay concludes with conclusions about the impact of this study on the nature of criticism in art and argument in general. In 1994, at the Third Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation, speculation about the function of argumentation in the post-Cold War era continued. James Klumpp, Patricia Riley, and Thomas Hollihan concluded that, "argumentation scholars have considerable work to do to escape these constraints. But the reward for that effort can be a renewal of democratic values of broad participation in a texture of argument that empowers people to participate in the formation of their lifeworld" (Klumpp, Riley, & Hollihan 1994: 328). This essay begins the search for one potential participatory avenue.

1. Art and Argumentation

While the special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* might be the most comprehensive body of literature dealing with argumentation and visual art, it is certainly not the first. Over the last eight years, there have been several projects that examined art from a rhetorical or argumentative perspective. Ken Chase, in his essay on argument and beauty, describes in significant detail the relationship between argument and beauty. In his examination of Mary Cassatt's Breakfast in Bed, Chase advances an expanded view of argument, one that broadens argument to include arguments that are not linear sequences of propositions. Chase concludes that "Arguers can be artists, bringing the harmony, unity and symmetry of beauty to bear on the rough edges and fractured relationships of everyday disputes" (Chase 1990: 271). Chase grounds his assessment of Cassatt's work in the classical and neo-classical works relating rhetoric to the beautiful and the sublime, and does not deal with the rationale for and the implications of bridging argument and art.

Barbara Pickering and Randall Lake, in their examination of the refutational value of films dealing with abortion, find that visual representations can serve an argumentative function. They believe that, "images, even though they are not propositional and hence lack the capacity, strictly speaking, to negate, nonetheless may be said to `refute' other images" (Pickering & Lake 1994: 142). Pickering and Lake ground their work in the writings of Susanne Langer and Kenneth Burke, who are particularly concerned with images and symbolic

constructions of meaning.

The 1996 issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* explores the theoretical rationale and implications of expanding conceptions of argument to include visual argument. There are three basic questions involved in the examinations of the four relevant essays (Birdsell & Groarke, Fleming, Blair, and Shelley).

First, must arguments be constructed of words? Shelley distinguishes between what can be referred to as rhetorical or demonstrative visual argumentation. Rhetorical communication is that visual communication which is related to informal verbal arguments. Elements in paintings or pictures would have to have some correspondence to informal verbal argument in order to advance a rhetorical visual argument. Demonstrative visual arguments "represent the actual course of visual thought. Thinking often involves the use of mental images, a process typified by thinking with visual mental images, or the 'mind's eye'." (Shelley 1996: 60). Blair contends that argumentation should not be limited to verbal communication. He writes, "the fact and the effectiveness of visual communication do not reduce it to verbal communication" (Blair 1996: 26). Fleming believes that visual communication can serve as evidence or support for a linguistic claim, potentially provided by a caption or some other verbal statement (Fleming 1996: 19).

Second, are arguments exclusively made up of propositional statements, composed of data and claim? Fleming believes that, to be an argument, something must have a two-part structure (data/claim), and that it must be refutable or contestable (Fleming 1996: 13). Fleming concludes that pictures lack the structure to make them akin to verbal discourse. He writes, "a picture unaccompanied by language lacks the two-part conceptual structure of argument. Second, while it may be able to function as evidence, a picture is incapable of serving independently as an assertion" (Fleming 1996: 15-16). Given this ambiguity, the visual argument becomes impossible to refute, which means that it cannot meet the traditional tests of arguments. Blair believes that visual arguments can occur, and that they must be propositional. He writes: Visual arguments are to be understood as propositional arguments in which the propositions and their argumentative function and roles are expressed visually, for example by paintings and drawings, photographs, sculpture, film or video images, cartoons, animations, or computer-designed visuals (Blair 1996: 26). Blair concludes that other forms of discourse, such as metaphors and narratives, are either propositional or they are not argumentative (Blair 1996: 35). The

implication of this interpretation, therefore is to admit the possibility of visual constructions serving as arguments, but to definitionally exclude a significant portion of visual communication from within this scope.

Third, what is the implication of expanding the scope of argumentation to include visual arguments? Fleming believes that a conception of argument could be developed that would include visual argument, but that the new conception of argument would be so vague that it would lose its explanatory potential (Fleming 1996: 13). Blair agrees with this claim, noting that, "it would be a mistake to assimilate all means of cognitive and affective influence to argument, or even to assimilate all persuasion to argument" (Blair 1996: 23), even though he admits that there are still some visual constructions which can function as arguments.

To account for definitive answers to these questions is difficult, but it seems that most of these concerns are true for other, more traditional, forms of argument as well. Verbal arguments can be just as ambiguous as nonverbal or visual arguments, and in some cases, more ambiguous (Birdsell & Groarke 1996: 2). Art can also provide visual cues as to possible propositional arguments, through the implied claims and evidence provided in the particular artwork. To limit the study of argumentation to traditionally propositional is somewhat artificial, and would clearly serve to inscribe one appropriate form for argument. Finally, to expand the scope of argumentation is not particular to the visual; indeed, argumentation has expanded its own reach to include such forms as science, history, and movies. To expand argumentation is not a particularly persuasive reason to exclude the study of one of the most persuasive arenas of all time. Birdsell and Groarke write: Most importantly, it allows for a significant expansion of the theory of argument. Without this expansion, argumentation theory has no way of dealing with a great many visual ploys that play a significant role in our argumentative lives – even though they can frequently be assessed from the point of view of argumentative criteria (Birdsell & Groarke 1996: 9). Given this discussion, it seems appropriate to discuss some of the argumentative functions of argument in art. The next section of this essay begins this discussion, by providing three interrelated argumentative functions of visual art.

2. Art Functioning as Argument

We believe that there are three interrelated functions that visual argument can perform. Initially, art can serve a cognitive or knowledge-based function. Art serves to provide information to its viewers. Viewers seek out art to see how

artists have interpreted different persons, places, times, and contexts. Shelley, for example, notes that the interaction between the art and the viewer is principally a cognitive one. Shelley writes, “A step towards such a characterization can be taken by making the distinction between rhetorical and demonstrative modes of visual argument. Fundamentally,this distinction is a cognitive one and concerns how individual elements of a picture are understood by a viewer” (Shelley 1996: 67).

Much of the research about art and argument has examined the art from this perspective. In particular, most traditional argument research is concerned with the elucidation and examination of the claim in a particular artwork, as well as the supporting material. This functional perspective concentrates on the art as a cognitive claim, one which principally examines the artwork in terms of the information that it provides about the subject matter.

Second, art serves to advance normative claims. Particularly for some audiences, art attempts to describe how things portrayed in the artwork should appear, or how things referred to in the artwork should relate to one another. Joli Jensen describes this perspective, arguing: Under this perspective, the people become a substrate on which culture can work. The “bad” cultural choices of the people, so distressing to social critics, are due to the hypnotic or corrupting powers of bad art, or to the lack of exposure to good art. By this logic, the “good” cultural choices of critics and intellectuals are to be protected against the corrosive tide of the people’s choices, so that the people, later, can benefit. Notice how the people are presumed to have, but are never blamed for, corrupted taste and bad judgment that can lead to crass actions and foolish choices. Bad art is a cause, and good art can be a cure, for whatever is deemed to be wrong with the populace (Jensen 1995: 365).

Finally, art serves an ideological function. Art helps people to understand the relationship between people (including the viewer), the state, power in general, and social units and associations. Art helps people to see the relationships, in that viewers can see intersections in contexts other than their own. In this sense, ideology continues to spread or to be reinforced. Ronald Moore writes: The history of Western philosophy is, in fact, replete with testimony on the importance of young people’s exposure to admixtures of artistic, literary, and philosophic ideas in readying them for enlightened adulthood. Just as students must reflect on the fundamental principles of science, politics, history, and so on, if they are fully to understand these disciplines and their role in the life of the state, so they must

reflect on the fundamental principles of the arts to understand how these enterprises unite the life of the state with that of the individual (Moore 1994: 8).

Art objects can instill particular religious, political, or moral values. Marcia Muelder Eaton notes: A growing number of theorists, myself included, do not believe that aesthetic experience (and hence aesthetic value) can be neatly packaged and distinguished from other areas of human concern – politics, religion, morality, economics, family, and so on. Art objects do not always, nor even typically, stand alone. Even if some are created to be displayed in museums or concert halls – above and beyond the human fray – many are intended to fill political or religious or moral functions. Their value is diminished, indeed missed, if one ignores this. This is particularly true of the art of cultures other than the one dominant in the West in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century – the art world of wealthy, white, male connoisseurs (Eaton 1994: 25).

The problem with the inscription of ideology in art is that, in conjunction with the traditional perspectives on art interpretation, explorations of alternative perspectives and viewpoints is stilted. The traditional interpretative perspective suggests that there is one accurate interpretation of art, and that the particular interpretation can be taught through the various education venues. Silvers suggests: Effective art, it is thought, should transcend differences of culture and learning – that is, should appeal transculturally or internationally. Thus, art's power is supposed to derive from how well it accords with human nature in general, not with particular humans and their specialized histories. A corollary encourages us to expect that the capacity to relish are can be activated even at a very early age, as the relevant experiences are essentially human ones and as such are not relativized to socialization or acculturation (Silvers 1994: 53).

As a result, there is only one interpretation of a particular piece of artwork, the cultural context of the piece is not particularly relevant to an understanding of the artwork, and the enduring truths of the artwork can be discovered through critical scrutiny. More importantly, this sort of perspective centers the discovery and dissemination of truth in the hands of "experts" who have the truth about the artwork. Silvers continues, saying: Moreover, autonomy of judgment is reserved for the privileged. For a threshold condition for achieving autonomy is that one enjoy at least minimal recognition as a distinct, and therefore potentially independent, entity. Dependent beings are precisely those who are considered indistinct because inseparable from their attachments and, as such, they do not

qualify as autonomous(Silvers 1994: 53).

The museum environment amplifies and intensifies this phenomenon. The museum, in multiple fashions, functions to legitimize and sanction particular artworks and particular interpretations of those artworks. The museum's architecture and environment often serves to distinguish the viewing of artworks from the "real world" outside the walls of the museum (Walsh-Piper 1994: 106). Museums also make choices about artworks, design factors, and inclusion/exclusion of artworks, which have implications for the viewers. Walsh-Piper notes: Museums make aesthetic choices in everything they do, from the arrangement of spaces, the choice of exhibitions, the arrangement and lighting of the works of art, to the design of furnishings and brochures. The most important choice is the selection of objects to be exhibited. This power to choose is a double-edged sword; choices could be said to entomb values and preserve cultural prejudices rather than to present examples of the best (Walsh-Piper 1994: 107-08).

The role of docents and museum educators cannot be understated. Depending on the instructor's interpretation of certain works, and the attention that they draw to a particular artwork, the impact of the received interpretation might even be greater.

One way out of this conundrum is to allow students to discover particular messages within their own contexts, and to encourage a more participatory style in art observation and criticism. Instead of instructing students in the appropriate understanding of an artwork, educators might instead simply introduce the student to the piece of art, and allowing the students to discover truths within the artwork for themselves. This sort of perspective allows for art to more fully reach its potential for critical awareness and cultural flexibility. Ronald Moore writes: The rationale for introducing aesthetic subject matter into school curricula is not to be understood as merely the enhancement of art education; rather, it sets the stage for critical reflection, redirected awareness, and heightened appreciation as these pertain to an extraordinarily broad range of objects. Even when aesthetics and philosophy of art are taken as synonyms, it should be understood that the art in question is the art of living no less than it is the art of gallery walls (Moore 1994: 6).

This education serves a valuable function if, and only if, the student is allowed to discover truths from a wide range of perspectives and from a diverse base of cultural premises. Otherwise, art education merely reinscribes another received

truth, and the function of education, argumentation, and art criticism is undercut. One example of this participatory approach is the use of the "imagination stations" at the Dallas Museum of Art in 1997. The next section of this essay describes the make-up of the procedure, as well as engages in a preliminary examination of selected responses to the art in the museum in the sketchbooks.

3. Analysis of Imagination Station Responses

The exhibition *Animals in African Art: From the Familiar to the Marvelous* centered on the premise that animal imagery in African art can be interpreted as a metaphor for human behavior and that the human experience can be explained through animal imagery. Another concept imbedded in the exhibition is to dispel the myth of Africa as a jungle, complete with jungle or safari animals such as lions, giraffes, elephants, and monkeys. (Roberts 1995: 16) In actuality, these animals are rarely depicted in the artistic traditions of African cultures. The imagery of the exhibition was organized into five main themes: animals associated with the domestic sphere, wild animals of the bush, composite and anomalous animals with supernatural abilities, leopards (the most commonly depicted animal in African art), and the social, political, and metaphorical connections between humans and animals.

The exhibition design differed from many of the Dallas Museum of Art's other installations in several ways. The foremost obligation for the museum's exhibition design team was to set up gallery experiences that allowed viewers to take an active role in interpretation and encouraged visitors to write or draw their responses in the exhibition. Elementary school children created a large book of paintings and drawings of animals found in Africa, and that book was placed in a prominent position at the beginning of the exhibition. Monitors showing video footage of animals in natural habitats were interspersed throughout the exhibition. Instead of an information-based, didactic orientation video that so often accompanies exhibitions, a three-minute film of a Malian leopard dance filmed in 1973 played continuously, with only a caption following the video indicating the time and place of the performance. The imagination stations were placed throughout the exhibition near an entrance or exit. These consisted of a podium, sketchbook, colored pencils, and a brief statement to assist viewers in synthesizing the main concept of the area.

The first imagination station was located at the end of the rooms containing objects depicting animals of the home and garden and the wild animals that exist outside the boundaries of the village. Typical human behaviors are associated

with the animals found inside the village. At the various times when acceptable norms of behavior are suspended, and uncivilized actions are sanctioned by the community, the actions do not come from inside the village. Instead, they must be brought in from the bush, where wild or uncivilized animals reside. The guiding statement at the imagination station instructed visitors to think about wild animals they knew and make them into a mask, an instrument, or an ornament. The majority of drawings can be placed into two main categories: animals seen in the wild room transformed into musical instruments, such as flutes or stringed instruments, and domestic animals that have been given the attributes more commonly associated with wild animals. In one example, a pig was given horns and sharp teeth to communicate its wild nature.

In the Composite/Anomalous area, the exhibition focused on the supernatural qualities of certain animals. Anomalous animals, such as crocodiles, have the ability to pass between land and water and are therefore thought to be associated with spiritual forces (Roberts 1995: 138). Artists also constructed art with composite animals dominating the scene, with parts of several animals put together. This artwork is often created to counteract a crisis or mark an occasion of instability in the community. The imagination station asked visitors to create a composite animal that does not exist by combining parts of animals that do exist. Many drawings left by young visitors combined the aspects of animals seen elsewhere in the exhibition such as crocodiles, felines, snakes, and birds, often creating an animal having the ability to fly, swim, and walk, therefore becoming anomalous. Several other drawings included animals not seen in the exhibition (flamingos, bears, and manatee), suggesting those visitors may have been drawing on their own experiences with animals.

It is in the Leopard section of the exhibition that the sketchbook drawings by young visitors are most interesting. The objects in this room included necklaces, claws, masks, costumes, and stools representing leopards in various ways, from recognizable images of crouching and standing animals to jewelry composed of leopard claws. Images of leopards are widespread throughout Africa and are most often associated with military or political power.

The statement at the imagination station encouraged visitors to think of something they use everyday and make it look like a leopard. The responses generally fell into three categories: everyday objects that were included in the leopard area, objects related to the experiences of the visitor, and drawings of actual objects in the exhibition. Several children created drawings of the types of

objects in the leopard area, especially jewelry, clothing, and objects used for sitting (chairs, stools, and toilets). These drawings did not recreate the objects, but depicted the idea of the leopard in different ways. The drawings of everyday objects focused on hair and toothbrushes, pencils and pens, eating utensils, computers, cars, and mirrors that included elements of leopards. Different interpretations of leopard toothbrushes included a recognizable brush with only spots added, and a brush with the bristles replaced by sharp fangs and connected to the mouth and head of the leopard with the body curling around to form the handle. Several visitors chose to recreate an image of an object found in the leopard room, namely a cylindrical wooden mask with painted spots and a sack-like leopard costume.

The final gallery of the exhibition focused on objects that combined images of animals and humans. In the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, Roberts notes, "In African cultures, verbal and visual arts reinforce and enrich one another. Proverbs, songs, and spoken narratives, in unison with visual art forms, provide complex multisensory systems of communication. Animals are common subjects of both verbal and visual arts, often portrayed in dynamic interaction as a comment on the nature of social relationships (Roberts 1995: 176). The imagination station invited visitors to think of what kind of animal they would be, and further guided them by asking, "would they be tiny, sneaky, slithery, or carefree?" One young visitor drew a feline body with lion mane surrounding a dog or fox-like face. A brightly colored plume extended from the forehead of the animal and a flag with three horizontal bands of green, yellow, and red was situated atop the animal's head. Interestingly, the drawings received from this imagination station were most often accompanied by written descriptions. Animals associated with strength (felines and elephants) were common, as were comparisons to snakes and birds. One drawing of a bird in flight was accompanied by the statement, "I'd like to be a bird because I'd like to see things from a birds [sic] eye view."

The response to the imagination stations was overwhelming and far exceeded the Dallas Museum of Art's expectations. During the course of the twelve-week exhibition, sixteen sketchbooks were filled with visitor responses. Although directed at young, school-age viewers, visitors of all ages participated in the imagination stations. The museum's exhibition team, composed of curators, designers, and educators, attempted to create a gallery experience that encouraged visitors to create their own meaning and interpretations of the works

of art. At the same time, the team also offered various depictions of animals in African art. The imagination stations and their resulting responses indicate that a need exists for museum visitors to come to terms with works of art from their own perspective.

4. Conclusions and implications

This essay has argued that visual art can function as an argument, and that museums are one site for the study of such arguments. In this essay, we argue that the drawings in the imagination stations are argumentative responses to the artwork in the museum, and that these drawings can be studied from an argumentative perspective as well. This essay only serves as a beginning to the study of these works; there are many hundred pages of drawings left to study.

There are some implications that this study has for the broader study of art as argument, for argumentation and art criticism in general, and for the role of the critic. Initially, it is important to remember the initial conversation that this essay enters into. There are still some questions as to whether or not art can be or should be examined as argument. This essay attempts to provide support for the position that art is one of the more important and powerful venues for argument, and that the study of art can provide some critical insights into the field of argumentation. In particular, we argue that there are benefits to both communities if critics are encouraged to examine visual art from an argumentative perspective. Art can benefit from the advances in argumentation theory over the last thirty years, particularly, the integration of alternative perspectives for the evaluation of arguments, such as the narrative paradigm of Walter Fisher and the insights of critical rhetoricians. Argumentation scholars can not only begin to examine a powerful set of argumentative artifacts, but they can also benefit from the experiences of art critics and art educators/historians.

With regard to argument and art criticism, this essay reinforces the concerns for and the potential of the critical endeavor. Drawing on the works of John Dewey, Joli Jensen argues: We can also rethink our role as artists, intellectuals, social critics. Dewey forces us to find justification for our work that is not smug or self-serving. We must think of reasons why our particular forms of aesthetic practice are any more valuable than those of less status-ridden and privileged groups. . . . Dewey asks us to spend less time exhorting, prophesying and declaiming, and more time watching, listening and responding. He asks us to talk with, not to, other people. He expects us to learn from each other. His metaphor of conversation is a metaphor of exchange – as citizens we are participants in a

modern, democratic conversation (Jensen 1995: 375).
The art itself can reveal power relations for what they are to audiences with the potential for action. Art serves a liberatory function when the critic/observer can observe artworks without the constrictions that traditional models of education impose. The imagination stations, in the world of the children, helps to begin this process. Hanno Hardt writes: If for no other reason, the works of Benjamin, Lowenthal and others provide a powerful rationale for the consideration of creative practices in the debate over issues of communication, media and society; their aesthetic or psychological dimensions especially help explain the historical circumstances of social relations. Art discloses the material and ideological foundations of society; it is a manifestation of human creativity and a mode of expression that lends visibility to the inner world. But it also can be the site of critical observation and analysis of the social conditions of society and, ultimately, a powerful means of participating in the emancipatory struggle of the individual (Hardt 1993: 62).

This sort of individualized critique describes what Barbara Biesecker details in her comparison of the works of Michel Foucault and the critical rhetoric of Raymie McKerrow. Biesecker raises the potential that the critical rhetorician, in his or her revelation of power structures and call to change, actually merely reinscribes another hegemonic interpretation. Biesecker writes: “if we take Foucault’s critique of repression seriously and extend its insights to other orders of discourse, we are led to wonder how transgressive, counter-hegemonic or, to borrow McKerrow’s term, critical rhetorics can possibly emerge as anything other than one more instantiation of the status quo in a recoded and thus barely recognizable form” (Biesecker 1992: 353). It is important that critics, either from the field of art or from argumentation, do not succumb to the temptation to merely replace one true interpretation with another. Instead, it is important for critics and educators to allow students to discover relationships in art works, and to make them relevant to their own lives. In this sense, educators can truly create an environment where learning can occur, and make possible the changes needed in Klumpp, Riley, and Hollihan’s post-political age.
Admittedly, the possibility for change is limited, in that there are other constraints on children’s ability to truly open-mindedly criticize art. Children are limited in their range of experiences to bring to bear on the artwork, and they are also limited in the artworks that they are exposed to. There will always be limitations on the range of options, but by allowing children to express themselves

and to criticize art in their own way, the liberatory potential is maximized.

Further study is warranted in this area. We hope, in the future, to more thoroughly examine the sketchbooks in an attempt to understand what this work tells us about childrens' arguments. Also, the cultural impacts of the sketchbooks could be examined, in that they are assessments of African art. Further study could examine how the sketchbook responses function as argumentative responses to the original artworks. This essay, however, has attempted to set the theoretical framework for these future studies by describing the theoretical grounding for the study of art as argument.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Semantic Shifts In Argumentative Processes: A Step Beyond The 'Fallacy Of Equivocation'

In naturally occuring argumentation, words which play a crucial role in the argument often acquire different meanings on subsequent occasions of use. Traditionally, such semantic shifts have been dealt with by the "fallacy of equivocation". In my paper, I would like to show that there is considerably more to semantic shifts during arguments than their potentially being fallacious. Based on an analysis of a debate on environmental policy, I will argue that shifts in meaning are produced by a principle I call 'local semantic elaboration'. I will go on to show that semantic shifts in the meaning of a word, the position advocated by a party, and the questions that the parties raise during an argumentative process are neatly tailored to one another, but can be incommensurable to the opponent's views. Semantic shifts thus may have a dissociative impact on a critical discussion. By linking the structure of argumentation to its pragmatics, however, it may be revealed that there are two practices that account for a higher order of coherence of the debate. The first practice is a general preference for disagreeing with the opponent, the second practice is the interpretation of local speech acts in terms of an overall ideological stance that is attributed to the speaker. Because of these

practices, parties do not criticize divergent semantic conceptions as disruptive, but they treat them as characteristic and sometimes even metonymic reflections of the parties' positions.

1. The fallacy of equivocation

Starting with Aristotle's fallacies dependent on language (Aristotle 1955: 165 b 23ff.), the impact of shifts in the meaning of words on the validity of arguments has been a standard topic in the study of fallacies (as a review, see Walton 1996). Traditionally, such shifts have been dealt with by the 'fallacy of equivocation'. We can say that a fallacy of equivocation occurs, if the same expression is used or presupposed in different senses in one single argument, and if the argument is invalid because of this multiplicity of senses. Moreover, in order to be a fallacy, the argument must appear to be valid at a first glance, or, at least, it has to be presented as a valid argument by a party in a critical discussion. Equivocation can be produced by different kinds of semantic shifts, for example, switching from literal to metaphorical meaning, using homonyms, confounding a type-reading and a token-reading, using the same relative term with respect to different standards (see Powers 1995, Walton 1996).

Like many others, Woods and Walton (1989) analyze equivocation as a fallacy in which several arguments are put forward instead of one. If the ambiguous term occurs twice, then there is at least one argument in which the ambiguous term is interpreted in an univocal way, and there is at least one other argument in which it is interpreted differently. Each of these arguments is invalid: The first argument is invalid, because in one of its assertions, the ambiguous term must be disambiguated in an implausible way to yield a deductively valid argument; the second argument is unsound, because it is deductively invalid. So, analytically, the fallacy of equivocation can be viewed as a conflation of several arguments. In practice, however, this 'several arguments' view seems to be very implausible. Woods and Walton posit that people reduce the cognitive dissonance that resulted from being faced with invalidating readings of the argument by conflating them into one that is seemingly acceptable. This "psychological explanation" for the "contextual shift", that allows for two different readings of the equivocal term to occur in one argument (see Woods & Walton 1989: 198ff.), is not convincing. First, there is no reason why a person should generally be disposed to accept the argument in order to reduce cognitive dissonance – why doesn't she simply reject it, if she discovers the fallacy? Secondly, most textbook examples of equivocation are puns or trivial jokes. Their humourous effect is founded on the incongruence

between the plausible, default reading of the potentially equivocal expression on its first occasion of use and the divergent disambiguation it has to receive on its second occasion, if it is to make sense (Attardo 1994). That is, people just do not develop alternative readings, which they afterwards conflate, but they restrict themselves to contextually plausible readings.**[i]** It seems then that it is not a conflation of several arguments that leads to the acceptance of an equivocation. I suggest that it is simply the identity of the form of an expression that can be misleading, because it can erroneously suggest the identity of meanings, as long as there is no definite semantic evidence which points to the contrary. This view is in line with the observation that gross equivocations -for instance those that rest on homonyms which share no contextually relevant semantic features (like "bank")- are easily discovered, while in the case of subtler equivocations, people often "feel" that there's something fishy about the argument without being able to locate the trouble precisely.

So, why have I deployed these reflections on the interpretive structure of equivocation? In typical cases of equivocation, there are two or more instances of the problematic expression. Mostly, none of them is ambiguous in context, that is, there is only one plausible disambiguation for each instance of use, but these disambiguations are different. This difference in turn results from a potential ambiguity of the lexical item out of context. Walton (1996: 21ff.) seems to acknowledge this point, as he draws a distinction between potential, lexical and pragmatic ambiguity in use. But he is wrong, if he says that pragmatic ambiguity was the interesting case, because most equivocations do precisely not arise from pragmatic ambiguities (though this might also be the case), but from the exploitation of lexical ambiguities. I now will focus on those candidates for equivocation in which expressions are not ambiguously used at the moment of their use, and I will term them 'semantic shifts': The meaning that is attached to an expression changes from a first instance of use to a next one.

2. The empirical case: the keyword "freedom" in a discussion on environmental policy

My inquiry into semantic shifts in natural argumentation is based on so-called 'keywords' (Nothdurft 1996). Keywords are expressions that obtain a crucial status concerning the topics discussed and the positions unfolded over the course of a discussion. Because of their importance for the argumentative process, and since they are used repeatedly, they are especially apt to a study of semantic

alterations over the course of an argumentative process. My examples are taken from a study on public debates about environmental policy. I analyzed six videotaped discussions that were subsequently transcribed. The analysis was carried out in a conversation analytic mode (Deppermann 1999; Heritage 1995). Here I will focus on one exemplary case. It comes from a staged discussion titled "ethical questions concerning waste". A theologian and a representative of a producer of packages argue about the changes of consumption habits that were necessary for ecological reasons, and how these changes were to be brought about. During this discussion, "freedom" emerges as a keyword. While Meyer, the industrial representative, holds that there was no legitimate way to restrict the consumers' freedom to decide for themselves what to buy, his opponent Weiss, the theologian, insists that consumption needed to be limited for ecological and for psychological reasons. Before we turn to the analysis of specific semantic and argumentative properties, I give you a typical sequence of segments, in which"freedom" becomes crucial for the argument, and I will explicate in short the main semantic, evaluative and argumentative characteristics concerning the use of "freedom" in each segment. These segments are not adjacent parts of dialogue, but they are subsequent instances in which "freedom" is talked about, and the participants relate the segments to one another.

(1) Meyer had already asserted that there were no legitimate grounds for restricting the consumers' freedom to decide which needs they would like to satisfy. Weiss replied that, for instance, a reduction of mobility was not a loss of freedom, but might increase the quality of life. Now Meyer insists on his position: „But who is to define the quality of life? I believe that we are all wholly individual beings, and, with my expression 'being man', I find it very very important that I'm not anyhow forced by any social group or by the state to live in a certain way. Like I had to sit at home every day of the week and read a book. I simply defend myself against this absolute either-or. I like to reconcile both: I like to get to know new cities and new countries and stuff and that's what I perceive as a piece of freedom."

Meyer takes the position of liberalistic individualism by emphatically explicating his conception of freedom. He defines it by the absence of any constraint or prescription, he explicitly includes mobility – his example is travelling- in the extension of freedom, and gives it an unquestionably high value. Meyer argues that the irreducibility of freedom was derived by the fact of individuality, because

individual differences between people made any claim to general rules illegitimate. In his perspective, quality of life then is not superior to freedom, but freedom is itself the precondition for defining quality of life.

(2) Little later, a discussant from the audience takes up the issue of restricting freedom; he addresses Meyer: "I think you still owe us an answer to the question: how far should our freedom reach? Because there is the freedom to live at the expense of others, to consume at the expense of others. Now we have still learnt: freedom – my own stops where the freedom of the other begins, and if I don't grant others to live as I do, then I cannot go on living that way, at least not in the long run. And that's why we have to start to live in a different way."

In his contribution, the discussant defines freedom not as an irrelational, individual affair, but sees it as a reciprocal, social matter. He values freedom negatively, as he points to harmful consequences arising from it. He claims that the current practice of freedom prevented other people from living the same way. Since he sees this as a violation of a basic moral maxim – he alludes to a famous dictum of Rosa Luxemburg-, he concludes that the way of life had to be changed, which implied that freedom had to be restricted. Interestingly, he doesn't state this last thesis explicitly, but formulates it in terms of a question, by which he starts his argument. This kind of indirectly stating a position is a common rhetorical device in the debates I analyzed. It is also used in the segments (1), (3), and (4).

(3) Meyer doesn't respond to the claim of the discussant and instead opposes to Weiss' thesis that the production of unnecessary goods had to be stopped: "There's a bottle of beer on the table. I don't drink beer, so in my opinion it's superfluous. But I like other goods very much. And there are people, perhaps you, who would say that's totally superfluous. So, who defines it in the last resort? Again, that's the aspect of freedom." Meyer repeats his conception of freedom we know already: its essential semantic aspect of the individual definition of preferences of consumption, its positive valuation and the argumentation that it was irreducible.

(4) Weiss now directly attacks Meyer's position: "Those market-mechanisms of supply and demand are not decisions of freedom that I can make by myself. If a system once is established, I cannot elude it. The average worker must buy at Trashy's [name of food store], he's got no choice, but to buy these one-way

packages. The question must be put another way. It's not, whether I take the freedom to buy my things somewhere else, but, how must I organize economy, how must I organize man's dealings with the resources. It's not necessarily this 'I must have my freedom', but, perhaps, the deeper question is, if this devouring of products, this mentality of a suckling, if this really makes people happy."

Weiss first introduces "market-mechanisms" as an antonym to "freedom" and denies the existence of the consumers' freedom. This is a contradiction to her earlier statements, when she criticized and devaluated the consumers' freedom and thereby presupposed its existence. Later on, she seems to suggest that Meyer (like many others) had fallen prey to an ideological self-deception: What he takes for his freedom was really the "mentality of a suckling", which means – as she specifies later – that the consumer psychologically also is not free, but depends on consumption like a drug-addict. By her first argument, Weiss denies that it made sense to argue about how the individual might consume more ecologically. The second argument subordinates the question of the consumers' freedom to the question of happiness.

(5) Weiss continues this line of reasoning up to a point where she inverts Meyer's conception of freedom: "So my question actually is: How much freedom or time or creativity or occasions of communication am I deprived of by, for instance, the consumption, the acquisition of certain things?" Freedom now is equalled with other immaterial goods, that means, with her conception of happiness; its extension not only doesn't include consumption, but consumption is seen as the rival of freedom.

3. Properties of semantic shifts: Local semantic elaboration and processual reinterpretation There is an enormous variety of semantic aspects of "freedom" that are deployed in the segments presented. We find different conceptions of
– extension and exemplification (freedom includes (not) consumption, (not) mobility),
– implication (freedom implies travelling, happiness implies freedom),
– co-hyponymy or partial synonymy (quality of life, time, creativity, occasion to communicate),
– antonymy (to be forced to live in a certain way, market mechanisms, mentality of a suckling),
– perspective (individual/self vs. social/others; prerequisites and consequences of freedom),

– factuality (freedom exists, doesn't exist, "freedom" is an ideological deception),
– deontic meaning (freedom needs to be restricted, must not be restricted),
– valuation (positive, negative, subordinated to other values),
– and different semantic modes (use, citation).

Clearly, these conceptions don't sum up to a homogenous semantics of freedom, but they are continuously reworked from segment to segment. We get several kinds of semantic shifts in the meaning of "freedom" between and sometimes even within segments, as, for instance, narrowing, widening and negation of extension, oppositive valuation, rejection, addition or exchange of semantic aspects and structural relations.

Perhaps, you would question, if really all of these shifts concern semantic matters. So, is valuation part of semantics, or does it rather relate to a state of affairs? Or is there really a shift in meaning involved, if you point to the harmful consequences of freedom for others, instead of focussing on the benefits for the individual? The answer to such questions depends on your semantic theory, especially on what you consider as the scope of semantics. But beyond differences in theoretical outlook, it seems to be impossible to draw a clear-cut distinction between the semantic properties of words-in-context and the assertions that are made about certain states of affairs that are designated by these words. This becomes especially clear in the case of opposing valuations. The positive or negative value of "freedom" is not attributed to a state of affairs or a semantic conception that is expressed independently of the valuation. On the contrary, it is by expanding different semantics of "freedom" that valuations are made. Consider segments (1) and (2): Meyer's view of individual choice implies a positive valuation of "freedom", a negative valuation is implied by the discussant, who conceives of "freedom" as a social threat to others. It is highly improbable that they talk about the same referents of "freedom", and it is for sure that they don't mean the same intension of "freedom".

As the instances of "freedom" show, speakers actively shape the meaning of words with respect to their context of use. They do this by practices of what I would call 'local semantic elaboration': by explicating and exemplifying the semantics of a word, by contrasting it with other words or by establishing relations of class-inclusion, implication or synonymy. Context-dependency doesn't only relate to such clearly pragmatic dimensions of semantics as reference or deontic meaning, it also affects dimensions that are commonly held as lexically

determined, such as denotation or position within lexical fields.**[ii]** These contextual constructions of meaning are not merely discursive realizations of lexical relations that would hold independently of actual use. Rather, lexical relations are selectively constructed and portrayed as relevant for the specific context of use. These semantic constructions are 'local', because they are intrinsically context-bound; the speaker might consider them as irrelevant or even wrong, when he uses the word "freedom" for the next time. As the examples of the antonyms "market mechanisms" and "mentality of a suckling" demonstrate, these lexical relations can not simply be viewed as actualizations of a pregiven lexical structure, but they are created with respect to the specific contextual matters at hand.

In most cases, these local semantic elaborations do not result in gross equivocations or even contradictions. Rather, most of them constitute different specifications of a very abstract and vague basic meaning. In the above segments, a definition of "freedom" as "to be allowed to do whatever one wants to do" would work for most, though not all instances.**[iii]** But this is clearly not a definition that covers all semantic aspects of "freedom" that are relevant in each individual instance of use. Indeed, it is often very hard to decide, if the semantics of any two instances of "freedom" are sufficiently similar for considering them as relevantly concerning the same matter or if they are relevantly different.**[iv]** The simple distinction between "same meaning" and "different meaning" is quite pointless, because there is always some semantic aspect that is subject to change.

The complexity of the semantics of words-in-context is further complicated by the fact that meaning is not invariably fixed by the end of an utterance. Speakers may add or correct certain aspects, they may give further specifications and clarifications. In addition, the activities of other speakers can affect the meaning of the words that a speaker has used. Consider, for instance, segment (2). By claiming that unrestricted individual freedom was a danger to the freedom of others, the discussant contests an aspect of Meyer's conception of freedom that remained implicit in segment (1), namely, that "freedom" in Meyer's sense was available to everyone. Meyer didn't state this availability, but it can be attributed to his semantics of "freedom" as long as he doesn't exclude this aspect explicitly. Semantic activities of one speaker thus can lead to emergent reinterpretations of the semantics of words that another speaker has used. So we really are faced with semantic processes in which interpretations are locally made and continually reworked. Because of this local semantic elaboration and processual reinterpretation, semantic shifts in argumentative processes almost inevitably

occur.

Most theorists of argumentation still at least tacitly seem to cling to a conception of logical semantics. This might also be the main reason for the fact that they conceive of semantic shifts nearly exclusively as potential sources of fallacies. My short analysis on the semantics of natural language in everyday dialogue suggests that we need a more complex, more interpretive and more contextually sensitive conception of semantics. Especially the aspects of active constitution of meaning in context, of processuality and of multiplicity of the dimensions of meaning have to be considered more seriously. They must be viewed as basic features of semantics and not primarily as flaws.

4. Semantic shifts in the argumentative process: Reciprocal constitution of semantics, question of debate and position

How are these semantic properties linked to argumentation? First of all, semantic shifts are closely tied to alterations of the question of the debate.**[v]** A very obvious case is segment (4): Weiss first deals with the economical question, how consumption might be arranged in a way that is ecologically favourable; she then unmarkedly turns to the psychological question, in which relation the consumers' freedom stands to happiness. Alterations of questions are still more common between subsequent contributions of different parties. So we find alterations of the question between segments (1) and (2), between (2) and (3), and partially between (3) and (4). Take, for example, segments (1) and (2). In segment (1), Meyer talks about the question "who is to define quality of life?"; his position is that everyone had the right to decide on his own about his way of life; this position rests on the semantics of "freedom" as an irreducible individual right. In segment (2), the discussant talks about the question "how far should freedom reach?"; his position is that freedom was to be restricted; this position rests on the semantics of "individual freedom" as a limitation to the freedom of others. We see that alterations of the question of the argument are in line not only with the semantics of the keyword "freedom", but also with the position advocated by the speaker. In other words: There is a reflexive relationship between the question of the argument, the position taken und the semantics of crucial words. This reflexive relationship consists in a self-referential and reciprocal constitution of the three elements question, position and semantics, which bolster and stabilize one another. Semantic shifts thus can gain an important role for the elaboration of positions. A major part of the confrontation between the parties is realized by deploying different semantics of "freedom". Although these semantic shifts can

cause dissociations**[vi]** of the argumentative process, they are vital to the unfolding of the parties' positions and therefore also for their communication.

Let me go a little bit further into this, because it especially matters to the relevance of the fallacy of equivocation for dialogic argumentation. First, we have to keep in mind that the fallacy of equivocation is only in case, if a semantic shift in the meaning of a word affects assertions that are tied together in one argument**[vii]**, and that means also: they have to be framed as relating to the same question. An equivocation that meets this criterium can be found in segment (4). Weiss claims to refute Meyer's assertion that the consumer should be free to decide which sort of product he wants to buy. She objects that the consumer couldn't avoid buying goods which are wrapped up in one-way packages, and that the consumer thus was not able to decide freely. This alleged refutation rests on an equivocation; more specifically it is a fallacy "secundum quid" that consists in the neglect of relevant semantic qualifications: While Meyer spoke of "freedom" in terms of subjective preferences for certain products, Weiss speaks of "freedom" in terms of the choice of ecologically favourable products.
However, most of the semantic shifts that can be observed in our examples of "freedom" do not lead straightforward to fallacies of equivocation. There are at least three other argumentative moves that are accomplished by shifts in the semantics of "freedom". The first move is to argue about the right definition of "freedom". For instance, in segment (1), Meyer explicitly defines "freedom" in terms of travelling, whereas Weiss had claimed that mobility wasn't part of freedom. The second argumentative move is to downgrade the relevance of the opponent's position and the question he deals with by semantic shifts. In segment (2), the relevance of Meyer's claim to individual freedom is downgraded by focusing on the detrimental aspects of freedom. By downgrading relevance, the validity of the opponent's position and his semantics of the keyword are not really rejected, but they are either ignored or treated as less relevant in relation to some higher-order concern and become superseded by an alternative conception that is presented as being more relevant. By downgrading relevance, parties to an argument leave open, if they share an opponent's assertions. They manage to maintain opposition, even if they actually share the opponent's views, and they refuse consent which could be exploited by him. A third argumentative move that rests on semantic shifts is made by refuting positions which have not, at least not exactly in this way been taken by the opponent. In segment (2), for instance, the discussant refutes the position that there was generally no limit to individual

freedom, even if it does harm to others. The refuted position is framed as if it had been taken by Meyer, though Meyer had not talked about potentially detrimental aspects of freedom. The refutation thus is a valid argument in itself, but it rests on a semantic shift. Again, self-reference is at work here: Speakers build arguments that are framed as refutations of the position of others, while the refuted position is not the opponent's original position, but rather a more or less altered representation of it.

Though my analysis seems to suggest that this last kind of argumentative move was unfair or fallacious, this is not necessarily so. In order to advance the argumentation with respect to related or higher-order questions, it might be inevitable and perfectly right to draw on inferences and interpretations derived from an opponent's utterances, to comment on its premises or to reject its consequences. A general problem of the analysis and evaluation of semantic shifts thus results from the complexity of dialogic arguments. This complexity is made up of several factors: usually, there are several associatively, hierarchically etc. interrelated questions; there are background issues and taken-for-granted conditions, values and so on that any argumentative contribution can be related to; the argumentative function of a specific speech act is often polyvalent and sometimes unclear; semantic interpretations of one segment can be changed later on; many semantic shifts do not occur within clear-cut arguments, but over the course of an accumulating argumentative process that is characterized by internal argumentative relations which are often highly complex, vague and multiply interpretable.

5. Semantic shifts and higher-order coherence: Indexical interpretation with respect to a global positional confrontation and preference for disagreement

Semantic shifts can lead to talking at cross purposes. This can easily be seen, if you look at the debate about freedom. From a first segment to a next, the question is regularly altered, so no specific question is settled, nor is it the case that different opinions to a question are equally clearly expressed by the opponents. While Weiss and the discussant almost exclusively focus on negative aspects of freedom, Meyer simply doesn't respond to them. On the other hand, Weiss and the discussant partly deny, but also partly disregard the positive aspects of freedom that Meyer values highly.

The conceptions of freedom that the parties to the argument develop are incommensurable in many ways.**[viii]** Nevertheless, to complain of mere

dissociation would be premature. The speakers themselves signal coherence between contributions by tying devices, such as
– reminding the opponent of an obligation that was established by his partner's activity (segment (2): "you still owe us an answer"),
– highlighting that an argument refers to a position that had already been deployed (segment (3): Again, that's the aspect of freedom.),
– using paraphrase and citation of the opponent's position (segment (4): "It's not whether I take the freedom to buy my things somewhere else", "It's not necessarily this 'I must have my freedom'"),
– using parallel syntactic construction formats, in order to link two positions together (segment (4): repeated use of the format "It's not …I …freedom…, but…").

Moreover, the repeated use of "freedom" as a keyword is itself a device for establishing coherence: By using the same word, the participants signal that they talk about the same topic as they did before. One of the main functions of the keyword thus is to weave a thread which ties together different contributions in one topical unit. "Freedom" thus acquires a somewhat paradoxical status with respect to discursive coherence: While its semantic alterations produce incoherences, the repetition of the word-form indicates a general topical coherence.
In spite of these dissociations and, indeed, in part by these dissociations, there is a higher order of coherence. It is the coherence of a confrontation between two global positions. Meyer advocates the position of liberalistic individualism, and he focuses on the subjective use of products for the consumer; Weiss and the discussant advocate the position of universalistic dirigism, and they focus on questions of global ecological responsibility. These opposing positions are unfolded consistently over the course of the debate. It is performed rather as a global positional confrontation than as a discussion in which questions with a clearly restricted focus were talked about in a strict order. Single speech acts and arguments presented by one party are not interpreted and reacted to in isolation. Instead, they are indexically interpreted with respect to the global ideological stance that is attributed to the speaker. Since parties interpret local moves in terms of a global positional confrontation, it is thus perfectly to the point to reject an opponent's thesis by simply downgrading its relevance or by switching to another aspect that relates to some similar point at issue. It all seems to be one argument – in the sense of having an argument-, rather than performing a series

of arguments – in the sense of making arguments concerning a clear-cut question. At times, this global orientation is articulated by the opponents themselves. Consider, for instance, segment (3): Meyer makes an argument that is supposed to prove that there was no legitimate way to decide which goods should be dismissed as superfluous. By concluding "again, that's the aspect of freedom", he links his argument to his general ideological stance. It is itself symbolized by the keyword "freedom", which he has repeatedly used like a flag for his position. Weiss does the same regarding Meyer's position: She refers to it by the ficticious citation "I must have my freedom" and thereby treats it as a whole that can be referred to globally. So, not only utterances of the opponent are interpreted in terms of his overall ideological stance, speakers also frame own arguments and assertions as contributions that indexically reflect their global standpoint. Dialogic argumentation thus is performed as an interpretive process which locally and globally gains crucial dimensions of its coherence by assumptions about higher order positions of the parties. The practice of higher-order interpretation clearly can cause difficulties to the analyst who doesn't share or doesn't manage to reconstruct such higher order assumptions.

Because of this practice of indexical higher-order interpretation, participants only very rarely criticize semantic switches as fallacious or as invalidating a refutation.**[ix]** Different semantics are interpreted and taken into account as reflecting the specifics of the parties' positions, they are not treated as obstructions to a critical discussion. As Meyer's leitmotif-like conclusion "again, that's the aspect of freedom" and Weiss' ficticious citation "I must have my freedom" show, a party's position can metonymically be identified by a certain way the party uses a keyword, and that is, also by a certain semantics of the keyword.

Higher-order interpretation in terms of opposing global positions is closely linked to another pervasive feature of the argumentative process: a preference for disagreement (Bilmes 1991).**[x]** This is in sharp contrast to non-competitive, cooperative interactions, which are enacted according to a preference for agreement (Pomerantz 1984). This inversion of preference in a competitive debate is constituted by several features of discursive practice: Disagreements are formulated without hesitation, in unmitigated and even upgraded forms, while agreements are generally avoided.**[xi]** If they are produced at all, they are minimized, subordinated to disagreements, and formulated in mitigated ways. Together with higher-order interpretation, this general preference for

disagreement itself lends a coherent structure to the debate as a global positional confrontation. Along with these two practices, the positions tend to become increasingly rigid. One case in point is the stabilization of certain argumentative patterns that are repeatedly used by the parties. Meyer, for instance, rejects any demand for an ecologically based regulation of production or consumption by a fixed argumentative pattern (see segment (3)): He points to some product or activity, talks about his own consumptive preferences regarding it, declares that other people would prefer different things, and concludes that there were no legitimate grounds on which to base any regulation.**[xii]**

The combination of local semantic elaboration with the practices of higher-order interpretation and preference for disagreement might also be responsible for the fact that the participants don't seem to care about obvious contradictions that result from divergent semantics of "freedom". For instance, Weiss once claims that consumption wasn't a case of acting freely and would even deprive of freedom (segment (4) and (5)), while in a later phase of the discussion, she demands that the consumers' freedom be restricted. Though this is an apparent contradiction, both conceptions converge with regard to a higher order of global positional confrontation.
Both of them result in downgrading Meyer's issue of individual freedom in relation to her issue of global responsibility and the increase of happiness by changing the way of life. So it seems that assertions may be accepted as long as they are functionally equivalent with respect to a positional confrontation, even if they suffer from severe logical flaws.
Behind the dissociation of the argumentative process that is mainly produced by semantic shifts, there thus lies a coherent systematics of global positional confrontation. This coherence follows its own principles of higher-order interpretation and preference for disagreement. These principles have their specific functions for the evolution and negotiation of positions, for the constitution of the interactional relation of being opponents and for issues of their self-presentation in front of an audience.

6. Conclusion: A plea for a non-normative reconstruction of argumentative practices

My analysis has shown that semantic shifts are virtually inevitable in a critical discussion on complex subject matters. They can give rise to dissociation and fallacies, but they may as well contribute to the elaboration of questions and

positions. Participants in a debate follow argumentative and interpretive principles that are at odds with traditional views of argumentation. By reconstructing such principles, namely, the preference for disagreement and the interpretation of local utterances with respect to an overall stance attributed to the speaker, we can reveal that phenomena like semantic shifts can be coherent, functional and often unproblematic for discussants. Argumentation analysis therefore should not prematurely condemn such processes as defective because of their dissociative impacts on argument structure. These alleged flaws rather should be seen as a starting point for a non-normative reconstruction of the practices, principles and functions that govern natural argumentative processes.**[xiii]** An empirical inquiry into natural argumentation should not restrict its focus to questions of argument structure, but it should take interactive, processual and functional matters into account. As my analysis shows, these aspects are not only interesting in their own right, they are also vital to an adequate understanding of the way discussants constitute and interpret argument structure itself.**[xiv]**

NOTES

i. Psycholinguistic experiments of the process of semantic disambiguation in natural language comprehension also show that, within a few tenth of a second, people choose the contextually appropriate reading and discard the implausible ones (Swinney 1979).

ii. Consider, for example, the denotational question, if the consumers' right of choice is part of freedom, or the differing antonyms, co-hyponyms or partial synonyms that are related to 'freedom' by the speakers.

iii. For instance, this definition would produce a contradiction, if it was applied to 'freedom' in the context of the assertion 'restriction of mobility is not a loss of freedom'.

iv. The relation of this problem to the fallacy of equivocation is discussed in the next section.

v. A related point was already made by Aristotle (1955: 92ff.), who points out that using ambiguous expressions amounts to asking more than one question.

vi. Dissociations are produced, if the argumentation loses its topical coherence and contributions relate to different issues (see Spranz-Fogasy & Fleischmann 1993).

vii. Remember Walton's 'argument requirement' for fallacies (Walton 1996: 24ff.)!

viii. By the way, I personally think that this incommensurability and talking at cross purposes is one of the main reasons why debates of this kind so often leave the audience dissatisfied.
ix. Indeed, while a lot of contributions that include semantic shifts are rejected by opponents, the rejection is always justified by the alleged irrelevance of the fact, the question, etc., but never by a reproach with equivocation.
x. 'Preference' here doesn't mean a psychological disposition of sharing or not sharing opinions, but refers to structural features of the discourse: Preferred activities are those that are performed without justification, and that are realized in a shorter, unmarked, and unmitigated form, while dispreferred activities are characterized by the opposite features.
xi. Hence, we often find no uptake of opponent's positions that are likely to be shared.
xii. Meyer repeats this argumentative pattern six times during the discussion.
xiii. I elaborated further on this point in Deppermann (1997: 319ff.).
xiv. Consider, for instance, the argumentative criteria and resources that participants in natural argumentation themselves appeal to (Spranz-Fogasy 1999).

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