ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Reasons To Buy: Teaching Reasoning Through Television

Ads purport to give us reasons to buy. What sorts of reasons are they? When Nike asked us to '*Just do it*', they were not – or not simply – with a sort of primitive practical syllogism, telling us to just buy. The phrase has layers of meaning. It could mean do what you were going to do, or what you were not going to. It has overtones of the coach, or the irritated mother, of the inner voice urging you on. It is a cryptic and ambiguous phrase, accompanied by a stylish logo, and it is universally known. What is more, people buy Nikes. But their purchase is not simply falling in with the order to buy: it is a complex and highly social event.

To think of ads as practical syllogisms is to think of them as arguments from the content of the ad to an act of buying, or an intention to buy. But it is too simple to claim that an ad is properly taken only if the appropriate action issues. Ads are complex and highly sophisticated components of modern life, embedded deeply in a variety of cultural practices, but at the same time, communicating across the global village with almost unprecedented effectiveness My project is to look more closely at the reasoning structure of advertisements.

George Steiner's claim that advertising is the poetry of the modern age is correct in the sense that the pure condensation of meaning which was once the province of purely poetic or religious discourse is now found in the ad industry. Highly intelligent (and well paid) executives spend hours searching for the one pithy phrase, a phrase that will capture the imaginations and heart, which will resonate and be sung, whispered or held – often for life. The jingles of my childhood seem inexpugnable. One, of very limited poetic worth, went

'*Menz makes biscuits a treat*
Because Menz makes biscuits that are good to eat'

It will, I am sure, remain with me when all else has gone. In the days of music videos and startlingly high production values of visual television, the qualities of ads are legion. The sheer effectiveness of ads as memorable images, as semiotic signifiers, as music videos or film clips is itself a matter of academic study. We

are familiar with the intertextuality of ads, both in the sense that the one theme will appear in print, television and billboards, but also in the sense that ads refer to the genres, particularly of television, with enormous subtlety. Puns proliferate, both visual and verbal and across the media. I do not attempt here to cover all aspects of advertising paper seeks out the structures of argumentation in ads. I concentrate on the verbal messages of ads as the central focus of argumentation. This is not to deny the importance of the visual and musical components of the force of advertisements, but rather to focus on one element of ads which has received relatively little attention.

I begin with an example of a print advertisement, to indicate the possibilities of argumentation, but also to sharpen issue of differences between print and other media. In this context, I explain my general project of analysing the reasoning on the media as a way of both teaching kids philosophy and of teaching them about the impact of the media. Kids are all too familiar with denunciations of the capitalist forces behind advertising -yet they adore ads. If we wish to have kids react critically to ads, the best method is to have them draw out their own understanding of advertisements as a starting point.

The second section draws on materials I have developed for talking about reasoning in television ads, and their billboard counterparts. The final section deals with the obvious problem with ads – are they true?

Section 1. A print advertisement

In the *New York Times* of November, 1996, my former compatriot, Rupert Murdoch, now a US citizen, placed a full page ad. He, as owner of the Fox network, was fighting a battle to gain access to the New York market, controlled , through its ownership of the cable company, by another media giant, the Time Warner company. Murdoch wanted Time Warner to offer Fox news on the cable.

Time Warner refused, citing that most archetypal of all US institutions, the First Amendment, which protects freedom of speech. Already the situation is complex, in a fashion not unfamiliar to European media watchers. The ad, far from reducing the complexity of the situation, exploits it and presents what is by most counts a fairly elaborate argument.

"I'm about to dust some cops off.

Die pig, die pig, die."

Time Warner used the First Amendment's protection of free speech in its unwavering support for these lyrics, from "Cop Killer", by Time Warner Recording Artist Ice-T. After all, profits were at stake.

Now, Time Warner believe the FOX news Channel poses a threat to the Profits of its CNN.

And this time, Time Warner cites the First Amendment to deny New Yorkers the right to see the Fox News Channel.

The First Amendment protects free speech, *not* Time Warner profits.

Support, don't distort the First Amendment

Don't block the FOX News Channel

I was struck by this advertisement, not just because of the vagaries of capitalisation – and of capital – it exploited. The sheer effrontery of using Time Warner's support of tendentious lyrics to grab attention for a competing company has style. So does the irony of Fox accusing other companies of protecting profits by excluding competition. But what was striking about the ad for me was its use of a complex logical structure to make a rhetorical point.

The ad accuses Time Warner of inconsistency in its use of the First Amendment - the law which protects free speech in the United States. The first sub argument claims that

(1) Time Warner claimed the support of the first amendment to allow playing of the Ice-T lyrics

There is an implicature we cam draw from 'After all profits were at stake':

(2) Time Warner's action were caused by the need to maximise profits,

This in turn leads,, by a weak inductive argument, to:

(3) Time Warner's actions are now caused by the need to maximise profits

The second subargument takes 3 and 4

(4) Time Warner claimed the support of the first amendment to prevent playing Fox news on New York cable.

to reach a conclusion that

(5) The First Amendment has been used to protect Time Warner profits.

So far , of course, there is no evident inconsistency: Even if Time Warner's actions were caused by the need to maximise profits, their behaviour appears to be consistent in both cases. The moral force of the argument depends on two enthymematic premises:

(6) The need to maximise profits is (in itself) not a good reason for acting.

This, ironically given Fox's behaviour, is taken for granted.

The second enthymeme, attributing inconsistency to Time Warner, could be

(7) It is improper, in some sense, to appeal to the First Amendment both to allow and to prevent material to reach the airwaves.

This is a crucial and debatable premise. Since the appeals to the First Amendment were successful, Time Warner was operating within the letter of the law, so their action was not legally improper, nor inconsistent with the law. Thus the ad must be suggesting that Time Warner is morally inconsistent and has effectively distorted the law. Clearly it is not inconsistent tout court to use a law which protects free speech under reasonable constraints, as the first amendment does to prevent playing of one type of material (eg incitement to treachery in time of war, or racist jibes) and allow playing of another type of material.

The two final claims of the advertisement make it clear that Time Warner is being accused of moral inconsistency and of ill faith in the use of the law

(8) The First Amendment protects free speech, *not* Time Warner profits.

This premise draws on the first of the elliptical premises, suggesting that the First Amendment has been misused in pursuit of profits. In the final call to action,

(9) Support, don't distort the First Amendment. is then read

(10) Don't block the FOX News Channel

Supporting Fox news, the ad says, is tantamount to supporting the real intention of the First Amendment.

The advertisement is clearly designed for the *New York Times*. The complexity of the argument structure, whatever its fallacies, leaves room for relatively sophisticated readers to fill in the gaps as they choose. Its political force survives the evident inconsistency of one media giant accusing another of greed, through the immensely powerful emotional appeal to the First Amendment.

Note moreover, that in terms of argumentation, this example uses a direct argument structure the conclusion of which is an appeal to action: supporting Fox. This is indeed a case of practical reasoning. It is rare to find the argument structure of an advertisement so explicit: I will suggest that the form is often implicit in advertisements. Just as it is often necessary to supplement explicit argument structures in ordinary language disputes, in order to reveal the implicit argument structure (van Eemeren, Jackson & Groodendorst, 1993), so it is often necessary to supplement the implicit argument structure of advertisements.

My first reaction to this advertisement when I saw it eighteen months ago, was to argue that this was a characteristically print media ad. I argued that the very complexity of form identified here is unlikely to appear in television or radio advertising, since it required a level of logical and linguistic reflectiveness, let alone the time to reflect, which television viewers lack. This view is expressed, for

instance, by Postman (1993), who suggests that the linear patterns of thinking may be undermined by the immediacy and impact of television, and that hot links on the internet also fail to encourage the development of logical thinking skills. Eisenstein's (1983) finely worked analyses of the impact of print have been developed by some to suggest that television, with its plethora of clues, limits the imagination, and the demands made on the viewer. Print, on the other hand is both 'linear' and demanding – the imagination is working double time to think through images given in language, while at the same time interpreting the logical links explicit in written language.

This is a conclusion I now reject, both at the level of the possibilities of argumentation, and at the level of the sophistication of audience reaction. What is at the heart of this ad is an accusation of inconsistency. Just such inconsistency is often attributed to opponents in political advertising on television. Inconsistency in itself is bad enough, but usually there is a further twist – your inconsistency is self serving. Quite generally, it is an error to identify print alone as suitable for reasoning skills. Being reasonable is fundamentally a feature of discourse and action, not of written linear texts. It is only a contingent feature of our culture that extended patterns of reasoning do normally appear in print. The fact that visual media evoke immediate and emotional reactions does not imply that television – and certainly television ads – are not as cognitively complex as print.

What is more, kids, especially, are highly sophisticated viewers of television. They are a highly televisually literate generation, whose skills include the ability to deconstruct the medium itself. As the media guru Rushkoff puts it: 'Most kids are doing media deconstruction while watching television' (Gabriel, 1996). He goes on 'Their favourite shows come "pre-deconstructed" that is with built in distancing devices …such shows earn the ultimate youthful phrase "cool". By cool, I mean seeing things from a distance'. (Gabriel, 1996). Rushkoff goes on to talk of the sort of deconstruction that kids seek in watching television 'What screenagers seek from television, multi media and other entertainment is the "aha" experience of making connections across their storehouse of media images' (Gabriel, 1996).

The level and philosophical complexity of ads and the arguments they contain should never be underestimated. A good, cool ad is making a range of complex moves which are worth deconstructing, both for the argument structure and for the training in reasoning it provides.

Looking at the reasoning implicit in television ads is part of a broader project, which is designed to teach reasoning through television product, some of the

materials of which have been trialled in the US and Australia. Advertising agencies, who specialise in persuasion, are adroit at exploiting underlying philosophical uncertainty, as well as pushing blatantly fallacious claims. This project aims instead to uncover and analyse those philosophical issues while teaching reasoning skills**[i]**.

Traditionally reasoning skills have been taught through written examples, some of which are highly anachronistic or artificial. However critical reasoning skills are required in order to filter and interpret the rapidly changing circumstances of the world around us – and those skills need to be relevant. Many students use television as their major source of information about the world and as the source of basic understanding of the world. Yet we rarely provide students with the skills directly to criticise and analyse television's world view. It is an obvious step to use the medium of television itself as a means of analysing television product critically and thereby of teaching viewers to reason. Reasoning skills as conceived above do appear on television; and can be refined using debate about television. Ads are a particularly fertile field, both at the level of reasoning strategies, and at the meta level of philosophical debate about the issues in ads.

It will not do, however, to take a simplistic line of denying the force of ads, and labelling them as immoral, stupid, or ill intentioned. However true such claims may be, they fail to capture the cleverness and attraction of ads. Far wiser to begin with the questions: "What does this ad argue? Is it valid? Why does it work?" and get kids to learn the process of reasoning about and through ads, than to denigrate what is obviously a powerful product. In recent months, I have been working on a homepage (Slade, 1998) designed to help teachers – and students – work through the philosophical and argumentation strategies of television product. This paper provides a background for the section on advertisements.

Section 2. Fallacies and television ads

Television advertisements are a rich field of examples of all of the so called classical fallacies: from 'appeal to authority' to begging the question, from equivocation to affirming the consequent. The most obvious television fallacies offer real possibilities, both of argumentation structure and of philosophical debate, for teaching and examining reasoning skills. Each of the so called fallacies, however, must be seen in a context: a context which suggests that while formally fallacious, the ad might provide a moderately good reason to buy.

This is a consequence of what is a very general truth about television ads – they are enthymematic. Spelling out the suppressed premises is often a tedious and

unrewarding affair, like spelling out the meaning of a metaphor. Nevertheless, I think it is worth remembering that much of the force of ads derives from the ambiguities and possibilities of elaboration they contain. The general model of elaboration I adopt draws on principles of charity of interpretation of behaviour to make sense of utterances (Davidson, 1967, 1984 *passim*) together with Gricean principles (eg Grice 1975). My assumption is that where an advertisement appears to be inexplicable or meaningless, we should search for the best fit of meanings, given our knowledge of the world and of linguistic practice. My procedure is thus similar to that outlined in van Eemeren *et al* (1993), in so far as it elaborates arguments according to contextual knowledge.

Consider a Mexican example, an ad for a beer called in Spanish 'Dos X lager'**[ii]**. It shows an image of a refrigerator, opening to show it filled with beer, again with less, then again with more beer.
The punch line:
'Ahora entenderás la evolución de las especias' (Now you understand the evolution of species) is open to a range of interpretations. It may mean that Dos X has proven, by its ability to survive, that it is the best – it has achieved natural selection. From the point of view of the ad agency intentional ambiguity such as this grabs the attention and ensures impact. In part such ads are driven by the washback validity of ad companies' evaluative methods. It is normal to test ads for 'cut-through', or the extent to which they are remembered by focus groups of viewers. Ads which are difficult to understand and thus tantalising may be more memorable than others.

From the point of view of the consumer however, the sheer fact of being familiar with the Dos X ad cannot even remotely guarantee that we buy that beer rather than another. Thus we need to draw again on our principle of charity to make sense of the Dos X ad. Why would the ad give us reason to buy? One version might be
If people drink a lot of Dos X, it must be a good beer to drink
But the ad shows lots of beer passing through the fridge
So I too will buy Dos X (if I want beer)

This is not compelling, but it alerts us to a possible structure of argumentation. Ads can indirectly suggest how to behave by making indirect claims about others' behaviour.

Some ads have fairly simple arguments: the classical appeal to authority, for instance, with breakfast cereal being advertised using a sporting star, suggests that if you eat the same breakfast cereal you too might improve your sporting ability. This is not always merely a fallacy – appeals to authority are quite reasonable in their place. Indeed, a cereal recommended by one who is an expert in sporting health might provide a better recommendation than the sheer suggestion that it is great. The reasons are not as baldly bad as they might at first seem.

Another example of an apparent fallacy is again Australian:
'Sugar, a natural part of life'
The enthymematic step relies on a premise
Natural parts of life are good for you
to reach the conclusion
Sugar is good for you (or eat sugar!)
We might point out that
Cancer, a natural part of life
is also true. The argument looks absurdly fallacious. In fact, a careful examination of the subtext of the argument might uncover a slightly better argument: say
You have a choice of natural and artificial sweeteners
All else being equal, natural is better
So buy sugar.
Appeal to a principle of charity makes better sense of the ad than sheer harping on invalidity.

Consider another example, of what are often known as life style ads. The new Apple ad, 'Think Different' is designed to remind consumers that although PCs dominate the market, a different product might have advantages. The ad is both elliptical and ungrammatical. Its impact derives in part from its open endedness. What does it mean to 'think different'? Is it the same as thinking differently, or not? With Apple positioning itself to be the minor player in the personal computing domain, how is it locating its market? In a sense this is a paradigm lifestyle ad – with blatantly fallacious arguments, even if we accept the untrue premise
People who think different, the Dalai Lama, Einstein and so on are associated with Apple computers
So, if you are associated with Apple, you will be different

So you will be like the Dalai Lama, Einstein and others.

Even if it were true that you would be different if you were to be associated with Apple, it certainly does not follow that you will be relevantly like the extraordinary people shown.

The fallacy is shared by all life style ads, of which Coke has been the leading exponent. Coke ads associate a particular life style with those drinking Coke, with the implicit suggestion that if you drink Coke you will also be young elegant and lively. But even if it were the case that:

All the young and lively and beautiful people drink Coke,

which is the best that could be claimed on the basis of the lifestyle ad it would be affirming the consequent to claim that

If you drink Coke, you are young and lively and beautiful.

Even worse is the claim that drinking Coke will make you young and lively and beautiful. But kids certainly recognise this fallacy.

The Sprite ads in Australia drew on kids' scepticism, saying:

Drinking Sprite will not make you a good basketball player. But it will refresh you.

The very existence of the debunking form of ads, of which there are many, shows how aware we are of the logical weakness of ads.

How then are we to make sense of such ads providing us a reason to buy? If we as viewers are well aware of the fallacies, why do we like the Coke ads, the Nike and the Sprite ads, and why do we keep on buying? Partly, the answer is elliptical phrase to draw attention, to avoid the obvious. The Nike campaign, 'Just Do it' exploits ambiguity to draw attention. It does not simply tell us to buy the shoes. There is a perfectly justifiable argument which might go:

When we buy training shoes, we want to buy the same sort as everyone else – we will try to buy what others buy..

In the absence of other good reasons to pick one brand over the other, what reasons are there to pick a brand? I pick the brand I think others will pick, and assume that they do the same.

We all know we all watch television and the Nike ad

So we all know we all know the Nike brand

So the best strategy is to buy Nike.

Such chains of reasoning are rarely made explicit; but they do provide a rational reason for acting as the ad suggest, and buying Nike. Any criticism of the impact

of ads in the lives of kids must allow for this level of complexity, rather than debunking ads. This does not mean we have to accept a pattern of consumption dictated by ads. The next step is to develop the ability to question, philosophically, the patterns of justification themselves. In effect, once we have found the best possible argument, we examine the truth of the premises. In the case of this version of the argumentation, we would want to ask why kids *should* use the same trainers as others, why they want to be like others. We might ask what the costs to those who produce the goods are. Indeed, the recent difficulties of Nike about their use of cheap labour suggest that just such questions have been asked by consumers.

The issues are often complex ethical problems. Such problems are worth discussing outside the context of the ad and raise fundamental philosophical issues.That I wish to finish with is the notion of truth in ads itself.

3. Truth and Ads
Are ads ever true? In so far as an advertisement is a call to action, it is either complied with or not, rather than either true or false. But the premises of ads are certainly either true or false, and the notion of truth plays a major role in talk about advertising, as well as in ads themselves.
But first a word of caution. The truth of premises is neither sufficient for a good ad, nor necessary. Consider first those familiar soap powder ads in which mothers of a family of five kids vouch for Omo. True they may be, but the ads lacked cool. Even more striking is the case where truth in an ad was seen as negative, so that truth of the premises was definitely not necessary for a good ad. I quote the following story about Coke ads in Mexico:
Mexicans had such an inbuilt scepticism that they regarded the very concept of "truth" with great suspicions the Coca Cola company... found in their marketing studies..
Coke had conducted extensive marketing studies in Mexico as it was introducing the company's world wide slogan "It's the real thing", which had worked wonders throughout the world, advertising industry sources recall. In line with Coca-Cola's international advertising campaign , it had translated the slogan in Mexico almost literally to "Esta es la verdad" or " This is the truth". But it didn't work. Several focus groups assembled in Mexico City reacted coldly to it.
"We found that the word *truth* had a negative connotation in Mexico," I was told by Jorge Matte Langlois, the Chilean born psychologist, sociologist and theologian

who had conducted the confidential polls for the Zedillo campaign, and who had conducted the focus groups for Coca-Cola years earlier. "People's reaction was, if it's the truth, it must be bad".

Coca-Cola's Mexico division soon changed its slogan to "La chispa de la vida"- "the spark of life". (Oppenheimer, A, 1996: 269-270)

Coke has gone through a myriad of ads in Mexico since then: now we have 'Disfrute Coke' and a much debated campaign, which thankfully never reached the air, trying to link Coke with the Easter spirit. One cringes at the thought of Coke reviving Jesus or Jesus turning water to Coke, but the proposed campaign was not far off. Last year, an ad for local spring water featured a priest standing over a bottled of imported purified water and saying 'Well if it had to be purified, how many sins had it committed?'

Thus far the point may be merely that truth or – at the very least, the desirability of truth – is culturally influenced. For many, the function of ads is precisely to transform truth, to alter meanings. Barthes' (1972) work on soap powders showed how ads about what are really harsh chemical substances could transform them into gentle products: products which manifested the mother's loving care for her family. Mark Morris transformed the thesis into a ballet, transforming the product again into a signifier of the US commercial culture. Such transformations, we are reminded by those who create and those who criticise advertisements, are essential to the advertising culture.

The study of such transformations have long been a staple of the media criticism industry. What I mean by philosophical debate about ads, however, is something different. Ads are a potent site for philosophical questioning, in part because of the enormous energy that is involved in locating where an ad will have an impact. The ad is often a clue to a real philosophical dilemma. Television commercials characteristically aim to be unsettling, to cut at the margins of issues which are exercising a community. The best ads play on the issues which are exercising a community, drawing out the concerns and materialising them. The very content of ads contain issues about truth which need discussing.

Toby Miller[iii] notes the following statistic: while in 1993, six hundred ads in the US mentioned truth, by 1994 two thousand did (Fitzgerald, 1994). The mention of 'truth' here calls out for investigation. Understanding what is going on in appeals to 'truth' requires hard philosophical leg work. It is truth, as it is used in the ads, that we need to begin to address when we talk of television. Kids and adults have been told that television is a capitalist plot. They don't want to talk about that.

What they want to do is talk about what interests them – what 'true' means in an ad. Kids are not interested in the meta-level debate about whose interests are served by television; but they are interested in issues like fairness, truth, reality. Consider the Cannon ad, for a laser printer – 'Its only competition is reality'. What is real and what unreal about a photocopy, colour or not? Surely photocopies are real photocopies?

Truth as a concept used in ads has burgeoned as the disquiet about the role of truth on television, in the news, and in the advertising industry itself has risen. My project is to allow this debate to go back to its philosophical beginnings, to the theories of truth which sustain lay talk about truth. I will not rehearse my account here, since I aim merely to encourage debate about truth and television, although I do think we can do better than a wholesale post modern rejection of truth.

I finish with another New York gleaning, this time from a department store called Barney's. I was wandering in the store when I saw a huge sign 'Philosophy'. It was a trade mark for a range of cosmetic products. I quote the booklet the naked truth:

… the naked truth is a revolutionary new product that takes the notion of tinted moisturisers to the next generation… so we're stretching the truth a little. after all perception is reality.
(philosophy sales booklet, Barneys, 1996, p30.)

Truth has become an issue which advertisers have latched on to: After all, the ad says that 'perception is reality'. Surely that claim needs debating?

NOTES
i. 'Reasoning' as it is used here has a broad application, to skills which range from analysis through inference to evaluation. Reasoning thus conceived is far broader than the set of logical skills often caricatured by non logicians: it is rather, logical skills as conceived by many logicians and most informal logicians, as skills of interpreting and evaluating arguments, with all due contextual sensitivity. They are skills used by all from the youngest toddler when guessing at causal connections to the most theoretical of physicists or post modernists, drawing out implications of statements.
ii. This is a Mexican beer. Four X is the Australian beer noted for the ad 'I can feel a Four X coming on', which I will not attempt to analyse.
iii. in conversation, and in Miller (1998)

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Reasonableness Rather Than Rationality

The idea that logic alone can determine the distinction between good and bad arguments is rapidly being replaced by a broader dialectical theory of argumentation. Yet, to preserve a suitable notion of normativity, dialecticians appeal to a notion of rationality that shows much the same features as the disreputed logic is sought to replace. In this contribution, I will diagnose the problem and present an alternative: dialogical rhetoric.

The idea that bad arguments are logically interesting is rather young. For ages, logic was primarily interested in good arguments. Bad ones were negatively defined as not-good, and, as distinguishing instrument, logic could be limited to answering the question what accounts for the goodness of arguments. Modern formal logic, in this fashion, sought after *sound* arguments that yield conclusions by necessity. Starting with true premises, a truth-preserving method of valid inference warrants conclusions that cannot be wrong. The truth of the premises, although essential for soundness, is left to the relevant fields of investigation. Logic proper concerns the method of inference and deals only with validity. Logically speaking, a good argument is a valid one, and a bad argument is invalid. This type of logic observes what we may call the deductive demand. A good argument is one of which the conclusion follows necessarily, under the condition that its premises are true.

Hamblin's *Fallacies* (1970) cracked the ice. He showed that the notion of invalidity was not adequate in accounting for bad arguments, and that consequently the deductive demand did not serve the distinction between good and bad arguments. In a nutshell: invalidity was neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for fallaciousness. Some fallacies are not invalid at all (e.g. the notorious begging the question), and many arguments are invalid but not

fallacious (all inductive arguments are deductively invalid). Many thinkers have followed Hamblin, and added doubts on the suitability of the deductive demand. I will mention three problems in particular.

1. The deductive demand is an all-or-nothing matter: only necessary conclusions are allowed and anything less is rejected. To every problem there is only one solution: the best one. Curiously enough, however, no account can be given for a notion of `better'. This makes argumentation, in any substantial sense, impossible. Argumentation, after all, consists of arguments pro and arguments contra, and the balance of those two factors constitute the strength of an argument. The deductive account cannot acknowledge positive and negative forces in this way because a deductive argument `knocks down' either way.

2. The deductive demand cannot acknowledge alternatives, and is in that sense *monological*. The point is that as a truth-preserving method it should yield necessary conclusions and it cannot allow a different logic arriving somewhere else. But if so, any deviation of the monologic is impossible, including unlogicality. Indeed, as the early Wittgenstein said: `we can think nothing unlogical, since if we could, we would have to think unlogically'(*Tractatus*: 3.03). The idea is that thinking as such presupposes logic. This feature gives monologic a transcendental flavor: it provides for the very condition of the possiblity for thinking and cannot be questioned, nor sustained by argumentation. Monologic must be `seen', and can only be `shown'. The problem, obviously, is that bad arguments do exist and that we must presume that the persons who advance them in fact thought badly.

3. Perhaps the most serious problem for the deductive demand is that it is not hard at all to meet it. Many arguments are sloppy in the sense that not all premises are explicitly mentioned. This is not a problem, because most people will tacitly add the missing premise. To determine the deductive validity, however, we must add the hidden premise. This can do no harm because it cannot make a valid argument invalid, but it can do much good by explicitizing an implicit premise. The problem, however, is that *any* argument can be made valid by adding the right premise. The associated conditional, or even the conclusion itself, and perhaps even the negation of one of the other premises**[i]**, will do. This simply means that either an argument is valid, or can be made valid. Deductively, no bad arguments exist. Deductive logic, far from providing a suitable instrument, has no powers to perform its distinguishing task.

Dialectical Shift

Increasing numbers of logicians have dropped the deductive demand over the last three decades, in favour of a *dialectical* approach. Dialectics differs from deductive logic by applying *acceptable* instead of *true* premises, and by acknowledging different systems of logic between which a *choice* must be made. Dialectics does not yield necessity but is satisfied with probable conclusions**[ii]**. Dialectical logic is much more modest than deductive logic, and `may or may not be a good one in the full alethic sense', as Hamblin says, `but it is certainly a good one in some other sense which is much more germane to the practical application of logical principles'(Hamblin 1970: 241).

If logic is to perform its normative task in the practice of argumentation, it should comply to the nature of argumentation better than formal deductive logic does. A first observation is that argumentation is always a *dialogical* matter involving, basically, two participants: a proponent, defending a thesis, and an opponent, resisting the thesis. Monologic concentrated on the support of the conlusion only, but dialectical logic emphasizes the generic role of the opponent: only when disputed it makes sense to defend a thesis. Supporting an undisputed thesis is a waste of time at best; irrelevant babbling at worst; or an *ignoratio elenchi* in between. Dialectical logic, thus, takes disagreement as a condition for the possibility of discussions, but this calls for a suitable form of regimentation. Or else, the participants may `simply bash each other until bashing served no further purpose'(Freeman 1991: 18).

There are many different ways to deal with disagreements. We may try to solve the conflict, or stick to investigating where exactly the difference lies. We may want to settle the issue by means of force, or try to tackle the opponent by ridiculizing her position. Different ways of dealing with conflicts yield different types of discussion. And different types allow for different moves. What is suitable in a quarrel is not always acceptable in a critical discussion, and vice versa**[iii]**. Whether or not a move is acceptable depends upon the type of discussion that is going on. Dialectical logic presumes that it is up to the participants to decide upon how they want to deal with their disagreement. But when they have agreed upon a specific type of discussion, they should observe its particular regulative rules. The goodness of an argumentative move is determined by the rules that are in force: compliance with the rules makes an argument good whereas violation of the rules disqualifies it.

Clearly, the participants must voluntarily submit to the rules and their compliance to some type of discussion must be of their own accord. Only when someone has

accepted the authority of a set of rules, she can be held committed to them. Dialectical rules are only in force if they are *conventionally* accepted by all participants involved. The rules can change only when the conventional demands are being observed: suspend the discussion in progress, discuss the necessity of accepting new or modified rules, authorize them conventionally, and recommence the discussion proper again. The conventional authorisation of the rules implies that dialectical system is always local in scope; only when conventionally authorized, influences from other discussions *can* be acknowledged. Very often, the conventional aspect remains implicit: many rules of discussion go without explicitly mentioning them and it would be even very tedious to issue a `dated and signed written declaration' every time an argument were about to begin**[iv]**. Nevertheless, as Douglas Walton says, `the rules can be explicitly stated, and agreed to by the participants, where it is useful and necessary, at the opening stage'(Walton, 1989, 10, italics whs). In other words, the participants *would* accept the rules if they were explicitly asked to. Conventional normativity may be called `*would*-normativity'.

The normative force of rules provides for a possibility to determine win or loss of a discussion in an *objective* way. If the rules are clear, anybody can see whether they are being followed or not. In particualr, it allows the *logician* to put a decisive verdict on discussions. She is supposed to be able to determine exactly what type of discussion is going on, and she is supposed to be able to apply the suitable standard to the discussion and determine who has the best arguments. Because the participants have committed themselves to the rules, and she is only applying these standards, her verdict is normative for the participants involved. Obviously, the external observer must be neutral regarding the positions of the participants. His verdict should be unbiased and only the arguments as advanced should count. An external observer can control the agreed-upon regimentation of the discussion, and by application of that standard determine win and loss in an unbiased way. Barth and Krabbe define rationality in these terms: `it is not irrational to lose a discussion'. But it is – we suggest – irrational not to admit that one has lost'(Barth and Krabbe 1982: 71).

Would-normativity is not satisfactory, because, shortly, it allows for *would-not*. In face of losing a discussion, a participants may simply withdraw his commitment, or demand modification, or simply deny that he made the commitment at all**[v]**. The external observer can note this, but has nothing to go on to condemn it. The

evil-doer can simply claim not to accept the move in question. The local character of dialectical normativity, demanding specific agreement, allows for very limited, even opportunistic exceptions. Would-normativity is not what we expect from normativity; it lacks normative force precisely where it is needed most: when somebody would not accept something she *should* accept. To account for should-normativity, we must rule out arbitrary or strategical one-sided withdrawals. Dialectically, this is only possible if the agreements are controlled in some way. Not only the observance of agreed-upon rules, but also the agreement as such must be secured to safeguard normativity. If this were not regimented conventional normativity were a farce, because participants could change their commitments at will.

Control of agreements as such is needed for another reason as well. How are the conventional agreements arrived at? Presumably by discussion. But in what way is such a meta-discussion regulated? If a conventional set of rules were normative here as well, an infinite progress would have started. Dialectical logicians, if they address the problem at all, appeal to a notion of `logical intuition' or `natural rules' of normal argumentative behavior**[vi]**. The idea is that participants want to cooperate because they agree on the purpose of the discussion. If so, it is rational to follow rules that promote cooperation, for example: do not abuse the adversary; acknowledge loss if forced to; do not mislead the other; etc. Although the rules that make up for dialectical rationality are innocent enough, they are *substantial.* They do not only demand that one must be reasonable, they also say what *counts* as reasonable. Rationality, thus, provides for a substantial higher-order standard, which stops higher-order discussions in a notion of rational *acceptability.* We may see, incidentally, that a *reason* is given to be rational: it promotes the purpose of the discussion.

Still, if conventional acceptance is to be taken serious we must acknowledge that someone may reject rationality in terms of normal argumentative behavior. For example, what if compliance to the `normal' rules would result in loss of the discussion, and the stakes are just too high for that? We need not necessarily think of people seeking advantage to find examples. Gandhi should be called irrational if `normal' argumentative behavior defined the substance of rationality. But if there can be reasons for being irrational, can those reasons be good? And what standards are conceivable to determine this? Ever higher-order systems of rules lead to the infinite progress. Only an indisputable rationality can call such progress to a halt.

The Rational Observer

It may seem, and it is often claimed, that the dialectical shift in logic followed Hamblin's proposal to leave `the control of each discussion' in the hands of the participants themselves'(Hamblin 1970, 283). But the foregoing suggests a third crucial role: the external observer who controls the rationality of the discussion. Dialectical logic is not dialogical, but in fact trialogical, and the logician typically is in the position to play the third role. The dialectical understanding of normativity as being dependent upon agreement is responsible for this proliferation of logical roles. To account for agreement we must account for commensurablity: the standards of assessment must be the same for everyone involved. If normativity is a matter of agreement, it should transcend the particular preferences and provide for a standard that commensurates the idiosyncratic "standards" of the respective participants**[vii]**. The rational observer is the embodiment of this standard**[viii].** This means, however, that the control of the discussion is in the hands of the participants themselves only in so far as they represent the verdict of the rational observer.

It may not surprise us, considering the role of the rationality, that dialecticians generally make a qualitative distinction between two different ways of dealing with conflicts; they distinguish between *settling* and *resolving* a dispute. Settling simply indicates that the problem at issue is set aside by whatever means: tossing; refereeing; fighting or intimidation. `To really resolve a dispute', however, `the points that are being disputed have to be made the issue of a *critical discussion* that is aimed at reaching agreement '(Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992: 34). Although people are granted the freedom to deal with conflicts of opinion in several different ways, one specific type of discussion if singled out: the prototype of rational argumentation, critical discussion.

The rational observer is unbiased and evaluates any discussion by the strength of the arguments alone; not by the particular interests of the participants. The criteria applied by the rational observer depend upon the type of discussion that is going on. Still, contrary to what dialecticians tend to say, the participants are not free to chose any type of discussion they want. The choice of a type of discussion depends upon the best way to deal with a problem, and the rational observer surveys all possible ways and can pick the best one. The notion of rationality, indeed, is only useful if it provides for a `best' solution. If it yielded just another opinion, it could not be normative regarding the other options. It

would just be another perspective like those of the other participants. The opinion of the rational observer must be qualitiatively better to have normative force. In fact: it must be the best solution, because rationality should be normative for all possible positions. But this merely means that rationality has taken over the role monologic played before the dialectical turn. To account for its normativity, dialectics turns out to be a monologic in disguise. If so, we may ask to what extent the objections to monologic apply to dialectical rationality as well? To a large extent, I think.

1. Dialectical rationality is supposed to settle issues and cannot itself acknowledge alternatives. If the ideal standard were applied in any pure form, everybody would agree to its conclusions. This regards the outcome of any discussion that is regimented by a specific set of rules, but it also applies to the higher-order choice of a logical system as such. The ideal observer makes the ideal choice of a logical system. For every problem, an ideal rationality would find (or invent if necessary) a perfect normative tool to solve it. In this way, rationality does not acknowledge `better' anymore than monologic and quests for the `best' solution as well.

2. The acknowledgement that people in fact argue and that arguments pro and contra both cut ice is a matter of discomfiture and is a result of the fact that real-life arguers are not perfectly rational. The problem is how this imperfection as such can be accounted for. As highest standard, rationality has a similar transcendental status as monologic: `we "play" upon modes of thought we expect the readers already to follow'(Barth and Krabbe 1982: 75). In what way can people be irrational, under these circumstances. Indeed, how can they have a perspective that deviates from the rational one?

3. The main problem for a dialectical notion of rationality is that it is an *ideal* standard and, as human beings, we have only our limited perspectives at our disposal. The normative standard of an ideal observer is fundamentally inaccessible for us. In argumentation both parties may claim that their own arguments accord to the rational standard, but that is often precisely what is at issue. When it comes to distinguishing good from bad arguments, we need an instrument that is available, and dialectical rationality by definition is not.

The failure of a dialectical notion of rationality to perform its normative function can be illustrated by making a short detour to fallacy-theory. Van Eemeren and

Grootendorst link fallacies directly to the violation of specific rules for critical discussions: `the dialectical rules which are violated in case of fallacies are applicable *only in so far as the purpose of the discussion is to resolve a dispute'*(Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1987: 296, italics whs). The pragma-dialectical understanding of rational normativity, thus, is conditional: if people engage in a critical discussion, they must obey its specific rules. But the occurance of a fallacy simply yields a *modus tollens* of the normative conditional: violating the rules simply negates the consequent which means that the antecedent is false as well. The occurance of a fallacy, unless as slip of the tongue or corrigeable mistake, simply indicates that no critical discussion is going on. If so, as Van Eemeren and Grootendorst argue, it is not possible to apply the standard for a critical discussion and consequently `there is no point, from a dialectical perspective, in referring to a fallacy'(Van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1987: 298). Dialectical normativity based on rationality fails to perform its normative task.

In brief: dialectical normativity is either a monologic in disguise, meeting much the same problems as deductive monologic, or the rational solution cannot be distinguished qualitatively from other opinions and represents just another point of view without specific normative force. Slightly differently put: the verdict of the neutral external observer either remains external and thus irrelevant for the participants, or becomes an element within the discussion, cancelling its neutrality. The external rational observer will not do for a suitable notion of normativity. Yet, we need not be sad about this. It may, as Hamblin argued, `not be the logician's particular job to declare the truth of any statement, *or the validity of any argument*' (Hamblin 1970: 244).

Dialogical Rhetoric
Rhetoric is often blamed for lacking normativity. It is conceived of containing argumentative tricks that induce people to accept things they would not have accepted were they put in less woolly terms. Rhetoric aims at bringing people to accept conclusions they would not accept by themselves and should not accept by general standards.

Rhetoric is considered an instrument to deceive people. Such an understanding of rhetoric is very far off the mark, at least when we look at rhetorical theories. Classical rhetoricians maintained that only the virtuous could speak well and that deception was the least advisable strategy for any orator. We need not appeal to a now outdated Aristotelean epistemology, -which linked virtue and truth-, to see

that deception is a very bad advice for a speaker. Trustworthiness pays double; deception only makes people suspicious on the long run. Only a very shortsighted rhetoric resorts to deception. Rhetoric does not focus on the advantages of the speaker, but much more on the position of the hearer. Rhetoric, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca say, `aims at gaining the adherence of minds'(Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 14), and this can only be achieved if, indeed, the audience to which the speaker directs her arguments becomes convinced. The speaker seeks the cooperation of her audience and in order to attain it, she must take seriously the standards of the hearers. This rhetorical demand for a fundamental audience-orientation implies the pedestrian hint to speak English to anglophones and not to bore lay-people with technicalities. But it also takes into regard the asymmetrical startingpoint of discussions. Rhetoric accepts the idea of dialectics that some thesis must be disputed for an argument to begin. That is, only when a thesis is being questioned by *someone*, it makes sense to support it. As it is the actual resistance of a specific opponent that blocks the establishment of the thesis, it is his doubt that should be removed. The very *raison d'etre* of argumentation indicates that a specific audience is addressed.

But if rhetoric directs its arguments at a particular audience what about the rest of the world? Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca discuss mixed audiences in this respect, and they propose a notion of the Universal Audience to conceive of arguments that are convincing for all audiences, and thus normative for *any* audience. This construction is superfluous, however. The speaker can only orient herself to the audience as she perceives of it. She has no direct access to the minds of her hearers and can only estimate its standards. Particular, mixed and universal audiences are all projections of the speaker, and the orientation to the audience thus has always a tentative character that needs to be adjusted while the dsicussion is in progress. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tytcea define the notion of audience as `the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation'(Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969: 19), and this can be substantiated in a particular, mixed, or perhaps even universal way. There is no need to make a fundamental or even qualitative distinction between types of audiences **[ix]**.

Still, there *is* an important normative problem. The demand to orient oneself to the standards of the audience, erodes the position of the speaker herself! If the standard of the audiences were all that counted, the speaker seems to be extradited to the whims of her audience. This surely, would be a very disturbing consequence of audience-orientation. There would be a moral objection: it is

absurd to demand the orientation to abject standards. There is a rhetorical objection on the longer run: one would disqualify as serious partner in discussion when shifting standards according to specific audiences.

Most serious, however, is the logical objection that only by observing one's own standards a thesis is worth defending. Much like the dialectical idea that an argument only begins when some thesis is being questioned, we should say that an argument only starts when the speaker is willing to support it. If only the standards of the audience were decisive, its very resistance would be the end of the discussion. Precisely because the speaker is committed to the thesis, she defends it, but this is only possible if she acknowledges the normative force of her own position, at least for herself.

If rationality fails to transcend the subjectivity of the respective participants, it seems that the disagreement that initiated the discussion in the first place pervades the entire discussion and that, indeed, we have nothing to go on but the idiosyncracies of the respective participants. In contrast to dialectics, however, I do not think this is much of a problem. In fact, I think that acknowledging the fundamental differences between participants may even yield a much stronger notion than the dialectic appeal to rationality. Note that agreement is not denied. *People may*, and in fact do, agree on many things; just as they are disagreeing on many other things as well. My point, however, is that agreement is *insubstantial* for normativity, and that commensurability is of no consequence when it comes to distinguishing good from bad arguments.

Whereas dialectics stopped the infinite progress jeopardizing conventionalism in the rational *acceptability* of arguments, I propose to locate the stop of the progress in the actual *acceptance* by the adversary. Instead of tacitly assuming a third logical role in the dialogue, I suggest we take the responsibility of the participants themselves seriously. The idiosyncracy of the standards is not resolved in the commensurability of a transcendent standard of rationality, but is restrained by eachother. When rhetoric is seen from a dialogical perspective, we will observe that the orientation to the audience goes both ways. In any dialogue, of course, both participants are speaking, and both must orient themselves to the standards of their respective audiences, that is: their adversary. A *dialogical rhetoric,* I suggest, understands a discussion as the mutual orientation of the participants to each other's standards. Not only actively, as proponent, but also passively, as opponent, a participant must orient herself to the other. Dialectical logic burdens only the proponent to proof her thesis. The opponent can ask any

question he likes. Dialogical rhetoric concedes this in principle, but adds the condition that the questions must be *reasonable.* The point simply is that not every question is good enough to demand a serious answer. As Aristotle remarked: `a man should not enter into discussion with everybody or practice dialectics with the first comer'(*Topica*, VIII, 14, 164b). The proponent may ask the oponent to defend his opposition. In effect this means that both participants face burden of proof for their respective positions both in defending and in resisting a thesis.

Both participants are both advancing a position of their own, and opposing the position of the other. Whether they succeed in doing so is up to the respective adversary. It is the adversary that has to be convinced of the reasonableness of the advanced move, and it is the adversary's standard that determines the goodness of the argument. But only so, we should add, if the adversary is reasonable himself. He may for various reasons resist the thesis, even against his better judgment; he may use fallacies to distract attention; he may simply be too ignorant to see the real point... He may simply be the wrong person to discuss the issue with. He may not be among those whose minds we seek adherence of. The reasonableness of the hearer opposing some thesis, depends on the standards of the proponent.

The basic idea of dialogical rhetoric is that the two personal or even idiosyncratic standards of proponent and opponent `span' a normative field that determines the argumentative moving space of a particular discussion. Like dialectical discussions, such a dialogico-rhetorical normative field always has only a local character, because it is always the result of the contributions of the particular participants involved. Yet, we may see that discussion has consequences for other discussions. The audience is, as said, a construction of the speaker, and she can only make her projections on the basis of past experiences or reputation of the adversary. A reputation may seriously damage, or strengthen, one's point of departure in other discussions. Bad behavior may have as a consequence that the adversary terminates the discussion at issue, but may also deter other potential partners in discussion. Still, sometimes it may be worth the risk.

The adversary determines whether or not an argumentative move is accepted or not. If it is, the move is established. If it is not, the proponent may try to support the claim in an other way, or she may question the reasonableness of the resistance. If so, it is up to the opponent to defend the opposition. In general, this will not be a fruitful strategy when a discussion has just started. A discussion

begins with resistance of the opponent and the proponent's wish to convince him. It is strategically unwise to begin a defense by asking why on earth he is resisting her claim. But at the end of a discussion, after many moves have been made, such a question may not be strange at all. If an elaborate defence has been given it may very well be the question why somebody is still resisting the claim that has been supported extensively. Still, resistence may be the right thing to do; the opponent may convince the proponent of the reasonability of the opposition. This may result in the withdrawel of the claim, in which case the opposition of the claim is established**[x]**.

The normative force of dialogical rhetoric lies in the fact that for the establishing of any move both participants are responsible. Obviously, the proponent is responsible for the moves she advances. But the opponent also becomes committed when he does not, or no longer, resist the claim**[xi]**. In this way, both participants become responsible for both supporting and rebutting moves. Both positive and negative aspect form, as it were, a vector that together constitute the strength of the argument. The resulting conclusion is binding for both participants because they either advanced or accepted the consititutive elements. Dialogical rhetoric plays on the disagreement that got the argument started in the first place. It works in cases of incommensurability, but can obviously also be maintained when the situation is much less *différant* as some contemprorary philosophers want us to believe. The matter is insubstantial for a suitable notion of normativity. Just as unimportant is the taxonomy of types of discussion. Discussions are not neatly defined from the outset and may slide from one type to another**[xii]**. The problem is that if the rules are normative, it is impossible to see how such a sliding could ever occur. In fact, a rule-based normativity should prevent normative sliding. If incidental exceptions to the rules are allowed this merely means that the normativity is not located before the argumentation proper starts, but within the discussion itself. Even if rules were laid down at the beginning, the very decision that no exception is to be made puts the normative authority within the discussion proper. But this is simply to say that it all depends upon whether or not some argumentative move is accepted or not. There is no use in doubling this issue by postulating incidental rules in between. There is no use for any notion of discussion-rules other than as suggestions of strategic hints, indicating argumentative regularities that may be helpful, and even to the benefit of everybody involved. The point is that an argument does not become good or bad because of these rules. They do so because they are, or are not, accepted by

the only one whose opinion is of any substantial interest: the adversary's. Instead of the term `rules' I prefer the rhetorical term `topos'. The question is not how to authorize a rule, but how to implement a topos effectively.

The goodness of arguments is determinied by the acceptance of the adversary; the badness of arguments by the refusal of the adversary to accept an argumentative move. This idea has consequences for the notion of fallacy. Without an operative notion of discussion-rules, fallacies cannot be seen as violations of rules. The traditional fallacies can, however, be understood as unadvisable argumentative strategies. Arguments that are usually considered fallacious are bad because they are weak; they are easy to expose, and not very convincing for the most part. A taxonomy of fallacies is useful to show risky argumentative strategies, but not as a list of arguments that are as such always bad. If only, I may shortly point out, because fallacies are not merely slips of tongues, but are often committed for good reasons. A fallacy can shift the burden of proof to the adversary because his charge of `fallacy!' may be called for support. In this way, committing a fallacy can be strategically advantageous. Fallacies should not only be studied for logical self-defense, but also as a means to win a discussion. If an adversary accepts a `fallacy' there is not much reason to call it a fallacy at all, although the logician may want to point out to the naive adversary that he could have maintained his position better. A fallacy is only fallacious if it is exposed as such, and not all traditional fallacies are fallacious all the time. In any way, it is up to the adversary to point out the fallacy, not to any external observer. But a charge of `fallacy!' can always be called for defence.

Postlude
Obviously, despite overpowering evidence and even while acknowledging the reasonableness of the arguments, someone may persist in resisting a conclusion. No account of normativity can prevent this, but at least dialogical rhetoric can *blame* someone for doing this. Dialectical logic, depending on the voluntary submission to rules of discussion can only determine the fact that someone does not accept the rules that were supposed to be normative. It can never blame someone for not voluntarily submitting to any rule. Not even to rules of transcendental rationality: there is no dialectical answer to someone who wants to be irrational. But there is a rhetorical answer to someone who wants to be unreasonable: go and waste someone else's time. It moreover allows one to take up responsibility for one's own position, even facing non-cooperation because of unreasonable demands of the adversary.

NOTES

i. Obviously, this will make the premises inconsistent. But the problem of inconsistency is its triviality, not its invalidity. After all: ex falsum sequitur quodlibe.

ii. Cf. Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Snoeck Henkemans 1996, chapter 2.

iii. Walton distinguishes between eight different types of discussion, including eristic discussions. Most dialecticians, however, do not recognize the latter as genuine discussion. Cf. Walton 1989: 3-11.

iv. Cf. Barth and Krabbe 1982: 21f, defining a logical convention for a well-defined company.

v. Walton and Krabbe see retraction as 'one of the most fundamental (almost intractable) problems concerning commitment'. They are certainly right, but the problem may be less intractable if there were no need for an external observer to decide upon the acceptability. Cf. Walton and Krabbe 1995: 9ff.

vi. Cf. e.g. Barth and Krabbe 1982: 39; 75.

vii. Johnson and Blair argue that: 'many people evaluate arguments by one 'standard' only: does it support my view or not? That', they insist, 'is not a logical standard of evaluation but rather a purely idiosyncratic one'(Johnson and Blair 1983: 30).

viii. Obviously, the rational observer is a logical role; it is not demanded that it is actually present at the spot. The participants may themselves take up the role of the rational judge. What is important, however, is that only an unbiased evaluation of the advanced arguments is normative.

ix. Cf. also Ray 1978.

x. It is also possible that the participants accept the reasonableness of each other's position and yet retain to their own point of view. The conclusion is that the disagreement is not resolved.

xi. At what stage he does so is not important at this point. In some cases, hem must be quick to react, because the discussion may pass an irreversible moment after which no return to an earlier stage is possible. In other cases, steps may be retraced to an earlier stage. What is allowed is simply ot the adversary to decide.

xii. Cf. Walton and Krabbe 1995: 100-116.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Falsification And Fieldwork In Recent American Anthropology: Argument Before And After The Mead/Freeman Controversy

Ethnographic fieldwork – going into the bush, into the unknown – to study some 'tribe' has arguably been the central feature of cultural or social anthropology in this century.**[i]** "Ethnography has been, and is, the sine qua non of cultural anthropology. It accounts for our initial status and networks within our profession, legitimizes us as "real" anthropologists. . . and provides us with the means to survive the publishing dictates of the academy." (Farrer 1996: 170). It has been taken as primarily the product of the individual researcher and as relatively unproblematic. It then provides the evidential foundation for anthropological theory, which is where controversy enters. Debates are about the implications of the 'research findings', not typically the findings themselves. In the last decade and a half, there has been increased attention paid to just how ethnographies are rhetorically constructed by an anthropologist.

This is a valuable emphasis, but I am adding another – looking at how fieldwork is criticized and accepted as reliable after publication. I explore this process as a social activity by the discipline in light of its various audiences. To do this I focus on what led up to and followed Derek Freeman's attack on Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa.* My concern is not with argument by Mead or Freeman per se – that has been done (Weimer 1990, Marshall 1993).

A bit of quick history. In 1925 Margaret Mead went to American Samoa to test G. Stanley Hall's then current account of adolescence as inevitably stressful.. Her subsequent book refuting Hall and giving a compelling portrait of South Sea life, *Coming of Age in Samoa,* became a bestseller, and its view of adolescent development, particularly in sexual relations, had a great influence on American culture. Mead became the best-known anthropologist in America, a veritable

cultural icon (Lutkehaus 1996).

In 1983, five years after Mead's death, the first notice of the Australian anthropologist Derek Freeman's critique of Mead was published on the front-page of the *New York Times*; a media event ensued, complete with television appearances. Freeman, who dedicated his book to Karl Popper, the philosopher who championed the importance of falsification in science, claimed to have definitely falsified Mead, as well as offered a more adequate account of the interaction of biology and culture. A multitude of reviews and rejoinders followed; Freeman replied vigorously to many of these.

The American Anthropological Association even took a vote deploring the recommendation of the book by the magazine *Science 83*. In 1989 a documentary film, *Margaret Mead and Samoa* (Heimans 1989), apparently supported Freeman with an interview with one of Mead's informants who stated that she and other Samoan girls had "pulled Mead's leg in response to probing questions about their personal lives, and that Mead, then 24 years old, believed their tall tales" (Monaghan 1989: A6).

Why was the Mead-Freeman controversy such an event? For some anthropologists, there has been a certain befuddlement – why won't it go away? One reason is the sheer number of issues involved – ranging from particular questions such as the degree of Mead's facility with the Samoan language, to the personalities involved, to larger issues such as the nature-nurture debate and social responsibility of scientists. It is a mistake to say, as some have, that "it was really about" one thing and not another. Nonetheless I focus in this paper primarily on the relation of an epistemic matter to a standard rhetorical one, on how anthropological fieldwork claims are taken to constitute reliable evidence or knowledge for the audiences of anthropology. Following Lyne, I distinguish anthropology's intra-field audience – other anthropologists, its inter-field audience – other scholars and scientists outside the discipline, and its extra-field audience – the general or educated public (Lyne 1983). My issue involves how, as Lyne puts it, epistemic expertise is projected to these various audiences.

1. A Criterion of Science

Although many discussions of whether or not social sciences are really sciences are at best unfruitful, let me begin with one criterion for being a science set out by a philosopher writing for anthropologists (see also Kuper 1989: 455). In *"Objectivity, Truth, and Method: A Philosopher's Perspective on the Social Sciences"* Little writes, that while there is no "cookbook" version that can be

given for scientific method:

The epistemic features of science include at least these criteria: an empirical testability criterion, a logical coherence criterion and an institutional commitment to intersubjective processes of belief evaluation and criticism. . . . And all [sciences] proceed through a community of inquirers in which the individual's scientific results are subjected to community-wide standards of adequacy. And these standards are designed to move the system of beliefs in the field to greater veridicality and explanatory power. (1995: 42)

It is the last criterion that is my focus – the requirement of an effective critical assessment community of inquirers. The connection of this criterion of scientific standing to the audiences of American anthropology is highlighted by two influential anthropologists, who see the controversy as a "scientific scandal" for "the reading public" who had come to look to Mead and others to deliver the discipline's "long-established promise: its capacity on the basis of reliable knowledge of cultural alternatives to critique and suggest reform in the way we live." (Marcus & Fischer 1986: 3).

Little cites several examples of anthropological ethnography, to "show that it is possible for interpretive anthropology to be supported by appropriate empirical methods; and that is all that we need in order to show that anthropology is a scientific discipline in which there are appropriate standards of empirical reasoning as a control on scientific assertion." (1995: 43). However he does not examine how any of these were critiqued by the anthropological community. Are there in fact standards of ethnographic accuracy? And most importantly for this paper have anthropologists applied them? I will argue the record is mixed.

There has been a tendency to see the ethnographic process as unproblematic, and thus not especially needing critical assessment. In considering the Mead/Freeman controversy, Rappaport comments "Even poor ethnography usually gets the facts right." (1986: 347). Heider asserts that "ethnographers rarely disagree with each other's interpretations of a culture" (1988: 73). It should be added in defense of anthropology that in the beginning years of this century a high priority was placed on studying societies before they disappeared or radically changed. It was rare that two researchers would work on the same society, or even two adjacent ones. Thus the likelihood of conflicts such as between Mead and Freeman was low, though they certainly occurred. Given the relatively small number of anthropologists it "seemed a waste of scarce resources to let two or more researchers go to the same place." (Kloos 1997: 430).

A second tendency is to neglect the role of the community of scientists in

critiquing the evidence in the constitution of the evidence as such. "Real science" is what goes on before publication. Just one example. Headland slips into this tendency even though it does not even reflect his own practice. At the close of a survey of controversies in ecological anthropology – in effect showing how anthropology meets Little's third criterion, he writes: "Basically, we need to do good anthropology – which means longer periods of fieldwork, more archaeology, especially in the wet tropics, and interdisciplinary team research." (1997:609). Given what he is trying to show, that "a refreshing new approach in ecological anthropology called historical ecology" has been part of effective critique of a number of "doctrines long accepted", it is surprising he does not stress that more good anthropological criticism is needed.

2. Views of the Controversy At the Time and Later
In the initial round of reviews of Freeman's book, many anthropologists basically rejected Freeman's claim to have refuted Mead (Weiner 1983, Schneider 1983). A number attacked Freeman for the manner of his critique, waiting until after Mead was dead, using questionable rhetoric, and the like. For some within anthropology the controversy was really peripheral to anthropology itself. It was simply a result of the vagaries of publishing and media misunderstandings. Others found Freeman basically correct on many of the elements of his critique, even though they may have questioned his approach (Appell 1984, Brady 1991). Freeman saw himself as vindicating anthropology, that is, by using anthropological means to refute Mead's work on Samoa, and thus redeem his discipline (as well as presenting a more accurate picture of Samoans).

For many outside of anthropology, Freeman set the agenda. There was a clear and decidable issue: "Who was correct about Samoan sexuality and adolescence?" and Freeman was seen as right. For example, Martin Gardner in an article entitled "The Great Samoan Hoax" writes: [Freeman's] "explosive book roundly trounced Mead for flagrant errors in her most famous work*, Coming of Age in Samoa. ...* new and irrefutable evidence has come to light supporting the claim that young Mead was indeed the gullible victim of a playful hoax. Her book, until recently considered a classic, is now known to be of minimal value – an amusing skeleton in anthropology's closet." (1993: 135) As I discuss below this view is *not* commonplace within the field of anthropology, but this pro-Freeman view of the matter is prevalent in two camps, in the inter-field area called "evolutionary psychology", where Freeman has been described as a "hero" of the movement (*Economist* 1998: 84, Pinker 1997) and, extra-field, in politically conservative or

right-wing American writing (Jones 1988, Davidson 1988). For many in the extra-field audience the Mead-Freeman controversy is not simply a matter of historical curiosity, but also part of clearing away misconception, propaedeutic to new intellectual advances. Wrangham and Peterson in *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence* use Mead as a prime example of what their book is to offset, the "misleading separation of nurture from nature". They assert that Mead's "findings from this expedition [to Samoa] would capture the imagination of the Western world and galvanize a movement toward cultural relativism. Yet she was later proven extraordinarily wrong in many of her claims about Samoan life." (1996: 106, 97).**[ii]**

For some the most salient issue has been whether Mead was duped by some of her informants. The fear that, in turn, the American public was duped has colored anthropological responses. For one, "Perhaps the most painful part of this controversy has been the erosion of the 'public trust' in the social sciences to which many educated Americans have traditionally looked for guidance with respect to how to raise their families." (Scheper-Hughes 1984: 90).

An editorial the *Denver Post* asserted: This is more than just another academic teapot tempest; anthropology is a science often accused of being a haven for social theorists manipulating facts to prove their preconceived points . . . Mead . . . made major contributions to U. S. social attitudes. Her reputation is secure. The real loser may be anthropology's reputation as a science. If its methods haven't made quantum leaps forward since Mead's day, the whole discipline might find a better home in creative literature (in Rappaport 1986: 316).

3. Whose Responsibility?

Are such public perceptions American anthropology's fault? Some anthropologists have tried to distance their discipline. Rappaport argues that "Anthropology is no more capable of establishing the mythic status of narratives than is chemistry. All anthropology can do is to offer to a public accounts from which that public can select some (as it can from other sources) to establish as myth, leaving the rest to anthropologists' arcane in-house conversations." True enough, but as Rappaport mentions on the very next pages, "The book enjoyed substantial classroom adoptions for decades."(1986: 322, 324, also Kuper 1989: 453). Such distancing attempts, such as Marcus's comment, apparently intended to downplay Freeman's critique, that "outside of introductory courses, [Mead's] work has not generally been read in recent years." are revealing (quoted Fields 1983: 232-233). But it is precisely in such courses that anthropology has its greatest opportunity to

educate its extra-field audience about itself. As the philosopher Philip Kitcher has suggested in his analysis of the conflicts between evolutionists and scientific creationists, the use of slogans, raw dichotomies ('proven fact' vs. 'only a theory'), and simplistic philosophies of science by biologists provide readily exploitable starting points for creationists (Kitcher 1983). The extra disciplinary audience for anthropologists, like evolutionary biologists, is in part a reflection of how scientists have educated it, including their critics. At least one would expect them to cite their efforts to rectify the misperception, even if the efforts are unsuccessful.

There is another tactic. If, as the Denver Post suggested above, anthropology was more like literature, then it would not be responsible for attempting to resolve the controversy. As one literature professor suggested: "[T]here is *a priori* no reason why we should attribute a greater degree of truth to her account of Samoan life than we might to a travel journal or a realist novel on the same subject. And the same is true of Derek Freeman's . ." (Porter 1984: 31). But then anthropology's standing as science and source of cultural critique would have to be reassessed, something many in the field would resist.

4. Critique in Anthropology Prior to 1983

In responding to Freeman's critique some anthropologists rather dismissively said that the problems with *Coming of Age in Samoa* were well-known. In a review, Ivan Brady says by 1983 though Mead's Samoan research was still respected for "its pioneering impact . . . It was also recognized as inadequate on several counts . . . And had been relegated largely to discussions of disciplinary history" (1991: 497). And there certainly were several critiques. Indeed Freeman published a list of errata in Mead's *Social Organization of Manu'a* after they were not included in its republication (1972). Examples of published critiques are an article by Worsley in *Science and Society*, a socialist oriented British publication (1957) and an analysis of education in an African tribe, *Chaga Childhood*, by a South African anthropologist (Raum 1940).**[iii]** These do not seem to be obvious places to look for responses to Mead's work on Samoa. Someone from outside the discipline would easily miss these.

And other anthropologists praised Mead's work. McDowell wrote that "Most significant is [Mead's] concern for the precision and accuracy of the data she gathered . . . . In presenting her material accurately and precisely, Mead is a careful and exceptionally honest ethnographer." (1980: 127). At least until very recently it has been quite rare for anthropologists to do restudy of a group

previously studied by another anthropologist. But Ta'u, where Mead worked, has been restudied, in 1954, by Lowell Holmes, perhaps the first time a "methodological restudy was ever conducted with the specific purpose of evaluating the validity and reliability of an earlier observer's work." (Holmes 1987: 14) Holmes writes that his advisor Melville Herskovits suggested he restudy Mead's work, in part because "for some time scholars (including himself) had been skeptical about Mead's findings in American Samoa"(1987: 18). This gives some credence to the claim that Mead's work was thought to be suspect. However Holmes sums up his results as indicating that, though in some cases Mead "over-generalized and was given to exaggeration", overall Mead "was essentially correct in her characterization and conclusions about coming of age in Samoa. And I still am impressed with the quality of her investigation." (1987: 172-73). Unfortunately for anyone looking for a clear-cut resolution of the controversy, Freeman claims that Holmes's assessment is suspect, and that Holmes changed his evaluation of Mead's work over time, and under pressure. Nardi cites Holmes and an article by Naroll, which in turn cites Holmes, as examples of preexisting critiques (1984: 323) . However, the criticisms of Holmes are hardly comparable to Freeman's. Further Naroll also included an article by Mead in the collection in which the criticisms Nardi cites are included (Naroll 1970, Mead 1970). Of course, whatever one's view of Mead on Samoa, she was an indisputable pioneer in other areas, for example, in visual anthropology.

An examination of surveys published before Freeman's book in 1983 does not show any signs of this supposed widespread knowledge of Mead's weaknesses. For example, Agar lists a number of disputes over fieldwork, but does not mention Mead's work as one of these (1980). Edgerton and Langness discuss a number of cases where ethnography has been questioned – Ruth Benedict's Pueblo work, the Redfield-Lewis divergence – in a chapter where they also mention Mead, but make no indication of any reservations about her work (1974). Indeed the strength of the defenses of Mead after Freeman suggests that he was far from simply rehearsing or amplifying commonly held suspicions, albeit in an objectionably antagonistic fashion.

Either the supposedly well-known problems with Mead's work were not in fact known or recognized to be serious problems by very many, or not made public, even within the wider field. In any case the discipline never confronted them. Indeed there are mentions of a general custom of not being a public critic of a colleague's work. Jackson quotes an anthropologist informant as "commenting on one of the discipline's unwritten rules 'We've built up a sort of gentlemanly code

dealing with one another's ethnography. You criticize it, but there are limits, social conventions . . . You never overstep them or you become the heavy.'"(1990: 22).**[iv]** So when Freeman did bring them up, one speculates that there were some guilty consciences. Whether from simple oversight or Mead's iconic status, her Samoan work went without adequate critical assessment. In terms of the criterion of a critical assessment community prior to 1983 in this respect there is little evidence of it existing.

5. Critique in Anthropology After 1983
What has happened since 1983? One major change is the importance anthropologists now place on listening to those they study, to their subjects, as Freeman emphasized. Taking into account their views has become more common, indeed expected. As responses of Samoans to the controversy indicate there is at least much to learn from that audience.**[v]**

Another common response to the whole debate is to 'perspectivize' it, that is, to attribute the dispute to the effects of different perspectives or approaches of those involved, and not due to any inaccuracy per se. Thus falsification is impossible. For example, a review of a new book on the controversy begins: "I was amazed to find that yet another contribution to the so-called 'Mead-Freeman controversy' had been published, . . . It is even more unfortunate that authors cannot resist making judgements on this issue and trying to resolve the issues involved, insisting that there is and was a definitive , 'real' Samoa to be discovered. . ." (Morton 1996: 166). Scheper-Hughes, whose own ethnography in Ireland seemed to conflict with previous work of Arensberg, argues that

.. when we are talking about Samoan culture or Irish culture we are talking about an interpretation that is the result of a complex series of interactions between he anthropologist and his or her informants. . . . Ethnography is a very special kind of intellectual autobiography, a deeply personal record thought which a whole view of the human condition, an entire personality, is elaborated. .. And the knowledge that it yields must always be interpreted by us, by the particular kind of complex social, cultural and psychological self that we bring into the field. ......Hence there can be no "falsification" of a 1925 ethnography by a 1940 or a 1965 "restudy" because the particular ethnographic moment in the stream of time that Mead captured is long since gone. (1984: 90)

This pattern of attributing differences to perspectives is not limited to this controversy. There is a growing movement in anthropology toward seeing

ethnography as a much more complicated and multifarious endeavor than previously held. A greater sense of the personal nature of ethnography, and of the rhetorical construction of ethnography developed in the years after 1983. As Brady points out, these developments "which we lump under the heading of 'post-modernism', [influenced] . . . a common perception (but very little said in print) that even if Mead was wrong, Freeman didn't have . . . the answer to what was right . . .The 'meta-issues,' in other words, seem to have carried the day against Freeman, against closure on multiple interpretations of Samoan ethnography." (1988: 44). However, while anthropology's internal, or intra-field, audience was not especially interested, its inter- and extra-field audiences were drawing their own conclusions, as discussed above. Though really a matter for another day, I do not believe that post-modernism in any stricter sense than Brady's is really involved. The issues pre-date its rise; it serves more to provide a strawman to criticize (Pool 1991).

This 'perspectivist' response would seem to make a thorough going criticism otiose. Other anthropologists, of course, do not see it this way. It is striking that other ethnographic work by Mead has come under significant criticism. Gewertz and Errington have re-evaluated Mead's analysis of one tribe the Chambri (or Tchambuli) in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* arguing that Mead's interpretation was led astray by reliance on a Western conception of self (Gewertz 1984, Errington & Gewert 1987). Others have made substantial criticism of Mead and Bateson's work on Bali (Jensen & Suryani 1992). If Mead and her work were ever sacrosanct that does not appear to be the case recently (Foerstel & Gilliam 1992, Roscoe 1995).

With respect to Samoa, and in particular the controversy itself, there has recently been a number of critical work. There are two book length assessments. Cote, a sociologist, in *Adolescent Storm and Stress: An Evaluation of the Mead-Freeman Controversy*, comes to the conclusion "that Mead's coming-of-age thesis is quite plausible . . . There are some problems with some of what she wrote in *Coming of Age.* But there is little reason to believe that she was wrong in most of what she reported – contrary to what Freeman claimed and despite the mythology surrounding her book." (1994: xiv). Orans in *Not Even Wrong: Margaret Mead, Derek Freeman, and the Samoans* (1996) concludes that Mead's fieldwork and the claims she makes on its basis are seriously inadequate, that on a number of points Freeman is correct, but that Freeman is wrong to think that he could refute Mead in that her claims are really insufficiently formulated to be either verified or falsified. Hence the book's title *Not Even Wrong*. Given the prominence given to

the 1989 filmed interview with an informant which led to the perception that Mead was duped, after examining Mead's fieldnotes and letters, Orans holds that there is no indication that the 'tall tales' had any particular impact on Mead's thinking.

Even more striking are attempts to not just adjudicate the controversy, but to learn from it. Taking up suggestions first raised by Shore, Mageo develops an account of that integrates what she calls "the incongruent impressions that surround Samoan character." She argues that Mead and Holmes "documented the communal personality, which is the ideal product of Samoan socialization. Freeman observes the psychological costs of this ideal." (1991: 405). She does not simply says that there are different approaches, the Rashomon 'perspectivist' tactic, but tries to account for this divergence, and thus advance beyond the controversy. There are other articles of a critical nature (Shankman 1996, Grant 1995). Perhaps book reviews of the three books on the controversy (Caton, Cote and Orans) will be revelatory. Textbooks now at least have perfunctory mention that Mead's work is contested.

What is striking is the contrast between the simplistic "Freeman falsified Mead" views prevalent inter- and extra-field and the recent critical work on the controversy within it. If prior to 1983, the American public listened to an incompletely scrutinized account from anthropology, allowing Mead's erroneous findings to go unchallenged, today they do not seem to be listening to anthropology at all. And if they are not listening, then the discipline cannot fulfill what Marcus and Fischer call its "long established promise: its capacity on the basis of reliable knowledge of cultural alternatives to critique and suggest reform in the way we live." (1986: 3).

6. Conclusion

Is anthropology "the gang who couldn't shoot straight"? That is certainly not my contention. As Kloos points out in an examination of disagreements in anthropology, there also are many examples of sites studied by anthropologists from a number of countries, including the one studied, where no radical disagreements have emerged. And he rightly stresses that these outnumber the thirty some cases on the list of serious discrepancies that he has compiled (Kloos 1996). Nor do discrepant results necessarily indicate the absence of a critical assessment community. Tracing the history of research on the !Kung people, Kuper argues for the existence in that area of anthropology of a disputatious, but

at the same time cooperatively interacting, group of researchers from different countries and theoretical backgrounds, working, as he says, "in many ways like conventional scientists." – or at least like the standard conception of scientists (1993: 68). The practice of the journal *Current Anthropology* of publishing articles followed by comments from other scholars, often quite critical, is also signal. The American Anthropological Association has a precedent here. It published a collection of articles on another, somewhat similar dispute within the discipline: *The Tasaday Controversy: Assessing the Evidence*. (Headland 1992).

My conclusion is that, if one examines the discipline of American anthropology with respect to Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* prior to 1983 in light of the criterion of functioning as a critical assessment community the judgment has to be anthropology's achievement is at best mixed. A book that many in retrospect claim was inadequate was allowed to be seen as adequate, or even better. Since 1983 the evidence is considerably stronger, but not univocal. Here the *practice* seems better than the theory. That is, there is a considerable amount of criticism. What is problematic the strand of what I call 'perspectivism'. Here I have suggested the problem is not so much the practice of critical assessment, but confusion over the nature of, or even need for what Little terms "community-wide standards of assessment". This history in turn is, I have suggested, is partially reflected in the relation of American social anthropology to its various audiences.

Meeting Little's criterion is of course at most a necessary condition. I have not tried to *explain* what occurred. Perhaps it is a matter of disciplinary structure and practice, of how a scientific discipline functions. Or perhaps it is the nature of social reality – the stuff ethnographies are about – as just too complicated or transitory to be studied in the ways anthropologists study it. One could argue that the culture and personality school, of Benedict and Mead, was particular prone to problems (see Stocking 1989). Establishing claims about temperament of a culture or dominant personality traits in a group may simply not be an endeavor for which anthropological methods are appropriate. The particular factors of Mead's iconic status, and Freeman's approach, must be considered. I am inclined to favor the first explanation, or perhaps some combination of factors.

Nonetheless there is only so much a discipline can do to educate its audiences. I was taken aback to read in a recent book by a psychologist – from Harvard University Press, the publisher of Freeman's book no less – that *Coming of Age in Samoa* is "considered by some to be one of the great anthropological studies of all time." (Plotkin 1998: 241). After all the controversy, I cannot believe that even Mead's strongest supporters would evaluate it that highly.

NOTES

i. I use 'anthropology' as short for American cultural or social anthropology. I draw on Strikwerda 1991. I want to thank Penny Weiss and Clarke Rountree for their comments, the Indiana University Kokomo Division of Arts and Sciences and Interlibrary loan staff and the Indiana University Institute for Advanced Study for their support.

ii. I have not done a comprehensive search, but the prevalence of these interpretations of the upshot of the controversy is striking. I did find more favorable treatments of Mead in books and tapes for children (for example Ziesk 1990).

iii. Note that these are not American authors. Gupta and Ferguson (1997: 45, n. 38) cite Radin's 1933 critique of Mead. Their omission of any mention of Freeman strikes me as rather disingenuous.

iv. Worsley writes that after publication of his 1957 article Mead wrote him attacking the piece. "Taken aback by the virulence of this language, I soon discovered that it evidently was not unusual, for I received several communications from anthropologists in the United States who told me that they had been treated to similar withering counterattacks when they had dared, especially in public situations, to say anything critical of her work". (1992: xi).

v. In her preface to the 1973 edition of Coming of Age in Samoa, Mead acknowledged Samoan concerns but stated that "It must remain, as all anthropological works must remain, exactly as it was written, true to what I saw in Samoa and what I was able to convey of what I saw; true to the state of our knowledge...." (1973:. xii). Why she did not discuss these concerns in some depth elsewhere is not clear.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Rhetoric As Ideological Pronouncement: An Analysis Of The Cardinal Principles Of The National Entity Of Japan

The concept of *kokutai* or 'national structure' derived from the fundamental insularity and isolation of the Japanese. The concept served as a powerful linguistic weapon both for attack and defense in the political arena of the period 1931-1945…. [A]fter the Meiji Restoration, 'national structure' was used to signify the uniqueness of the existing government of Japan. The word became a glorification of that order, a claim that the present had existed since time immemorial. Since the oldest book extant was the *Kojiki*, which recounted the descent from heaven of the ancestor of the Royal Family, the national structure was generally understood to centre on an unbroken line of emperors of heavenly origin. – *Tsurumi Shunsuke*

Over the past centuries, scholars of rhetorical communication have been

grappling with a fundamental nature of argumentation that continues to shape and reshape social, political and religious structures of human society. Literature suggests that whereas most scholars acknowledge its critical or sometimes subversive effects, some have paid a considerable attention to enemies of argumentation such as ideology, myth, and propaganda. For instance, Marxists are concerned with ideology as the ruling ideas of the epoch in an attempt to investigate what might be termed the internal life of the ideological realm and to provide detailed and sophisticated accounts of how a society's "ruling ideas" are produced. Religious scholars have argued that myth, as sacred tales concerned with the origins of natural or supernatural, or cultural phenomena, serve various roles available within the articulated social cosmos for community members to achieve a position of influence within the social hierarchies or to find ways of operating meaningfully as contributing members. Finally, the scholars of media studies have explored the tension between the principles of democracy and the process of propaganda since the notion of a rational person, capable of thinking and living according to scientific patterns, of choosing freely between good and evil seems opposed to secret influences or appeals to the irrational.

Given that, it is surprising to know that there has been very little discussion about "ideological pronouncement," which means a sort of rhetoric which undermines and limites the possibility of critical discussion among target audiences. In what follows, I will explore "ideological pronouncement" as an enemy of argumentation. First, I will contend that the nature of argumentation is primarily characterized as an engagement in critical/rational discourse. Second, I will define the nature of ideological pronouncement as an engagement in fascist/anti-realist discourse. Specifically, the essential constituents for such an enactment can be identified as anti-realism, a lack of critical space, and especially, one-sided communication.

Finally, I will investigate Japan's wartime textbook, the *Kokutai no hongi, or Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan* (hereafter it will be referred to as *Cardinal Principles*) as a rhetoric of ideological pronouncement. In 1937, the *Cardinal Principles* was published by the Japanese government and became the most widely employed moral education textbook, an official attempt at indoctrination of its nationalist principles: "first printing of approximately 300,000 copies was distributed to the teaching staffs of both public and private schools from the university level to the lower cycle of elementary schools" (*Cardinal Principles* 10). As of 1943, the book is said to have sold approximately 1,900,000 copies. Given such enormous popularity, it seems appropriate to use

the *Cardinal Principles* as a prime example of fascist discourse.

1. Argumentation as engagement in critical/rational discourse
Let me start the discussion by posing a question: Why is ideological pronouncement problematic or undesirable? To answer the question, I will define and examine the following three concepts: *argumentation, argument, argumentativeness.* First, argumentation is generally recognized as "the process of advancing, supporting, modifying, and criticizing claims so that appropriate decision makers may grant or deny adherence" (Rieke & Sillars 5). This audience-centered definition holds the assumptions that the participants must willingly engage in public debate and discussion, and that their arguments must function to open a critical space and keep it open. From this perspective, as Chaim Perelman has rightly pointed out, the aim of argumentation is to gain the adherence of others. Hence, argumentation should be viewed as an interactive process between arguer and audience to determine the appropriateness of an advocated claim based upon data presented with reasoning given. Only the arguments that exceed a threshold for audience acceptance will survive or prevail, and others will disappear or fade away. This way, argumentation plays a chief role in the critical decision-making process.

Another important definition is concerned with the term "argument." In his landmark article, "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument," Wayne Brockriede maintains that "argument" means the process whereby a person reasons his/her way from one idea to the choice of another idea, and further argues that this concept of argument implies five generic characteristics:
1. an inferential leap from existing beliefs to the adoption of a new belief or the reinforcement of an old one;
2. a perceived rationale to justify that leap;
3. a choice among two or more competing claims;
4. a regulation of uncertainty in relation to the selected claim – since someone has made an inferential leap, certainty can be neither zero nor total; and
5. a willingness to risk a confrontation of that claim with one's peers.

Thus, the second definition also assumes the arguers' willingness to risk engaging in critical evaluation of claim selected, data presented, and reasoning provided. As Brockriede himself notes, the "last characteristic is especially important. By inviting confrontation, the critic-arguer tries to establish some degree of intersubjective reliability in his[/her] judgment and in his[/her] reasons for the

judgment" (167). Thus, the establishment of intersubjectivity is one of the primary aims of engaging in argumentative discourse.

As a consequence, the arguer is necessarily required to cultivate his/her "argumentativeness," or willingness to argue for what he/she believes, by treating disagreements as objectively as possible, reaffirming the other, stressing equality, expressing interest in the other's position, and allowing the other person to save face (Devito). Thus, the arguer is forced to engage in critical/rational discourse, running a risk of being defeated by his/her opponents. When he is quoted by Jürgen Habermas, H. Neuendroff states: Anyone participating in argument shows his[/her] rationality or lack of it by the mannerin which he[/she] handles and responds to the offering of reasons for or against claims. If he[/she] is "open to argument," he[/she] will either acknowledge the force of those reasons or seek to reply to them, and either way he[/she] will deal with them in a "rational" manner. If he[/she] is "deaf to argument," by contrast, he[/she] may either ignore contrary reasons or reply to them with dogmatic assertions, and either way he[/she] fails to deal with the issues "rationally." (Habermas 18)

Therefore, Habermas concludes that "[c]orresponding to the openness of rational expressions to being explained, there is, on the side of persons who behave rationally, a willingness to expose themselves to criticism and, if necessary, to participate properly in argumentation" (18). Thus, assurance of rationality is one of the chief purpose of argumentation.

In short, argumentation must help carry out critical decision-making, establish intersubjectivity, and save rationality in the act of speech. I believe that ideological pronouncement fails to meet all three of the fundamental characteristics of argumentation. Ideological pronouncement should be considered problematic and even undesirable in that it is designed to oppress free and critical discussion and promote controlled and uncritical thinking. In the following section, I will illustrate how ideological pronouncement is constructed by using Japan's wartime rhetoric as a major paradigm case.

2. Ideological pronouncement as engagement in fascist/anti-realist discourse
Rhetorical reality is produced and maintained through symbolic interaction between and among people and rhetoric. Clearly, communication practice typically serves to reinforce the ongoing construction of rhetorical reality (Berger & Luckmann; Farrell & Goodnight). In this sense, reality is far from something we are given by others, but something we experience within the framework of rhetorical formation. As Berger and Luckmann argue, "Knowledge about society

is thus a realization in the double sense of the word, in the sense of apprehending the objectivated social reality, and in the sense of ongoingly producing this reality" (66).

I argue that a rhetorical reality becomes ideological pronouncement when it possesses the three characteristics mentioned previously, and that such an anti-argumentative rhetoric is likely to proliferate in the period of fascist ideology, such as wartime. To begin with, the nature of ideological pronouncement can be defined as "anti-realism," or symbolically constructed reality. For instance, the character of wartime Japanese rhetoric can be represented by the following: *respect for order, hierarchy, filial piety, and harmony.* As Kenneth Burke has argued, "a cycle or terms implicit in the idea of 'order,' in keeping with the fact that 'order,' being a polar term, implies a corresponding ideas of 'disorder,' while these terms in turn involve ideas of 'obedience' or 'disobedience' to the 'authority' implicit in 'order'" (450).

Specifically, the *Cardinal Principles* was exerted in order to construct Japan as the great family nation which has no parallel in history. The imperial Household is regarded as the head family, and the Japanese people as the Emperor's subjects and nucleus of national life. The book begins:

The unbroken line of Emperors, receiving the Oracle of the Founder of the Nation, reign eternally over the Japanese Empire. This is our eternal and immutable national entity. Thus, founded on this great principle, all the people, united as one great family nation in heart and obeying the Imperial Will, enhance indeed the beautiful virtues of loyalty and filial piety. This is the glory of our national entity. (emphasis added, 59)

Thus, filial piety is featured as "a Way of the highest importance" that "originates with one's family as its basis" (*Cardinal Principles* 87). The term "Way" is used in the technical and ethical sense to indicate a particular significance in placing the Imperial Ancestor and the Emperor in the relationship of parent and child. Thus, the Emperor-subject relationship is emphasized as not only that of sovereign and subject, but of father and child. In this way, the content of the Cardinal Principles is far from historical facts: rather, it is an ideological construction. Japanese historian Nagahara Keiji comments: The imperial view of history sought to reinforce itself as an ideology to rationalize the powers that be, rather than to cope with contemporary rationalism. The Imperial view of history was inherently non-scientific, since it started the Japanese history from the divine message, descent of the Sun Goddess's grandson to earth, and Emperor Jinmu. Further, it fundamentally blocked the academic recognition of Japanese history by ascribing

everything to "manifestation of Kokutai" and describing Japanese aggression as dissemination of the "Imperial Will." (my translation, 27-28)

After all, it is impossible for State Shinto evolved from an indigenous religion of nature-worship to offer a solution to social problems caused by the rapid modernization of Japan. It was rather natural for militarists and imperialists to seek a means of escape into territorial aggrandizement in order to divert the attention of the public from real issues. This attempt to resolve the internal contradictions only created new contradictions, all doomed to end badly. The second essential constituent for ideological pronouncement is "a lack of critical space." Rather than promoting a space for critical thinking and reflection, it functions to undermine and limit the possibility of critical discussion among target audiences. For instance, the *Cardinal Principles* is said to serve the role of indoctrination, or "the teaching of what is known to be false as true, or more widely the teaching of what is believed true in such a way as to preclude critical inquiry on the part of learners" (*Oxford Companion to Philosophy* 867). It was published for the purpose of easing the social tension caused by the impact of Westernization after the Meiji Restoration and Great Depression later, and of unifying the Japanese people for nationalistic ideas. Robert King Hall explains: Its avowed purpose was to combat the social unrest and intellectual conflicts which sprang from the "individualism" of the people and to substitute a devotion to the "national unity" which it identified with unswerving loyalty to the Imperial Family. ("Prefactory Note" in the *Cardinal Principles*)

Thus, the *Cardinal Principles* serves twin functions: the first is to divert the Japanese people's attention from internal disorder and dissatisfaction with political realities; and the second, to provide justification for Japan's wartime nationalism.

The final important characteristic of ideological pronouncement is "one-sided communication," or a sort of imperfect communication designed to ask the audience to stop thinking and accept the imposed cultural norm or social more blindly. In this frame of reference, no criticism or even questioning is called for, but all obedience and loyalty are required by the ruling class. A prime instance of this is the wartime Japan's "ideology of death." Tsurumi Kazuko argues that, in the army and the navy, the indoctrination was extended so as to serve as socialization for death:

Army indoctrination was a strictly one-way communication, in which only the socializer spoke and the socializee was expected to accept silently whatever was told him. It was an imperfect communication, since the socializee was not

expected to understand precisely what these words meant but only to grasp vaguely what they were about. Their ambiguity created a halo of sanctity around the words of the Imperial dicta.... Thus imperfect communication, instead of complete discommunication or perfect communication, was function for military elites as a method of indoctrinating soldiers in the ideology of death. The use of imperfect communication as a vehicle of army socialization was related to the functional diffuseness of its ideological content. (121)

Thus, the Japan's army education provides what Tsurumi calls "imperfect communication" for indoctrinating young soldiers in the "ideology of death."

With the above defining characteristics in mind, let me now turn to an analysis of the *Cardinal Principles* in order to show how ideological pronouncement as a rhetoric serves a role of fascist/anti-realist discourse, in lieu of that of critical/rationalist discourse.

3. The cardinal principles of the national entity of Japan as an example of ideological pronouncement

The *Cardinal Principles* employs a variety of rhetorical strategy to distinguish Japanese from Western traditions. Assuming a nation to be an "imagined community" (Anderson), I will analyze its rhetorical strategies as an instrument of official nationalist education within the context of the three constituents of ideological pronouncement.

First of all, to prove the ground from which the claim that the Japanese people are a special race destined to rule the world is drawn, the *Cardinal Principles* argues that the "Emperor is a deity incarnate who rules our country in unison with the august Will of the Imperial Ancestors" (71). As the fascist regime came into power, the "sacred and inviolable" nature of the Emperor was transfigured to claim that he was the living representative of the imperial line unbroken for the age eternal. This is the existential dimension regarding Japan's special status. The *Cardinal Principles* contends:

The Emperor is not merely a so-called sovereign, monarch, ruler, or administrator, such as is seen among foreign nations, but reigns over this century as a deity incarnate in keeping with the great principle that has come down to us since the founding of the Emperor; and the wording of Article III [of the Imperial Constitution] which reads, "The Emperor is sacred and inviolable," clearly sets forth this truth. Similar provisions which one sees among foreign nations are certainly not founded on such deep truths, and are merely things that serve to ensure the position of a sovereign by means of legislation. (165)

Here Japanese mythology is used to generate a national ethos. Its citizens are told that Japan is a unique sacred nation which is ruled by a divine character. The Cardinal Principles goes on to argue the time dimension of Japan's special status. Namely, it is argued that Imperial Japan possesses everlasting life and so flourishes endlessly in an eternal "now." The Cardinal Principles states:

That our Imperial Throne is coeval with heaven and earth means indeed that the past and the future are united in the "now," that our nation possesses everlasting life, and that it flourished endlessly. Our history is an evolution of the eternal "now," and at the root of our history there always runs a stream of eternal "now." (65)

The concept of an eternal "now," of course, assumes that the Imperial rule is unchanging and resistant to historical pressures within and without the country. Clearly, the aim of the *Cardinal Principles* is to unify and elevate the nationalistic spirit of the Japanese. The authors themselves state:

We have compiled the [*Cardinal Principles*] to trace clearly the genesis of the nation's foundation, to set forth clearly at the same time the features the national entity has manifested in history, and to provide the present generation with an elucidation of the matter, and thus to awaken the people's consciousness and their efforts. (emphasis added, 55)

Like the Hegelian phenomenology, consciousness becomes a task in the sense that Spirit is a progressive and synthetic movement through various figures or stages in which the truth of one moment resides in that of the following moment. In this way the *Cardinal Principles* constructs a convenient ideology for the ruling class (see, for instance, Ajisawa). Again Nagahara argues:

From the imperial view of history, the social and political actions of the masses, especially issues of class struggles and movements, were not only of no significance but also intolerable and something excluded. These problems could destabilize "harmony" of the great family nation whose head was the imperial family. This emotional and irrational concept of "harmony" was employed as a device to conceal the oppressing condition of the imperial state under the name of family nation. (my translation, 24)

Thus, the *Cardinal Principles* cannot but emphasize the spirit of harmony in order to inhibit liberal academism or politics.

The second defining characteristic of ideological pronouncement is one-sided communication, accepting no empirical evidence to prove the point, only to

extend comparisons with and denials of "outsiders." At this point, the *Cardinal Principles* deploys the strategy hinged upon binary oppositions to, first, discredit the Western tradition, and, then, praise the Japanese tradition. They are based upon the assumption that the growing prosperity of the Imperial Line has "no parallel in foreign countries" (*Cardinal Principles* 67).

The book takes virtually any and every opportunity to argue the superiority of Japan over the West. The first example draws upon a purported relationship between "God" and men. Whereas the West posits a hierarchical relationship between God and people, in the East God is in eternal concord with the mutual harmony between them. Thus, the spirit of harmony is demonstrated even within the relationship of "God" and the Japanese people. Elsewhere, the same idea is also extended to the relationship between nature and human beings in which humankind and nature enjoy coalescent intimacy (*Cardinal Principles* 97). Political or moral philosophy is presented as another area of comparison (113). Whereas harmony provides moral character for the Japanese people, Westerners are not thought to be capable of drawing on collective inner strength because individualism characterizes them. Finally, Japan is represented as superior to the West in the terms of its social institutions. The Imperial Constitution is featured as a major example (161). The Constitution is distinguished from that of foreign countries by the nature of the ruler, and it is considered an august message of the Emperor.

In short, Japan is both differentiated from the West, and the superiority of Japan is held to be demonstrated over the West throughout the *Cardinal Principles.* The keys to the comparison are the oppositions between Japanese "harmony" and Western "individualism," and between Japanese "filial piety" and Western "liberalism."

The final constituent for the enactment of ideological pronouncement can be viewed as a lack of critical space, thus, undermining and limiting the possibility of public argument or discussion. Specifically, the *Cardinal Principles* presents a "sub-universe" within which Japan is infused uniquely with the "spirit of harmony." Not only is harmony the "foundation of our country" but there exists no true harmony in Western individualism. The *Cardinal Principles* maintains:

Harmony is a product of the great achievements of the founding of the nation, and is the power behind our historical growth; while it is also a humanitarian Way inseparable from our daily lives. The spirit of harmony is built on the concord of all things. When people determinedly count themselves as masters and assert

their egos, there is nothing but contradictions and the setting of one against the other; and harmony is not begotten. In individualism it is possible to have cooperation, compromise, sacrifice, etc., so as to regulate and mitigate this contradiction and the setting of one against the other; but after all there exists no true harmony. (93)

The spirit of harmony is characterized as the key concept to national unity and contrasted with individualism, or self-autonomy, which is asserted to be the basis of Western socio-political theories. If harmony is a cultural ideal of the Japanese race, then everything that aims at harmony should be desirable. Even "war" can be regarded as a valid activity, as long as its ends are to achieve harmony and to bring about peace: "War, in this sense, is not by any means intended for the destruction, overpowering, or subjugation of others; and it should be a thing for the bringing about the great harmony, that is, peace, doing the work of creation by following the Way" (*Cardinal Principles* 95).

In the Cardinal Principles, there is a careful and predetermined plan of prefabricated symbol manipulation to communicate to an audience. The symbol manipulated is, of course, the Emperor and the imperial myth. The modern concept of equal partnership among autonomous people is replaced by the emotional concept of harmony that envelopes the sovereign and subjects within a hierarchical relationship. Potentially threatening praxis is inhibited or ruled out by the bond of intimate interaction between the Emperor and his "Good and Loyal" subjects. Real politics is, for instance, not valued since it might hurt the spirit of harmony.

Harmony is asserted to have practical benefits for other cultures, too. The *Cardinal Principles* maintains that saving the deadlock of Western individualism is Japan's "cosmopolitan mission" (55). The *Cardinal Principles* even indicts Westernization for the cause of the social evils in Japan's modernity:

The various ideological and social evils of present-day Japan are the fruits of ignoring the fundamentals and of running into the trivial, or lack in sound judgment, and of failure to digest things thoroughly; and this is due to the fact that since the days of Meiji so many aspects of European and American culture, systems, and learning have been imported, and that, too rapidly. (52)

The Imperial Forces, hence, are given the mission to spread the Japanese moral superiority over the world. Of course, territorial aggrandizement is the only way to fulfill the cosmopolitan mission. So the spirit of harmony is elaborately transformed into the justification for Japan's war efforts and imperial acts.

4. Conclusion

I have so far argued that ideological pronouncement is fascist/anti-realist discourse, and should be discounted and criticized as such. The problem lies in the fact that when such a discourse proliferates and is accepted by the general public, it is often difficult to counter it by critical/rationalist discourse as Japan's wartime experience indicates. The situation is, I believe, a cultural or even mythical domination of ideology over argumentation. In other words, the whole book can be regarded as a "mystification of social reality" insofar as the text represents the fascist regime's attempt to indoctrinate the people by combining its own aims with Japan's indigenous religion, Shinto. Japanese mythology is made into mythos of the state for the sake of rationalization.

The "mystification of social reality" is a process through which a grand narrative is logically rationalized by social agents depending upon, rather than opposing a mythos. By "mythos" I mean people's appreciation of their cultural heritage or membership in society. Here the rhetorical construction of mythic authority is used for the purpose of ordering the Japanese youth to serve the country. It is necessary to realize that the outcome of such a fascist/anti-realist discourse would be a disaster. Further efforts should be devoted by rhetorical communication scholars in order to attain freer and more reflective societies, and against the emergence of controlled and uncritical societies in the future.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Pragma-Dialectics of Visual Argument

1. Introduction A number of recent commentators (among them Birdsell & Groarke 1996, Blair 1996, Groarke 1998, and Shelley 1996) have discussed the role that visual images play in public argument. The present paper is an attempt to sketch a pragma-dialectical account of this role. I will call the argumentation which employs such images "visual argumentation" in order to stress the extent to which the images in question can be compared to verbal claims. Because a detailed account of the pragma-dialectics of visual argument is beyond the scope of a short paper, I will more modestly attempt to sketch some cental features of such an account. In the process I will emphasize two aspects of pragma-dialectics: (i) its commitment tospeech act theory and (ii) the principles of communication it uses to explain implicit and indirect speech acts. I end with some remarks on an approach to visual argumentation which is fundamentally at odds with the one that I propose.

2. Visual Images as Speech Acts Any pragma-dialectical attempt to understand how visual images inform public argument must begin with the recognition that such images can, like verbal claims, function as speech acts in argumentative exchange. Understanding such exchange in a pragma- dialectical way, we can say that argumentation is a reasoned attempt to resolve a dispute, that a dispute centers on a a standpoint which is "entails a certain position in a dispute," and that an argument is an attempt to defend a standpoint (Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, 14). The question whether visual argumentation is possible thus reduces to the question whether visual images can be used to express standpoints and defend them, and can in this way contribute to the critical discussion which revolves around disputes.[i] A comprehensive account of visual images in argumentative contexts requires a detailed account of visual meaning. Because such an account is beyond the scope of the present paper**[ii]**, I will instead demonstrate the possibility of visual argumentation with some select examples. The first is reproduced below. It is a World War I American political cartoon drawn by Luther Bradley and published in the *Chicago Daily News*. Though the message is in part visual, it functions as a pointed comment on the causes of the war. Ingeniously, Bradley portrays the world at war as a person afflicted with a terrible tooth ache and the world's "old" monarchies as dental crowns. The nurse labelled "The Spirit of Peace" provides his own diagnosis: the war will end and the world will enjoy peace and comfort only when its old crowns are removed.
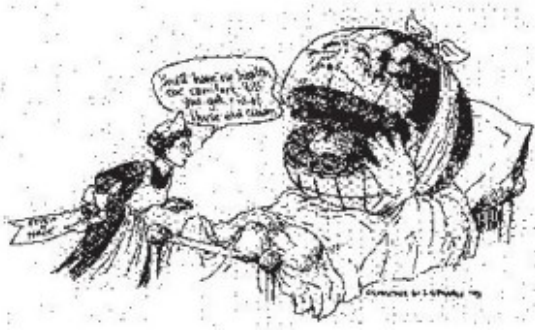
"The Spirit of Peace"

Press has described the view of international politics which characterizes this and other American cartoons of the same period in his book, *The Political Cartoon*. "War is," it holds, "made necessary by the machinations of corrupt and archaic feudal monarchs. Such outmoded feudal leaders seek war because they glory in the pomp of military splendour and aggrandizement, or else they are prone to excesses and saber rattling that inadvertently leads to war. The root cause of war is thus... feudal monarchs and self-proclaimed Emperors [who] vie with each other for the spoils of empire, in a manner suited to the Middle Ages or to Graustark or Zenda, but not to modern times. The solution to war is to replace an outdated feudalism..." (Press 1981, 158). In presenting the standpoint this implies, Bradley's cartoon functions as a speech act which may appropriately be called an "assertive." The proposition it asserts might be summarized as the claim that "If the world is to enjoy peace, then old monarchies must be removed." In the present context, it illustrates the point that a visual image may present a standpoint and in this way initiate or contribute to critical discussion. As in the case of standpoints expressed in purely verbal ways, one might agree with Bradley's position and adduce evidence in support of it. Alternatively, one might – like Press – argue that it is founded on the simple minded view that American democracy is a panacea which can, if propagated, solve the world's problems. The important point is that Bradley's standpoint can thus become the locus of argumentative exchange. Bradley's cartoon might usefully be described as a sophisticated visual metaphor. His standpoint might therefore be said to express the view that "The world is (like) a person with a bad tooth ache who needs old crowns (monarchies) removed." Not all visual images can be classed as metaphors, but the role that visual and verbal metaphors play in critical discussion makes the important point that standpoints are often expressed in ways that extend beyond literally intended verbal claims. The study of visual argumentation in this way extends argumentation theory beyond this narrow

compass. But critical discussion implies something more than the expression of a standpoint. It is, therefore, important to see that visual images can occupy other argumentative roles. Most significantly, they can incorporate attempts to justify a standpoint and can in this way function as arguments, not only in a pragma-dialectical sense, but also in the traditional sense which implies premises and a conclusion. The nature of visual images can be illustrated with another Luther Bradley cartoon, this one from September 15, 1914, shortly after World War I began (below). In this case, the cartoon presents war as a run away automobile speeding down a slope. The driver, EUROPE, sits beside the car's "self-starter," looking in dismay for its "self-stopper." Much to her chagrin, it turns out that war is not equipped with one. The message might be summarized as follows.
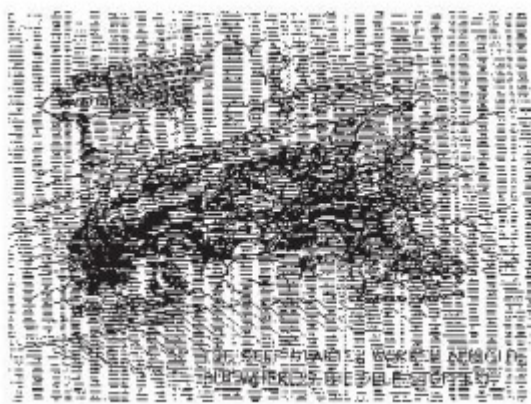

(Standpoint/Conclusion:) Europe is naive and foolish beginning a war for (Premise:) it should know that war is not easily stopped and is bound to end – like Bradley's runaway automobile – in ultimate disaster. The sign beside the car that points ahead to "Bankruptcy" clearly tells us that there will be an economic side to this disaster. So understood, Bradley's cartoon expresses a standpoint but also provides grounds for believing that it is true. It can, therefore, be understood as a visual argument. Once we recognize Bradley's second cartoon as a visual argument, we can analyze it in much the way that we analyze verbal arguments. It is in this regard significant that the argument has close affinities to slippery slope arguments, for they also argue against some action by suggesting that it will initiate a chain of consequences which will have some undesirable result. It might be added that the argument is founded on a generalization about war which is applied to a particular war. The argument is in this way comparable to many verbal appeals to general and universal statements. Many other examples of visual argumentation can easily be found in other political cartoons, in visual art, in magazine and television advertising, and in political campaigns of all sorts. The prevalence of such argument well establishes it as an important species of reasoning which needs to be recognized by any comprehensive theory of argumentation. In the case of pragma-dialectics, the first step in this direction must be a more explicit recognition of the role that speech acts often play in critical discussion, especially in the public sphere. This said, something more is required if visual arguments

are to be fully integrated into a pragma-dialectical account of argument. This "something more" can be achieved by turning to the pragma-dialectical account of implicit and indirect speech acts, for it readily explains the way in which visual images function as contributions to argumentative exchange. It is here that pragma-dialectics has the most to offer to our understanding of visual argument, for its account of the principles of communication provides a ready explanation of the mechanics of visual argumentation and the indirect arguments that makes it possible. *3. Visual Images as Implicit and Indirect Speech Acts* Often, the possibility of visual argumentation has been overlooked because the visual images which function as argumentative speech acts are best classified as implicit and indirect. It would be a mistake to conclude that visual argumentation is necessarily vague and imprecise. Visual images are often explicit in the sense that there meaning is clear and unambiguous. Our first examples are a case in point. Visual images are necessarily implicit and indirect only in the sense that they are not explicitly verrbal and must, therefore, be made verbally explicit when we pursue argument analysis. In many ways, the suggestion that argumentative visual images function as indirect speech acts is very much in keeping with a pragma-dialectical point of view, for it holds that "[i]n practice, the explicit performance of a speech act is the exception rather than the rule" (Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, 44). If we extend its account of other implicit and indirect speech acts to the visual realm, then we must give argumentation visuals a "maximally argumentative interpretation," in order to ensure that their argumentative function is fully recognized. In doing so, we can apply the "principles of communication" that govern all speech acts (Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, 49-55). They can be summarized by stipulating that speech acts should not be (i) incomprehensible, (ii) insincere, (iii) superfluous, (iv) futile, or (v) inappropriately connected to other speech acts. The extent to which the principles of communication can be usefully applied to visual images warrants special comment. Consider the cartoon I have reproduced below. Because I want to stress the wide applicability of the principles of communication in the visual realm, I have in this case picked an image which is not an example of visual argumentation. Instead, it functions as a simple joke. Significantly, it is a joke which is founded on a visual contradiction. Its punch line is found in the last frame, which visually contradicts the earlier frames, which portray the runner running and winning a race. We instinctively avoid this contradiction by interpreting the sequence of visuals in the comic strip in a way that adheres to the principles of communication and avoids the conclusion that they are

incomprehensible, superfluous, etc. We do so by interpreting the runner in the different frames as the same runner, and by interpreting the first four frames as an account of his imagination. The joke occurs because his athletic prowess and accomplishments are, in no uncertain terms, revealed to be a figment of his imagination when he crashes to the floor in the final drawing. No verbal or visual cues are needed to guarantee this interpretation because it is instinctively established by our commitment to the principles of communication. Similar appeals to the principles of communication explain how we understand many images that occur in critical discussion. In the present paper, I want to illustrate this point with two examples. The first is the following 1997 recruitment poster for the British Army (reported in The Guardian Weekly, Vol. 157, No. 16, Oct. 19, p. 9). It is a remake of a famous World War I recruitment poster which featured Lord Kitchener pointing his gloved hand at the viewer declaring "Your country needs YOU." In due course the poster became a patriotic symbol. In the 1997 version it is altered by replacing Lord Kitchener's face with the face of a black officer. Looked at from the point of view of the principles of communication, the purposeful disruption of the traditional image calls for an interpretation of the poster which does renders this disruption meaningful and significant. We can begin to construct a plausible interpretation by noting that the 1914 poster which is the basis of the 1997 remake is readily understood as a visual argument which attempts to convince potential recruits that "(Conclusion/Standpoint:) You should join the army because (Premise:) Your country needs you." One might include as an implicit premise or assumption the patriotic principle that you should do what
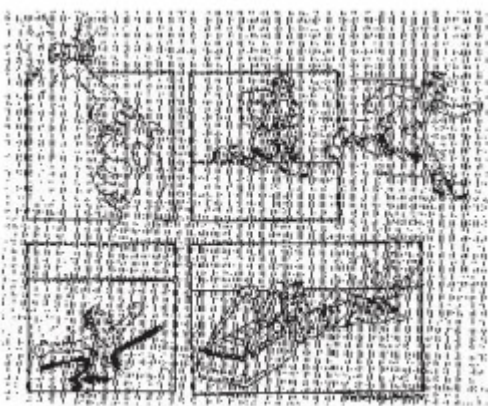
your country needs you to do. The 1997 version of the poster presents a similar argument, but with a new twist which overshadows the original meaning. Clearly, the poster is an attempt to "reach out" to ethnic minorities which are now explicitly recognized by the poster, even though they do not fit the traditional image of the white anglo saxon British soldier. This change in the image has two significant consequences for its meaning. First, it directs the original argument of the poster to a particular audience, i.e. ethnic minorities. Second, and perhaps more significantly, it attempts to convince this audience that the British Army is committed to ethnic diversity. We might therefore summarize the 1997 argument as follows. Premise

1: Your country needs you. Implicit Premise 2: You should do what your country needs. Premise 3: The army is committed to ethnic diversity. Standpoint/Conclusion: You (i.e. members of ethnic minorities) should join the British Army. It is in passing worth noting that this is a case in which the existence of the visual image in an argument is itself offered as evidence for its conclusion. A second example which can illustrate the way in which the principles of communication allow the interpretation of visual argumentation is a recent advertisement for Bacardi Rum. Under the title "Just add Bacardi" it features a huge bottle of Bacardi which is being emptied on a sleepy little village. In a different light and from a different angle, the village scene could be a charming rustic landscape scene, but the time of day (dusk), the lack of activity, and the lonely lights in the windows now suggest a boring hamlet where there is nothing to do. The lack of activity contrasts sharply with the image which appears where the Bacardi splashes onto the scene below. Like a miracle fertilizer, it produces a bustling Manhattan-like cityscape complete with skyscrapers, lights, nightclubs, glitzy restaurants and a thriving night life. Taken as a whole, the advertisement contrasts this exciting scene with the sleepy village which surrounds it. The message is obvious: "If you drink Bacardi, your sleepy life will be transformed into something as exciting as downtown Manhattan." As this suggestion is offered as a reason for believing that "You should buy Bacardi Rum," this is another good example of a visual argument. Significantly, this is a visual argument which seems guilty of the fallacy affirming the consequent, for it argues that you will have an exciting night life if you drink Bacardi, implicitly assumes that you want an exciting night life and concludes that you should drink Bacardi. In the present context, it is enough to note that the meaning is clear, even though any attempt to understand the picture literally entails a series of absurdities – bottles of Bacardi are not so absurdly huge, they do not pour their contents onto sleepy unexpecting villages and if they did the result would be sticky streets and dead plants rather than a Manhattan streetscape. Looked at literally the image is therefore incongruous. We nonetheless manage to easily understand it because we automatically assume the principles of communication, which require that we find some plausible way to make the visual images coherently tied to one another in a way that produces a plausible meaning. We succeed by interpreting the image as a metaphor which is not intended literally. We use the principles of communication in a similar way when we interpret verbal metaphors. We do not, therefore, have problems understanding the verbal claim that "Jackie is a block of ice" and do not interpret it to mean that her temperature is zero degrees celsius,

she turns into liquid at room temperature, is composed of nothing but water and so on. Drastic misunderstandings of this sort are as infrequent in the visual as the verbal sphere, because in both cases the principles of communication undermine them. *4. Two Approaches to Visual Argument* Because the role that visual images play in public argument can be explained in the way I have suggested, pragma-dialectics provides a relatively simple way to assess and evaluate visual argumentation. In the present context, it is enough to say that the account I have proposed suggests that it can assess visual argumentation in essentially the same way in which it assesses other instances of indirect argument. While I will not pursue this point, it is one of the strengths of the proposed approach, for it allows us to assess visual argumentation as fallacious, valid, sound, etc. without requiring that we devise a new theory of argument which is restricted to the visual realm. One might therefore contrast my approach to visual argumentation with attempts to formulate a theory of visual argument which treats it and verbal argument as irreconcilably distinct. One approach to non-verbal arguments which tends in this direction is found in Gilbert 1997, but I will in this paper focus on the account of advertising found in Johnson and Blair 1994. In the present context advertising is significant because it tends to emphasize visual components and is in this way heavily committed to visual argument. Given this feature, one might expect an attempt to come to grips with advertising to result in an expansion of the standard account of argumentation which allows it to encompasses visual statements and arguments, in a manner analogous to the expansion of pragma-dialectics I have suggested here. Instead, Johnson and Blair argue that advertising only "mimics argumentation," that its argumentative leanings are a "facade," and that "most advertising works not at the rational level but at a deeper level" which implies a fundamental difference between its "logic" and "the logic of real arguments" (Johnson and Blair 1994, 220-221). One might summarize their view by saying that it treats advertising as a form of persuasion which is distinct from argument. It in this way suggests that the visual images that proliferate in advertising should be seen as instances of persuasion, and not in the manner I have proposed – as instances of argument. In many ways, Johnson and Blair's account of advertising is impressive and insightful. It convincingly makes the point that advertising is characterized by many sophistic ploys, and is firmly built upon a self-interested attempt to understand what motivates human action. Granting all these points, one might take their comparison of advertising and ancient sophism in the direction I have already proposed. For though one might criticize the sophists for their slippery tactics, it is clear that they saw themselves

as experts in argumentation, and not as individuals who gave up argument for some other form of persuasion. Protagoras' famous claim is, therefore, the claim that he can make the weaker argument (*logos*) the stronger. In view of this, one might compare advertisers to sophists without concluding that they exchange argument for persuasion. Such a view is more in keeping with the pragma-dialectical approach I have developed here, for it proposes a "maximally argumentative" interpretation of the visual images which are employed in advertising contexts, and this implies an emphasis on the attempt to interpret a visual as an explicit argument or the expression of a standpoint which calls for one. It does not follow that the criticisms of advertisements which Johnson and Blair make no longer apply, but that they must frequently be applied to attempts to argue rather than persuade. Suppressed evidence is not, for example, less problematic (and perhaps more problematic) when one describes a visual advertisement as an attempt to argue for the conclusion that one should buy a certain product. The illegitimate appeals to pity, fear and other emotions which Johnson and Blair identify as a key ingredient of advertising remain similarly problematic even when advertising is understood as a form of argumentative appeal. Looked at from this point of view, it might seem that my approach and the approach to visuals implicit in Johnson and Blair are equal, for either can explain the problems with the images that characterize contemporary advertising. To some extent this is true, though I believe that there are four problems with the attempt to drive a wedge between argument and advertising and, more specifically, argument and advertising visuals. I will end this paper by proposing them as four reasons which favour a theoretical approach to visual argumentation which construes it as an extension of verbal arguments rather than a species of persuasion which abides by a different 'logic.' One problem with the attempt to treat advertising visuals as persuasion rather than argument arises in the context of the sophistic features of the former which motivate this view. Here the problem is that these aspects of advertising have clear analogues in verbal argumentation. Purposeful ambiguity and vagueness, slippery allusions, the suppression of evidence, and self-serving appeals to fears, pity and other emotions are not, for example, the sole preserve of advertising and their visuals.

They are, on the contrary, a constant feature of verbal critical discussion, especially in the public sphere. So long as their existence there does not show that verbal argumentation of this sort needs to be classified as persuasion rather than argument, it is difficult to see why it should entail this conclusion in the case of advertising images. It is precisely because there is this kind of overlap that it is useful to apply pragma-dialectical accounts of fallacies to visual argumentation. In marked contrast, the attempt to divorce visual and verbal arguments seems to unnecessarily separate two kinds of arguments which may be more efficiently understood in terms of a unified theory of argument. A second problem with the attempt to treat visual advertising images as instances of mere persuasion arises in cases in which they do not seem to be sophistical, even if they are problematic. Here the problem is that many instances of visual argument seem to clearly conform to standard forms of argument. A Canadian television advertisement for Cooper hockey equipment features players from the National Hockey League using and recommending Cooper equipment. Though the appeal was primarily visual this seems a clear case of argument by authority. The same can be said of many other advertisements which are similarly constructed around some alleged expertise. When a man with horn rimmed glasses, a white lab coat, and a stethoscope tells us that this pain killer relieves headaches faster than that one, we know that he is being presented as a medical expert. Because visual appeals to authority of this sort demand the same kind of analysis as verbal appeals to authority – an analysis which asks whether the authority's credentials have been properly presented, whether he or she is an appropriate authority in the case in question, whether they have a vested interest in a particular conclusion, etc. – it seems a mistake to treat them as anything other than arguments in the traditional sense. One might respond to such examples by trying to distinguish between visual images which function as arguments and those which function only as persuasion. But this requires some principle of division which can clearly distinguish these two sets of images. I propose this as a third problem for the persuasion account, for it is not clear what principles can be employed in this regard. In contrast, the interpretation strategy which I have gleaned from pragma-dialectics – which proposes that we interpret argumentative visuals in a maximally argumentative way – establishes clear priorities which are relatively easy to implement in the practice of argument analysis. A fourth and final problem with the kind of approach proposed by Johnson and Blair is its emphasis on the negative aspects of advertising and the visuals it employs. This is in many ways in keeping with their emphasis on fallacies, which teach argumentation

skills by identifying the mistakes that frequently occur in ordinary argumentation. A number of commentators have criticized this approach on the grounds that it emphasizes instances of poor rather than good reasoning (see, for example, Hitchcock 1995 and Tindale 1997). In their own discussion of advertising, Johnson and Blair themselves point out that it is a mistake to dismiss all advertisements as deceptive and misleading, but their decision to treat them as attempts at persuasion which only mimic arguments still has a very negative slant and invites this conclusion, especially in students. It is in this regard worth noting that the persuasion approach to visual argumentation supports a common prejudice against the visual which has tended to characterize argumentation theory. In view of this prejudice, it is all the more important that we emphasize the possibility of good visual argumentation. In some ways and in some contexts, I would argue that visual argumentation is actually preferable to verbal argument. If one wishes to argue about the horrors of war or the desperate plight of children in the developing world, for example, then it is arguable that it is not visual images but words which tend to be inadequate conveyers of important truths. If this is right, then there are practical contexts in which visual argumentation is more appropriate than its verbal analogue. A more detailed discussion of visual argumentation lies beyond the scope of the present paper. In the present circumstances, I hope I have given some reasons for believing both that we should accept the possibility of visual argumentation, and that pragma-dialectics can provide a basis for an understanding of its content. NOTES i. The most-cited study here is by Tversky and Kahneman. They conducted an experiment in which a witness' testimony had to be combined with knowledge of prior probability to yield a value for claim probability – a simpler situation than the one being discussed here. Their subjects were told the following story. A cab was involved in a hit and run accident at night. Two cab companies, the Green and the Blue, operate in the city. You are given the following data: (a) 85% of the cabs in the city are Green and 15% are Blue, (b) a witness identified the cab as Blue. The court tested the reliability of the witness under the same circumstances that existed on the night of the accident and concluded that the witness correctly identified each one of the two colors 80% of the time and failed 20% of the time. What is the probability that the cab involved in the accident was Blue rather than Green?" (From Baron, J., Thinking and Deciding, 1988, p.205) Most subjects gave estimates near 80%, as if ignoring the base rate for Blue cabs, which is 15%. The Bayes Theorem shows that the correct answer is 41%! Using the procedure advocated in this paper, we would not accept the eyewitness claim that it was a

Blue cab. To warrant accepting the claim, the witness' error rate would have to be less than 1/4 (we are dealing with a claim, not an argument) x 0.15 (the initial probability that a cab would be a Blue cab), or 0.04. But it is actually 0.20. ii. In part because visual images may gain meaning in such a great variety of ways (by convention, by demonstration, by purposeful exaggeration, and so on). REFERENCES Birdsell, D & L. Groarke (1996). "Toward A Theory of Visual Argument." *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 1-10. Blair, J.A. (1996). "The Possibility and Actuality of Visual Argument." *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 23-39. Eemeren, F.H. van & R. Grootendorst (1992). *Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies.* Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Gilbert, M. (1997). *Coalescent Argument.* Mahweh: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Groarke, L. (1998). "Logic, Art and Argument." *Informal Logic* forthcoming. Hitchcock, D. "Do the Fallacies Have a Place in the Teaching of Reasoning Skills or Critical Thinking?" In: H.V. Hansen & R.C. Pinto, *Fallacies: Classical and Contemporary Readings University Park*: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995. Johnson, R.H. & J.A. Blair (1994). *Logical Self-Defense*. United States Edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 1994. Press, C. (1981). *The Political Cartoon.* Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Shelley, C. "Rhetorical and Demonstrative Modes of Visual Argument: Looking at Images of Human Evolution." *Argumentation and Advocacy*, 33, 53-68. Tindale, C. (1997). "The Negative Approach to Teaching Argument: The Case Against Applied Fallacy Theory," Presented at the Second International Conference on Teaching and Learning Argument. Middlesex University, London.

ISSA Proceedings 1998 – On The Fallacy Of Fallacy: Arguing For Methodological Difference:

Producing vs Processing

1. Introduction

Fallacies have always been in the centre, or near the centre, of argumentation studies. In fact they lie at their roots in two senses: most approaches to argumentation have sprung from a consideration of what is amiss in human reasoning or thought, and theories of argumentation stand and fall with their capacity for detecting errors. In other words, fallacies are the cornerstone of argumentation theories very much like paradoxes once percieved by Russell as the stumbling block of scientific theories: they constitute the boundary conditions within which human thought and action remain to be *rational*. For a long time fallacies and rationality had been taken to be the two sides of the same coin, until certain evidences appeared to undermine their interdependence. They came basically from two sources: the psychology of decision making and the semantics and pragmatics of inferences in language use. Now it is no longer the exclusive power of argumentation theory that matters but their inclusivity, i.e. how charitable they are with faulty reasoning, error making and unjustified action. If fallacy theory does constitute a major divide, it works rather like a filter through which the beyond normal is let upon the territory of the rational; or at most it is a tradeoff between the rational and the irrational.

In this paper I am not going to take stock of the enormous data corroborating the "legal status" of irrational moves in thought and action; I only elaborate a little on the diagnosis that with the *cognitive turn* in the 70s a new look on the methodological basis of argumentation is needed. Yet I will not adumbrate a methodology here because, as I see it, there is an important, and not clearly noted, distinction underlying most of the insights in cognitive science that should be reckoned with in the first place before any stand on argumentation can be taken. Since there is not enough room here to fully elaborate this distinction, I have to suffice with some important consequences. Thus I am doing a kind of archeology of knowledge in the Foucaultian sense, which may fall beyond the proper scope of argumentation theory, but if there is anything wrong with the idea of fallacy, as I think there is, it can only be identified in its undepinnings and its undepinnings are in cognition.

It is a most common opinion that the idea of fallacy is theory-laden: no fallacy without a theory. Now I want to oppose that view and try to argue for a rather

strong claim that there are – at least some interesting – cases of language use when what appears to be fallacious or misplaced is not the given move itself but rather the *attempt* to judge what has been said or done as acceptable by some pre-set theoretical standards. Fallacies result then from a fallacious methodology; the methodology is fallacious for two reasons, which are however related.

2. The outline of the argument

I start then with the first reason why fallacies are originally methodological. It is constituted by what I take to be a major tension between the *descriptive* and *normative* ideal of argumentation theories. It is the basic claim of this paper that conflating the two inevitably leads to apocalypse. Thus it is because of the trafficking between the two ideals that John Woods could once call relevance theory as developed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson *apocalyptic*.

Since most frequently argumentative structures are the result of re-descriptions of utterances, in illustrating the first reason I will draw upon certain tenets from linguistic theory. This does not mean that I am necessarily biased by linguistic theorizing; rather the principles of understanding and producing language like relevance, graduality, similarity or structure mapping etc. should cohere with the more general priciples of argumentation. If our understanding of language, i.e. of what is said, is apocalyptic, there is not much chance of constructing a – let alone sound – argument out of it.

Next I present my second reason by outlining a basic distinction that results from the findings of cognitive science. The distinction is between *producing* and *understanding*. My supposition is that even if the structure of our cognitive aparatus might at some future time be found the same in both cases, the terms of its operation, the aims and the procedural conditions, significantly differ.

The distinction has much to do with the debate of the continuity thesis of *similarity* and *rule-governedness* that has recently surfaced in cognitive psychology. (See e.g. the special issue of *Cognition* (65) 1998) Thus in this part I will cite some examples from categorization and topical research in linguistics and criticize their treatment for not taking heed of the above distinction. The basic idea is that rules are abstract and context-independent, whereas similarity-driven processes are particular and contextual.

Finally I bring together the two distinctions within general rationality in terms of Donald Davidson's principle of charity. I also hint at an evolutionary framework to be developed along the lines proposed by R. Garrett-Millikan. The basic idea is

two-tiered: i.) what is fallacious or not depends on the evolving of discourse and thus it cannot and should not be stated *a priori*; ii.) tampering with a rule is acceptable as long as both verbal and non verbal behavior preserve the biologically and culturally vital boundaries. This may be taken as a solution to the paradox of the sorites to which boundaries which are not fallacy-proof can easlily give rise to. It is the reason why I consider my approach anti-apocalyptic.

To sum up: cases of rule-governedness, which is descriptive, cannot always mean rule-following, which is normative, and vice versa: cases of not following a rule does not necessarily result in violation *simpliciter*: it may amount to tampering with meaningful content: the domain covered by the the rules in question. One may wish to distinguish between motor activities, which *appear* to be rule-following to the external observer because they respect the evolutionary important boundaries without a proper representation of content, whereas higher cognitive activities *appear* to be rule-following to the internal observer because they are truth-preserving in inferencing and representing content. However, if the continuity thesis is correct, any attempt to separate out the normative element in the two cases is doomed to fail. One should look instead at how much producing speech and action and interpreting incoming stimuli are task-centred.

3. The graduality principle

Producing and interpreting differ in the first place as to their criteria of success. No doubt that in producing some behavior I have to cope with certain constraints or expectation evironmentally determined. My behavior is rule-governed precisely in the sense that the constrainsts are out there: it is always rational to respect them and set the aim of my action accordingly. Yet their observance need not be normative in the full sense: I may be careless or lazy enough, or too roughly – even differently -disposed to come up with an optimal "solution". What I thus produce, my performance, is rarely ideal or "well-formed". This does not exclude that I may consciously chose to follow some abstract rule and approximate an ideal as closely as possible. Most (re)actions are however coarse-grained and/or come off the target, while their aims may be properly defined.

In contrast when I interpret natural signs or other people's behavior, I always do it by relating it to what is given inside my mind, to what I know and believe. But it cannot be said that they are a kind of inner constraints with which strictly speaking I have to cope; rather they form the background for my understanding. Thus it follows naturally that *any way* I interprete what has been said to, or

performed before, me IS rational. In other words the descriptive and normative ideals coincide. What I do is *eo ipso* optimal with respect to the *available* alternatives. Most interpretations are fine-grained and relevant to previous knowledge, although they can many times become automatic and similarity-driven. It appears then that, though rules and similarity in principle form a continuum, they are prototypical of two diagonally different activities: producing and processing. And while rule-following is the prototype of producing and shows more flexibility as a result of the working principle of optimality, similarity being the prototype of processing yields more rigidity in structure because of the underlying principle of mapping.

One – if not the only – reason that producing and processing are not mirror-images and relie on different mechanisms is that language use in humans amoumts to more than communicating information. The idea is at least as old as the Gricean maxims. Today the clearest formulation of the common core of its "additional" – if not *sui generis* – dimensions is the *graduality principle* (GP). It is a structural principle of human knowledge in that it places the items in long term memory upon a scale or within a hierarchy of levels on the basis of the similary among them. (Cf. Dubois \Resche-Rigon 1996: 37) We can identify three important characteristics of GP. First that it allows for a categorical structure based on typicality *à la* Rosch. Second that it is value-laden in that it expresses a point of view and hence it can be utilized for argumentation. And third that it figures in lexical-linguistic structure. (Cf. Raccah 1993) Thus it results that the structure of cognition need not reflect – counter what Rosch claims – the ontological structure of our world, and neither does it follow formal-logical rules; rather it is governed by the orientations expressed in graduality. Language use "involves the application of general principles which we call *topoi* (*pace* Aristotle)." (Anscombre \ Ducrot 1989: 80) The topoi constitute an argumentative potential: they are corrrespondences among a series of gradations which allow for a set of possible inferences and can be exemplified with a comparative (the more/the less..., the less/the more...) structure.

Clearly, the aim here is to discover a common basis for our conceptual and linguistic apparatus. Accordingly, the commonality is found in the task-centredness of categorization as well as of the manipulation of knowledge: it is always relative to a given task that category judgements are made and decisions are arrived at. And the list is by all means extendable to many kinds of contextual approaches, especially to relevance theory proposed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson where contextual selection is a primitive, an unreducible hallmark of rationality,

rather than something awaiting rational explanation. It is the bare fact that the stimulus is "worth the audience's attention. Any utterance addressed to someone automatically conveys a presumption of its own relevance. This fact, we call, the *principle of relevance.* ... it is not something that they (the people) obey or might disobey; it is an exceptionless generalization about human communicative behaviour." (Wilson \ Sperber 1988: 140)

The authors' purpose is to find the rock bottom of communicative activity where a deviation from the norm comes to constitute the norm itself. No wonder that John Woods found this conception apocalyptic. If relevance theory is however aligned with typicality and topical argumentation, its rationale appears to be not so much the wielding of formal-logical structure – although Sperber \ Wilson do make such a claim – but rather the search for non-logical constraints on interpretation. Whether the constraints imposed by what is known include or not the utilization of demonstrative logic is a separate matter. As prototypical categorization represents a move away from taxomical systems, so do relevance theory – and other context selection approaches – make a step toward informal inferencing. That the idea of relevance in question leads to apocalypse in logic may well be true. Sperber\Wilson's real fault does not lie there. It lies rather in occupying two contrastive positions concerning rationality in cognition and in argumentative behavior. On the one hand they set the task to explain how communication even without an explicite code can become successful; that is how things can be inferred instead of being decoded. But if this is so, it appears on the other hand that what people in fact do is not understanding each other but rather conducting a monologue. In order to be otherwise, the speakers should be saddled with the extra burden of optimizing their talk *in such a way* that it facilitate the context selection by the hearers. To do that they should also be ascribed the mutual knowledge the pertinance of which Sperber \ Wilson argue against. Thus, however, we would soon be lead back to the original code model. And indeed, if the speaker were so keen on communicating the same idea, it would be more economic for her to use the latter than sending the hearer into an a-mazinglabirynth of dubious and intricate – i.e. non-computable – inferences. Moreover, we have seen that, while we are more often than not optimizers as interpreters, we are quite nonchalant in producing proper behavior. So if the apocalypse is there, it is on the side of the speakers, not on that of the hearers. I will even venture to add that the more we are optimizers as producers, the more hard wired the given reaction becomes. In fact, as we will later see, *it is precisely*

because we ascribe the same optimizing rationality to others that we are prone to be nonchalant in producing behavior. Sperber \ Wilson cannot have it both ways: retaining the rich inferential potential on the part of the hearers and securing the uptake of the communicative intent of the speakers. That is they cannot account for the fact that we are cognitive satisficers and productive optimizers at the same time. Yet that is what "the exceptionless generalization about human communicative behaviour" would require them to do. Else there is no rational explanation for language to have evolved.

4. The categorization problem
I illustrate the above point with a categorization problem. Thus the second reason for the methodological character of fallacy theories surfaces in cognitive psychology. Subjects are often tested for categorizing with a selection task in which they must perform pairings of figures and/or names, while it is the whole structure of training and testing they have undergone that should explain why they succeeded or not in their task. Yet it is highly dubious that the structure of the experiment correctly mirrors the structure of "inner" processing, i.e. the bridging between stimuli and output. In many cases "subjects are asked to provide a report under conditions where they would ordinarily not see anything meaningful. Knowing that the figure contains a familiar object results in a search for cues." (Pylyshyn 1998) Still in other cases subjects must judge a statement like "A canary is a bird" either true or false. Such tasks are rather imposed on them and constitute "closed paradigms". (Cf. Dubois 1991: 43) What psychological experiments are supposed to show is that the same principles that discriminate among the categories are also working within the categories themselves in producing prototypical effects. Thus – as Rosch puts it – there would be no sense in dissociating these principles. But since furthermore prototypicality is only a matter of best example within a category and not to be confused with the question of belonging, in many cases it seems to be enough if only the boundaries between categories (such as human and non-human, friend and enemy, etc.) are represented and the content either simply does not matter, or if it matters, it matters only to the extent of delineating contrastive categories. Note that in such psychological experiments what goes on in the mind is taken to be mirrored by how the subject reacts to the target problem, that is by producing. Psychological testing reduces inner processes to simulation, that is to outward behavior and thus it commits the methodological fallacy of pulling down the distinction between interpretation and production. Such analyses are open to the

criticism that representations are emptied out of content. By content I mean anything from feature-detection to nearest neighbour or averaged vectorial distance among affiliated items in connectionist networks. Representing boundaries may be as congenial (or conducive) to survival as ranking an instance within some category. Representing boundaries, however, implies that behavior relies so heavily on context that it is neither rule-based, nor similarity-based. It is not rule-based because it is an essential feature of rules that they are non-contextual. But it is neither similarity-based because, as e.g. Ellard reports, certain species "respond to *all stimuli* as threatening or to *no stimuli* as threatening depending on their familiarity with the context in which the stimulus is presented" irrespective of the local configuration of the stimulus, since there is an "obvious adaptive advantage… that it pushes the time-consuming and computationally expensive problem of stimulus recognition to a point in time that actually *precedes* stimulus onset." (Ellard 1995: 681) In other words it does not imply structural mapping, but rather a pre-tuning to current context. I do not see any reason why such behavior could not appear to be significant in man.

A particularly interesting case is the experiment reported by Smith and Sloman who repeated a test by Rips to highlight the difference between the two categorization processes (similarity-based and rule-based). The task was to decide whether the test object with some characteristic attribute(s) belong to one of two target categories, of which one was fixed, while the other was variable with respect to the given attributes. (The attribute was shape falling in between the regular sizes of quarters and pizzas.) When there was only one such attribute, namely size (a round object 3-inch in diameter), most subjects judged that it belong to the category of pizzas rather than to the category of quarters. The explanation went that in case of boundary conditions subjects categorize on the basis of rules and rank the vague object with the variable category, while, and despite, noticing its similarity with the members of the fixed category. Whereas with the test object having more attributes similar to the members of the fixed category (e.g. silver color) subjects tended to judge it not only more similar, "but also as more likely to belong" to the fixed category. (Smith et alii 1998: 182) This experiment however does not prove -as the authors want it – that categorization is similarity-based, since the attributes in question were necessary and/or perceptually *salient* features, which attest rather the application of rules. Experiments with boundary conditions do not show that people, if made to give all-or-none responses, indeed *represent* the test object as this or that. They rather

show to the contrary that subjects are reluctant to tamper with represented boundaries, and so they temper with content: if presented with something conspicuously similar to the target object, they adjust, or temper with, the precise "rule" of what belongs to that category. Note also that such experiments completely disregard the role of context. How would subjects decide if the test object is presented to them within a restaurant or buy-and-sell frame?

Thus we reach the conclusion: the fact that people follow rules in their behavior above – behavior in processing stimuli – is a phenomenon resulting from the contrived character of the situtations they are tested or observed. There is nothing like inherently normative here. It is rather that the horizontal organization of categorial structure appears to be far more *relevant* to selective action than the vertical structure. To sum up:

(T1) Human categorization is such that it reflects the evolutionary important boundaries among the objects of environment, but there is no objective mapping between the content of coded categories and external reality. (Cf. Pólya \ Tarnay 1997)

Coded boundaries may naturally shift with evolution, hence there is objective necessity for the semantic trasparency of the boundaries themselves. Yet it is crucial that there be observed boundaries, which can be reflected linguistically as well.

5. Normative vs descriptive: rule-governed vs similarity-based

Thus we are confronted with contrastive evidences or conflictive demands: on the one side we have experimental results in develomental psychology, pathology and animal behavior which attest of high contextuality and dispositionality in behavior; hence they point to similarity-based rather than rule-governed behavior. Yet – and this is partly my point here – they *appear* to be rule-following to the external observer since – at most – coding of category boundaries may be inferred in certain cases. Furthermore, it turned out that prototypical categorization prompted by E. Rosch and her followers frequently mirror prior training and external activity rather than the inner structure of representation; thus typicality should also be ranked here, which accords well with the fact that they are similarity-based.

On the other side we have the topoi or argumentative inference conceived along the lines of J.-C. Anscombre and O. Ducrot. By all means inferential activity implies rule-following, hence it cannot exclude normativity in its entirety. Given

the rhetorical nature of language it arises that the scope of inferential activities cannot be wholly captured by a theory of relevance as Sperber \ Wilson want it. Yet it must have also become clear that their theory occupies a middle position in my ranking in that for them context selection is primary and similarity based, while it is only fuel and/or input to the main operation: the producing of contextual effects by means of – demonstrative – rules.

Suppose for the moment that the picture linguists and psychologist with an argumentative bent is close to the truth. Suppose furthermore that it is the best explanation one can offer of what goes on in the hearer's mind. Then we have a blatant inconsistency. When we interprete we are cognitive satisficers, that is we try to extract with the least effort as much content as we can from what has been said. In other words we set our aims too high: we strive to construct a distinctive – fine-grained – picture of the world on the basis of structural and inferential relations between incoming new and retrievable old information. But when it comes down to responding or (re)acting, unless we are *rationalized* experts – we observe only the most "relevant" – coarse-grained -boundaries of our cognitive structure.

Whence such an inconsistency? I have already hinted at one possible answer: evolution driven selectivity. This may well cover low-level – dispositional – action. But I have presented high-level, categorical thinking very much like autonomous, similarity-based action. Can I be justified in making that move? Now here is the source for a second answer, quite orthogonal to the first; it is the principle of charity proposed by Donald Davidson. It says briefly that in evaluating the speakers' behavior we aim at giving the best possible explanation of their – linguistic – behavior. That is we rationalize their activity. At face value, rationality is not an ideal by which we automatically assess their action, but it is rather a result of our interpretative activity. The question is: Can we reconcile the principle of charity with the principle of relevance or argumentative normativity?

At first sight it seems yes, since both approaches aim at at a full-blown interpretation of utterances, at exploiting its inferential potential, at resolving conflicts, etc. This latter task most often amounts to supplying missing premises. But on what basis should such premises be determined? On the argumentative approach, it is a set of agreed upon rules – either semantic or pragmatic – that constrain both interpretion and possible responses (i.e. speech acts). Violations of such rules would then naturally amount to committing a fallacy. But if so, most argumentative-communicative situations are doomed to break down. For what if the best possible explanation of inconsistent or incoherent speech behavior comes

from unique or "irregular" sources of the situation in question, from ideosyncretic aspects which are not given or statable once for all. What if the point of a semantic or pragmatic rule consists precisely in tampering with, or manipulating, it? This is a moral to be learnt from oral communication, ordinary and artistic, in primitive and as well as higher cultures. But a moral also rendered by categorization testing in experimental psychology when it is acknowledged that "a change in the activation level of a feature has the effect of changing the criteria of arbitrarily many categories into which that feature could enter, including ones that the investigator may have no interest in or may not have thought to test." (Pylyshyn 1998)

If we take the principle of charity in an argumentative vein we have our second answer: we are nonchalant in our behavior *just because* we ascribe the same kind of rationality to others. We suppose there is a rock bottom of rule-following, some abstract set of rules upon which agreement must sooner or later be reached. It is an overgeneralization: *an extrapolation of external behavior onto the domain of what goes on in the head*. But it is just this supposition of general rationality that appears to be a fallacy as soon as we take content seriously. Inconsistency may not be right word to apply to what is meant here: tampering with the rules may well be just another metaphor of constantly jostling the boundaries of our inner categorical structure. Redrawing the horizontal structure of our categories cannot be made to follow some pre-set rule, it cannot be normative. There may well be external constraints originating with the changing of our environment, but there is no direct internal response to that change; cognition has its own plasticity but it is essentially constrained by its former structure. If relevance bears any selective advantage, it is in (re-)utilizing "cognitive parts" as building blocks already there rather than starting anew. (Cf. The Gouldian idea of evolution as assembling old parts together – ones adapted to a previous purpose – for a new purpose.)

This may be taken to be a stretched – even a too charitable –interpretation of the principle of charity to cover cases of blatant inconsistency. Yet I think it is not. I agree with Z. Pylyshyn that inference is an activity "where the semantic property truth is preserved. But we also count various heuristic reasoning and decision-making strategies (e.g. satisficing, approximating, or even guessing) as rational because, however suboptimal they may be by some normative criterion, they do not transform representations in a semantically arbitrary way: they are in some sense at least quasi-logical. This is the essence of what we mean by cognitive penetration: It is an influence that is coherent or quasi-rational when the meaning

of the representation is taken into account." (Pylyshyn 1998) The use of term "rational" is meant to indicate that in characterizing such processes we need to refer to what the beliefs are about – to their semantics. The important point is that such processes can be suboptimal. I think Pylyshyn hits the right note when he asserts that "most psychological processes are cognitively penetrable, which is why (cognitive) behavior is so plastic and why it appears to be so highly stimulus-independent." Hence cognition is both stimulus-independent and meaning dependent. That could well be the reason of its suboptimality. Suboptimality does not mean however that cognition is not task-centred as most cognitivist conceive of it. But that is not enough reason to tret motor and processing activity on a par. The difference may be analoguous to that between "systems that have constraints on interpretation built into them that reflect certain properties of the world" (Pylyshyn 1998) and systems that access and use knowledge. While the first is cognitively impenetrable, the second is not.

To sum up: higher cognition may *appear* rule-governed to the extent that it is stimulus-independent and and meaning-preserving in exploiting more or less abstract structural correspondences. Even so, even if it is cognitively penetrable, it cannot become normative, since it always works with used materials.

6. Concluding remarks

Let me conclude with giving vent to a good and a bad consequence. The good one may be that the black box of the mind has not been wholly and adequately opened yet, so there is much work to be done in this field. It is plausible that man is capable of high-level cognitively penetrable activity, of understanding complex relation structure, etc. I take it to be part of the good news that such ability is higly plastic, and even if abstract, it cannot be ranked with rule-following. Quite clearly so because it involves analogical thinking which has much in common with primary similarity-governed processing. But there is the bad news. It starts with the simple observation that if communication (and cognition) is task-centred, then an important part of it must be constituted by the attempt of securing the uptake and the "correct" interpretation of any utterance. Otherwise – and in lack of some other meaning independent social function – selection should have driven it out. But should it? If what has been said of production is only partially true, we are surrounded with a huge mess of carelessly formulated and misfired talk and misunderstanding. How is it that selection has not already driven out our communicative ability? I can give two brief answers here. The first is simple and a bit cheating. It runs that the evolutionary story of literacy is too short to be a

proof of its selective advantage. The second is more complex but I cannot elaborate it here. It starts by seemingly overturning my argument in this paper in that it claims that what we are almost smothered with is not a mess of misfired talk, but rather a "cognitive" technology, factories of ideologies, which not only reproduce the same forms of talk like e.g. the ads, but they self-reproduce as well. That is they do not overturn the communicative function but overexercise it. So far so good. Communication should not be wiped out then. But there is a corollary to this answer: the overarching function of exact communication will result in the wiping out of the meaning-dependent and rule tampering cognitively penetrable higher activity, since any tampering with the rules slows communication down or may even end up blocking it completely. But once again our past is only a drop in the evolutionary ocean. So we are stuck with our morsel of hope.

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