ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Standpoints In Literary Reviews

1. Argumentation in literary reviews

In this paper I want to report about my analysis of the main standpoints in literary reviews from a pragma-dialectical point of view. This first exploration was carried out on a corpus of literary reviews in Dutch newspapers.

The main standpoint in a literary review is a value judgement about the quality of the book as a whole. There are more standpoints to be found in reviews. Reviewers advance arguments to support the acceptability of their standpoint. If they say the book is beautiful, they have to bring in arguments like 'it is well-written, it opens new horizons for the reader' etc. These arguments relate to certain characteristics of the book. They are value judgements on aspects of the book, such as style, reality, innovation, and information. These arguments serve as sub standpoints in the literary reviews, whereas the main standpoint is an utterance about the book as a whole.

2. Standpoints and value judgements

The term 'standpoint' is broader than the term 'value judgement'. A standpoint not only can relate to the truth of propositions but also to their acceptability in a wider sense. Since a judgement may refer to the value of the subject of the utterance, it is a special kind of standpoint.

In literary reviews, the main standpoint is a judgement about the value of the book as a whole (and not about the values of certain aspects like style as pointed out before). Only relative terms can be used to express the value of books. Relative terms are always based on a scale. A scale is defined by two extremes: e.g. beautiful and awful, and the line between these extremes. In my survey, I postulated four different scales, on which the value of a book might be given.

1. The value of the book can be placed on a general scale from positive to negative. The general scale is between beautiful (or any other related positive qualification) and awful (or any other related negative qualification). Unlike the qualifications in the next scales, these qualifications are not exclusive for literature. "*Fear* could have been a terrible book because of all this, but it is a beautiful novel from the very start" (N. Hylkema, *Leeuwarder Courant*,

19-5-1995).
2. The value of the book can also be expressed by comparing a book with a general accepted standard of literature, a 'literary scale'. For example: 'This book is like a new Shakespeare. 'The value of Shakespeare's work is generally accepted, so the book is evaluated in a positive way.**[i]**
3. The value can also be expressed by comparing a book with another book from the same author as in 'This book disappointed me (…). His previous novel was much better. 'This scale can be called an oeuvre-scale. This is an example from the corpus: 'The award has caused quite a stir. That is not so surprising, because the book is an average book that in the light of Llosa's previous works looks particularly pale' (S. de Vaan, de *Volkskrant*, 19-5-1995).
4. The value can also be given within a certain genre as in: 'This book is a moving historical novel.'This utterance doesn't specify the value of this book as a novel, but it does express the value as a historical novel. In this example 'historical novel' can be replaced by all genres: from historical novel to pulp fiction, from experimental novels to thrillers. I called this the genre-scale.**[ii]** Genre is used here in a broad sense: Dutch books can be called a genre as well. I found this example in the corpus: 'Van Teylingen's writings enriched Dutch literature' (J. Diepstraten, de *Gelderlander*, 17-5-1995).

The corpus I examined consisted of all literary reviews in Dutch newspapers, published in an average week (no literary prices, no special literary events, no holidays). The first, general scale was used by far the most: in 18 of the 23 reviews in which the main standpoint was expressed in an assertive. The other scales were used rarely if ever.

3. Propositions, to which the main standpoint can be related
A proposition refers to something and adjudges a certain predicate to that something. Three kinds of propositions are distinguished: descriptive, evaluative and inciting propositions. Descriptive propositions describe facts or events. Evaluative propositions express an assessment of facts or events. Inciting propositions call on to prevent or to enhance a particular event or course of action (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, 1992: 159). This distinction is important for the analysis of the argumentation in literary reviews because different types of propositions are connected with different types of arguments. And conversely: a certain type of argument presupposes a certain type of standpoint. Is it possible to predict to which kinds of propositions the main standpoint in literary reviews

can be related?

1. Can the main standpoint be related to a descriptive proposition?
The answer must be no, because the arguments to support descriptive propositions are factual arguments: you need facts to support a standpoint related to a descriptive proposition. The main arguments in a literary review to support the main standpoint are judgements and not facts, so the main standpoint can not be related to a descriptive proposition.
2. Can the main standpoint be related to an evaluative proposition?
This seems to be pre-eminently the kind of proposition to which the main standpoint in literary reviews is related. This is for two reasons. Evaluative propositions are supported by arguments that express values or a hierarchy of values, as Peter Houtlosser stresses (Houtlosser 1995: 176). The argumentation in literary reviews consists of sub standpoints in which judgements are expressed about the value of different aspects of the book. So the argumentation expresses values.

Besides that, there is a hierarchy of importance between these aspects, reflecting the reviewer's overall opinion about literature. For example: a reviewer is positive about the style and negative about the innovative character of a novel. His main standpoint can be negative, if he considers innovation to be the main function of novels. So there is also a hierarchy of values. These two characteristics of argumentation in literary reviews (expressing values, not independent values because these values are hierarchical anyway) point out that the evaluative proposition is pre-eminently the kind of proposition the standpoint can be related to.

3. Is it possible that the main standpoint is related to an inciting proposition?
An inciting proposition calls on to prevent or to enhance a particular event or course of action. (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, 1992: 159). That can be so in the main standpoint in a literary review, for example in 'My opinion is that this book should be read world-wide'. So far, the main standpoint has been given the following characteristics: it is a value judgement about the quality of a book as a whole; this value is expressed on a scale; it can be related to evaluative and inciting propositions.
4. Different speech acts and the main standpoint in literary reviews
The speech act 'to advance a standpoint' is an assertive. According to Peter Houtlosser the speech act to advance a standpoint must be seen as a complex

speech act, as is argumentation (Houtlosser 1995: 75). That means that an utterance can be analysed at a higher textual level as a standpoint while on sentence level it may actually be a non-assertive. Peter Houtlosser also stresses that not only assertives but also other speech acts can lead to a difference of opinion. These speech acts must be reconstructed as standpoints in an analysis. The reconstructed standpoints are virtual standpoints. A value judgement is a certain kind of standpoint, so it is an assertive. Peter Houtlosser stated that other speech acts also might lead also to a difference of opinion. Which speech acts can be used to express the main standpoint in a literary review?

a. Suppose the only utterance about the quality of the book as a whole is: 'This book should be read world-wide'.

This example illustrates that the main standpoint can be an advice. Language users recognise this advice as a value judgement. An advice is not an assertive but a directive. This directive can be reconstructed on textual level as the (in the example: positive) main standpoint.

b. Suppose the main standpoint is expressed in 'I promise never to read a book from this author again'.

To promise is a commissive speech act. On textual level this utterance can be reconstructed as a value judgement. In this example the judgement must be negative: the reviewer's promise never to read these books again is not very recommending.

c. The main standpoint can also be expressed as in 'Reading this book made me very happy'. This utterance is an expressive. But it can be reconstructed as the main standpoint on textual level. The qualification appears to be positive, assuming that only good books can make the reader happy.**[iii]**

In literary reviews a special kind of expressive can be distinguished. In some of the reviews I examined I found remarks in which the subjective character of the judgement remains implicit. For example: 'This book is really moving.' An utterance like this must be characterised as an expressive. But the expressive is made impersonal, the phrase suggests that the book is moving for every reader. It differs from the utterance 'this book made me happy' because the personal experience is generalised. I called this kind of expressive a 'depersonalised expressive'.**[iv]** I believe that depersonalised expressives can be found very often in reviews, but this needs further research.

4. Can main standpoints in literary reviews be expressed by declaratives?

Declaratives are speech acts by means of which the speaker creates the state of affairs that is expressed in the propositional content. Usually declaratives are performed in more or less institutionalised contexts, – such as court proceedings, religious ceremonies – in which it is clear who is authorised to perform a particular declarative. When the referee in the championship says: 'the ball is out', so it will be, whatever all the British football fans may say (or do). When the reviewer says: 'this book is good', his utterance doesn't influence the reality: it doesn't change the quality of the book. Therefor I think main standpoints in literary reviews can not be expressed by declaratives.**[v]**

What are the differences between main standpoints, expressed in an assertive (not to be reconstructed) and reconstructed main standpoints expressed in a non-assertive? First, the reconstructed main standpoint can only be reconstructed in positive or negative ways. If a reviewer writes: 'read this book', the qualification is positive. If he writes 'don't ever read this book', the qualification is negative. Because it can only be reconstructed as positive or negative, the qualification behind reconstructed main standpoints is less specific than in standpoints like 'this book is better than his last one' (an assertive). Second, a reconstructed standpoint is always explicit, whereas a standpoint that has not yet been reconstructed may be very vague, like: 'this book might be the start of an international career'. So far the main standpoint in literary reviews can be expressed by all different speech acts, except for declaratives. They must be reconstructed on a textual level as explicitly positive or negative judgements.

5. Unexpressed main standpoints

If the main standpoint is unexpressed, only argumentation provokes a clue for the reconstruction of the main standpoint.

First: when only positive judgements of aspects (or: the sub standpoints, the arguments) are given, the main standpoint must be reconstructed as positive. Only if one aspect is judged as negative, the judgement of the book as a whole might already be negative: the negatively judged aspect might have a very high place in the hierarchy of the values. Analysis of the corpus shows, that the repetition of a negatively judged aspect may emphasise the negatively judgement so much, that this aspect seems to be a decisive criterion. The judgement can also be negative to such a degree that it becomes very important compared to the other (positively judged) aspects.

Second: the main standpoint can also be unexpressed (no utterance can be found about the quality of the book as a whole), whereas evaluative utterances with a

broader reference can be found. For example: ‘Daphne Meyer is a good writer’. In these cases, one level in the argumentation scheme is left out. The argumentation scheme can be reconstructed as: Daphne Meyer is a good writer. Good writers write good books. This book is written by Daphne Meyer, so this book is a good book. In the corpus I found this example: ‘All this together inconspicuously turns IJlander into a writer whose entire oeuvre you want to read after the very first acquaintance’(L. Oomens, *Algemeen Dagblad*, 19-5-1995).

6. Requirements for the main standpoint in literary reviews

Eveline Brandt (1994) developed four requirements for the main standpoint in literary reviews: it must be well considered, and supported by arguments; it must be easy to recognise as the main standpoint and formulated without any ambiguity. How can be decided whether the reviewer meets these general requirements?

1. Whether a main standpoint is well considered or not, is depending on the required attitude of the reviewer towards his work. Only the verbal presentation can show whether he meets this demand. And only argumentation can show whether the main standpoint is well considered or not.

2. The second requirement deals with argumentation to support the standpoint. In an analysis of the main standpoint the argumentation gets more important when the main standpoint is unexpressed. And if the main standpoint is unexpressed, the demand for an easy-to-recognise and unequivocal argumentation becomes stronger. The main standpoint can only be reconstructed if the judgements of certain aspects and the hierarchy between those aspects is made clear (outspoken or suggested by repetition).

3. The third requirement is that the main standpoint should be easy to recognise. The notion ‘recognisibility’ is a relative notion. Whether a main standpoint is easy to be recognised, is influenced by the next elements:

– explicit and implicit language use;

– the position of the main standpoint in the text;

– the repetition of the main standpoint.**[vi]**

4. The fourth requirement is that the main standpoint should be unequivocal, not ambiguous. The main standpoint can be ambiguous on the level of the sentence as well as on wider, textual level.**[vii]**

– If just one utterance can be identified as the value judgement, the main standpoint can be ambiguous in two ways. The scale of the value can be ambiguous (as in: ‘This is the best Thai historical novel, ever translated in Dutch’)

and the qualification of the book can be ambiguous (as in: 'This book needs a lot of attention from the reader'). There are value judgements in both last examples, but the value remains unclear.
– Sometimes two utterances can be identified as the main standpoint. If so, it is not always clear which of the utterances expresses the main standpoint the best. The two (or more) utterances can be more or less contradictory, as in: 'This book claims to be an old masterpiece, but isn't one.' (…) 'I wonder why this was translated.' (…) 'If the writer aimed to write an catching erotic story, he succeeded.' (H. Pos, *Trouw*, 19-5-1995) This is an ambiguity on textual level.

7. Some examples taken from the corpus
After this theoretical, first exploration of the main standpoint in literary reviews, some quotations can illustrate the complexity of the analysis. In the analysis, the theoretically assumed characteristics were very helpful.
1.
'The award has caused quite a stir. That is not so surprising, because the book is an average book that in the light of Llosa's previous works looks particularly pale. (…) Anyone who enjoyed the breathtaking plot, the technical wizardry and the elaborate themes and the pageturning epic narrative in previous works will feel cheated. The book lacks tension. (…) The dialogues are generally anaemic and sometimes even trivial and the saccharin conclusion is disappointing, to put it mildly. (…) If it had been an anti-climax to an otherwise thrilling book it would have been acceptable, but the rest of the book is not exactly breathtaking either (…)' (S. de Vaan, de *Volkskrant*, 19-5-1995).

Three value judgements can be found in these quotes.
– The first utterance (it is an average book) is an assertive, and the value is placed on a general scale.
– The second utterance (it looks particularly pale in the light of Llosa's previous works) is also an assertive and the value is placed on the oeuvre-scale.
– The third utterance (anyone who enjoyed his previous works, will feel cheated) repeats the judgement expressed in the second utterance. But here it is expressed in a 'depersonalised expressive.'

2.
'His texts belong to the best that has been written in Dutch and wouldn't it be beautiful for this work to be spread as widely as possible. (…) This fragment is taken from the story 'the carrot in the letterbox', that, although it's title is not as

beautiful as most of them, it's solid and strong construction make it one of the best stories I have ever read. (…) Finally I would like to conclude with a sentence suitable for the blurb on the back of Berckmans next book: I still don't understand why every household in the country does not have the complete works of J.M. Berckmans on their bookshelves' (R. Giphart, het *Parool*, 19-5-1995).

The first part of the first sentence in this quote is an assertive. The proposition is evaluative and the value is placed on the 'genre-scale'. In the second half of the first sentence, a wish is expressed indirectly. It is not an assertive but an indirect speech act, which can be interpreted as a wish. Then again this wish contains an indirect advice for readers. Strictly spoken, the second sentence is not a judgement of the book as a whole, only a judgement of one of the stories. But the judgement is so positive, that the book as a whole must be positive. The value is placed on a very large scale: everything this reviewer ever read. And reviewers do read a lot; it is their profession. So this judgement of one part, reinforces the judgement of the book as a whole. The value judgement in the third sentence is hidden behind a promise, a commissive. And this commissive contents also an advice for readers.

3.
'I swear, I have read this book right through, I have not shied away from this mugful of lard but I would seriously advise against even picking this book up, because it is so greasy it will slip through your fingers. And in case you are still interested in it, it will be a great pleasure for me to give it to you as a present. In Witte's own words: 'do me a chip sandwich – oh, and heavy on the mayonaise'. This way at least you are sure your are dealing with an unhealthy mouthful (…)' (A. Koopmans, *Apeldoornse Courant,* 17-5-1995).
It is very clear: the reviewer judges this book as an awful one. In the first sentence he assures the reader that his judgement is well considered, he did his job and read this book through. This judgement is expressed in an advice. Later on it is expressed in an expressive, and the expressive also contents a commissive.

4.
'The reader travels along with them to the heart of the catastrophe, an experience that makes a deep impression, just as Lynn Pan's other journeys through China's life and history (…)' (anonymous, *Barneveldse Courant*, 20-5-1995).
This main standpoint is hidden in a short sideline. The utterance 'makes a deep impression' is the main standpoint, an expressive. The reviewer suggests with his

words that his personal experience will be shared together with all readers, but in fact it is his own and personal experience. It is a so-called 'depersonalised expressive'.

5.
'In the first story of this collection I found literary confirmation of the fact that she is a real writer. (…) Her writings are not limited to just being descriptive, but are always permeated by an emotion that goes beyond that' (J. Bernlef, *NRC Handelsblad*, 19-5-1995).
Real writers write real books. Real books are good books. So the reviewers' judgement is positive. In the second quote he specifies what real writers do.

6.
'A direct beginning like this can be found quite often in IJlanders's work. It is his way of introducing the subject of the story directly at the beginning. They are all examples of IJlander's narrating skills. That is how IJlander has inconspicuously become a writer whose whole oeuvre one would like to read after the first acquaintance' (L. Oomens, *Algemeen Dagblad*, 19-5-1995).
This was the only utterance in this review, which could be identified as the main standpoint. But it is not an utterance about the quality of the book as a whole. The main standpoint is unexpressed here. The main standpoint is hidden in an utterance about an authorship, it is easy to reconstruct as a positive judgement about the book in question: you are curious about a whole oeuvre, if your judgement of one specimen is positive. So the value judgement is clear, while the main standpoint is unexpressed.

7.
'While reading Yoshimoto's collection of stories I was constantly reminded of my experiences with the Japanese cuisine. Like most Japanese food Yoshimoto's writings are not exactly pushy. You have to conquer it, discovering the qualities in a careful and concentrated way. He who puts his mind to it shall not be disappointed but will at the same moment discover that the distance in Yoshimoto's work comes with a price tag (…) To remain in culinary terms, despite their ingredients the taste of her stories remains often insipid. While dining you might feel it is time again to order a hearty steak au poivre' (H. Bouwman, de *Volkskrant,* 19-5-1995).

This value judgement is expressed by a comparison, not a comparison with other

literature, but with the Japanese kitchen. Such a comparison is an indirect speech act. The reviewer transformed his reading experience, being a mixed visual and intellectual sensation, into a taste sensation. More than one utterance can be identified as main standpoint, as the quotes show. The value can be paraphrased as 'pretty good, but now for something completely different'. A bit positive, a bit negative. The value judgement is unequivocal.

NOTES

i. This scale differs form the general scale: the comparison is not only qualifying but also characterising. If the reviewer compares a book with Shakespeare, the book differs from one, which is compared to Dostojewsky's, although both writers have a position in the literary canon.

ii. I postulated one last scale, which is connected to the former one: a debut-scale. Debuts can not be seen as a genre, but an utterance like 'this book is a strong debut' is very much like 'this book is a good regional novel'.

iii. Awful books can make the reader happy as well, but in that case the reader must have special reasons for this strange effect. Without any further explanation, utterances like 'this book made me happy' or 'I felt awful reading this book' must be reconstructed as positive and negative qualifications.

iv. In Holland many publications can be found, in which reviewers discuss the subjective character of reviews. This discussion comes up very often. This attention to the subjective character of a value judgement sheds a new light upon this depersonalized way of expressing the value of a book.

v. An exception must be made for the usage declaratives. The usage declarative points to another speech act, so they can't be interpreted as the main standpoint. If they occur in a literary review and point at the main standpoint, the main standpoint is easier to recognise.

vi. For that matter: repetition not only influences whether the main standpoint is easy to recognise, it also determines the confidence with which the main standpoint is brought forward.

vii. Once again a reason to analyse the main standpoint on textual level.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Argument Structure And Disciplinary Perspective

Many in the informal logic tradition distinguish convergent from linked argument structure. How intuitively we may present this distinction is quite familiar. In some arguments, several premises may each be offered to support some conclusion but these premises are apparently intended to be taken together, to work together to constitute a case for the conclusion. Each premise given is somehow incomplete in itself. Its removal would leave the argument with a gap. As Stephen N. Thomas puts it in *Practical Reasoning in Natural Language*, the "reasoning involves the logical combination of two or more reasons,... each of which needs the others to support the conclusion." (Thomas 1986: 58) Following Thomas, we say that such an argument

has *linked* structure. By contrast, some arguments will have what Thomas calls *convergent* structure, where two or more premises are intended to support the conclusion separately, independently giving evidence for it.

The problem of distinguishing linked from convergent structure has proved vexing; indeed so vexing that it is currently the central problematic issue for understanding argument structure. The terminology in which Thomas and others have drawn the distinction is one obvious explanation for this difficulty. What do these key concepts of logical combination, premises needing each other, or being separate or independent mean? These characterizations are shot through with terms whose precise meaning is far from clear. What does it mean to say that reasons logically combine, that they need the others, that they fit together? What does it mean to say that they are completely separate or independent?

The metaphorical nature of the terms in which the linked-convergent distinction is frequently cast may betray a more fundamental difficulty with this distinction. It is a confusion over just exactly what this distinction is to mark. It is the thesis of this paper that the linked-convergent distinction, which we regard as a logical distinction, is frequently confused with a dialectical or pre-logical distinction, the distinction between multiple and co-ordinatively compound argumentation as defined by the pragma-dialectical school. This distinction is sometimes regarded as marking the linked-convergent distinction, but only using different terminology. However, as I shall argue, the distinction is quite different. According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst in *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions*, a multiple argumentation consists of "a series of separate and independent single argumentations for or against the same initial expressed opinion." (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984: 91) Each argumentation is (or is intended to be) individually sufficient to justify accepting (or rejecting) the initial expressed opinion. With co-ordinatively compound argumentation, the single argumentations are "only sufficient together" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1984, 91). In *Argumentation, Communication, and Fallacies*, they point out that in "multiple argumentation, the constituent single argumentations are, in principle, alternative defenses of the same standpoint" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 73). Again, "What matters most is that the individual arguments should count as independent defenses of the same standpoint" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 75). By contrast, "Compound argumentation consists of a combination of single argumentations that are…presented collectively as a

conclusive defense defense of a standpoint.…In a coordinative argumentation, each argument individually is presented as being a partial support for the standpoint, but it is only in combination with the other arguments that it is presented as a conclusive defense" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 76, 77).**[i]**

Why should we not see van Eemeren and Grootendorst as drawing the linked-convergent distinction, only using different terminology? Why does the multiple versus co-ordinatively compound terminology mark a different distinction from the linked-convergent contrast? The answer comes, as I have already suggested, from the fact that the multiple-co-ordinatively compound distinction is dialectical, whereas the linked-convergent distinction is logical. We have two different disciplines here out of which these distinctions have come, disciplines with different perspectives on argumentation. Let me make it clear that by saying that these perspectives are different, I am not suggesting that one perspective is valid and the other not, or that one perspective is superior to the other. The perspectives of these disciplines may be equally valuable, but they are different, have different goals, and should not be confused.

The goal of a *logical* analysis and evaluation of an argument is to determine whether the premises constitute good reasons for accepting the conclusion, good in the sense of constituting inductively strong or sufficient or deductively necessitating reasons for the conclusion. The unit of analysis, then, is the premise-conclusion nexus. In developing a system of argument diagramming from the logical point of view, a system containing circles, arrows, and perhaps other elements, we understand these elements as making manifest the internal structure of such a nexus. That is, the various statements and their support relations are internal to an argument and together constitute one unit of analysis. The tools of argument analysis are tools for manifesting this internal structure.

This contrasts with the tools needed for a properly dialectical analysis of argumentation. Where the focus of interest concerns how well a critical discussion has come to a reasoned resolution of some disputed question, the argumentation included in the critical discussion need not form one single unified argument developed over the course of the discussion. In the case of resolving some dispute, a proponent may put forward a reason which he regards as sufficient to defend some claim. This reason, then, constitutes the premise in a distinct argument for that claim. Yet the proponent may later withdraw that

reason, and thus the argument, under critical questioning from the challenger. She may not accept that reason and the proponent may have no premises – at least premises which she will accept – from which to argue for it. He may then offer another reason for the claim. Clearly this could be repeated a number of times. Each time a premise is withdrawn and replaced, the proponent is putting forward a different argument. Alternatively, a proponent may put forward what he regards as a number of distinct arguments for his claim. This could happen in a critical discussion with several interlocutors. The reason or premise one interlocutor is prepared to accept may not be acceptable to the others. But by presenting a series of reasons, the proponent has given each interlocutor at least one reason which that interlocutor finds acceptable (Compare van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 74). If then each reason is sufficient to justify the claim which is the issue of this critical discussion (and seen as sufficient by each interlocutor), by offering this series of reasons the proponent will have brought about a resolution of the dispute favorable to him. But notice that he has brought this about *not* through one argument but through a whole series. The proponent's argumentation consists not of one argument developing cumulatively, but of a number of discrete arguments. Again, for rhetorical purposes, a proponent may present a plurality of arguments for the same conclusion. A claim becomes more credible the more often one hears it repeated, especially if it is repeated in varying contexts. Surely if a proponent wants to get his audience to believe some claim, he may want to repeat it a number of times. But he can certainly vary the context by each time giving a different reason for that claim. The tools for carrying out a dialectical analysis of argumentation then must include a way of indicating that an argumentative passage or exchange includes a number of distinct, separate arguments. A *dialectical* analysis of argumentation, then, will focus on a different unit, a whole argumentation, possibly containing multiple arguments, where a logical analysis will take an individual argument as its unit of analysis. Different disciplines then will legitimately have different analyses of argument structure.

Dialectical analysis comes out specifically in the identification of multiple argument structure and the distinction between multiple and co-ordinatively compound argumentation structure in the pragma-dialectical approach. By saying that a multiple argumentation consists of a series of single argumentations, each sufficient or intended to be sufficient to accept the conclusion, van Eemeren and Grootendorst indicate that the unit of their analysis of argumentation is more

than a single argument. Their use of "conclusive" is significant here. Their discussion also indicates that we should judge an argumentation to be multiple when the single premises "should each be regarded as conclusive defenses of the speaker's standpoint" (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 79). "Conclusive" is revealing for highlighting the separateness of the arguments in multiple argumentation. It is a modal term. On one standard understanding of "conclusive," to claim that the premise or premises of an argument constitute a conclusive defense of the standpoint is to claim that they entail or necessitate the conclusion. It is to claim that the argument from those premises to the conclusion is deductively valid. This is significant, because from a logical point of view, no argument is stronger than a deductively valid argument. If certain of the reasons or premises put forward for a conclusion constitute a deductively valid argument for that claim, any remaining reasons will in no way strengthen the deductively valid argument that we already have, for one cannot strengthen a deductively valid argument. One cannot have any support for a conclusion stronger than premises which necessitate it. That a premise necessitates a conclusion could then be taken as a sign that any other premises offered in support of that conclusion are parts of one or more other, numerically distinct arguments for it. "Conclusive" then highlights the fact that in multiple argumentation we have two or more separate arguments for the conclusion.

Use of "conclusive" is also problematic, however, for arguments, although logically cogent, will not always provide conclusive support for their conclusions. We must allow for the possibility of multiple argumentation where each of the separate arguments provides less than conclusive evidence to justify accepting the conclusion, and we must also allow for the possibility of co-ordinatively compound argumentation where the premises collectively provide support but not conclusive support for the conclusion. In this connection, Snoeck Henkemans' appeal to modal qualifiers in distinguishing multiple from coordinatively compound argumentation is very insightful. In her view, modal words such as "probably," "certainly," "possibly," "necessarily," "make explicit the degree of certainty with which their standpoint is advanced" (Snoeck Henkemans 1992: 108). In deciding then whether an argumentative text has multiple or coordinatively compound structure, we should not look solely for units whose premises conclusively support their conclusions. Rather. If the argumentation consists of more than one argument [premise], in order to determine which structure is to be attributed to the argumentation, the analyst has to judge

whether each individual argument is sufficient to support the standpoint with the claimed strength, or whether the arguments only have sufficient weight if they are combined (Snoeck Henkemans 1992: 113). Clearly, if each premise supports the conclusion with the strength claimed, then we have good reason to count the argumentation as multiple. On the other hand, if only the premises in combination have sufficient strength, we have reason to count to argumentation as coordinatively compound.

Hence, although there is an obvious parallel between the multiple and co-ordinatively compound distinction and the convergent and linked distinction, these two distinctions do not amount to the same thing. We have more than a terminological difference here. The multiple-coordinately compound distinction is a dialectical distinction, while the linked-convergent distinction is logical. Multiple argumentations consist of a plurality of arguments, while convergent arguments are single, argumentative units. This is not to deny that when approaching an argumentative passage from a logical point of view, it is important to determine whether the passage contains one or a plurality of arguments. That will determine the units to be subjected to logical analysis and evaluation. But identifying those distinct units is preliminary to *logical* analysis – it is a prelogical analysis employing, from the logical point of view, a prelogical distinction – while identifying distinct units may be integral to dialectical analysis. Characterizing convergent argument structure in a way to make it coincide with multiple argumentation structure then is a mistake. It confuses dialectical with logical structure.

Keeping this in mind, we can see how certain characterizations of convergent structure are inappropriate, since they amount to characterizing this structure as multiple argumentation. This is most notably true of Thomas's first characterization of convergent argument structure: When "each reason supports the conclusion completely separately and independently of the other, the reasoning is *convergent*" (Thomas 1986: 60, italics in original). Thomas's wording is quite strong here. If by "completely separately and independently," Thomas means completely separately and independently, then convergent reasons on his characterization are separate distinct arguments for the conclusion. The cogency of each reason as support for the conclusion should be assessed separately from any of the other reasons. Thomas apparently endorses this interpretation when he says that "A convergent argument is equivalent to separate arguments (or

evidence coming from separate areas) for the same conclusion" (Thomas 1986: 61). We say "apparently endorses," for in the light of Thomas's further elaboration of the nature of convergent arguments, it is not clear that he would endorse the view that convergent reasons should *always* be regarded as the premises of distinct arguments for the conclusion. Suffice it to say at this point that at least one of his characterizations may plausibly be interpreted this way.

In *Argument Structure: A Pragmatic Theory*, Douglas Walton analyses the differences among a number of tests for the linked-convergent distinction as falling along two axes: the Falsity-Suspension axis and the No Support-Insufficient Proof axis.
Some tests will ask us to consider the effect on the support the remaining premises give a conclusion if one premise is false. Others will ask us to consider the effect on the support if one premise is suspended, i.e. blocked out of the mind. If that premise were simply removed from the premise set of the argument, what would be the effect on the support the remaining premises give to the conclusion? Again, some tests will judge an argument to be linked if and only if the support is completely undercut, while others will judge the argument linked if and only if the resultant support is insufficient to show the conclusion. The various combinations of these two axes yield four possible tests for distinguishing linked from convergent arguments: Falsity/No Support, Falsity/Insufficient Proof, Suspension/No Support, Suspension/Insufficient Proof. Of these four, Walton regards the last, the Suspension/Insufficient Proof … Test: *If one premise is suspended (not proved, not known to be true), then conclusion is not given enough support to prove it* (Walton 1996: 119, italics in original). As "being an analysis of the meaning of the linked-convergent distinction, generally, in an ideal argument in which the premises are collectively sufficient for the conclusion" (Walton 1996: 151). It provides "a right minded contextual framework, and a sensible pragmatic viewpoint on what is meant by the linked-convergent distinction generally" (Walton 1996: 181).

Appraising how Walton came to this position and his overall views on the linked-convergent distinction developed in *Argument Structure* is beyond our scope here. He acknowledges that this test frames the multiple versus co-ordinatively compound distinction of the pragma-dialectical school. If our argument is cogent that this dialectical distinction does not amount to the linked-convergent distinction, then Walton's claim that the Suspension/Insufficient Proof Test

properly analyses that distinction is mistaken.

In *Informal Logic: Possible Worlds and Imagination*, John Eric Nolt also in effect characterizes convergent (or as he prefers to call them, split-support) arguments as separate arguments. In such arguments, the premises "work independently; neither needs to be completed by the other…, but stands by itself as a separate line of reasoning." The premises then constitute "separate inferences" (Nolt 1984: 31). Nolt carries this through in his instructions for evaluating convergent arguments. Each inference should be evaluated separately. The reasoning of a convergent argument "will generally be as strong as the strongest chain of reasoning it contains,… [T]he overall strength of the argument is as great as the overall strength of its strongest chain" (Nolt 1984: 90). If an argumentative text contains two (or more) separate arguments for the same conclusion, then from a logical point of view, those arguments should be evaluated separately. The logical cogency of one is a separate issue from the cogency of the other. But in such a case, we are dealing with *distinct* arguments, not a single unit of argument. Nolt is quite consistent, then, in regarding a split support argument as being as strong as its strongest chain, as long as we recognize that split support arguments are multiple argumentations and not convergent arguments.

But Walton and others might very well ask why we need the lin-ked-convergent distinction in addition to the multiple co-ordinatively compound distinction. Why within arguments which we all agree are co-ordinatively compound do we need to distinguish those whose internal structure is linked from those whose internal structure is convergent? Some further remarks Thomas makes concerning convergent argument suggests why. He makes the following claim:

It is possible to have a correct convergent diagram in which the result of combining the separated reasons would (if this were done) be a stronger argument than either reason provides alone, as long as the *negation* or *falsity* of the various separated reasons would not decrease the support given by the other(s) to the conclusion (Thomas 1986: 62, footnote 18, italics in original). This assertion is problematic as it stands. What argument is the correct convergent diagram to be a diagram of? Is it the diagram of the various numerically distinct arguments, each giving a separate, independent reason for the conclusion? Or is it the diagram of the result of combining these several arguments into one? If the convergent-linked, multiple -co-ordinatively compound distinctions amounted to the same thing, then the convergent diagram would represent a plurality of

arguments, and the combined argument would have co-ordinatively compound, i.e. linked structure. But Thomas does not regard the resultant combined argument as having linked structure. The last clause makes reference to what he regards as another hallmark of the linked-convergent distinction. Reasons are convergent if the falsity of any one of them would in no way affect the strength of support each of the others affords for the conclusion. If by contrast the falsity of one of the reasons undercuts the strength of the others, the structure is linked. This allows for the possibility that the strength of two or more premises considered together will be greater than the *strength of the strongest premise*, and that the strength of the overall argument will be diminished by the falsity or withdrawal of any of its premises. The argument will be convergent as long as the strength of each remaining premise considered separately remains the same.

Notice that this allows the combination of a plurality of premises which supplement each other, which work together logically in terms of the weight of the entire case for the conclusion, but which are still regarded as convergent. No wonder, then, that there is confusion over the linked-convergent distinction. One would think that if the combined weight of the premises offered to support a conclusion were greater than the weight of any premise taken individually, then the premises would be working together, logically supplementing each other, and thus should be linked. But Thomas now allows that under certain circumstances they may be convergent, even though in such a case we shall have only one argument.

What this apparent conflict between Thomas's criteria for drawing the linked-convergent distinction may indicate is that within the class of arguments which from a dialectical perspective have co-ordinatively compound structure, we need to distinguish convergent from linked arguments. This reinforces our thesis that these two pairs of distinctions do not amount to the same thing. We are dealing not with one but with two structural distinctions here and thus with two problems in delimiting argument structure. That for *logical* reasons we should want to distinguish linked from convergent arguments is easily shown. Indeed we claim no originality for this point. Consider the following argument:

There is no evidence that capital punishment for first degree murder constitutes an effective deterrent for these crimes. It cannot restore life to the murder victim. If applied to the wrong person, there is no way that wrong can be redressed. It signals that brutality is an option for the state. Hence the death penalty for

premeditated murder should not be a judicial option. Here four distinct reasons are given for the conclusion. Although all four reasons together give a stronger case for the conclusion than each separately, each by itself counts against capital punishment and thus for the conclusion. Intuitively this argument is convergent. From a logical or logico-epistemological point of view, the premises of an argument must be acceptable and adequately connected to the conclusion. Now suppose the first premise were recognized false. Suppose there was evidence that under certain circumstances at least, say when the administration was swift, sure, and equitable, capital punishment constituted an effective deterrent for first degree murder. Given that information, the first premise would no longer be acceptable. Yet the remaining premises would still constitute a case against capital punishment. The falsity of one premise would not spell the demise of the entire argument, although if all four premises had been true, we would have had a stronger case for the conclusion than that made by the remaining three. The point is that even if the first premise proves unacceptable, it still makes sense to proceed with the logical evaluation of the remainder of the argument.

Now contrast these considerations with the following argument: Capital punishment signals that brutality is an option for the state. Brutality must never be an option for the state. Hence capital punishment must not be permitted.
Suppose the first premise were found false and thus unacceptable.
Suppose some forms of capital punishment, e.g. lethal injection, were certifiably non-brutal. Then the remaining premise would not give us much of a reason for opposing *those* forms of capital punishment.
Suppose, on the other hand, that brutality is an acceptable option for the state, at least under certain circumstances. Then under those circumstances, capital punishment might be quite permissible.

Intuitively it seems we need both premises together to constitute a case for the conclusion of this argument. Intuitively it is linked, and the contrasting logical fate of this argument with that of the convergent argument when it is imagined that one premise is false shows the cogency of drawing the linked-convergent distinction.
Whether an argument is linked or convergent has a bearing on its logical evaluation. The distinction is relevant from the logical point of view. Hence, it is important that we keep the logical purpose of this distinction in mind when we draw it and not confuse it with prelogical or dialectical considerations, even

though those distinctions may be valuable for the logical and dialectical analysis of argumentation. The linked-convergent distinction and the multiple-co-ordinatively compound distinction are two different distinctions, ultimately expressing two different disciplinary perspectives, and we should not use the latter to explicate the former.

NOTES

[i] We shall comment on the significance of "conclusive" shortly.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Critical Thinking: Assessment, Flow Charts And Computers

This paper will look at some new directions in the teaching of critical thinking. This project originally began as an assessment project to discover how well our students were mastering the critical thinking unit in our introductory philosophy course. By using computers to test the pre and post course skills of students, and by running some statistical analyses of what students were and were not learning, I became aware that students had little difficulty memorizing logical concepts – they could define arguments, they understood the difference between premises and conclusions, etc.What they were not able to do successfully, or as successfully as I would like, is apply these concepts to new material. They had difficulty distinguishing arguments from other forms of discourse, evaluating new arguments for strength and validity and recognizing examples of pseudoreasoning. What they most needed help in was learning the skills one uses to come to the decision that a passage does or does not contain an argument, or that a particular form of fallacious reasoning is being used.

My initial computer exercises focused on reinforcing the nature of the concepts – what an argument is, what a slippery slope involves, distinguishing between valid and invalid arguments, etc. These exercises improved student outcomes, but not as significantly as I had hoped. My next step was to develop flow charts to help students picture graphically the relevant reasoning processes. I have used three such charts, designed to help students recognize arguments, recognize valid arguments, and recognize several informal fallacies. The students could then use these flow charts to develop their own methods to accomplish these tasks.

By focusing on the processes used to make logical decisions, I hope to show that students can master logical concepts more easily. Most logic texts are problem based; yet little is offered on *processes* to solve the problems. For example, most texts include problems on identifying arguments, but do not show the steps necessary to distinguish arguments from other types of discourse. Notable exceptions to this are units on more complicated logical procedures such as diagraming arguments, using Venn Diagrams and logical proofs. Logic Texts address part of this problem when they teach students how to recognize premises and conclusions. The expectation seems to be that if students can understand the concept of an argument, they can therefore identify arguments in practice. But I do not find this to be the case. This is not enough to give students the ability to distinguish arguments from other types of discourse.

To address the problem of making the process more explicit, this semester I measured the growth in critical thinking ability of 150 students in three sections of introductory philosophy. The first step was a pre-test on the second day of class to evaluate their ability to recognize arguments, to judge good arguments, and to detect examples of informal fallacies. The test consists of 14 computer questions that ask students to distinguish arguments from other forms of discourse and to say whether the conclusion of an argument follows from the premises given. It also includes 11 questions given in class that asks what is wrong with passages that each contain an example of an informal fallacy. The same test was repeated on the last day of class. The students never received the results of their pre-assessment test or discussed the correct answers in class.
Because the concept of flow charts is integral to the way computers are programmed, they can be programmed to duplicate the kinds of flow charts employed here. By using pre and post course tests for assessment purposes, I hoped to show that through using flow charts, and computer exercises based on those flow charts, students' acquisition of these critical thinking skills would increase.

The first step in this process was the decision about which skills to target in my course. Since philosophy is the discipline that employs argumentation most prominently, and since this course fulfills the University requirement for critical thinking, students must learn to identify arguments and to distinguish arguments from other forms of discourse. This pushed me immediately back into the arena of concepts, but there did not seem to be much literature on the process of recognizing arguments. From treatments of the nature of arguments: I chose the definition used by Moore and Parker in their text *Critical Thinking*, one of the most popular texts for critical thinking courses in the United States. They begin their exploration of arguments with the claim that an argument is an attempt to settle an issue (something up for debate) through the use of premises and conclusions supported by premises (Moore and Parker 97: 8-11). This seemed a promising avenue for exploration,
though it proved to generate some difficulties as well. Using this definition, I instructed students to look for an issue, a conclusion and some support for the conclusion.
However, this definition led substantial numbers of students to deny that the following is an argument: All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore Socrates is mortal. They rejected this as an argument on the grounds that there is

nothing to dispute, or no issue. I therefore revised Moore and Parker's criteria for an argument to the following: an argument must involve an attempt to persuade, must come to a definite conclusion and must provide reasons to accept that conclusion. Students find these criteria somewhat easier to follow than Moore and Parker, though they still have some difficulty in deciding whether a passage involves an attempt to persuade.

The flow chart I developed for students to use is #1 on the handout. It works reasonably well: scores on the homework and quizzes for this section of critical thinking have improved dramatically. This area of the assessment had been one that, before the use of flow charts, showed very little improvement from the beginning of the course to the end. In my original assessment the average improvement on this section was less than 5%; using the flow charts this semester the average improvement more than doubled to over 11.29%. I am not completely satisfied with the current flow chart (perhaps more needs to be said about what constitutes an attempt to persuade, and it does not address some of the subtle differences between explanations, justifications and arguments). Still, it seems to help students to improve their ability to recognize arguments.

The second skill I chose to address as part of critical thinking was the evaluation of arguments: specifically, the ability to distinguish valid deductive arguments from invalid ones, and the ability to decide an argument's soundness Good arguments are important precisely because we can trust their conclusions. So it is essential for critical thinkers to be able to distinguish good arguments from bad. The conclusions of sound arguments are, by definition, true; so the ability to pick out such arguments is an essential skill.

Since the list of valid arguments is so extensive, and given the time constraints in an introductory course, I decided to choose just a few for this unit. Arguments that use hypothetical seemed a good start, because students initially find these difficult, and because they are a source of many reasoning mistakes. To illustrate such mistakes I usually let students read some examples of valid and invalid modus ponens and modus tollens and have them make intuitive suggestions about the reasoning in each. Invariably, they argue that the valid forms are bad arguments and the invalid forms are good arguments. Despite this poor beginning, grades on homework for this unit after the introduction of the flow charts are the highest in the course.

Besides hypothetical arguments, we also look at the validity of disjunctive

syllogisms, another source of reasoning mistakes commonly made by students. Most students understand the word "or" only in its exclusive sense, meaning only one alternative is the case. So they commonly reason that if A is true, B cannot be true. With some exposure to the inclusive sense of "or," most students are able to avoid this reasoning mistake, though for some students disjunctive arguments are the hardest to evaluate and they continue to regard all "or's" as exclusive. (See Flow Chart #2) Test scores and homework scores on the evaluation of arguments show considerable improvement with the use of flow charts.

But the most dramatic improvement on the assessment test came in the section on informal fallacies, despite the fact that I am the least satisfied with the flow chart I developed for this purpose. Since informal fallacies are so widespread in everyday life, from the comics section of the newspaper to political oratory to advertising, all of us are bombarded with examples of informal fallacies. This made me conclude that the ability to recognize such fallacies and to understand why they are compelling for many people is an extremely important skill for a critical thinker. Developing a flow chart to duplicate these processes proved the hardest challenge.

Over the years, in teaching such reasoning mistakes, I have encountered resistance from students who find these concepts vague and difficult to master. The task was made more difficult by the fact that no two logic texts approach informal fallacies in the same way, or even agree on a list of such fallacies. The most helpful text here was Morris Engel's *With Good Reason*, because of the way he classifies the mistakes(Engel 94: 84-86). I also found the treatment of informal fallacies in Cederblom and Paulsen's text, *Critical Reasoning* helpful in coming up with a procedure for identifying such fallacies (Cederbloom and Paulsen 91: 134-166).

I tell my students that most informal fallacies use five kinds of appeals in their proofs: diversion, emotion, presumption, misuse of language, and appeals to the presenter of an argument. If they can identify what the author is attempting to use for proof, they can usually correctly identify such fallacies as *ad hominem, ad populam*, etc. Some of the categories are easier to recognize than others: appeals to emotion are much easier to identify, for example, than what Engle calls fallacies of presumption. This leads me to suggest a process of elimination as a part of the flow chart for this unit. (See Flow Chart #3) One of the chief difficulties in constructing flow charts for these kinds of exercises is that more than one fallacy can be involved, depending on the interpretation of the passage.

Refinement in the charts may needed to provide branches that reflect the overlaps among the fallacies. Still, though there is room for improvement, students increased their mastery of these concepts by an average of 154% since they began using the charts.

I had hoped to translate this approach into a set of computer questions that duplicate the flow charts. I have written the basic outlines for such a project, even written the preliminary exercises. My current computer exercises are written in tree form with students answering relevant questions and then being given explanations of those answers. The software that is used for those exercises is *Authorware* by Macromedia and it will be no major project to rewrite these so that the questions duplicate the questions on the flow chart. Unfortunately our Department's computer expert got more interested in protesting Texas' marijuana laws than in improving critical thinking. As result of his public pot smoking (perhaps in itself a lapse of critical thinking), he was arrested and expelled from the University. Consequently, the exercises I had planned to be performed on the computer were never programmed into the machines.

I believe that using such exercises will continue the improvement already achieved by the flow charts. Overall, my students demonstrated more than a 100% average improvement in their scores on the post-assessment test; this compares with a 46% average improvement in scores using the computers but without the flow charts. The average score on the department-wide assessment also increased from 4.84 out of 10 to 7.14: a 47% increase. This compares with an average 25% increase before using the flow charts.

My basic contention, then, is that in teaching logic and argumentation, we must focus more on the processes we use in good argumentation and reasoning rather than the concepts. Students seem to understand the definition of premise and a conclusion, but frequently can not distinguish them in actual arguments they encounter in real life or even in logic books. Logic texts have always focused on the doing of logic through the use of exercises that emphasize skills. What I found missing and what my students profit from is more explanation of the very basic processes involved in mastering those skills.

Ironically, those of us who teach logic or critical thinking may be the least able to explain these processes. They have become so automatic for us that we rarely stop to think about the steps we go through to recognize arguments, evaluate them, or pick out instances of informal fallacies. We understand the concepts on an abstract and even on a practical level, but we rarely stop to go through the

processes and make them fully explicit for our students.

This became clearly apparent to me as I tried to develop flow charts for my students. It was very difficult for me to say why I thought something was or was not an argument. And I frequently found my self disagreeing with the authors of a particular text. The following appears in Moore and Parker's supplement to *Critical Thinking: The Logical Accessory*. "Some of these guys that do Elvis Presley imitations actually pay more for their outfits than Elvis paid for his. Anybody who would spend thousands just so he can spend a few minutes not fooling anybody into thinking he's Elvis is nuts" (Moore and Parker 95:33). Moore and Parker do not feel this is an argument, and some of the time I agree with them that neither sentence really supports the other. But other days I can see my students' point that there does seem to be an attempt to persuade; there does seem to be a definite stand, and some reason is given for that stand. Perhaps we have not yet gotten to the heart of the concepts. Perhaps if we more fully understood the nature of logical concepts, the processes would not be so difficult to explain to our students. I don't really want to push that line of thought, so much as to suggest that we need to spend more time discovering the processes that lie behind logical thought and reasoning. My flow charts are an initial attempt to explore this area; they begin to meet what students seem to need. They help them to understand how we make decisions that something is or is not an argument, is a good argument or is an example of an informal fallacy. I would very much welcome any suggestions that you might make as to a better analysis of the processes involved.

APPENDICES

#1 Flow Chart for recognizing arguments

1. What is this passage trying to do?

Present facts – no argument

Describe something – no argument

Present compound unrelated claims – no argument

Persuade me about the truth of a claim – possible argument –Procede further.

2. What is the claim or issue at stake?

State this in your own terms. Go to step 3

3. Does the passage take a clear stand on the isue? What is the stand?

If no stand, no argument.

If yes, procede to step 4.

4. Does the passage provide clear reasons to accept the stand taken?
If no reasons, no argument.
If yes – then argument.
=
An argument must be an attempt to persuade, include a definite stand on an issue and provide reasons to accept that stand.

#2 Flow Chart for Evaluating Arguments
Find the logical indicator – *If* move to step 2; if there is more than one if statement move to #9 If the logical indicator is an *or* move to #13.

2. Label the claims beginning with the if clause, no matter what comes first in the argument. Label the antecedent or if clause p; label the consequent or then clause q.

3. Identify the conclusion; label the claim based on the first premise.

4. Identify the second premise(this will be what is left over). Label the claims according to the first premise.

5. Set up the schema.

6. Identify the argument using the schema: if the second p and q are affirmations or repeat the first p and q, the argument is a modus ponens. Go to #7 If the second p and q are denials the argument is a modus tollens: go to #8.

7. Determine validity: A modus ponens must affirm the antecedent clause (p clause) to be valid. If it affirms the consequent clause (q clause) it is invalid.

8. Determine validity of modus tollens: A modus tollens must deny the consequent clause (q clause) to be valid. If it denies the antecedent clause (p clause) it is invalid.

9. More than one if statement means the argument is a chain or hypothetical syllogism.

10. Find the conclusion. Label the premises with p, q and r first. Label the conclusion last.

11. Set up the schema and determine validity. Watch for breaking the chain or reversing the conclusion. To be valid the second premise should affirm the consequent clause of the first premise in the second premise and should include the antecedent clause of the first premise and the consequent clause of the last premise in the conclusion. Any other pattern is invalid.

12. If the logical indicator is an or , first determine whether it is a strong or weak disjunct. (In a strong disjunct only one alternative is possible.)

13. Label the claims beginning with the or statement. Set up the schema with the conclusion last. Determine validity: all strong disjunct are valid; in a weak disjunct only the denial in the premisses is valid; if the denial is in the conclusion it is invalid.

#3 Flow chart for recognizing informal fallacies
What is the main claim or the conclusion?
What are the premises or support?

Do the premisses or conclusion contain a word or phrase that could have more than one meaning?
one tipoff – a word used more than once.
NO – Move to next question
YES – 1. Ambiguous word or phrase – EQUIVOCATION
2. Sentence structure is ambiguous==AMPHIBOLY
3. Grouping is ambiguous-moves from parts to whole ==COMPOSITION
4. Grouping is ambiguous – moves from whole to parts==DIVISION

Are the premises irrelevant to the main claim?
NO – Move to the next Question
YES – 1. Changes subject==SMOKESCREEN
2. Appeals to others opinions==APPEAL to BELIEF/COMMON PRACTICE (See also emotions)
3. Appeals to undesirable consequences==SLIPPERY SLOPE
4. premises distort main claim==STRAW MAN

Do the premises appeal to emotions or supply motives?
NO – Move to next question.ES
YES – 1. They appeal to the good opinions of others== PEER PRESSURE
2. They appeal to wealth and status==-SNOB APPEAL

3. They use flattery== APPLEPOLISHING
4. They use fear== SCARE TACTICS
5. They appeal to our sense of compassion==PITY
6. OTHER EMOTIONS, eg. Spite, ridicule, etc

Do they attack the presenter of the argument or use the presenter's status illegitimately?
NO – move to the next question
YES – 1. Attacks the person directly==AD HOMINEM (abusive)
2. Attacks person or claim because of source==AD HOMINEM (genetic)
3. Discredits source for inconsistency==AD HOMINEM (inconsistent)
4. Uses a source outside its field of expertise== AD VERECUNDIAM Also called illegitimate authority

Is there an unjustified assumption? This category is usually reached by elimination. If none of the other categories fit try one of the following:
1. Look for premises and conclusion that say the same thing in slightly different terms==BEGGING THE QUESTION
2. Look for unproven assumption that there are only 2 alternatives.(MAY BE STATED AS AN IF CLAUSE)=FALSE DILEMMA
3. Look for claim that lack of proof proves the other side==ARGUMENT FROM IGNORANCE
4. Look for improper relationships between causes and effects ==FALSE CAUSE
5. Look for conclusions based on too little evidence or illegitimate evidence==HASTY GENERALIZATION
6. Look for a claim that assumes that an earlier question has already been answered in a particular way==COMPLEX QUESTION

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – "Scorching Irony, Not Convincing Argument, Is Needed": Frederick Douglass On Some Rhetorical Limitations Of Argumentation

This is the fourth ISSA conference to which I have contributed a paper. Each paper, with the exception of the first, has discussed the ideas of some thinker who was, for one reason or another, largely opposed to the strong Western insistence upon argumentative justification. Thus in 1990 I rehearsed Friedrich Schlegel's complex rationale for believing that "nothing should, and nothing can be proved," while in 1994 I explored Plato's attempt to "blame Lysias" for deviating from argumentative procedures which Plato advocated in theory but neglected to practice**[i]**. I have chosen to examine thinkers who are skeptical about, if not also opposed to, argumentation primarily because much of my own current work seeks to trace the long subalternated tradition of Western anti-argumentative, "declarative rhetoric." I am interested, that is, in all of those thinkers who, for a wide range reasons, have come to believe that the process of providing reasons and inferences in support of claims, is not, or at least is not always, the best way to accomplish communicative, rhetorical or epistemological purposes. I must confess, however, that I especially enjoy discussing such argumentative agnostics and atheists at this particular conference, for this is a place which, more than any other I've encountered, abounds with the hubris of argumentation, and it gives me some small pleasure to play the role of the oracle of doom, to be the one who, however modestly, attempts to inject a smidgen of yin into a discourse that is otherwise so lopsidedly yang.

As part of my larger project of recuperating the long declarative protest to the hegemony of argumentative justification in the West, I am forever on the lookout

for argumentative Nichtmitmacher, for those refractory types who refuse to accede to the conventional requirement that one be prepared to justify all of one's assertions, or "declarations," through recourse to argumentative justifications. I have by now collected quite a few odd characters in my declarative menagerie. Many of them, of course, oppose argumentation for rather poor reasons. But several of them, like Meister Eckhardt, Friedrich Schlegel, Soren Kierkegaard, Henry Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Walter Benjamin, provide objections to argumentation that deserve to be taken very seriously.

The author I wish to discuss today, that 19th century escaped American slave, polymathic autodidact, turned abolitionist orator par excellence, Frederick Douglass, is yet another who has some objections to argumentation which, I believe, are well worth the consideration of all who, like me, are interested in the many ways argumentation has been challenged by the subalternated declarative tradition.

Douglass's thoughts regarding the rhetorical limitations of argumentation occur toward the middle of what is generally, and I think rightfully, considered to be his oratorical masterpiece, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July? An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, on 5 July 1852." I frequently have my students analyze this speech as part of my course on "Rhetoric and American Culture." There are, of course, many features of the work that lend themselves especially well to rhetorical examination. Douglass is a master stylist, so it is easy for students to discover and scrutinize all manner of rhetorical devices, with which the work, like most 19th century American orations, is replete. The speech also exemplifies the characteristically American form of the jeremiad, a form inherited from early Puritan oratory much discussed in recent years.**[ii]**

Thus the work is divided chronologically into three basic sections. The first eulogizes the accomplishments of the American founders. Conveniently eliding the many shortcomings of these men, of which he was well apprised, Douglass paints them, borrowing their own sacralized words, as men of principles.

They loved their country better than their own private interests, and, though this is not the highest form of human excellence, all will concede that it is a rare virtue, and that when exhibited, it ought to command respect. He who will, intelligently, lay down his life for his country, is a man whom it is not in your nature to despise. Your fathers staked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor on the cause of their country. In their admiration of liberty they lost sight of

all other interests.
They were peace men; but they preferred revolution to peaceful submission to bondage. They were quiet men; but they did not shrink from agitating against oppression. They showed forbearance; but they knew its limits. They believed in order; but not in the order of tyranny. With them, nothing was “settled” that was not right. With them justice, liberty and humanity were “final”; not slavery and oppression. You may well cherish the memory of such men. They were great in their day and generation**.[iii]**

We then receive a sentence which begins the transition to the speech’s second section, concerning the repudiation of the founder’s principles, and describing the moral degradation of the present situation. Their solid manhood stands out the more as we contrast it with these degenerate times.**[iv]**
In moving to consideration of the degenerate but potentially regenerative present, “the accepted time with God and his cause,” “the ever-living now,” Douglass reminds his audience that many Americans are not included in the joyous celebration of freedom that the Fourth of July symbolizes for free white Americans.**[v]** This leads him into a clear topic sentence, thesis, and amplificatio.
Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, “may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!” To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be reason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then fellow-citizens, is American Slavery. I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave’s point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible, which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call into question and to denounce, with

all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery – the great sin and shame of America! "I will not equivocate; I will not excuse." I will use the severest language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgement is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just.**[vi]**

Now clearly this is great stuff. It retains much of its rhetorical power even when read by a thin-voiced professor a hundred and thirty some years after the issue of abolition was decided. One can only imagine the force it must have had upon its original abolition-sympathetic audience when declaimed by arguably the finest orator of a country and age which prided itself on the quality of its oratory. To use the more impoverished language of our own day we might note that Mr. Douglass is clearly on a rhetorical roll here. We might thus expect him to continue to build the amplificatio, to depict for us in greater detail, and with greater vividity, some of the legion crimes and hypocrisies of the institution of slavery. He will indeed do that quite soon. But for the moment, he interrupts his excoriation to provide us with an interesting little digression or excursus.

Immediately after the first forceful assertion of his central thesis, he suddenly chooses to spend two pages of speech text elaborating a critique of argumentation to which we will turn our attention here. He begins the excursus with a traditional anticipatio. But I fancy I hear some one of my audience say it is just in this circumstance that you and your brother abolitionists fail to make a favorable impression on the public mind. Would you argue more, and denounce less, would you persuade more, and rebuke less, your cause would be much more likely to succeed.**[vii]**

This anticipatio is followed, as one would expect, with an immediate refutatio, taking, as so often in 19th century American oratory, the form of several rapid rhetorical questions, all intended to establish that the main facts germane to the slavery issue are already conceded even by those who oppose abolition.**[viii]**

But I submit that where all is plain there is nothing to be argued. What point in the anti-slavery creed would you have me argue? On what branch of the subject do the people of this country need light? Must I undertake to prove that the slave is a man? That point is conceded already. Nobody doubts it. The slaveholders themselves acknowledge it in the enactment of laws for their government. They acknowledge it when they punish disobedience on the part of the slave. There are seventy-two crimes in the State of Virginia, which if committed by a black man, (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death; while

only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment. What is this but an acknowledgement that slave is a moral, intellectual and responsible being? The manhood of the slave is conceded. It is admitted in the fact that the Southern statute books are covered with enactments forbidding, under severe fines and penalties, the teaching of the slave to read and write. When you can point to any such laws, in reference to the beasts of the field, then I may consent to argue the manhood of the slave. When the dogs in your streets, when the fowls of the air, when cattle on your hills, when the fish of the sea, and the reptiles that crawl, shall be unable to distinguish the slave from a brute, then will I argue with you that the slave is a
man!**[ix]**

The first line here is quite significant. It suggests that Douglass views argumentation as a process oriented toward resolving misunderstandings of facts or opinions. If everything is clear, or "plain," to all participants at the outset, then, there can be no argumentation, since argumentation seeks only to adjudicate differences. Douglass thus seems to be asserting the counter-intuitive thesis that the basic facts of slavery are clear to both those who seek to abolish it and those who wish to uphold it. Now since the other side would undoubtedly wish to deny this, Douglass attempts to establish that, although they may explicitly deny abolitionist principles in theory, supporters of slavery still tacitly endorse these same "facts" through their practice. Thus in punishing slaves severely for transgressions, they too recognize the basic fact that slaves are "moral, intellectual and responsible being(s)" etc.. Douglass is thus here involved in making what we today call a "transcendental argument."
He begins with some universally acknowledged reality, i.e. the punishment of slaves, and then seeks to establish that such a reality is only rendered "possible" through some prior condition, i.e. a tacit recognition of the slave's humanity. The transcendental argument merely renders explicit what was already implicit, but unrecognized, in the situation at hand.
Now this is hardly the place to rehearse the long, interesting, and rather checkered, history of transcendental arguments in Western discourse.**[x]** Those of you familiar with Kant's philosophy will be acquainted with such procedures, as will those of you who have encountered the specious machinations of Kant's epigoni among the contemporary German and American advocates of "universal pragmatics" and "transcendental discourse ethics," those Latter-day prestidigitators who are forever claiming that, "merely by participating in

argument at all" you are already tacitly acceding to whatever goofy theory of argumentative discourse they have cooked up this week, that "your every denial" merely further establishes the veracity of anything they happen to claim. In fairness to Douglass, however, the transcendental argument he advances would seem far more credible. The punishments specified do seem to presuppose some moral agency of the slaves.

Having thus indirectly argued against the first counter-claim, that slaves are not moral agents, Douglass reiterates his refusal to engage in traditional argumentative operations, opting instead to valorize, as do so many other declarative rhetoricians, the act of "affirmation" over that of demonstration or proof.

For the present, it is enough to affirm the equal manhood of the negro race. Is it not astonishing that, while we are ploughing, planting and reaping, using all kinds of mechanical tools, erecting houses, constructing bridges, building ships, working in metals of brass, iron, copper, silver and gold; that, while we are reading, writing and cyphering, acting as clerks, merchants and secretaries, having among us lawyers, doctors, ministers, poets, authors, editors, orators and teachers; that, while we are engaged in all manner of enterprises common to other men, digging gold in California, capturing the whale in the Pacific, feeding sheep and cattle on the hill-side, living, moving, acting, thinking, planning, living in families as husbands, wives and children, and, above all, confessing and worshipping the Christian's God, and are looking hopefully for life and immortality beyond the grave, we are called upon to prove that we are men!**[xi]**

Here too the primary strategy is to reveal the absurdity of the counter-claim, i.e. that slaves are not human, by enumerating – to an extent tolerable only to a 19th century audience – many of the ways in which the actual quotidian activities of African-Americans belief that assumption. We then get further anticipatio and refutatio, in the form of additional rhetorical questions interspersed with emphatic repudiations, this time with a specific attack upon the rhetorical appropriateness of argumentation in the current setting.

Would you have me argue that man is entitled to liberty? that he is the rightful owner of his body? You have already declared it. Must I argue the wrongfulness of slavery? Is that a question for Republicans? Is it to besettled by the rules of logic and argumentation, as a matter beset with great difficulty, involving a doubtful application of justice, hard to be understood? How should I look to-day, in the presence of Americans, dividing and subdividing a discourse, to show that men

have a natural right to freedom? speaking of it relatively, and positively, negatively, and affirmatively. To do so, would be to make myself ridiculous, and to offer an insult to your understanding. There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven, that does not know that slavery is wrong for him.**[xii]**

Here we learn more about how Douglass conceives of argumentation. Since his conception differs markedly from the ones utilized today, we should pause to note, that argumentation, for Douglass, is something that one properly uses, along with "the rules of logic," in situations "beset with great difficulty," situations where it is imperative to understand the particular case through the "application" of general principles. This is, of course, a conception of argumentation which derives from scholastic thought, and which has made its way, via Puritanism and other protestant theology, into the political discourse of Douglass's age. There is a time and place, it thus seems, when it is perfectly appropriate for an orator to "subdivide a discourse" for analytical purposes, when it is appropriate to consider the issue from various "relative," "negative," "positive," and "affirmative" perspectives as was then frequently done in theological, philosophical, or some scientific discourses. In such cases, one seeks to get clear about the first principles, the basic premisses, indeed the foundational "facts" or "truths," upon which the discourse might build. But the current situation is clearly not such a one. For, in this situation, everyone already knows the essential facts of the matter, it is merely a question of getting all to draw the proper implications from these truths for their behavior, to get them to see that these facts require them to render their currently complacent, slavery-complicitous actions consistent with their primary moral principles. In short, to use the jargon of our own day, this is a practical discourse situation, not a theoretical discourse situation.

Douglass continues by again utilizing rhetorical questions and emphatic enumeratio to establish the superfluity of providing an argumentative justification of his position.

What, am I to argue that it is wrong to make men brutes, to rob them of their liberty, to work them without wages, to keep them ignorant of their relations to their fellow men, to beat them with sticks, to flay their flesh with the lash, to load their limbs with irons, to hunt them with dogs, to sell them at auction, to sunder their families, to knock out their teeth, to burn their flesh, to starve them into obedience and submission to their masters? Must I argue that a system thus

marked with blood, and stained with pollution, is wrong? No! I will not. I have better employments for my time and strength, than such arguments would imply.**[xiii]**

Now partly what is going on here is the old rhetorical strategy of dismissing one's opposition as "too absurd to merit serious argumentation." Rather than explicitly anticipate and refute possible counter-arguments to the abolitionist position he advocates, Douglass simply refuses to consider that any such opposition, at least rational opposition, is even possible. And, of course, considering the way in which he has just depicted the issues, providing graphic presence to slavery's most egregious failings, the impossibility of opposing his position seems, especially to a largely sympathetic audience like the one in Rochester that day, quite credible enough. He is well aware, of course, that there are any number of reasons used by advocates of the institution of slavery side which must in fact be refuted by abolitionists to win over the vacillating masses of white Northerners. Indeed, much of the later part of the oration is directly concerned with providing refutations of anticipated counter-arguments, like, for example, the standard Southern argument that slavery is sanctioned in the U.S. constitution. But, for the moment, he wishes to paint all opposition as being too preposterous to warrant serious response.

In reading Douglass' dismissal of his opposition under cover of the somewhat dubious assertion that "even they agree" with his assessment of the basic facts of slavery, I am reminded not only of today's post-Kantian ratiocinators, but also of the long-running, largely disingenuous, exceedingly expensive, socially injurious, patently discriminatory and thoroughly ineffective American "war on drugs." For several years now, opponents of drug prohibition have attempted to provide rational arguments in favor of ending a reign of government repression directed selectively against people of color and the poor. And yet, so self-righteously moralistic is the "decadent Puritanism" of American public opinion that proponents of continued prohibition need seldom to respond to these arguments with counter-arguments. Instead they can continue to dismiss all arguments for decriminalization as being "too absurd," "too ridiculous," or especially "too dangerous," to warrant any serious response. For the reigning "drug-czar," Barry McCaffrey, too, it seems, arguing about the wisdom of the current American prohibition of drugs would be tantamount to wasting one's "time and strength." It is enough to reiterate the old, increasingly hypocritical mantras about "saving our kids" to dismiss all rational deliberation. Dismissal in lieu of argumentation, then,

cuts both ways. Rhetorically considered, it can work, as it does here, well for an orator, especially when one is addressing an audience generally favorable to one's own position. By ridiculing the opposition in various clever ways, one can give the impression of having "refuted" it without ever having to take its alternative seriously or to construct cogent counter-arguments. Certainly in the case of slavery it does seem doubtful that the other side has much of a case to consider.

But, from the perspective of a normative theory of argument, such a procedure is always suspect, for there is simply no way to ensure, without recourse to argumentative deliberation, that the position dogmatically discounted as "too preposterous" to consider, might not also turn out to be true, or at least partially true.

Douglass continues by providing us with yet another refusal to engage in conventional argumentation with the opponents of abolition.

What then remains to be argued? Is it that slavery is not divine; that God did not establish it; that our doctors of divinity are mistaken? There is blasphemy in the thought. That which is inhuman, cannot be divine! Who can reason on such a proposition? They that can, may; I cannot. The time for such argument is past.**[xiv]**

Somewhat ironically, this passage, like several others railing against having to "argue" the divinity of slavery or lack thereof, actually makes a succinct, indeed even syllogistic, argument against the claim that slavery is divinely ordained: i.e slavery is inhuman, all inhuman things are not divine, therefore slavery is not divine. It then adds the idea that "the time for such argument is past," which suggests that the other side had a burden of proof which they did not meet, although ample time was provided for them to do so.

We then finally encounter what seems to be the primary point of this rather long, and ostensibly peculiarly placed, digression on the inappropriateness of argumentation regarding the issue of slavery. At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would to-day, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire, it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced.**[xv]**

The main point here is that certain rhetorical situations require the rhetor to eschew the dispassionate or, as the period generally preferred to call it, "disinterested," attitude essential to argumentative deliberation, and to adopt instead a partisan or polemical stance which allows for the stimulation of the audience's emotions or "passions" regarding the matter at hand. Dialectical argumentation then is too heavily dependent upon logos to be of great use to the orator who wishes to incite the masses to prompt action. Such an orator must also utilize ethos and especially pathos to persuade most effectively. It is interesting, however, that Douglass does not contrast "convincing argument" with "impassioned persuasion" or something similar, but rather with "scorching irony." Why might he have chosen to specify his rhetorical alternative in this way? What exactly does he have in mind when advocating "scorching irony"? Well, among other things, it suggests that he is operating here with some conception of what Theodor Adorno calls "immanent critique." It is not sufficient to build the positive case for abolition, even allowing for certain rhetorical embellishments. One must also reveal the "ironic" contradictions of the counter-case for slavery. It is thus quite understandable that Douglass should rhetorically wish for precisely what he, perhaps more than any person then living, so manifestly has; viz. the oratorical power to "pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm and stern rebuke." **[xvi]** We might look more closely at these four terms from the rhetorical lexicon, "ridicule," "reproach," "sarcasm" and "rebuke." Each of them implies some type of response which reveals the duplicity latent in the opponent's assertions.

Irony is also a central term for another declarative rhetorician, that greatest theoretician of literary and dialectical irony, Friedrich Schlegel. For Schlegel, however, irony tends to be related to polysemy. Irony also reveals the dialectical nature of all truth, the impossibility of stating any thesis without to some extent also implying its negation. Thus many of Schlegel's ironical statements seeks to exhibit the negation latent within the assertion. To provide an ironic interpretation of a text is thus, as many Schlegel scholars have pointed out, similar to providing its Derridian "deconstruction." Such a conception of deconstructive irony seems appropriate here as well. In much the same way as a deconstructionist critic reveals the failure of the text itself to expunge what its author most emphatically seeks to eliminate, Douglass is masterful at revealing the extent to which the actual practice of slavery gives the lie to the virtuous and patriotic ideation in which it is justified.

His – by today's conceptions actually quite argumentative – final justification of his refusal to engage in argumentation concluded, Douglass launches into a reiteration and intensification of his attack on American complacency and hypocrisy, one so emphatic and delicious that I can't resist the temptation to read it too, even though doing so contributes only indirectly to the point about Douglass' awareness of the rhetorical limitations of disinterested argumentation which primarily concerns us here.

What to the American slave is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, and unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy – a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.**[xvii]**

I am, of course, tempted to continue on and read you still more of this marvelously telling denunciation of my own still thoroughly hypermoralistic and hypocritical homeland. But it is no doubt better to return and finish the more parochial analysis of Douglass' dissatisfactions with argumentation. In this passage too, Douglass's primary strategy is to present a graphic, immanent critique of American society. As usual, this strategy affirms the basic American values, (justice, liberty, equality, greatness, religiosity etc.) and then employs polemic and "irony" to reveal the glaring inconsistency of current practice to these values. Like most American authors, according to Sacvan Bercovitch and other proponents of what is sometimes called "the new complicity historiography," Douglass nowhere ventures a thorough-going "transcendental critique" of the hegemonic American values or traditions themselves.

He does not attack the audience's independence day values or reveal the extent,

say, to which the glorified “founders” were also hypocritical or racist. Instead he spends the first third of the speech eulogizing the “great” and “manly” white leaders of the past. He purposely steers clear of a more radical, transcendental critique of American lore, of the type, say, which delighted his abolitionist fellow-traveller, Henry Thoreau. And for good reason. To adopt that strategy would require Douglass to abandon the resonant form of the American jeremiad, greatly weakening the rhetorical force of his inspirational appeal for moral rededication. A transcendental critique is also unnecessary here, since the immanent critique, with its magnificent “scorching irony,” quite adequately allows him to win the audience to his cause without threatening to alienate them with gratuitous and adscititious criticisms of their most cherished assumptions, criticisms of the type his more refractory friend, and one time last-minute oratorical stand-in, Mr. Thoreau, was wont to deploy with relish.**[xviii]**

The strategy of immanent critique also allows Douglass to move past the perilous present moment of eschatological decision to the third and final moment of the jeremiad, the promise of a future redeemed, a millennium of justice and joy as the fit reward for national moral regeneration.

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery. “The arm of the Lord is not shortened,” and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave of where I began, with hope.**[xix]**

In the end, then, we shall overcome slavery. But we shall overcome it only through the “fire” of irony, ridicule, reproach, sarcasm and rebuke, not through the “light” of argumentation.

NOTES

i. William D. Fusfield, “Blaming Lysias: On the Origins of Western Argumentative Justification in the Socratic Proscription/Utilization of Stylistic, Reiterative, Equivocative and Combinational Rhetorical Forms,” Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Argumentation, edited by Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, ISSA Publishers, (Dordrecht: 1995, SicSat) I, 311-27. William D. Fusfield, “`Nothing Should and Nothing Can Be Proved’: Young Friedrich Schlegel’s Declarative Challenge to the Demonstrative Voice of Western Rhetoric,” in Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Argumentation, edited by Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, ISSA Publishers, Dordrecht, 45-53, 1991.

ii. See especially Perry Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province, (Boston: 1953) and Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad, (Madison: 1978, U. of Wisconsin).
iii. Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?: An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, on 5 July 1852,” in The Frederick Douglass Papers, edited by John W. Blassingame, (New Haven: 1969, Yale University) II, 364-5.
iv. Douglass, 365.
v. Douglass, 366.
vi. Douglass, 368-9.
vii. Douglass, 369
viii. For more on the problems with transcendental arguments, see the numerous essays of Charles Taylor, Herbert Keuth and Hans Albert.
ix. Douglass, 369-70.
x. For more on the problems with transcendental arguments, see the numerous essays of Charles Taylor, Herbert Keuth and Hans Albert.
xi. Douglass, 370.
xii. Douglass, 370.
xiii. Douglass, 370.
xiv. Douglass, 370-1.
xv. Douglass, 371.
xvi.Henry Thoreau is, as far as I can determine, the only other american orator of the age who can touch, and in some ways even surpass, Douglass in the intensity of his irony.
xvii. Douglass, 371.
xviii. To get a better handle on the rhetorical differences between immanent and transcendental critiques, it is quite useful to compare the Douglass speech here examined with one of Henry Thoreau’s many famous attacks on the entire American ideography. Even a quick comparison with Thoreau’s “Economy,” “Slavery in Massachusetts,” the John Brown essays or “Life Without Principle” will reveal many stark differences. Thoreau’s tendency is always, as he noted himself, to emphatic “exaggeration” of the critique at hand. Such thorough-going “ruthless criticism,” his policy of “leav(ing) out all the flattery and retain(ing) all the criticism,” makes for very stimulating and provocative reading. And it certainly delights those few of his compatriots already sympathetic with his penetrating analysis of the many deep defects of American institutions. But it seems hardly to have ingratiated him with most of the chauvenistic New England

audiences he addressed in his, hardly very successful, career as a lyceum lecturer. As he himself put it, “if you would get money as a writer or lecturer, you must be popular, which is to go down perpendicularly.”
xix. Douglass, 386-7.

ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Nature Of Symptomatic Argumentation

1. Introduction

There seems to be general agreement among argumentation theorists that argumentation schemes are principles or rules underlying arguments that legitimise the step from premises to standpoints. They characterise the way in which the acceptability of the premise that is explicit in the argumentation is transferred to the standpoint. The argumentation scheme that has been used by an arguer determines the specific relation that is established between the explicit premise and the standpoint that is being justified. This relation is not a formal but a pragmatic relation.

Argumentation schemes play an important role in the evaluation of argumentation. In order to evaluate an argumentation, one must first determine which argumentation scheme is employed. Then it can be established whether the premise is in an adequate way linked to the standpoint. For this purpose, one has to answer the critical questions that go with the argumentation scheme that has been used.

The pragma-dialectical typology of argumentation schemes is designed to enable an adequate evaluation of argumentation. In this typology, three types of argumentation are distinguished:

1. *symptomatic* or ‘token’ argumentation, where there is a relation of concomitance between the premise and the standpoint;

2. *comparison* or ‘similarity’ argumentation, where the relation is one of resemblance; and
3. *instrumental* or ‘consequence’ argumentation, where there is a causal relation between the premise and the conclusion.

These three argumentation types are categorised based on the way in which the argumentation scheme concerned is to be evaluated. With each type of argumentation go corresponding assessment criteria that pertain to the relation that is characterised in the argumentation scheme. This means that a new argumentation scheme should be distinguished only when it can be shown that “new” assessment criteria are needed to evaluate the corresponding type of argumentation.
Each of the pragma-dialectical argumentation schemes represents a category that can be subdivided into a number of subtypes. The reason for distinguishing between subtypes is that evaluating the argumentations concerned requires more specific evaluation criteria. Argumentation based on analogy is, for instance, a subtype of comparison argumentation which is to be distinguished because the critical question ‘Are the things that are compared (X and Y) comparable’ needs further specification. This way of classifying the argumentation schemes results in a typology that meets the requirements of an adequate classification: its categories are clearly demarcated, homogeneous, mutually exclusive, and non of them is superfluous.

2. Theoretical and empirical research
In my doctoral dissertation on the pragma-dialectical typology of argumentation schemes I have tried to answer two questions
(Garssen 1997: 3-4). My first aim was to examine whether the pragma-dialectical typology of argumentation schemes is an optimal starting point for evaluating arguments. My second aim was to determine whether, and to what extent, the relations between premises and standpoints as they are perceived by ordinary language users, correspond with the pragma-dialectical argumentation schemes.
In order to answer the question whether the pragma-dialectical typology is an optimal starting point, I made a comparison between the pragma-dialectical typology and other typologies of argumentation schemes – or similar notions like types of argumentation or modes of argument. This is a first step in establishing whether the typology is exhaustive. In this way it can be investigated whether the wide and varied argumentation types distinguished by others are all captured by

the pragma-dialectical typology. In this endeavour, I analysed all major modern theoretical approaches of argumentation schemes. Broadly speaking, there are three kinds of approaches. First, those approaches that focus on evaluating arguments. These are the approaches inherent in the classification of types of argument in American textbooks on argumentation and debate. But they also include the classification of Hastings and that of Schellens. An approach that focuses on finding arguments is the New Rhetoric of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. Finally, there is Kienpointner's approach, who puts the emphasis on the description of argumentative discourse by means of argumentation schemes. My analysis makes it clear that there are notable similarities between the different classifications of argumentation schemes. This can largely be explained by the fact that the authors made use of the same sources and also influenced each other. Of course, there are many differences too. The first striking difference is the number of categories. In some classifications only three types of argument are distinguished, in others more than fifty. Other differences are related to the way the classifications are organised.

My comparison of the pragma-dialectical argumentation schemes with the argumentation schemes proposed by others showed that there is a large conceptual overlap between the typological accounts that can be found in the various approaches examined. In most cases, the argumentation schemes appear to correspond well with one of the pragma-dialectical argumentation schemes. Some can be seen as a variant of one of these schemes, while others can be regarded as a subtype. There is therefore no need to amend or expand the pragma-dialectical typology of argumentation schemes.
With regard to the treatment of causal argumentation and comparison argumentation, most approaches seem to agree. Leaving minor differences aside, these two types are in most approaches treated in the same way. This can not be said, however, of symptomatic argumentation.
According to the pragma-dialectical conception of this type of argument, in symptomatic argumentation, the argument is presented as if it is an expression, a phenomenon, a sign or some other kind of symptom of what is stated in the standpoint (Van Eemeren en Grootendorst 1992: 97). In the literature no analogon of this conception can be found that covers all the possible variants of symptomatic argumentation.

In the empirical part of my study, I have investigated to what extent the pragma-

dialectical argumentation schemes correspond with the pre-theoretical intuitions of ordinary language users. My empirical investigation focused on the question of whether the different types of argumentative relations as perceived by ordinary language users do match the pragma-dialectical argumentation schemes. Since no similar research regarding the intuitions of ordinary language users has hitherto been conducted, a new research method had to be developed. To this end, I have carried out several feasibility tests.

The nature of my research question posed an important restriction on the formulation of the instruction that was to be given to the respondents: is should not contain any information concerning the argumentation schemes. Two methods of research appeared suitable: a characterising-grouping test and a critical response test. The characterising-grouping test is a pencil and paper test that actually combines two tests. First, the respondents had to characterise in their own words the relation between the premise and the standpoint in a series of twelve argumentations. Subsequently, they had to classify the argumentations in a number of groups and explain their groupings. Both the respondents' characterisation of the relation between premises and standpoints and their classification of the argumentations provide clues as to how the different kinds of relation between premises and standpoints are perceived.

The results of the characterising-grouping test indicate that the relation between the premise and the standpoint is adequately interpreted by the respondents. Most of them were able to offer informative and pragmatically appropriate reconstructions of the unexpressed premise, instead of just connecting the premise to standpoint by way of the so-called 'logical minimum'. Many characterisations that were given of the premise-standpoint relation indicated that the respondents had a more or less clear conception of causal argumentation and also of comparison argumentation. They were also quite capable of reconstructing the unexpressed premise of symptomatic argumentation. Most of them, however, did not explicitly refer to the specific kind of relation used in the latter type of argumentation. These results were confirmed by the results of the grouping test. In that test, the respondents classified the argumentations based on a relation of analogy quite well and the argumentations based on a causal relation reasonably well. Only a few, however, succeeded in classifying the symptomatic arguments correctly.

The critical response test is an altered replication of the characterising-grouping test: the respondents had to react to the argumentation by criticising the relation

between the premise and the standpoint. The fact that there is a correspondence between their critical reactions and the standard critical questions going with the argumentation schemes indicates that they had a notion of the specific type of relation between the premise and the standpoint that was involved.
The results of the critical response test confirm the results of the characterising-grouping test. Most critical reactions indicate that the respondents discerned a relation between the premise and the standpoint that is pragmatic in nature – and that is more specific and more informative than the so-called 'logical minimum'. Many critical reactions could be interpreted as critical questions that go with the argumentation schemes concerned. Not all critical reactions of the respondents, however, contained explicit or implicit references to the argumentation schemes. In their reactions to comparison argumentation, the respondents very often made use of verbal indicators of the relation of analogy; in reacting to instrumental argumentations, they sometimes used verbal indicators of the causal relation; in reacting to symptomatic argumentations, they only rarely used verbal indicators of the relation of concomitance, used in symptomatic argumentation.
All the results of my empirical research indicate that the respondents were not so familiar with the concept of symptomatic argumentation. These results show that symptomatic argumentation is more difficult to understand than the other two argumentation types. The results of both the theoretical part and the empirical part of my dissertation make clear that symptomatic argumentation is a more heterogeneous category than the other two. A specification of the various variants of symptomatic argumentation is required to provide a better insight in its nature. A first step in this endeavour of making an inventory of the different uses of symptomatic argumentation is to start analysing how this type of argument is conceptualised in other approaches and next to determine how the pragma-dialectical notion of symptomatic argumentation relates to similar types of argument distinguished by others.

3. Symptomatic argumentation

Now I shall discuss some notions of symptomatic argumentation as proposed in modern approaches of types of argument. Most textbooks on argumentation and debate that are since the beginning of this century published in the United States pay attention to reasoning and the evaluation of argumentation. There are usually chapters on types of argument and the tests that go with them. The classifications and tests that are offered enable the debater to evaluate his own arguments and to anticipate counter argumentation. A representative classification is that of

McBurney and Mills presented in *Argumentation and Debate Techniques of a free society* (1964).
McBurney and Mills distinguish between four basic kinds of argument: sign argumentation, causal argumentation, argumentation based on examples and argumentation based on analogy. According to McBurney and Mills, an argument from sign gives an indication that the proposition is true without attempting to explain why it is true. All arguments from sign are based on the (stated or implied) assumption that two or more variables are related in such a way that the presence of absence of one may taken to be an indication of the presence of absence of the other. This definition might give the impression that McBurney and Mills' conception of sign argumentation is very similar to the pragma-dialectical notion of symptomatic argumentation. There are however some striking differences. According to McBurney and Mills, the effects of a given cause are in a typical sign argumentation employed 'as signs that this cause has operated or is operating'. Take the following argumentation:
Frank must be at home because the kitchen is a mess.

What is stated in the standpoint is seen here as a cause of what is stated in the premise. It follows that the link between the premise and the standpoint is of the causal type. To regard this type of argument as sign argumentation is confusing: in fact, it blurs the distinction between causal argumentation and sign argumentation. In the pragma-dialectical typology this kind of argumentation would be regarded as causal argumentation.

Another well-known textbook on argumentation and debate is *Argumentation and debate; critical thinking for reasoned decision making by Freeley* (1993). Freeley also distinguishes sign argumentation but he uses a different definition than McBurney and Mills. According to Freeley, sign argumentation is based on a substance-attribute relation. Since every subject (object, thing, person, event) has certain distinguishing attributes or characteristics (size, shape, colour) the attributes may be taken as signs of the substance, or the other way around. This definition agrees with the pragma-dialectical notion of symptomatic argumentation.

In his dissertation A reformulation of the modes of reasoning in argumentation (1962) Hastings gives a more elaborated classification of types of reasoning, or – as he calls them – 'modes of reasoning'. His classification servers as a basis for the typology of Schellens and also for Waltons' list of argumentation schemes. In

his classification, Hastings distinguishes verbal, causal and free-floating argumentation. In the verbal argumentation types, the premise is linked to the standpoint by making use of word meaning or a definition. This happens in an argumentation such as the following:
This is a sonnet because it is a poem with 14 lines.

The premise is linked to the standpoint by means of the general statement: sonnets are poems with 14 lines. Verbal argumentation also includes argumentation based on a value judgement, as in the following argumentation: *This movie is good because it has a very realistic plot.*

Both argumentation based on a definition and argumentation based on a value judgement can be seen as symptomatic argumentation. In the *New Rhetoric* (1969), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca distinguish two sorts of argumentative relations that are based on the structure of reality: sequential relations and the relation of coexistence.

In arguments which display both types of relation a link is established between two elements in order to promote a transfer of approval from the accepted to the not yet accepted. Sequential relations are causal in nature. According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, cause and effect are on the same phenomenal plane. This is not the case with the elements that are linked by means of coexistence relations. An essential property of argumentation relying on a coexistence relation is that one element is presented as being more fundamental than the other is. The relation between the person and the act is here seen as prototypical. The idea we have of the person is thus considered more essential than that of his acts. It is possible to argue from the person to the act but also the other around. One can for instance, say that Frank is trustworthy because he is never late, but one could also argue that Frank will not be late because he is trustworthy. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca consider the argument from authority as a special variant of this kind of argumentation. Other types of argument based on a relation of coexistence include that of the group and its members and argumentation based on a double hierarchy.

In his Dutch book *Redelijke argumenten* ('Reasonable arguments', 1985), Schellens presented a typology that is partly based on Hastings' Typology. Schellens makes a distinction between argumentation based on rules and argumentation based on regularity. A subtype of argumentation based on rules is

argumentation with the argumentation scheme based on rules of behaviour. In this type of argumentation a certain kind of action is promoted by referring to certain conditions. The argumentation is based on a relation of concomitance between the conditions and the required action. There are still many other conceptions of sign or token argumentation. My exposé is only meant to give you an idea of the many variants of symptomatic argumentation. For a better understanding of symptomatic argumentation, more systematic analysis is needed. One important way to get a clearer idea of this type of argumentation, is to examine more carefully which type of standpoint can be supported by symptomatic argumentation and what kind of premises can be used to support, and what combinations are possible.

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Issa Proceedings 1998 – The History Of The Enthymeme

1. Introduction **[i]**

Enthymemes are on the agenda of modern rhetoric, argumentation theory, conversation and discourse analysis, formal and informal logic and critical thinking. However, in the various approaches to enthymemes there are many and sometimes large differences with respect to the definition of an enthymeme. In some cases the definitions do not even seem to refer to the same language phenomenon:

Some modern definitions of an enthymeme

An enthymeme is a truncated of abbreviated argument – (…) with either a missing premiss or an unstated conclusion (Crossley and Wilson, 1979: 106).

Enthymemes are arguments in which the support is matched to the questions and objections of the recipient (Jackson and Jacobs, 1980: 262).

The enthymeme does not require a particular linguistic frame, it is a form of thought, rather than a form of composition. (Nash 1989: 206)) This argument has all the earmarks of the enthymeme: the opening proposition, the syllogistic statement of contraries or incompatibles, the conclusion which is in effect a reformulation of the opening proposition (Nash, 1989: 210).

An enthymeme is an argument in which the speaker for pragmatic reasons left certain parts implicit, which means that at the logical level of analysis the missing part must be added in order to render the argument valid, while at the pragmatic level the particular assumption on which the argument relies has to be shown (Van Eemeren en Grootendorst, 1992).**[ii]**

These are just some examples. There are many other definitions that resemble one of them, but may differ in one aspect or another. This variety in definitions is puzzling. Are the differences only differences in stressing some aspect or another of essentially the same meaning, or do they reflect major theoretical differences? My main concern in this paper is to investigate and explain these differences, which I will do by giving you a historical overview. It is important to look into this, because it is often tacitly assumed that there is general consensus on what an enthymeme is, while in my view this is not the case. As a result of that, discussions on enthymemes sometimes suffer from a confusion of tongues. There

are some thorough and helpful recent studies on the history of the enthymeme (e.g. Burnyeat, 1996; Braet, 1997), but these focus on one particular historical period, whereas I think that we need an overview of all the relevant periods.

2. The sophistic and the aristotelian view

It is often claimed that the concept of the enthymeme is derived from Aristotle. It is true that he was the first (as far as we know) to develop a theory of enthymeme, in his *Rhetoric,* but there are some clear indications that, at that time, a technical enthymeme notion was already in use in rhetoric. Aristotle for example does not give a definition when he first mentions the enthymeme, and he complains that handbooks on rhetoric do not devote sufficient attention to the enthymeme.

It makes sense that Aristotle's notion of the enthymeme stems from the dominant rhetorical tradition of his time, which was that of the sophists. In several sophistic handbooks, dating from the fourth century b.C., the enthymeme is indeed mentioned. In these handbooks, it has the general meaning of the word in ancient Greek everyday language-use: the enthymeme is a thought or a consideration. But the word 'enthymeme' also has a more technical use in the sophistic handbooks (the technical meaning is sometimes ascribed to Isocate): the enthymeme belongs in the context of juridical debates, and in that of weighing the pro's and cons in cases in which the truth is unclear and something can be said for both sides. In these contexts, the enthymeme is used to point out contradictions in the suspect's story or between the suspect's statements and that which is generally believed to be acceptable in society. This definition of an enthymeme as an argument based on contradictions I call the sophistic definition. The *sophistic definition* has lived on, for it can be found in Roman times in Quintillian for example, and also in modern definitions, as in the definition by Nash I gave earlier. Striking is that, in the sophistic definition, logic (syllogisms) does not play a role, nor does the nowadays prominent aspect of the missing part of an enthymeme.

Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, actually does not mention that an enthymeme is based on contradictions. He mainly seems to adopt the general idea of an enthymeme as a thought or a consideration in a context in which the truth is uncertain and deliberation is required. In other words, Aristotle places the enthymeme in the rhetorical context. Even today there is much debate on what Aristotle understood to be an enthymeme. At the centre of this discussion is Aristotle's description of an enthymeme as a *syllogismos tis*. This can be interpreted in several ways: it can mean 'a syllogism of a kind' or 'a kind of syllogism'. *Syllogismos* itself can mean

one of two things: it is either an argument that is deductively valid, or it has the more strict meaning of a categorical syllogism, with its minor-major structure, two premises**[iii]**, and with one of the four syllogistic forms Aristotle discerns in his *Analytica Priora* (written after the *Rhetoric*). It is unclear which of the two, or maybe both at the same time, Aristotle applies in the *Rhetoric*. In any case, as both Burnyeat and Braet claim, Aristotle's *syllogismos* cannot automatically be translated into the word 'syllogism' in its modern, logic-oriented meaning.

In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, only four examples of arguments are explicitly presented as enthymemes, some of which Aristotle took from existing literary sources. Some other examples, although not presented as such, are now generally considered to be enthymemes as well. Three of these examples are:
Aristotle's examples of enthymemes
1. No man is free, for he is a slave of money or of fate. (*Rhet*. 2.12.2:94b4-6)
2. If peace should be made when it is most profitable and useful, than peace should be made when luck is still on one's side. (*Rhet*.3.17.17:18b36-38)
3. Dorius was the winner in a contest in which a laurel wreath was the price, for Dorius won the Olympic Games (*Rhet*. 1.12.13).

According to Aristotle, enthymemes function in a rhetorical context: that is why they are rhetorical arguments. He further states that, as a result of this, the content of enthymemes is about things that are alterable, like human acts. The premises of enthymemes do not contain certainties nor generally accepted facts – in enthymemes the premises consist of probabilities (*eikota*) or signs (*semeia*). Furthermore, Aristotle says that enthymemes are supposed to be brief, since the audience is not expected to be able to handle complicated reasoning, and therefore what is known to the audience may be left implicit. Finally, Aristotle states that enthymemes contain topoi. All these statements together constitute what I call the *aristotelian definition* of an enthymeme.

Several aspects of the aristotelian definition are subject to debate. A relevant issue here is that it is unclear whether Aristotle regarded the aspect of unstated or implicit parts as necessary for an argument to be an enthymeme. Aristotle is not definite on this point. Some authors, for example Burnyeat (1996: 106), stress that Aristotle only mentions the possibility of a part being implicit: nowhere does he say that this has to be the case. As did Van Eemeren and Grootendorst before him, Braet proposes instead to differentiate between two levels of analysis, one being the pragmatic level, where it is decided what is to be left implicit. If

something is implicit, this requires the second level, the logical level, where a premise is supplied (1997: 103).

A second issue with respect to the aristotelian definition is how the topic structure of enthymemes relates to the syllogistic structure in its strict meaning. Are the two structures compatible, and if not, why did Aristotle call an enthymeme a syllogismos tis? Solmsen (1929) was of the opinion that Aristotle's *Rhetoric* contains a so-called double theory of enthymemes: one based on the topic structure, and one based on the syllogistic structure. Breat (1997: 106-107), however, points out that these structures are not incompatible. He claims that they rather reflect again two different levels, the logical and the pragmatic level. At the pragmatic level, the topical structure has to do with argumentation schemes. At the logical level, forms of argument and logical rules of inference are relevant. The references to the syllogistic structure in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* may well be later additions, a point made by Burnyeat (1996: 105).

The conclusion from this is that Aristotle's theory of the enthymeme seems to rely on two different lines of thought. One, which seems to be the earliest, is his concern with the rhetorical context, argumentations in practice and the topic of the (pragmatic) approach. The other one, which may be a later addition, seems to be the application of categorical syllogisms to rhetorical arguments, which resulted in the syllogistic (logical) approach to enthymemes. I agree with Van Eemeren and Grootendorst as well as with Braet that, for argumentation theorists, it is fruitful to distinguish between a pragmatic and a logical level, and to give attention to both in an analysis.

3. The boethian definition

In Roman times different definitions of enthymeme were in use. Some are clearly aristotelian in origin, others are clearly not. For example, Quintillian, in his Topica, refers to arguments based on contradiction as enthymemes. This calls to mind the sophistic definition. But in Quintillian's *Institutio Oratoria* he applies logical rules to formally represent enthymemes (he uses post-aristotelian propositional logic to do so, but this does not change the point). To formally represent enthymemes is in itself an aristotelian thought, and not a sophistic one. And Quintillian stresses that parts of an enthymeme are implicit, which is also not an element of the sophistic description, but of the aristotelian view.

According to Boethius, an enthymeme is an imperfectus syllogismus: Enthymema est *imperfectus syllogismus,* cujus aliquae partes, vel propter brevitatem, vel propter notitiam prae termissae sunt. (I.MPL. 64: 1050b) (An enthymeme is an

imperfect syllogism, of which some parts have been left out, either for reasons of brevity or because they are assumed to be common knowledge, S.G.)

The boethian definition of an enthymeme has become famous, and it can generally be found in handbooks up to the Middle Ages. The question, however, is what was understood by *imperfectus:* in what sense is an enthymeme considered to be imperfect? Are enthymemes imperfect because they do not deal with certainties but with probabilities only? Or does imperfectus mean that an enthymeme is incomplete because a premise is missing? Interestingly, Isidor de Sevill gives both these interpretations when he describes the enthymeme. According to him, an enthymeme is an *imperfectus syllogismus* because it consists of two parts rather than three. This is a reference to the form of enthymemes, and to the logical level. Furthermore, De Sevill explains that an enthymeme is imperfectus because it uses subject material that does not belong to the domain of the syllogism and is directed at convincing an audience. He gives an example about whether or not to go out to sea when the weather is bad, which is a clear case of deliberation on human acting. This part of De Sevill's definition is a reference to the rhetorical context of enthymemes and to the pragmatic level.

4. The logical definition

In the Middle Ages formal logic obtained its more dominant position over rhetoric. From Aristotle's work generally only the logical aspects got attention. Handbooks on logic from the Middle Ages often have Boethius' definition: an enthymeme is a syllogismus imperfectus. But imperfectus at this point in time only means 'imperfect because of the form' – a premise is missing and has to be added. Descriptions of the enthymeme as a 'truncated', 'abbreviated', 'shortened' or 'hidden' syllogism also date back to this period. The idea that, in an enthymeme, a premise is implicit (and not a conclusion) stems from the Middle Ages as well. According to earlier approaches, either a premise or the conclusion was missing.

Aristotle's typology of arguments and argument standards was neglected, and rhetorical arguments where not considered to be a separate kind of arguments with their own standards. Now there were only syllogisms, and all of them were what Aristotle called apodictic syllogisms. Enthymemes were apodictic syllogisms as well, the only difference being a difference in presentation. This view of an enthymeme as a syllogism in which a premise is omitted I call the *logical definition* of enthymemes.

During the Renaissance period, the humanists again appreciated the fact that in enthymemes parts are left implicit, and some found that, for that reason, enthymemes were more appealing to the reader. But this aspect of enthymemes was not attributed to Aristotle, since he was then thought of as being 'too formal' and 'too strict', and concerned with logic only.

In our times the logical definition is still current among logicians and others. The logical definition is often considered to be the only definition of an enthymeme, as in the Oxford Concise Dictionary: *The enthymeme according to the Oxford Concise Dictionary* (1988)

Enthymeme (Logic). Syllogism in which one premiss is not explicitly stated.

Characteristic of the logical approach is that, on the one hand, the pragmatic aspect of enthymemes is recognised: the speaker or writer has left a part implicit. In fact, from a logical perspective it makes no sense at all to recognise this. On the other hand, in the reconstruction the pragmatic aspects are not taken into consideration: the reconstruction is done solely in logical terms.

5. The argumentation-theoretical and the modern rhetorical definition

Recently, some new definitions have been formulated as well. One of these is the definition in which the logical level and the pragmatic level are distinguished, as is done by modern argumentation theorists, e.g. in pragma-dialectics. This results in definitions like the one formulated by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst that I gave earlier. It is also the view that Braet adheres to. This view is characterized by attention for both logical and pragmatic aspects. I call this the *argumentation-theoretical definition*.

Another definition comes from the modern, revived interest in rhetoric. Important here is the generative rhetoric of Bitzer (1959), based on the idea that speakers should only use reasons that the audience itself would come up with if a question-answer strategy were applied. This generative aspect can be found in the definition of an enthymeme by Jackson and Jacobs, also quoted earlier. I call this the *modern rhetorical definition*. Interestingly, it is rather close to what Aristotle seems to have had in mind first when talking about enthymemes in his *Rhetoric*.

6. Conclusion

There are different views on enthymemes, and they are all partly rooted in history. All in all, six main notions of an enthymeme can be found in the literature: the sophistic definition (the enthymeme is an argument based on contradictions or contraries), the aristotelian definition (the enthymeme is a rhetorical

argument, based on probabilities or signs), the boethian definition (an enthymeme is an *imperfectus syllogimus*), the logical definition (the enthymeme is a syllogism in which one premise is omitted), the argumentation-theoretical definition (an enthymeme is an argumentation in which a premise is left implicit at the pragmatic level, which means that a premise has to be added at the logical level), and the modern rhetorical definition (the enthymeme is an argument matched to the questions and objections of the recipient).

These definitions are not in all respects mutually exclusive, they do overlap. And perhaps, underlying the definitions, there is something of a shared core meaning of the concept of enthymeme, and maybe it is worthwhile (although not easy) to try and formulate that core in one definition of enthymemes that all of us can use. However, it can be useful, and it need not necessarily be a problem, to have different definitions of the enthymeme. But it is important to be aware that, when talking about enthymemes, you may be thinking of one thing while at the same time your audience may well be thinking of something entirely different.

NOTES

i. This paper is a summary of Chapter 2 of my doctoral dissertation Problemen met de begrijpelijkheid van argumentatie met een verzwegen argument (working title; translation: Problems with the understandability of argumentation with a missing premise), 1999 (forthcoming).

ii. This is not a literal quote, but rather my representation of the view presented by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst.

iii. I use 'premise' and not 'premiss'.

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