ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Rational Comprehension Of Argumentative Texts

The goal of this paper is to sketch a new method of analytical comprehension of theoretical texts in humanitarian sciences. The proposed method of research is based on semiological principles of text comprehension. Both content and form are essential for comprehending argumentative texts. A text recipient is viewed as a rational subject trying to detect all the components of the argument he/she considers and thus to see if the argument is logically consistent. Elementary and higher level argumentative units of the text are discovered by applying a modified S.Toulmin's model of argumentative functions (Toulmin, 1958).

Studying the problem of understanding depends on a method accepted, on a researcher's background, and on a field of research. Thus, approaches in psycholinguistics can differ from those in hermeneutics, literary criticism or philosophy. Scientific method is not the only one to be applied in solving the problem of the essence and mechanisms of understanding; it can be supplemented by other methods. All that means that both the topic and the object of research matter in studying understanding. By the topic I mean a particular kind of message for understanding. By the object I mean a chosen method and particular aspects of the message to be studied.

The topic of my study is a research text in humanitarian sciences. The object of my study is a problem of understanding a research monologue text. By text I mean the written form of discourse, as opposed to speech as its oral form. A research text is organically argumentative, i.e. constructed on the basis of certain principles of reasoning (irrespective of the field it belongs to). That is why research text understanding is essentially understanding of the text argumentation. By argumentation I mean reasoning, both in its formal-logical and informal-logical aspects (rhetoric is thus excluded from argumentation, which is conditioned by the specific topic under consideration). Argumentation is viewed here as a social symbolic sub-system, with the system being a language – natural or artificial, depending on which version of argumentation is chosen for

consideration. Like any human knowledge, argumentation as a symbolic sub-system is generated by the power of human mind. Constructive sign-forming abilities of cogitant individuals are unitary. This, however, does not mean that all cogitant individuals create identical cognitive structures: variety of constructs at an abstract level reflects specific categories managing the process; these categories can be purely logical or argumentative.

An important factor in producing or changing symbolic systems is acceptance or refutation of a knowledge structure, respectively. If an old system of knowledge is refuted or is found inapplicable for describing or explaining an object, it is substituted by a new or a modified one. Being social (inter-personal), such competitive cognitive systems are applicable for describing and explaining phenomena. Therefore it is possible to postulate coexistence of competitive cognitive structures/systems, none of which, as a product of human mind and interaction, can be absolutely true. Consequently, argumentation theories can be object-oriented and object-specific; they can also be competitive and differently plausible/valid for a specific object (some of them can be better, others worse).
A modification of rationalism is taken as a basis of method here. The modification states that though there is truth, it is practically unattainable. The theories can and must be discussed and refuted since any of them is only a further step to attaining the truth. Falsifiability of theories leads to falsifiability of particular claims and judgments. Taking into account the unique character of personal experience, we can state the uniqueness of scholars' theories.

Therefore truth of judgments is viewed here as always relative to a particular cognitive system. The common ground for comprehension here is conventions about the principal axioms and the meaning of terms (such as Argument, Premise etc.). The conventional character of terms can be stronger or weaker: cf. Informal Logic, Pragmadialectics, Deduction, Induction as examples of the latter). No doubt, conventional force can depend on linguistic clarity and the skill to formulate one's ideas.
A recipient of an argumentative text is viewed here as a "rational subject", or an analyzer of reasoning in the text. He/she uses a certain model of analysis to understand the author's reasoning. The model is stored in the recipient's memory and is based on logical laws of thinking. Criteria of logical correctness (relative truth of premises + validity of reasoning) must correspond to the standards of rationality that are used by both the author and the recipient of the text.

Supposedly, such criteria exist. The standards are manifested in a specific argumentative model because a theoretical text is based on a logic of reasoning.

Argumentation can be represented by various approaches. Still, to have even minimal explanatory force any approach must be based on principles of construction and analysis of reasoning. Rational attitude helps us to choose out of many logical systems a basic one maximally corresponding to the goal and the object of our research.

Since an argumentative text is regarded here as a theoretical text based on reasoning, it must correspond to the principle of strictness which can be deductive validity. Taking into consideration the sign nature of a text, we should choose a logical system oriented (at least partly) on semiological processes. Such a system must be intensional because theoretical texts are themselves intensional. If we have a suitable logical system applicable in all respects but the intensional one, the system can be extended thus having an opportunity to describe both form and content.

Since a theoretical text is a natural language phenomenon, it is necessary to pay attention to linguistic categories proper, i.e. meaning, exponential and contentive parts of the sign. These factors can be covered by a modified version of traditional syllogistic. Taking into account the specificity of the type of a theoretical text taken as the object, namely, a text in humanities that does not have a strict formal organization, it is necessary to apply an informal logical system to text analysis. Such a system could demonstrate that being non-rigid, the text is still logically organized, i.e. constructed in accordance with a scheme of reasoning representing a tactico-strategic aspect of argumentation. For that purpose an argumentative-functional model as a version of sentential logic is used.

Comprehension is understanding another person through a discourse; it is thus not only subject-oriented, but also object-oriented. The object-oriented principle of understanding presupposes specific treatment of happiness conditions of reasoning and comprehension of argumentation in monological texts. The happiness conditions are divided into general argumentative and specific argumentative conditions. This differentiation is based on the dichotomy between pan-systemic and mono-systemic levels in argumentative analysis.

General argumentative conditions comprise Principles of Generosity (described in detail in works on argumentation), of Argumentativity, and of Symbiosis of Systems of Reasoning. The Principle of Argumentativity presupposes co-direction

of premises of an argument so that their use could not contradict to a claim being proved, and the combination of the premises makes the argument stronger. This principle does not apply to syllogistic because premises in a syllogism are interrelative with its conclusion and thus always “work in the same direction”; it is also important that the notion of strength of the syllogism is inapplicable to syllogistic as a deductive system.

The Principle of Symbiosis of Systems of Reasoning presupposes division of application of systems of logical analysis in accordance with a strategic and a tactical approach to the text. There are two levels of argumentation in the text. The strategic level is responsible for description of the principal (general) organization of the text. For strategic analysis argumentative-functional model is used. The tactical level in the proposed theory is the level of the argumentative elementary unit; this intra-argument level is used here for analysis of logical correctness of the unit of argumentation.

Since the recipient has nothing but text as objective data for analysis, he can establish its logical correctness basing on the degree of its optimality of encoding. In other words, not only the contentive, but also the exponential part of the text matters for establishing its logical correctness as viewed by the recipient. For this level a new version of syllogistic is applied; its syllogisms are sensitive both to the form and to the content. The syllogistic operating on the structures resulting from argumentative-functional analysis of the text. These structures are argumentative units.

Specific argumentative conditions are Principles of Maximalism and of Discretion. Being both applicable to the intra-argumentative level of analysis, these principles are differently oriented. According to the Principle of Maximalism, if there is no explicit quantifier (which is most often the case) in the Claim judgment of an enthymeme and, consequently, the scope of the Claim can be either universal or particular (with different modes of syllogisms taken for restoration), the recipient should choose the universal option out of the alternative “universal vs. particular”. It is thus presupposed that the author of the text made the stronger (universal) statement. The Principle of Discretion is quite the opposite and is oriented at choosing a particular statement. Maximalism works in accordance with the Principle of Generosity: it is oriented on a greater scope (and, hence, greater force) of the author’s argument. Discretion is oriented at “saving face” of the author if his/her claim only turns out to be a particular (as opposed to a supposedly intended universal) statement as a less commitant one, i.e. having less

force than it could have had. Discretion is also oriented at the recipient – it insures it from possible blame of making a quantitatively too strong conclusion.
Argumentative analysis based on the two systems of reasoning operates on specific units of argumentation. The minimal unit is an Argumentation Step, composed of elements of argumentation – statements having specific argumentative functions: Claim, Data and Warrant. Nominal composition of a unit is co-occurrence of the three elements; relatively minimal is presence of Claim and Data; absolutely minimal is occurrence of Claim only. Argumentative elements do not necessarily correspond to separate statements in size and can be manifested as a combination of statements, particularly when the statements do not have a form of a standard judgment. The maximal unit of argumentation, to which both systems of reasoning (i.e. the argumentative-functional model and the syllogistic) are applicable, is an Argumentation Move; it is a unit of textual level composed of several Steps (it can also coincide in size with one Step). A formal border of the Move is the border of its respective paragraph.
At the local level (the level of Argumentation Step) use of both mentioned systems of reasoning is most efficient. The result of using the syllogistic method is a parallel argumentative structure composed of one (in a relatively minimal argument) or two convergently combined syllogisms (in a nominal argument). That is a "syllogistic portrait" of an Argumentation Step; it has the properties of provability and of unconditioned relevance of argumentation at the local argumentative level. Such "portrait' is not regarded as a separate argumentative unit here, because only one system of reasoning (but not both) is applied to it; rather, it is a result of analytic understanding of the Argumentation Step. The applicability of the method presented above has certain
limitations because it was developed for specific types of discourse – written argumentative monologue with a non-rigid structure. Other types of discourse can be analyzed from different positions.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Improvement Of Teacher Training In Philosophy For Children Through The Pragma Dialectic Approach

In this paper I intend to argue that teacher training in the Philosophy for Children Program can be significantly improved through the Pragma Dialectical Approach. For that purpose, I will first make a brief and necessarily sketchy presentation of the fundamentals of the Philosophy for Children Program. Then I will make a few comments on its potential for an education for democracy, making specific reference to the Chilean experience. Next I intend to discuss the concept of a "Community of Inquiry", central to the Philosophy for Children Program , in order to show 1) how the building of such a community can contribute to the development of reasoning skills and democratic attitudes in the participants and 2) what is expected from the Philosophy for Children teacher.

Based on this discussion, I intend to reflect on what I see as some shortcomings, as far as helping teachers meet those expectations, in the presentation of the formal and informal logic contents of the novels and teacher manuals, which are the standard materials used for teacher training in the Program. I shall also comment on the bearing that the usual structure and length of the Workshops may have on the results of that training.

Finally, I intend to show how the Pragma Dialectical Approach can help overcome the difficulties and contribute to improve the teachers' training. For this purpose, I shall discuss some features of the Pragma Dialectical Approach such as the formulation of a code of conduct for rational discussants and the analysis and evaluation of various types of argument attempting to show how these can help the teachers in training become the kind of model of reasonableness that the Philosophy for Children Program expects them to be.

1. The Philosophy for Children Program

The Philosophy for Children Program is deservedly renown and appreciated worldwide for its merits in helping to develop reasoning skills and reasonableness in children through philosophical dialogue. Using philosophical novels for children, the teachers trained in the Program are able to organize lively discussions in the classroom about things that matter to the students, thus breaking the monotony and lack of meaning of which traditional education, through the imposition of an "Adult Agenda", is usually accused.

As Matthew Lipman, creator of the Philosophy for Children Program explains, the main purpose of the Program is "to help children learn how to think for themselves" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan,198O: 53). Rather than aiming at teaching philosophical topics to children, the Program aims at helping them "to think philosophically" (Bosch,1992:18).

According to Lipman (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan,1980: 22), the most adequate means for stimulating thinking is dialogue. When we are intensely engaged in dialogue about things that matter to us vitally, says Lipman, we perform a number of mental activities such as listening attentively, considering carefully, rehearsing what we might say next, establishing connections with what others have said or written on the topic earlier or somewhere else, trying to figure out what the speaker is aiming at and what the assumptions are from which he or she is starting, etc. In other words, although we may not be aware of that, we are exercising our reasoning skills and thus stimulating their development. The same applies to children. Therefore, if we manage to engage them in dialogues that are meaningful for them, Lipman argues, we will contribute to develop their reasoning skills. If we help them, in this process, to become more sensitive to the variety of perspectives and the complexity of the problems involved, we will contribute to develop their reasonableness.

The role of Philosophy in this endeavour is twofold:

1. to maintain or repair the connection with the children's curiosity making it possible "to elicit from them the wondering and questioning characteristic of philosophical behavior at any age" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:1O3), and
2. to give dialogue the necessary structure and rigour that makes of it an effective tool for the development of reasoning skills.

The first is taken care of by the novels and by the methodology. The novels cover a great variety of topics from the philosophical tradition. The methodology stimulates children to ask and wonder about anything that the readings may

prompt them to ask and guides them in following the inquiry where it leads.
The second is covered by Logic, both formal and informal. Lipman says that there are three meanings of Logic in Philosophy for Children: Formal Logic, Giving Reasons and Acting Rationally.
Formal Logic's main purpose in the Program is "to help children discover that they can think about their thinking in an organized way" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan,198O:131). Giving Reasons or "The Good Reasons Approach" emphasizes seeking reasons and assessing reasons given by others. Its main purpose in the Program is to help children "discover the broad range of applications of structured, deliberate thinking" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:139).
Acting Rationally designates the kind of Logic whose purpose it is "to encourage children to use reflective thinking actively in their lives"(Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:146). Neither the philosophical questions and ideas nor the logical notions are contents or subject matter that the students are expected to learn as that. The teacher's role is to promote among the children a philosophical discussion of the highest level, using the novels' contents to stimulate them to discuss those issues that really interest them, and to become him or herself an arbiter that guarantees the discussion's impartiality. Therefore, Philosophy and Logic are blended, so to speak, in the activities the students and the teacher perform and it is rather artificially that one separates them for the purpose of analysis.
For my present purposes in this paper, it is important to note that the teacher not only is expected to know and to be sensitive to an enormous amount of philosophical material, but also is supposed to be aware of the rules of good reasoning and to be able to point them out to students as needed during the discussion and to help them apply those rules to their reflection and everyday experience.

2. Education for Democracy

Beside its remarkable results in improving children's reasoning and reading comprehension, the Philosophy for Children Program is also known for its impact on the development of other areas of the child's personality, such as creativity, dedication to work and what in the Program is referred to as "personal and interpersonal growth"(Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:65). This expression refers to an increased awareness of the own personal value and the value of others and an increased sensitivity to one another's personalities that emerges as

a result of being engaged in the common venture of philosophical inquiry. Learning to think together respecting rules of thinking and discovering different and unthought of ways of thinking and looking at things helps develop a special sensitivity for what it means to belong to a community. This will become more clear later when we discuss the concept of a "Community of Inquiry". For the moment, it is enough to say that in the very conception of Philosophy for Children is the seed of an education that is both democratic and for democracy.

In a research project (Fondecyt**[i]** Project O7O3-91), conducted for four years in a suburban area of Santiago, Chile, in a school that serves a population of extremely socially deprived children, my husband, Celso López, and I were able to show that the Progam can be an effective tool for educating for democracy in Chile.(Cf. Vicuña,1991).
What we did was to work with the children from 4th to 7th grade using the philosophy for Children materials, train the teachers so that they could do the same, and observe and register in every session the "democratic behaviours" that were being developed. For this we used an observation chart in which we included fourteen democratic behaviours. The research assistants, all university students majoring in philosophy, were in charge of this task. We also measured the development of reasoning skills in the children and contrasted it with a control group. The results showed significant improvement in the experimental group.(Cf. Vicuña & López, 1994).
I think that the Program's enormous potential for an education for democracy is obvious to those who know and reflect on its foundations and methodology. The only merit of what we did resides in showing that these ideas really could work in Chile, and in the most difficult setting. Now that we have shown it, we must be able to prepare teachers that can replicate the experience. Hence the importance of improving the quality of teacher training, especially in places like Chile where democracy is still quite far from being completely realized.

3. The Concept of a Community of Inquiry
According to Lipman, the expression "Community of Inquiry" was presumably coined by Charles Sanders Peirce and was originally "restricted to the practitioners of scientific inquiry, all of whom could be considered to form a community in that they were similarly dedicated to the use of like procedures in the pursuit of identical goals"(Lipman, 1991:15).
Applied to the field of Philosophy for Children, the expression designates a group

of persons (the children and the teacher) who are engaged in a common search that is both cooperative and mutually challenging. In Lipman's conception, whenever children are stimulated to think philosophically following the inquiry where it leads and submitting themselves to the procedures that are proper to that inquiry, the classroom is converted into a community of inquiry. This means that "students listen to one another with respect, build on one another's ideas, challenge one another to supply reasons for otherwise unsupported opinions, assist each other in drawing inferences from what has been said, and seek to identify one another's assumptions" (Lipman, 1991:15).

The repetition of the reciprocal expression "one another" in the above characterization is indicative of the communitary and cooperative aspect of this endeavor, also present in the words "build" and "assist". But there is also reciprocity in the mutual challenge to be critical, to supply reasons, to draw inferences, to identify assumptions. What becomes manifest, then, in this characterization are the two aspects that ought to be part of the community of inquiry: the communitary and the logical.

Some images that Lipman uses may serve to explain what the community of inquiry is all about. I consider the following four images to be the most suggestive and therefore I propose to elaborate on them in order to get a better grasp of the concept and especially of the teacher's role.

1. *The kittens and the ball of yarn.*

"Under suitable circumstances, says Lipman, a room full of children will pounce on an idea in the way a litter of kittens will pounce on a ball of yarn thrown in their direction. The children will kick the idea around until it has been developed, elaborated upon, and even in some instances applied to life situations, although the latter is seldom achieved without the teacher's artful guidance." (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:1O4).

Doing philosophy with children is inviting them to play with ideas, to make them roll around, to take them apart, and to take out the different threads until they apparently make a big entanglement. They may think that they are just playing and that what they are doing does not have much sense, but a skilled teacher will be able to help them find sense in that apparent entanglement, what the lines of convergence and divergence are, and how to go about to clarify the issue.

2. *The human pyramid* (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:105).

Doing philosophy with children is also similar to the building of a human pyramid

by the children in the school yard. They are all necessary in order for the construction not to fall and each one contributes in a different way to the balance of the whole. It belongs to the teacher's role to show where there is need of support and where of counterbalance.

3. *The construction of bricks (*Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O).
The way in which all children participate in the discussion and contribute to bring about clarity and to make sense of the problems at issue is similar to a construction made of bricks in which everyone is placing his or her own brick making it fit in harmoniously in the whole. The teacher should be able to point out where there is a brick lacking and how to make the building become more stable and more harmonious.

4. *The boat tacking into the wind* (Lipman,1991:16).
When the children and the teacher are committed to this kind of inqury, the whole group advances like a boat that goes into the sea following the wind's impulse that sometimes pushes in one direction and sometimes in another. The wisdom of the teacher, as that of an expert sailor, lies in knowing how to benefit from the favorable wind and how to resist the adverse one, when to unfurl the sails and when to pick them up.

Through this last image Lipman intends to show the most significant feature of the community of inquiry: that the progress of the group resembles the process of thinking itself. "Consequently, when this process is internalized or introjected by the participants, they come to think in "moves" that resemble its procedures. They come to think as the process thinks" (Lipman,1991:16). By means of these four images I have attempted to make understandable in a few words a concept that is rather difficult to explain to someone who hasn't lived through the experience. What is important to note for my present purpose is that the communitary aspect and the aspect concerned with the development of reasoning skills are intertwined. Therefore, in the process of building such a community the teacher has to attend to both.

Through participating in such a community, students become aware of the diversity of perspectives and the diversity of thinking styles from which an issue can be looked at and are willing to examine rigorously all possible alternatives. In the process, they learn how to think better because they are enriched by the different perspectives and learn to correct their thinking in the light of the other

participants' objections or suggestions. In order for them to be able to come to this ideal situation, they need to be guided by a teacher that helps them learn to respect each other, to become aware of one another's thinking processes and to develop a sense of what thinking rigorously entails.

According to Lipman, the conditions required to build a Community of Inquiry are intrinsic to philosophy itself (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980:45), therefore doing philosophy with the children is the best way of fostering its development.

What is needed, says Lipman, is "a teacher who is provocative, inquisitive, impatient of mental slovenliness and a classroom of students eager to engage in dialogue that challenges them to think and to produce ideas" (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980:102). The model for this ideal teacher is Socrates. In Lipman's view, Socrates' most remarkable features, as he is portrayed in Plato's dialogues, are his ability to question, his rigurosity and his belief that knowledge is not something that one transmits to other, but something that one helps the other to elicit from himself.

The Philosophy for Children teacher is expected to emulate Socrates, becoming for his/her students a model of inquisitiveness, rigurosity, openness, intelectual honesty and humility. He or she must be someone who challenges the students to think and who is able to show them how to think well and how to improve the quality of their thinking. The most important of the teacher's abilities should be the ability to foster and to guide a philosophical discussion, representing for their students an impartial arbiter and a challenging, inquisitive, open minded facilitator of it. There are a number of skills that the teacher should master for this purpose.

Among the ones mentioned and analyzed by Lipman are the following (Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 198O:1O2-128): the teacher must be able to elicit from the students their views or opinions, to help them express themselves more clearly, restating, explicating or interpreting what the children say when necessary, to request definitions, to point out to fallacies, to indicate underlying assumptions, to maintain the relevance, to center the discussion, to examine alternatives, to request reasons, to request evidence and to orchestrate the discussion conducting it to a higher level of generality.

It becomes clear from this that the teacher is expected not only to think philosophically but also to be able to analyze and appraise all the children' s contributions, to show how they relate to one another and to help the discussion grow and become a meaningful experience to all participants.

The question, of course, is how to train a teacher in order that he or she develops

these features.

4. Some shortcomings in teacher training

To train a teacher in Philosophy for Children is no easy task. It is necessary to help them develop a genuine curiosity, a commitment to philosophical inquiry, an abilty to question, a sensitivity both to rules of rigorous thinking and to different thinking styles, and the skills required for conducting a philosophical discussion mentioned above. In relation to this, Lipman says:

"No explanation of the art of teaching philosophy can be adequate for the teacher-in-training. First, it must be admitted that philosophers themselves have never been very clear about what they do when they teach philosophy. We therefore lack a complete understanding on which an adequate explanation could be based. Second, even if we had such an explanation, it would be insufficient without a competent modelling by the philosopher coupled with the teacher's experiencing what it is to engage in philosophical dialogue. These three components– -explanation, modelling, and experiencing- are indispensable in preparing teachers to teach philosophy on the elementary grade level."(Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980:125).

In consequence, in the Philosophy for Children practice everywhere the teachers are trained in workshops where they are expected to experience in themselves what it is like to be a participant in the building of a community of inquiry. Using the same materials that they will later use with the students, i.e. the novels and teacher's manuals, they are guided by an Instructor or teacher trainer in building a community of inquiry with their colleagues in training.

True to its Deweyan origins, the Program provides each of the teachers in training the opportunity of "learning by doing" through the experience of guiding at least one of the sessions. This and being a participant in the building of a community of inquiry constitute the "experiencing component". The "modelling component" is provided by the Instructor, a philosopher trained by Lipman himself. The "explanation component", however, is less visible in the workshops. What is usually done is giving the teachers to read "Guiding a Philosophical Discussion" (Chapter 7 of Lipman's "*Philosophy in the Classroom*": Lipman, Sharp & Oscanyan, 1980:102-128). In this text they will find very clear and practical explanations on how to do their work. But, even in this text, there are things that a teacher with no background in logic will find hard to understand or to apply in practice, for instance, inferring logical implications, seeking consistency,

indicating fallacies, etc.

As I see it, the explanation component doesn't seem to be sufficiently accounted for in the workshops, especially in what regards to the logic contents of the Program. This also hinders the exercise by the teachers of the experiencing component in this matter. There are several reasons for this:
1. The logic contents included are not the same in all the novels. Therefore, the teachers trained in "Pixie", for instance, will not have the same opportunity of being exposed to some logical contents as the ones trained in "Harry".
2. The logic contents of the Program do not include a thorough treatment of the fallacies. Although many excellent exercises on faulty reasononing are provided in the teacher's manuals, there is no systematic treatment that may ensure that the teachers will be able to use them profitably.
3. The logic contents of the Program do not include as a topic the procedural aspects that the teachers are expected to be able to point out to the students when guiding the philosophical discussion, like going to the point, avoiding personal attacks, providing reasons, avoiding contradiction, maintaining relevance, etc.
4. Due to the methodology of the Program, one only gets to discuss what the group chooses to discuss in every session. Therefore, it is quite possible that the logical aspects are not discussed, just because they are never chosen to be discussed. Of course, the teacher, being a member of the community of inquiry, can always propose to discuss logical topics, but he or she cannot impose them. This should never be a problem with the children, because the teacher has countless opportunities and ways during the school year to introduce the issues that have been left aside. However, given the length (usually 60 hours distributed in an intensive week) and the somewhat artificial nature of the workshops, the teacher trainer does not have this luxury, but has to move on in order to cover all the ground assigned to that workshop.

As stated before, there are many excellent exercises in the teacher's manuals, e.g. on analogical reasoning, part-whole relationships, syllogistic reasoning, inductive reasoning, and so on. But, if they do not come up during the training period, it is very unlikely that the teachers will attempt to use them later on with their students.
In our experience in teacher training in Chile, we have seen that teachers do, in fact, avoid discussing logical subjects. In so doing, they fail to get the necessary

experience to work these subjects later on with their students and they are deprived of discussing the theoretical explanations that may help them understand how these logical aspects can be introduced in the practice of successfully guiding a philosophical discussion.
The explanation and the experiencing components being absent, the only way that is left for the teachers to learn is by imitating the Instructor's modelling. This is hardly sufficient, for excellent that the Instructor may be.
What we often see is that the teachers "learn the music but don't learn the words", as we say in Chile. That is, they go through the stages of reading, inviting the students to formulate questions, helping them find relationships between the different contributions and grouping them. They are also able to create an open, inviting atmosphere, promoting questioning and discussion. But, when it comes to providing the necessary help to center the dicussion, or to pointing out to some fallacy that has been committed, or to showing that some contribution is not relevant to the issue at hand, they simply fail to do it.
In order to counter this deficiency in the explanation component, we have intoduced in the structure of our workshops in Chile some short lectures followed by discussion. One of the subjects of these lectures is the role of logic in Philosophy for Children. Although this helps, it is by no means enough. What is needed is a basic and systematic treatment of the logic involved in the Program.

5. The Pragma Dialectical Approach
I think that the Pragma Dialectical Approach could help to overcome some of the difficulties just mentioned and contribute to the improvement of teacher training in Philosophy for Children I shall limit myself to pointing out to four features of the Pragma Dialectic Approach that make of it a useful tool for helping teachers meet the challenges outlined above.

1. The Pragma Dialectic Approach formulates a code of conduct for rational discussants and gives ten rules to be observed in a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992: 208-209). These rules are to some extent equivalent, yet much more precisely expressed than the Philosophy for Children requirements for the building of a community of inquiry. For example, the building of a community of inquiry requires from the participants:
a. mutual respect and mutual challenging.
This could be expressed by
rule 1: "Parties should not prevent each other from advancing standpoints or

casting doubt on standpoints", and
rule 2: "A party that advances a standpoint is obliged to defend it if the other party asks him to do so".
b. openness.
This, again, could be expressed by rule 1.
c. intellectual honesty.
This is expressed by rule 5: "A party may not falsely present something as a premise that has been left unexpressed by the other party or deny a premise that he himself has left implicit", rule 6: "A party may not falsely present a premise as an accepted starting point nor deny a premise representing an accepted starting point" and rule 9: "A failed defense of a standpoint must result in the party that put forward the standpoint retracting it and a conclusive defense in the other party retracting his doubt about the standpoint".
d. rigurosity.
This is expressed by rule 3: "A party's attack on a standpoint must relate to the standpoint that has indeed been advanced by the other party", rule 4: "A party may defend his standpoint only by advancing argumentation related to that standpoint", rule 7: "A party may not regard a standpoint as conclusively defended if the defense does not take place by means of an appropriate argumentation scheme that is correctly applied", rule 8: "In his argumentation a party may only use arguments that are logically valid or capable of being validated by making explicit one or more unexpressed premises", and rule 10: "A party must not use formulations that are insufficiently clear or confusingly ambiguous and he must interpret the other party's formulations as carefully and accurately as possible". Although these rules are formulated for discussions between two parties and not for group discussions such as the ones that take place in the community of inquiry, being aware of these rules may be of great help for the teachers in their role of arbiters of the discussions. For this purpose, of course, they must understand what lies behind each rule and have had the opportunity of discussing them. From a pedagogical point of view, being able to summarize this information in these Pragma Dialectical ten rules is most advantageous.

2. The Pragma Dialectic Approach explains the fallacies as violations of the rules for a critical discussion. Therefore, knowing the rules may help the teachers get a better understanding of the fallacies. Since, as stated before, the training workshops' structure makes it difficult to take up the logical issues in a thorough

and organized way, the summarizing and comprehensive vision that the Pragma Dialectic treatment of the fallacies offer, represent a significant improvement for the teachers.
This is not to say that this will replace the necessary experience that ought to be acquired through time and practice, but I think that it will hepl the teachers in gaining confidence in their handling of the logical aspects.

3. Through the analysis of various types of argument the Pragma Dialectic Approach provides the teachers in training with different models to evaluate different situations. Particularly helpful in this context are the "argumentation schemes" that the Pragma Dialectical Approach distinguishes. According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst, arguers usually rely on ready made argumentation schemes : "a more or less conventionalized way of representing the relation between what is stated in the argument and what is stated in the standpoint" (Eemeren van, & Grootendorst 1992:96). Therefore, arguments can be analyzed as belonging to one of the three following categories ot types. The arguer may try to convince his interlocutor by pointing out that something is "symptomatic" of something else, or something is "similar" to something else, or that something is "instrumental" to something else. Of course, there are many subcategories of argumentation schemes that the teachers should be made aware of, but there is a great advantage for them in knowing and learning to identify these main types, because this will help them to better understand and evaluate the children's contributions.

4. Through the acquisition of the skills for dialectical analysis and normative reconstruction the teacher can be helped in developing an ability for better guiding the children during the different stages of the building of their discussion.

The brief mention of these Pragma Dialectical features may serve to indicate how this approach can help improve the quality of teacher training in the Philosophy for Children Program.
During the last three months a special course on the logical aspects of the Program has been offered to public school teachers already trained in one of the novels. For this purpose the Pragma Dialectical Approach is being used. We do not have results yet, but the teachers report that they are extremely pleased with the course and that it has helped them greatly in their work with the children.

NOTES

i. Fondecyt is the Chilean National Fund for the development of Science and Technology.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Do Advertisers Argue In Their Campains?

Advertisers are often creating a certain kind of argument called sales argument. Sales arguments are published in numerous media. Some are directly adressed to custumers, others to sales persons, who can use them to motivate their customers to buy. In common these

arguments are ‘good arguments’ if they are persuasive.
But if one asks whether they are valide, this question turns back to the theory of argumentative valitiy one is using. In pragmatic theories of argumentation, sales arguments can be reconstructed as argumentative moves with at least some charity by means of adding premises, reformulating theses and giving usage declarations. Arguments put forward as speech acts do also deserve some charity. But the question is in general: Are we right in reconstructing sales arguments as related to validity?
Before returning to this question I want to sketch out the positions of a virtual theorist and an advertiser who is willing to use argumentative rules. It is a narrative fiction about possible interactions of positions. The concept of position will then link up to a validity-related ‘dynamic’ approach to Argumentation Theory. The central issue of this paper will be a case-based discussion of the validity of sales arguments as analogies. Before I will mention briefly how sales arguments are missing the requirements of some other approaches to Argumentation Theory.

1. The positions of the advertiser and the argumentation-scholar
Do Advertisers Argue in their Campains?
It depends. This is the answer of a scholar. It depends on the concept of argumentation which is preferred and on the corresponding analysis of advertising.
Of course. This is the answer of an advertiser. Argumentation is one of the strongest instruments to force rational adressees to accept an opinion and to act accordingly.
Each position includes aspects of the other: From the scholar’s vievpoint the advertiser will be successful in applying a practical theory of argumentation that stresses the rational aspect of Argumentation. Argumentation is perceived as a rule-guided practice**.[i]**
From the advertiser’s perspective the scholar’s efforts maybe regarded as support in advance of the advertiser. The scholar seems to be engaged in strenthening the rational believes of the adressees so that they will understand themselves more and more as being committed to accept any thesis that can be arrived at by correctly applying the scholar’s rational rules of argumentation.
This position may be regarded as a rethorical or even sophisticated**[ii]** standpoint that describes rationality as a means of persuasion.**[iii]** It is an “enlightend” position as far as it delegates any ethical questions to the Indiviual. Relativistic

consequenses seem to be inevitable.
Nevertheless it provides the impression of usefulness towards the scholar who is not reflecting the values his work may be serving. The outcomes of his work are designed as unbiased scientific results.
Both viewpoints are strengthening each other, the one in applying the other's results, the other in being esteemated by the first. None of them is independent. None is disinterested.

2. Relativism and Positivism of Positions
Both positions are roughly scetched out, so that nobody is forced to identify himself with any of them. But nevertheless everybody is free to take up the position he wants.
What is of interest in this place is the concept of position which belongs to comprehensive concept of argumentation. Therefore we can take this reflexion as a starting point for further considerations. 'Position' means the circumstance, that an opinion is always stated somewhere and very often powered in favour or against something.
That means, that a position is situated in a virtual area of tension. Where do positions get their power from? Many strong positions are composed of arguments. At least there is only one demand to a position: It must hold. Good arguments do. Their steps are constructive in a way that each is posed on it's precedessor. Gaps and circles must be evaded.
This is not a mere methaphor. It is the easiest way to demonstrate how argumentative positions are 'positive'. Every position depends on being *posed* and internally being built up by someone. It needs a platform it can stand on. And it needs an architecture. Every demonstration, that it has no reliable 'static' creates an objection. The 'bricks', argumentative positions are built of, are oral platforms. Their 'way of speaking' is reliable. Objects can be identified, predications and intentions can be understood and propositions can be checked. To use another metaphor: The ways towards their positive theses can be followed up, if the construction is methodologically consistent.**[iv]** To demonstrate the reliability the adressee must be willing to go this ways towards the theses. Literally spoken this means that without ongoing dialogic inquiry the positions cannot be hold, because the only way to find out the reliability of a manner ('way') of speaking is the adressee's critique.
Therefore argumentative positions are relative. They are relative to objections, to disputes and to the lifes they are embedded in.**[v]** They are also relative to

concurring positions.

3. Case one

The DSDS bulb campagne 1997 used a surprising similarity between a pregnant woman's and and a bulb's silhouette. (Lürzer's Archive '98 I, 82)

As all ads do, the campagne aims at the observer's attention. At first glance a process of perception, deception and reflexion is initiated. The very familiar and emotional impression of a pregnant woman's stomach is supported by the Headline: "We will call her Narcis." Pregnancy is indeed a good reason to decide about the name of a newcomer. This impression will be falsified by reading the pay-off Line: "Bulbs. Again it's time to plant."

To better understand the interrelations the observer then will take a closer look. She will recognise the pictured bulb and the following new interpretation of the headline may amuse her: 'Narcis' is called the flower one can receive some month after planting the bulb.

The ad's strategy is successful if the observer has transferred her positive emotion from the first glance to the second. The deep structure might be the following syllogism:

Every matter of fertility is lovely. Planting (and buying) bulbs is a matter of fertility. Therefore planting bulbs is lovely. The conclusion is true if the premises are true. Obviously it is a syllogism, but it can't serve as a good argumentation because of the weekness of at least one premis. It is a structure of belief. The whole structure can be the result of an argumentative process as well as the outcome of an aesthetic perception of advertisements. Surprisingly it has a logical structure**[vi]** although it cannot be justified: Sentences like 'every matter of fertility is lovely' can be shown to be wrong by numerous ugly couterexamples, nearly everybody will agree to. Of course argumentation is not impossible in this case. The problem is with the pros: There is seemingly no way of approving a general premis that attributes 'lovelyness' to a set of objects, situations or even people. Seemingly it is a matter of taste.

Some say: Taste cannot be argued. I'm not so shure about that. Obviously the opposite can also be hold: Taste can be argued excellently. Both sentences are commonplaces used in aesthetic discourses. The differenciation needed to resolve the paradox does not regard the usage of the term 'taste'. The paradox depends on the aequivocal usage of 'argumentation':

Argumentation (1) has to meet the requirement of directing to truth. It ends up

with truth. It's paradigm is proof: deriving truth from premisses to conclusions using valide logical structures and meaningful expressions, some kind of logical syntax and semantics. Theses, that are worth to be argued, must be formulated in clearly defined terms. Otherwise "… one must remain silent." (Wittgenstein 1988: 85)
From this view, discussing the question wether something is lovely or not – or even causing pain – is not a way of talking about the world. It is a more or less civilised way of replacing expressive shouts and gestures. (cf: Wittgenstein 1984) Ethics and Aesthetics remain inexpressible.

Argumentation (2) is a social pracise, guided by the ideal of providing the participants with reliable orientations. Orientations are complex schemes of conduct. They are containing situation schemes, action schemes, ends and means-end structures. Feelings, sensations and impressions are part of situation schemes. Situations are 'by definition' not exactly definable. Each one is an original. Therefore situation schemes are focussing on some relevant aspects of them. This way they become managable. The more distance that can be established, the more individual differences can be ignored. Following this tendency (Wohlrapp 1990), the ability of controlling situations increases and validity of orientations can be established.
From this point of view, discussions about taste are not to be excluded from Argumentation. What kind of taste will be agreeable, and which one will be found ideosyncratic is a decision that depends on the corresponding argumentation. The decision on what can be attributed to be 'lovely' e.g. would be embedded into a range of paradigmatic cases (Govier 1985: 55ff) instead of stipulating a generalisation.

While Argumentation (1) postulates definite meanings and extensions of the used expressions, Argumentation (2) includes the development of concepts as well as dynamic moves of the whole structure: A starting-thesis T1 will be attacked by objections stating contradictions or gaps in the supposed chain of reasoning. In consequence the proponent of T1 has at least 3 options: He can
1. add some reasons, explicitising more backgrounds,
2. make some semantic shifts, that are also affecting the theses, so that he reaches T1'
3. or make the shift explicit ending up with the follower-thesis T2

Again this is a very rough sketch of theoretical approaches towards non-

theoretical argumentation. But I think the problem of aesthetical and practical reasoning is well-known. It is recognized in many other approaches:

Discourse Theory e.g. has developed different kinds of claims to validity: Truth, rightness, adequacy of evaluative standards and veracity. Each of them is related to a selfstanding realm of discourse marked as: theoretical, ethical or aesthectical. (Habermas 1981: 65ff) In this context Discourse Theory has realized the pragmatic turn: The paradigm of argumentative validity in Discourse Theory isn't any more a theoretical model of structure but a practical normative ideal taken from forensic debate.
The pragmadialectic approach also realizes this kantian primate of practise. It's rule guided code of conduct (Eemeren, Grootendorst 1984: 151ff) delegates different claims to different argumentative stages. Explication of terminological usages e.g. has it's place in the preparatory stage.

I don't want to mention these aproaches here. As fas as I can see they don't give enough attention to the peculiar argumentation related character of aesthetics as they appear especially in advertisings. Nevertheless they give an answer to whether ads are argumentative or not. To be acknowledged as argumentations fitting into one of these approaches advertisements are missing several necessary conditions:
From the viewpoint of Discourse Theory one will find a lack of equalty in the participant's chances. Pragmadialecticians will find a lack of intersubjectivity and sincerity. And they also won't be pepared to reconstruct advertisements as sequences of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Even a dispute in a tv spot won't be acknowledged being more but a fictional argumentation consisting of fictitious speech acts.
Other approaches to Argumentation Theory don't see the case much better. Wohlrapp's dynamic and reflexive approach (Wohlrapp 1995) e.g. doesn't provide the analyst with normative tools. The analyst's evaluation is at the same time to be regarded as a move of a participant. It is situated inside of a complex transsubjective activity called 'argumentative tendency'. Therein argumentation tends to evaluate itself. The tendency depends on the participants growing ability of 'distanciating' personally hold opinions and to transform them into 'theses' that are relative to given reasons.
In opposition to this, advertisements, placed in public media, are tending in the opposite direction: Reasons are put forward, objections sometimes mentioned, but

the moves are always directed towards individual feelings, and personally held opinions of the form: For me as an individual it is worth to prefer A in case of B. Such opinions are to be distinguished from argumentative theses. They are not at anybodies disposal. They are seldom explicitly expressed, and they are – ideally – beyond question because they are designed as implantes to the adressee's selfunderstanding and orientation system.

So advertisements are not argumentative? Here I can't state a conclusion like this, because this would presuppose a justification from an external standpoint which has no place in this approach. As we can describe a tendency as a more or less dense sequence of moves, motivated by different or even opposing forces, we can speak now of a 'discoursive' and an 'antidiscoursive tendency'.
Indeed this description does not leave advertisement as a disinterested object which does not effect argumentative validity. But I dont think, that this is the place to start a normative oriented criticism of antidiscoursive activities. Before taking a closer look to the example I only want to mention here that there are two opposed possible operations in the tendency: Wohlrapp's 'distanciation' is paired by an opposit move I will call: 'approximation'.

4. A dynamic approach to the argumentative force of advertisements
Analogies in general are not well reputated as arguments relating to valitity. As Mengel shows they nevertheless are doing their job in cases of insufficient theoretical bases. (Mengel 1995: 191) As already mentioned theses are validated by forwarding reasons against objections. Their ability to support a thesis in question depends on their supposed theoretical basis. An insufficient basis can be (re)constructed methodically step by step. But this may be a long and sometimes impassable way, e.g. in questions of taste.
In this case analogies can be useful. They can generate new viewpoints establishing new and surprising similarities between cases of different fields. Although they are not controllable like methodical procedures, they can be reconstructed by explicitising an underlying abstraction that makes their viewpoint plausible. For this purpose Mengel introduces the concept of an abstractor. The abstractor's function is to designate an equivalence between the cases of the analogy. But the equivalence is not expressible before the analogy has created the new share viewpoint. There cannot be a term before because there is no theoretical basis until this moment. Only the analogy itself is bridging the gap.

With this analytical tool I will return to the initial example:
The virtual abstractor may be the following: ‘equally sacrifice/benefit related’. The relation between pregnancy’s hardships and the luck of having children is the same as the relation of the costs of buying and planting bulbs in expectation of getting beautiful flowers. After establishing this analogy in advance of the discoursive tendency one may discuss the relation in detail: Isn’t the sacrifice/benefit relation in the case of planting bulbs more advantageos? Are we right to compare the fertility of our own families with the fertility of some other species, however beautyful? Aren’t we confusing symbolic reality with social reality? Aren’t flowers only substitutes?
In this direction one may proceed in developing absurd theories e.g. of how to evaluate aesthetic epiphenomena of fertility. The discoursive tendency is leading and the motivation of buying bulbs is dimished.

The advertisement is aiming at the other extreme: For the sake of commercial advantages the analogy is not worked out. The sacrifice/benefit relation remains unspoken. Instead the advertisingstragegy tries to transfer the stong emotional associatons of human reproduction into the contexts of of buying behaviour. Instead of ‘distanciating’ motivations to create discoursive values, the motivations are ‘approximated’ for effecting an inclination to buy. As stated in the beginning this shopping motivation may also be caused by argumentative means. The form is the following:
P1: You have the problem N.
P2: Everybody who has the problem N, will get the best solution of N in respect of price and performance by taking the Q we are offering.
C: Therefore you are best adviced to buy our Q.

If the members of the target group T(N) believe that P2 is true, this is a very strong sales argument. P2 expresses the so called unique selling proposition (USP) which is one of the essentials of every marketing plan and a central issue of advertising campagnes. Nevertheless in many cases the product benefit is not that clear. In this case the problems of customers and USPs have to be designed by the advertisers. Analogies are helpful in this situation.
The equivalence that is used by Mengel as an abstractor for analysing common viewpoints in regard of analysing seemingly different cases is not restricted to the analytical usage. It can also be used as a creative tool in finding analogies. An essential role plays the sacrifice/benefit equivalence:

In contradiction to other analogies this abstractor isn't that artificial. It has a very common synonym: It is called 'value'. The value transfer from paradigmatic cases with intensive sacrifice/benefit relation to others with less sacrifice/benefit relation but commercial interest is a central means of advertisements.
Mengel mentions the surprising effect as a central feature of analogies. Cases, where equal properties are listed and inductive inferences are drawn from the paradigmatic case to the case in question are fallacious and do not fulfil the peculiar task of analogies: improving insufficient theoretical bases. This kind of analogies are typically used in advertisements. The abstractor 'value' does not establish new viewpoints. The same commercial viewpoints are always iterated and the impression of originality is not due to innovation but to the enigmatic structure of many ads. Value transfer, openly handled, can easyly be criticised and would be too obvious to be fascinating. Nevertheless advertisements are cultivating the 'field' of values, so that one can make up her decisions in respect of what is hold to be valuable. And value related argumentations can take it up.

5. Case two
The second example seems to form an objection against the analysis of advertising analogies as being plainly value related. Obviously it is also surprising:
The american sports wear brand IN EXCESS portays victims of violence with a bloody nose or a shiner next to a neatly drapped trikot in the same color. (Lürzer's Archive '98, III 162) The copy is: "color coordinate."

At first glance a new and surprising viewpoint is offered to the reader. The abstractor of the analogy may be reconstructed as "has the same color". The reader is invited to lock at violations by leaving out the common contexts of harm, fear and humiliation. The relevant aspect is 'color'. But the relation of phoros and theme of the analogy is inverted. The property of the product serves as phoros. Paradigmatic is the color of the tricot. The case of violence, which represents the theme is seen from the aspect of the phoros. Violence is reduced to color.
In effect attention to the Brand is certain. But is attention enough for a product to become a seller? The suggested abstraction is obviously inhuman and cynical. The image of the brand is in danger to get damaged like the images of the victims. Therefore the reader is invoked to try another interpretation.

Supposed that the IN EXCESS campaign is designed to increase the sales of the tricots, it is useful to present them as valueable as possible. The sacrifice/benefit

relation can lead the interpretation to other paradigmatic valuable cases. Sportswear as IN EXCESS is adressed to people with certain values: They want to exceed their limits. Enormous sacrifices are tolerated in prospect of becoming the best in contest. Especially in team sports there are high risks of being injured. They are tolerated in favour of the team. The color of the trikots is a symbol of the team. The trikots are uniforms that fit into the world of team sports. The ultimate motivation of the members of the team is transferred to the customer, who can buy a symbol. This way they are becoming members of a community that shares certain values. The sacrifices, in this case the expenses are justifyied by the benefit: being a member of a highly motivated team.
Apparently the two cases are not so far from each other. And the usage of the abstractor does not produce a surprising new viewpoint. The interrelation of the violations and the colored sport dress is much too conventional to be able to serve as an analogy. It isn't more but a common metaphor.

6. Conclusion

These interpretations don't prove anything beause this is not an empirical inquiry. It is an attempt to come to grips with the apparently strong opinion-forming features of advertisement from the perspective of argumentation theory. At least I think there are good reasons to insist on the difference of Argumentation and Advertisement. The ends are too different. But these ends are extremes on the same scale. Both are competing for the adressee's orientations. In some cases the distinction is difficult to make. Value-oriented discussions can be very persuasive. And benefit-oriented advertisings do indeed present arguments. I hope that we can at least discern two polar tendencies in many cases: The production of insight stands in opposition to production of emotion.

NOTES

i. The epistemological theory of Cristoph Lumer is a good example of such a perspective.

ii. Can't Sophists be understood as early advertisers?

iii. The pragmadialectical position sometimes looks like.

iv. Logical consistency is not presupposed in this place. Methodological consistency is a pracical ideal guiding practical activities toward practical ends. Nevertheless the reflection on methodlogical consistency can be used to reconstruct the meaning of logical consistency. Cf. 'Konstruktive Logik, Praxis und Wissenschaftstheorie' and many other publications of the 'Erlangen School'.

v. Can't they also be relative towards the concepts of rationality?
vi. There may be pychological reasons to prefer a logical structured self. Always being prepared to give reasons for motivations, feelings etc. seems to be advantageos.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Narrative As An Argument Component

Narrativity

A narrative is an account typically consisting of a temporal sequence of events that is focused upon characters, their actions, and the outcomes of such actions. In recent decades the narrative has been the object of much analysis, study, and debate. Psychological research on

narratives has involved the study of story grammars, syntactic-like structures that describe the generic elements of narratives (e.g., Stein & Glenn, 1979). Other psychological research of narratives has included the study of causal structure (e.g., Trabasso, van den Broek, & Suh, 1989), and inference generation (e.g., Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994). Narratives also have received considerable attention in relation to their role and importance in the study of history (e.g., White, 1987).

Narratives have also been examined with respect to the purposes they serve. According to Focault (1969, 1972), narrative is used by those in power as a means of maintaining power while the alternative narratives of those out of power are suppressed by those in power. Narrative is also used to delineate official and unofficial history (Wertsch & Rozin, 1998). In the Soviet Union the official history was a Marxian account of the 1917 Revolution and post-Revolution period. Unofficial history, however, embraced a narrative that was historically Russian, extending farther into the post than the 1917 Revolution. Similarly, Epstein (1996) has shown that European American eleventh graders provide a narrative of U.S. history that follows the traditional colonization, French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, Civil War, and into the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries format, while Afro-American students provide a narrative emphasizing racial inequality. Narratives held thus relate to belief and experience, and indeed, the historian Mink (1987) has indicated that narratives provide information about the past, and the background of the narrator needs to be taken into account to understand the narrative. Narratives also have been viewed as deceptive, as White (1987) has stated, “narrative discourse …. endows events with illusory coherence” (p. ix). In any event, the narrative is used to provide continuity to a series of linear events and is the subject of this paper, a topic, incidentally, which is not new.

Narrative and Argument

The present paper is concerned with narrative as argument. Relating narrative to argument is not new, as Aristotle spoke of it as one of two types of argument within rhetoric, the other being the enthymeme. Probably the two most obvious contexts for the use of narrative as argument are those of history and of law. The study discussed here is in the jurisprudence context, primarily because of the likely greater difficulty in conducting the equivalent experiment in the context of history. Consider the statement “Capital punishment should be abolished because it is cruel and inhumane treatment.” In the Toulmin (1958) model, “Capital

punishment should be abolished" is the claim and "because it is cruel and inhumane punishment" is the datum or grounds.
Let us assume that we maintain some claim such as "Capital punishment should be abolished" but to support this claim we do not provide the a supportive reason in the usual sense but we provide the statement "Because of the following story," and then proceed to tell a narrative which has the point of showing that capital punishment be abolished. In this case the support is a narrative. This use of narrative, incidentally, is quite close to what Deanna Kuhn (1991) described in her book on argumentation as
pseudo-evidence.
Let us now imagine that we are in a courtroom and a prosecuting attorney makes the statement "This person, the defendant, is guilty," and then supports this claim by providing a narrative describing what happened leading to the crime, the defendant's presumed role in it, and how and why the defendant committed the crime.
A narrative supporting the attorney's claim of the defendant's guilt such as that just described is likely to have two components. One is the so-called "facts" of the case. This category consists of the statements of witnesses and exhibits of the case, which essentially constitute a list of information. The second component is the narrative, the story or account that the prosecuting attorney weaves and develops that has the goal of supporting the claim of the defendant's guilt. The two components then are the "facts" of the case and the narrative, which integrates the "facts" into a story. The use of the narrative to support a claim and the two-component distinction just made leads to the possibility that the narrative can play a role in the judgment of the jury. It may be that a good narrative, with the "facts" included, will be more likely to produce a "guilty" judgment than a poor narrative, even with the same "facts" included.

A question then raised by this analysis is how may narrative quality be defined? Fortunately, Leinhardt, Stainton, Virji, and Odoroff (1994) asked a number of historians to indicate what they thought to be the qualities of a good narrative. Five attributes were noted, namely, coherence, causality, chronology, completion, and colligation or, more or less, contextualization. Coherence refers to the narrative having a coherent whole. Causation to the narrative's need to show causal relations. Chronology is that the events of the narrative follow in a chronological order. Completion refers to whether the historians used all available information, and colligation to the narrative occurring in the appropriate

historical context. Pennington and Hastie (1993), in their work on jury decision making, also considered narrativity, and emphasized the importance of coherence, coverage (similar to completeness), uniqueness (the most appropriate narrative), and (being psychologists) they included the goodness-of-fit of the narrative.

The rationale of the study was as follows. The first hypothesis was that if a hypothetical prosecuting attorney states the defendant is guilty and provides a narrative in support of this claim, ratings of the quality of the narrative are a function of the extent to which the narrative maintains the criteria of good narrativity. If, for example, a narrative is made less coherent, the quality of the narrative will be rated lower than the original narrative, before it was made less coherent. The second hypothesis is that if a narrative is degraded, the ratings of the defendant's guilt are lower than guilty ratings provided for the original narrative. In other words, with a narrative having less coherence than the standard, both ratings of narrative quality and ratings of guilt would be lower than found for the standard narrative. The reason guilty ratings are likely to be lower is that a poor narrative presumably acts to hurt the prosecuting attorney's case. In the experiment conducted there were four narrative conditions. One was a standard narrative. One contained the identical sentences as the standard narrative but the sentence order was changed. This version maintained local coherence. This was called the coherence/chronology condition because it decreased the narrative's coherence and the chronological order. A third condition, the causal condition, decreased the causality stated in the standard condition. The fourth condition, the completion condition, deleted some of the information in the standard narrative but did not delete any of the "facts." It should be especially noted that in all four conditions the "facts" of the case were included, thus making the design one of holding the "facts" constant and varying the narrative, modifying the standard narrative in three conditions to lower its quality according to the previously mentioned criteria.

Four texts were employed, each being a murder case. Each text had four versions, each version of each text corresponding to the four types of narratives. Participants were 64 college students, with 16 serving in each row of a greco-latin square, that is, each participant read each of the four texts once, also serving one time in each of the four narrative conditions.
The baseline or standard condition for one of the texts, "The Car Accident"

follows. Participants were told that they were to consider the text to be the prosecuting attorney's summary statement.

The victim, Roger Wilson, had dropped off his co-worker, Susan Walker, at her home. He then was driving on Crawford Street in order to get to the freeway. As he was driving, a six year old girl, Marjorie Moran, ran out from behind a parked car. Before Roger could stop, his right fender hit her and she fell to the ground. He quickly got out of his car to check on her and found that she was not seriously injured. Despite this fact, a number of neighborhood teenagers, who were standing nearby, began to push him around, saying things such as "Don't you know how to drive?" Then someone from the crowd took a baseball bat and hit Roger in the head, killing him. This action was seen by a resident living across the street from the altercation, but he was unable to identify who had used the bat. When the police got to the scene of the crime, they took statements form several witnesses, and looked for the bat. In a few minutes, they found a baseball bat in the back seat of a car that was parked nearby. The car belonged to Matthew Moran, the girl's older brother. Matthew Moran had been among the crowd that attacked Roger Wilson. He was very protective of his younger sister, and sometimes got into fights with people he determined were trying to hurt her. Analyses later revealed that the victim's blood and hair were on the baseball bat. This evidence indicated that Matthew Moran's bat must have been the bat used to hit Roger Wilson. Furthermore, Matthew's were the only fingerprints found on the bat.

Matthew Moran claimed that his fingerprints were on the bat because he had used it earlier in the day to play baseball, but playing baseball could not have placed the victim's blood and hair on the bat. The evidence indicates that Matthew Moran's bat must have been used to hit Roger Wilson, and since there were no fingerprints on the bat besides those of Matthew Moran, he must have been the person who hit Roger Wilson with that bat. Matthew Moran, who had the motive, the means, and the opportunity, is guilty of killing Roger Wilson.

In the causation condition the following changes were made. (Text prior to arrows was in the standard text and changed to the material found after the arrows.)

– He quickly got out of his car to check on her and found that she was not seriously injured. -> He quickly stepped out to check on his car and found that it was not damaged.

– Despite this fact, a number of neighborhood…. -> A number of neighborhood….

– This evidence indicated that Matthew Moran's bat … -> Matthew Moran's bat….

– Matthew Moran's bat must have been the bat used to hit Roger Wilson… -> Matthew Moran's bat must have come into contact in some way with Roger Wilson….
– Matthew's were the only fingerprints found on the bat… -> Matthew's were the only fingerprints found on the bat, indicating that he had touched it and, that no one else could have touched it, unless they were wearing gloves…
– … had used it earlier in the day to play baseball, but playing baseball could not have placed the victim's blood and hair on the bat -> … had used it earlier in the day to play baseball.
– bat must have been used… must have been the person… -> bat was probably used… he was probably the person…

In the incomplete condition, the following deletions were made:
– his co-worker
– He quickly got out of his car to check on her and
– but he was unable to identity who had used the bat.
– When the police got to the scene of the crime, they took statements from several witnesses, and looked for the bat.
– In a few minutes, they found a baseball bat in the back seat of a car that was parked nearby.
– The car belonged to Matthew Moran, the girl's older brother.
– Matthew Moran claimed that his fingerprints were on the bat because he had used it earlier in the day to play baseball.

The order of sentences in the coherence/chronology condition, of the sentence in the standard narrative, were: 7, second half of 17, 4, 3, 1, 5, 11, 13, 15, 14, first half of 17, 9, 10, 12, 16, 8, 6, 18, 19.

Participants, after reading each narrative, provided 1-10 ratings for each of five questions and then subsequently answered these questions. The five rating scale questions were: "Do you think the accused is guilty?" "How confident are you in your decision?" "Please rate the overall quality of the summary statement." "How convincing or persuasive was the statement?" "How good an argument did the lawyer make for the case?" "The three open-ended questions were "What was good about the argument?" "What was missing?" "How could the statement be improved?"

The results indicated that the mean guilty rating (1=definitely not guilty,

10=definitely guilty) was 7.5, 7.5, and 7.4 for three of the texts. The fourth text, however, provided both a considerably different mean of guilt ratings and a quite different distribution of ratings. Only the three consistent texts were therefore used in the analyses. The mean guilty rating for the baseline condition was 8.0 and for the completeness condition was 7.9. However, for the causation condition the mean guilty rating was 7.0 and for the coherence/chronology condition was 6.9, the latter two means being statistically significantly lower from the first two. The confidence rating means were 8.0, 7.4, 7.6, and 7.8 for the four respective conditions, as listed in the order of the preceding sentence. The only significant difference was that the baseline condition yielded more confidence than the causation condition.

The three ratings of narrative quality yielded highly similar results. The means for the respective baseline, causation, completeness, and coherence/chronology conditions for overall quality of the narrative were 7.8, 6.9, 7.8, and 4.9; for convincingness, 7.6, 6.9, 7.9, and 5.3; for the argument stated 7.6, 6.9, 7.9, and 5.1. For all three narrative measures, the standard condition yielded significantly higher narrativity ratings than the causality and the coherence/chronology conditions, but not the completeness ratings.

The data show both hypotheses to be supported for the causality and coherence/chronology condition. Specifically, modifying either the causal or the coherence/chronology narrative structure produced lower judgments than the standard condition for narrativity and for the guilt ratings. With respect to the completeness condition, the deletion of information that did not involve the "facts" of the case likely produced little description in the participants' consideration of the narrative.

The results of the present study indicate that under particular circumstances, the narrative may be considered as a component of argument, a statement that supports a claim. Furthermore, the results indicate that if the narrative is of relatively low quality, as determined either by the causality it states or by the lack of coherence and chronology, the persuasiveness of the argument will suffer. Another interpretation of the results, although not mutually exclusive, is that the presenting attorney may have lost his ethos, that is, by presenting a relatively poor narrative, professional respect for lives as are authority may have diminished. The present data do not, however, provide evidence regarding this notion.

Possibly the most interesting result involves the causation condition. Why does making some statements probabilistic, statements that do not involve the critical

events, produce lower narrativity and guilt ratings? One possible explanation is that the probabilistic wording generalizes to the entire paragraph, giving the participant a sense of relative uncertainty for all paragraph events.

Performance in the coherence/chronology condition suggests that individuals are quite sensitive to the need for coherence and chronology in the narrative. In reply to an open-ended question, there were 23 comments that the text “made little sense,” “jumped around,” or were “mixed up,” as compared to such statements in the other narrative conditions.

There are a number of questions raised by the present findings, such as how would the guilt judgments be related to narrative judgments when both the presenting and defense attorney cases are presented as alternative narratives. More broadly, there is the question of how beliefs about the structure of a narrative play a role in guilt ratings and whether it is possible that an excellent narrative could be constructed with few facts that would provide a relatively high guilty rating. In other words, could under appropriate conditions, narrativity dominate the factual evidence.

In conclusion, the study indicates that narrative, when used as support for a claim, may be judged for its quality and that judgment is related to the convincingness of the argument presented. Finally, it needs to be mentioned that in the case of the enthymeme, the two primary criteria of support are that the reason is acceptable and that the reason provides support for the claim. The present results suggest the narrative quality influences the acceptability of the reason, and with less acceptability, less support may be provided and the proposed strength of the argument is diminished.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Cultural Reflections In Argumentation: An Analysis Of Survey Interviews

1. Introduction

For the analysis of corporate culture, researchers are in a habit to interview managers and employees, trying to find out how they experience, and relate to their work, and working conditions. Generally, researchers also use questionnaires in order to describe the organisation's culture. These questionnaires are partly based on the results of the interviews.

In order to find out as much as possible about the employees' and managers' views, researchers do not take a simple 'yes', 'no', or 'sometimes' for an answer. They want to know what underlies opinions, and are in need of explanations, because culture usually is not self-evident. Thus they keep on asking questions like 'Why is that?', 'How come?', or 'Can you give me an example?'. More often than not, interviewees are likely to explain their opinions, and to give *arguments* that *support their points of view*. Practical guides help researchers to prepare and conduct these kind of interviews.

What happens next? The researcher tries to assess the organisation's culture using concepts like 'formal versus informal hierarchy', 'pragmatic versus normative view of the work tasks', and interpreting the actual replies by using a scale model of sorts, that makes it possible to evaluate the answers, and to compare groups of employees with respect to the concepts used. The question is, however, *how* do researchers interpret the answers, e.g. the arguments that support the evaluations put forward by the interviewees? Are they able to make a connection between the culture they try to describe and the evaluations and arguments put forward? One should expect the researcher's interpretations to be presented in an explicit manner that allows others to find out how the researcher arrives at conclusions about the corporate's culture. Unfortunately, such an underlying rationale is most of the time completely lacking most of the time.
In order to bridge the gap between the data and their interpretation, I develop a comprehensive model for the interpretation of the interview responses. Starting with evaluations (concerning work, working conditions, hierarchy, etcetera), I analyse the arguments interviewees put forward to support evaluations. I develop a taxonomy of arguments, based on the modal perspective of evaluative utterances. Finally, I try to relate this taxonomy of arguments to concepts of the organisational culture.

2. Organisational culture and evaluations
Researchers investigating the culture of an organisation, must have some idea about the concept of a corporate culture. It is hard to find a description of 'corporate culture' that is widely accepted by researchers, but usually the definitions contain elements like 'behavioural regularities', 'commonly defined problems', and 'collective understandings' (Schein 1986: 6; Frost 1985: 38). In the course of their investigation, researchers try to connect what they observe – the employees' behaviour – with what the employees think -the employees'

cognitions. This connection is related to the theory of organisational culture that is used for the description, it describes and explains the relation and the organisational artefacts and the underlying cognitions (Schein (1986), Robberts and O'Reilly (1974), Sanders and Neuijen (1989) and Reezigt (1996)). For instance, who is communicating to whom and why to that employee, what is the frequency of their communication and why, how do they think they are able to the influence the organisation's policy the way they prefer, are seen as indicators of one of the most important aspects of a corporate culture, 'group relations' and 'group membership'.

We are able to observe who is communicating to who, we may count each time one employee phones another employee of the same department, but we cannot see and understand why they are doing things this way. So researchers have to ask questions to find out why things are going as they are, questions that are likely to provoke answers that contain the intended elements: a *specific artefact* so it is clear what we are talking about, a judgement about that artefact and an explanation of this *judgement*. This *explanation* is an essential part of the intended answers, because it gives the researcher the information he or she is looking for, it reflects the values and norms that underlie the employee's points of view, it makes it clear why the employee comes to a certain conclusion. These underlying values and norms are believed to be the essence of a culture: according to Schein, these are the basic assumptions that in fact constitute the culture (1986: 14).

To find out how we can make a reconstruction of answers in order to describe the corporate culture, we will have to take a closer look at value judgements. Bax (1985) developed a model for the analysis of value judgements. In short, this model relates what is evaluated (the *evaluatum*), the expression of a value judgement (the *evaluation*) and the underlying norm (the *evaluation standard*). A value judgement can be seen as the result of the following mental tasks (Bax en Vuijk 1995: 61):
– the speaker must determine the point of view from which he considers a given or chosen evaluatum;
– he must select a proper evaluation standard (a norm or a rule);
– he must relate the qualities of the evaluatum to that standard.

The outcome of this process (a sort of 'calculation process') is be the verbal expression of a value judgement. The answers thus express the speaker's opinion,

the speaker's attitude towards an artefact, and may also reflect the norm that is used. *May,* because it is not a necessity, people may express opinions without explaining how they came to a specific point of view or without making clear what qualities of the evaluatum have been related to the standard. Fortunately, in interview sessions people are very likely and willing to give that kind of explanations, so researchers do not have to push them hard to find out how they think. If necessary, questions like 'how come' and 'why do you think that?' usually do the trick.

To give an example: an employee is asked about his relations to his collegues and his boss, one of the items the researcher puts under 'group relations'. The employee states that his relation to his boss is 'quite good', mainly because 'he communicates in a very direct way' to his subordinates. In his answer, this employee makes it clear that he has a pro-attitude towards his boss, he evaluates this relation positively ('quite good'). We are able to reconstruct the employee's evaluation 'quite good' as the result of a calculating process in which he selected a *specific* standard, let us say an *efficiency* standard. The more direct the boss acts towards his subordinates, the less words he uses to let his subordinates know what he wants them to do, the more *efficient* he works, and the more positively the employee evaluates his boss.

The outcome of the calculation is not 'good', but '*quite* good'. Although it is difficult to give a precise interpretation of such expressions, it is clear that the boss is, in the eyes of the employee, not yet fully efficient in the way he communicates, but he is getting there. For this calculation, the employee may use a scale model of sorts: 'If a boss (or: if someone) is direct in his communication strategies toward his subordinates, then the relation with that boss (with that person) is good'. The calculation goes something like this: 'Most of the time my boss uses direct communication strategies, so my relation with him is quite good'.

If we have interviews with more subordinates of this specific manager, all sharing this employee's point of view and specific standard, we can assume a 'collective understanding': the employees use the same perspective on the way this division is managed, share the same efficiency standard, or the 'pragmatic' standard, or they share 'work-related relations' (Sanders and Neuijen (1989)). So they define (hierarchical) relations firstly as more or less efficient ways to achieve organisational goals, and not (primarily) in terms of 'human-relations', in terms of 'warmth', 'loveliness' and 'understanding'.

So, a closer analysis of what employees and managers evaluate, and, especially, of the *evaluation* standards they use, makes the relation between what people say in

interview sessions, and the underlying rationale, more explicit. Nevertheless, it still is difficult to find out what evaluation standard is used, and it is also difficult to relate these standards with concepts of culture. In the next section I will focus on the analysis of argumentation, which may help to find the appropriate evaluation standards.

3. Evaluation standards and warrants

In the interview the employee is asked to explain his evaluation. In the previous section, it was stated that "This explanation is an essential part of the intended answers, because it gives the researcher the information he or she is looking for, it reflects the values and norms that underlie the employee's points of view, it makes it clear why the employee comes to a certain *conclusion*." The evaluation of the artefact can be seen as a conclusion and the interviewee *accounts* for this: the employee that was asked about his relations to his collegues and his boss *concluded* that his relation to his boss is 'quite good', *because* 'he communicates in a very direct way' to his subordinates. The interviewee tries to convince the researcher that his evaluation is accurate, that he came to a logical conclusion.

It is easy to see that the analysis of evaluations can benefit from a Toulmin (1958) analysis of argumentation: a *claim* (the evaluation he presents) is backed by *premises* (the facts chosen by the interviewee to support his claim), and the *warrant* (the evaluation standard he uses), an abstract rule that provides justifications which legitimate the inference of a claim from a premise (e.g. 'if..then..'). So an argumentation analysis of the boss-subordinate relationship fragment shows that the *claim* that the relation is 'quite good' is backed by the *premise* (because) 'he communicates in a very direct way' to his subordinates'. The rule that legitimates the premise-claim inference will be the *warrant* 'If a boss (or: someone) is direct in his communication strategies toward his subordinates (other persons), then the relation with that boss (that person) is good'.

The speaker has several possibilities to be more or less explicit about his evaluation process or argumentation. As I have said before, this explicitness is related to the situation in which the interaction takes place: the survey or research interview. The interviewee is asked to back up his claim or evaluation by the researcher, and, considering the aim of the interview, it is very likely that he will do so. It is possible that he states one ore more premises, that he can use qualifiers to strengthen his commitment to the claim, that he may back the

warrant by credentials or backing, that he will allow for acceptions and rebuttals. All these well known elements of Toulmin's model of argumentation can be used by the researcher to identify the position of the speaker towards the evaluation in a rather sophisticated way, and so, eventually, to specify the speaker's position towards the artefact the researcher likes to investigate. But, as claimed before, these elements seem to specify the speaker's position furthermore, a specification that is primarily based on the appropriate identification of the warrant. To identify the warrant seems to me the first and most important step to identify the organisational culture. The use of qualifiers, rebuttals, etcetera, are to be seen as part of a process of refinement: they help the researcher to conclude that this group of employees is to be characterised as *more or less* 'pragmatic' than the other group. So, first I will discuss the warrant identification: what type of warrants are of interest when we are looking for the company's culture?

4. Warrants and organisational culture

A warrant is, as said before, an abstract rule which provides the justifications which legitimate the inference of a claim from a premise: *if* a premise, *then* this claim is justified. For the analysis of corporate culture, it is important to find a proper way to identify this abstract rule. The identification has to be based on the theory of organisational culture used by the researcher. From a methodological point of view, the theory of organisational culture has to become part of the *analytic frame* used for the analysis of the data (Ragin 1994: 56). The research is aimed at the analysis of the culture, so the researcher is aimed at finding evidence that can be used for his analysis.

Theories of organisational culture may vary in the artefacts they include, in the way the connection between artefacts and underlying ideas is understood, and the nature of the dimensions that are used to describe the culture of an organisation, but they seem united in the acceptance of the idea that behaviour is related to underlying basic assumptions and that they want to describe and understand what is done and what is not done, and why it is done this way, in the organisation or in parts of the organisation, like departments.

To find out what is done and not done, and why it is done this way, the arguments that support the evaluative claims should be considered from a moral perspective: people are asked to describe what they think is – in this (part of) the organisation – *morally* right or wrong, good or bad, better or worse, ought to be or ought not to be, etcetera. So the evaluation standards used should be considered moral standards.

Three basic moral standards are distinguished (Velasquez 1982: 9):
– Principles of *utility*, which evaluate behaviour in terms of the net (social) benefits they produce;
– Principles of *rights*, which evaluate behaviour in terms of the protection they provide for the interest and freedom of individuals;
– Principles of *justice*, which evaluate behaviour in terms of how equitably they distribute benefits and burdens among members of a group.

Velasquez extensively enunciates these principles as a theory of ethical principles in business. As far as internal organisational relations are concerned, he explores problems raised by life within business organisations, the employee's and employer's duties, rights and organisational politics (302-303, and sections 8.2 – 8.6). Below I will be more explicit about the relation between these three principles and organisational culture, and give some examples of the analysis of evaluations, argumentation and warrants.

Utility
When the moral principles of *utility* are used, behaviour is evaluated in terms of the net benefits it produces: these benefits should outweigh the costs. I will not go into detail about 'traditional' utilitarianism which does not, and utilitarianism which does, include 'social benefits and costs' (see Velasquez 1986: 45-49 and 239-241), but simply state that not all costs and benefits can be restricted to economic values (like money) and that other factors, that can not be measured easily, should nevertheless be taken into account.
The principles of utility are often assumed the best way to evaluate *business decisions* (46). People seem to expect that almost every decision in a company is based on utilitarian evaluations: the benefits should be maximised, the costs should be minimised. The concept of business, of the organisation, seems closely related to the usage of utilitarian principles.
Organisational culture theories often use characteristics like 'goal related', 'work or job oriented', 'professional', the use of 'pragmatic views', 'discipline first', etcetera, to express the utilitarian way of evaluating actions as the dominant view in an organisation.

The following example may illustrate the use of utilitarian warrants. A production manager is asked about the meetings he attends.
Q: "Are the meetings in this organisation useful, what are you doing during this meetings, what are you talking about with your subordinates?"

A: “Nowadays they are useful, we just use these meetings to discuss problems, we only talk about work related items, we must think about our work and try to find solutions, to deal with problems. And we must all deal with problems the same way, otherwise we end up having new problems, other problems we have to deal with first.”

The evaluation ‘the meetings are useful’ is backed by the arguments that the manager and his subordinates ‘talk about problems, work related items’ ‘find solutions to problems’ and that ‘everyone deals with problems the same way’. The warrant ‘if a meeting is about finding solutions to problems then a meeting is useful’ can be seen as a utilitarian warrant, because using a meeting just for ‘finding solutions to a problem’ is a way of maximising the benefit (the solution) at minimum costs (not spending time on the social aspects of a meeting).
Of course, it is also important to note that the evaluation is ‘useful’, and not ‘not useful’, or ‘very useful’, or ‘useless’ (which may be very likely alternatives). In my opinion, for the analysis of the organisational culture, the main point is that the evaluation is based on an utilitarian standard, that a utilitarian warrant is ‘used’ to justify the claim.

Rights
When moral principles of *rights* are used, people evaluate behaviour in terms of the protection they provide for the interest and freedom of individuals: people have rights that should not be violated, no matter the costs that are to be made – in that way, rights ‘overrule’ utilitarian principles. Velasques, who dedicates an important part of his book to this part of moral reasoning, mentions the following important rights of employees: the right to privacy (1986: 321), the right to freedom of conscience and whistleblowing (324), the right to participate (326) and the right to due process (325). In general, when people use arguments that can be translated to warrants like ‘I act like this, because I feel I have the right to do so’ principles of rights are used.

The following examples may illustrate the use of rights warrants. A surgeon is asked about group relations and group identity.
Q: “Do you consider yourself primarily to be part of the management team of this hospital or to be part of team of the consulting physicians?”
A: “Nowadays I must see myself primarily as one of the executives, as part of the management team indeed, mainly because of the way I see my duties as a manager, because I think that I have to devote myself a hundred percent to the

management part of my job".

The surgeon, nowadays part of the management team of a hospital, argues that he sees himself primarily as an employee who has the right to devote himself a hundred percent to his managerial duties. 'If I think that I must devote myself a hundred percent to the management part of the job, then I am primarily an executive' can be seen as a 'rights warrant', because the surgeon he has the right, the obligation, to devote himself completely to the management part of his job: he has no choice, if he wants to do the job properly, he *has* to spend every minute to this part of his job.

A production manager is asked about the dependency relations between his tasks and the tasks of his boss.
Q: "About your tasks as a production manager: are you able to perform those tasks independently?"
A: "O yes, yes I really am, in this area of the factory one is expected to do all sorts of things independently, one has to arrange one's affairs oneself, and it suits me quite well: I hate having a boss looking over my shoulder constantly – he occasionally does, but not in an annoying way."

The production manager more or less says he acts independently because he has the right to do so, he has the right to arrange his affairs himself, and his boss is not in a position to violate that right. 'If one is able to arrange one's affairs oneself, then one is able to perform one's task (really) independently' can be seen as the use of a rights warrant, because the manager protects his way of acting during his work from the influence of his boss: he does not have the moral right to look over his shoulder and say what he is doing right or wrong.

Justice
When moral principles of *justice* are used, people evaluate behaviour in terms of how equitably , or fair, benefits and burdens are distributed among members of a group. In an organisation, one is able to distribute the tasks to be performed by a group of people in a more or less fair way: usually, every employee with the same position should perform the same tasks and receives the same income. It is seen as unfair when an employee must perform more tasks or has more duties and does not get more money. This distributive justice is the most important and basic category (76).
The second category is retributive justice, which refers to the "just imposition of

punishments and penalties upon those who do wrong" (76). An organisational subculture (like a department) not only specifies what is done, but also what is not done and what actions are to be taken to impose penalties. Thirdly, compensatory justice describes the compensation that one should receive when someone is wronged by others.

A production employee is asked about the discussions during the meetings he and his collegues attend.
Q: Someone said to me not every team's shift ends exactly at 11 PM? Is that true?
A: That is true, we all finish work at 10.45. We used to finish at 11, but one team one time left at 10.45. They didn't clean the place, they went to the showers and left, leaving the mess to the next shift. They didn't want to do all the cleaning work for them, so the protested. But no one did anything, so they didn't want to do the cleaning either. Now nobody does anymore, of course, I don't do things for them anymore.

It is clear that because one team finished work at 10.45, and did not want to do the cleaning work until 11, none of the groups want to do the cleaning work anymore, they want to distribute the burden – 15 minutes of cleaning the working place – equally, all the teams do that task, or they do not want to clean at all. 'If they don't have to spend 15 minutes to clean the working place, the we don't have to do that either' seems to be the underlying 'justice warrant': they want all the teams to be treated the same way.

5. Conclusion

Organisational culture is *expressed* in survey interviews by evaluations, and by arguments. Because organisational culture is described as a pattern of 'underlying ideas', norms and values, the warrants (or the evaluations standards), that specify the relation between the evaluation and the arguments, may be seen as indicators of organisational cultures. If we see warrants as indicators of organisational culture, we should analyse a warrant in terms of *moral reasoning*, so we should specify the relation between the evaluation and the arguments as use of a utility standard, a rights standard or a justice standard.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Identity Crisis Of Informal Logic

Informal logic is an area of serious scholarly study that has achieved a somewhat grudging acceptance in philosophy only recently, and is till not seen as a leading subject of research. It is not clear exactly where it belongs in the curriculum, or even whether it really a kind of logic, in the same sense as formal logic. It could fit in better as a branch of philosophy of language or epistemology, in some ways, because it is addressed to stuying argumentation in natural language texts of discourse, and it

typically has the task of dealing with inconclusive arguments based on opinions that are subject to doubts. Nearly all philosophy departments teach informal logic, under some heading, at the introductory level, and these classes are often the biggest in the department. But offer courses in it beyond the introductory level.

But some would say that these large introductory courses are not courses in informal logic, and in fact, they tend to be called by other names, like “critical thinking” or “practical reasoning”. Informal logic seems to be in a kind of limbo. Some would say it is not the same subject as critical thinking, while others would see no difference between the two subjects. Informal logic seems, in some ways, more like an academic subject, or even a theory, with a particular point of view or agenda. It seems to represent a group that rose in opposition to formal logic, or at least to the dominance of formal logic in the philosophy curriculum. But on the other hand, informal logic has always had a strong pedagogical orientation and motivation, arising from a felt need about what students ought to be taught to deal with the kinds of arguments they will encounter in everyday thinking about matters of real importance. Perhaps because it has grown out of instructional needs at the introductory or elementary levels of the teaching curriculum, it has not got the academic respect accorded to the more established traditional fields of philosophy.

Perhaps for these reasons, there is considerable ambivalence and uncertainty, even within the exponents of informal logic themselves, on how the subject should be titled and defined, on how it ought to be presented, and where it should fit into the philosophy curriculum.

1. The Identity Crisis

The twelve slected papers from the *Third International Symposium on Informal Logic* held at the University of Windsor in 1989, published in Johnson and Blair (1994), pose some interesting, and so far unanswered, questions about the status of informal logic as a discipline. What exactly is informal logic? What are its central methods and fundamental assumptions? How is it different from formal logic, critical thinking and argumentation theory? Does it have place in the logic curriculum, and what exactly is that place? The last question is a puzzle, because although informal logic is widely taught at the introductory level, and there is a growing scholarly literature, there is no graduate level instruction in it – or very little, compared to other fields in philosophy. Johnson and Blair (1994, p. 3) write that they know of only one philosophy doctoral program where it is possible to

take courses in informal logic or argumentation, while in contrast, it is widely possible to take graduate courses in argumentation in speech communication departments. Another problem is that the widely used introductory textbooks do not seem to be based on, or even very often to acknowledge, the scholarly literature in informal logic, to the degree that you think would be normal and healthy in a field.

A review of the volume by Robert Binkley (1997, p. 259) cites an "identity crisis of informal logic", arisimg from the question of whether this new subject should be thought of as a branch of logic, or a distinct discipline in its own right. This identity crisis is implicit even in doubts about the exact terminology that should be used to label the new subject. Should it be called "argumentation" or "critical thinking", without the term 'logic' being used at all? Or should it be called "applied logic" or "practical logic", if the word 'logic' is appropriate? The very phrase "informal logic" looks like an oxymoron, if logic is defined as a field that uses exact, i.e. formalistic methods. 'Informal logic' is a confrontational phrase that seems particularly off-putting, especially now that so many in the field of computer science have taken up with argumentation as a much-needed component in computer programming, most notably in the area of logic and computation in artificial intelligence (Gabbay and Ohlbach, 1996), where some degree of formalization is helpful. The term 'practical reasoning' has recently been advocated in computer science as the right label for this new discipline (Gabbay and Ohlbach, 1996), but this term is already well known to philosophers as referring to Aristotelian phronesis, or goal-directed, knowledge based reasoning by and agent, that culminates in an action. So even the name of the field, or the term used to stand for it, is a problem.

Johnson and Blair (1994) indicate that informal logic arose out of the 1970's project of reforming the "baby logic" courses in the universities. According to their account, this change had two components – a move from artificial language (the precise syntax and semantics of formal logic), to natural language, and the move from argument as a property of statements to argumentation as a social activity involving an exchange between two parties – a sender and a receiver of information. But as Binkley questions (1997, p. 260), "does this twofold change add up to a new discipline?" The problem is that such an account, by itself, does not make clear the advantages to be gained in moving from the old style of logic instruction, and is not full enough to enable someone to grasp the precise positive purpose of the new field, and the need for it.

2. Contextual Method of Informal Logic

How informal logic (or whatever we call it) needs to be seen is as a method of evaluating arguments (and other moves made in argumentation) that is practical, or pragmatic in nature, in that the purpose is to evaluate not just the reasoning in the argument – the set of premises and conclusions, and the links of inference within these sets) – but how that reasoning was used in a given case for some communicative purpose, in a given text of discourse. So conceived, informal logic is nor only pragmatic in nature, but also dialectical – it views an argument as a verbal exchange between two speech partners, in which they are reasoning together, or at least trying to reason together. In so doing, they are taking part in a conventional type of talk exchange (conversation, to use the term of Grice, 1975), in which they are supposed to follow the collaborative conventions appropriate for the type of conversation they are supposedly taking part in. So when informal logic is used to analyze or evaluate an argument used in a given case, what is the target of the exercise is to judge how that argument was used in some context of conversation to make some point, as far as can be judged from the given information on what the purpose of the speech exchange was supposed to be. Thus what is important is not just the truth-values of the propositions, but how the moves made go in a certain direction, and are relevant, to contribute to some conversational goal. Studies of the informal fallacies have show that, in fact, the fallacies are best modelled as failures to help move such a conversation forward, or even moves made to deceptively trick a speech partner into accepting something he shouldn't, moves that tend to interfere with the goals of the conversation being fulfilled.

This fuller account, of course, begins to sound radical to the old-fashioned view of logic, because contextual factors of how an argument was used in a given text of discourse, are, notoriously, questions of interpretation of natural language discourse. And of course, deconstructionists have already loudly declaimed, that such a process is inherently subjective, implying that no pragmatic and dialectical logic could ever be possible. Any talk about context and natural language discourse interpretation makes the old conservative guardians of formal logic very nervous. It even makes many students nervous, who want to know what the "right" answer is, and want to get it "right" on the exam, and be assured of that by using exact methods of calculation.

But this fuller account of the purpose and methods of informal (applied) logic, needs to go even further, in my view. Each argument selected for evaluation

needs to seen as having occurred in a uniquely individual case, represented by the given text of discourse, and by the context of the case, as far as that can be inferred, or judged, from the given text of discourse. Each case is unique, so judgment is needed in applying the methods of informal logic to the particulars of the case that are given. Applying such a method is highly contextual, and assumptions (or presumptions) needs to be made, for example, about what type of conversation was supposedly involved. Such presumptions can be backed up or contraindicated by the textual and contextual evidence given in a case, but typically they cannot be absolutely verified as true or false. Of course, that shouldn't be a problem. It is true in any applied subject. But it is taken to be very worrisome in logic, a field that prides itself on exactness, where there is supposed to be no need for guessing or saying "maybe".

On my view then, informal logic is closely related to casuistry in ethics. But as we know, casuistry has been distrusted, and like sophistry, has had a bad name (Jonsen and Toulmin). So it is quite likely that many of the informal logic crowd will be cautious and reluctant to go as far as I have in saying that this field should be based on case studies. But I think this is where they need to go, to see the real purpose and usefulness of informal logic as an applied discipline.

3. Formalization and Informal Logic

Another bone of contention is whether formalization is useful or necessary in this new field, and what kind of formalization is the most useful. Freeman (1994), makes the point that argument diagramming is a central method. But he adds that informal logic also needs to take into account the dialectical or dialogical nature of argument. Many, including (Hamblin, 1970 ; 1971), (Mackenzie, 1981 ; 1990), (Barth and Krabbe, 1982), (Hintikka, 1992), (Walton and Krabbe, 1995), would say that dialectical frameworks of argument use can, to some extent, or usefully, be formalized. Indeed, it seems to be the prevailing view that the foundations of informal logic are to be found in formalized systems of dialogue. If this view is justified, then there are even sharper questions about whether the field ought to be called "informal logic".

Part of the problem here, as Johnson and Blair (1994, p. 11) point out, is that there are many different meanings of the word 'formal'. In some of these senses, informal logic is not opposed to formal logic at all. So it is a good question whether what is called informal logic really is all that "informal". Perhaps then, the title 'informal logic' should be given up, as a generic name for this field, or should be seen as reresenting only a subfield within some larger subject. But if we

don’t call this area informal logic, what else should we call it?
I wish I had the best, or a definitive answer to this question. I have, from the beginning, been less than completely happy with the expression “informal logic” (at least partly for reasons indicated above), although I have accepted it provisionally, as matter of practice, because it is the term that conventionally signals a known area of interest and emphasis in philosophy. I like the term ‘applied logic’ better than ‘informal logic’. But the problem with ‘applied logic’ is that it seems to suggest, or so I have been told, that there was some previously existing formal logic, or abstract theory, that has now come to be applied to something. But that is not really what happened, historically. What happened is that the need for an applied method of evaluating arguments led to a stepping beyond the traditional formal logic, and to making a move to a new kind of methodology that was not known or established yet. Also there is the question of whether even the term logic is appropriate within the phrase used to denote the new dsicipline, and that some term like ‘argumentation’ is better, because it does not contain the word ‘logic’ at all.

4. Argumentation Theory
But is ‘argumentation’, or ‘argumentation theory’ really the right expression to stand for the new field? These terms have been developed within the field of speech communication, notably by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), and are also widely used in the field of rhetoric. But the goals of rhetoric and speech communication are surely quite different from those of logic, even though there is surely much more overlap and commonality of interest than there was with the traditional formal logic approach. For informal logic, the purpose should be to evaluate arguments as correct or incorrect by some standards (usually called normative standards), even though argument identification and analysis are important preliminary tasks. In contrast, persuading an audience successfully, and teaching skills of effective communication, are central goals for speech communication and rhetoric (There are also questions here of whether there are two separate fields or not, and how they ought to be defined and distinguished). The problem then is that it is far from obvious that informal logic and argumentation theory are the same field, and have exactly the same goals. Argumentation and rhetoric seem to be quite a bit broader than, and also somewhat different from any kind of logic, or method of evaluating arguments are correct or incorrect. This question is subject to dispute, however. For according to the Amsterdam School of pragma-dialectics, evaluating arguments as correct

or incorrect is a central goal of argumentation, seen as a normative, as well as an empirical discipline.
Despite these qualifications, however, it would not seem to be quite right to say that argumentation theory is exactly the same field as informal logic. It still seems that we need a term for the logical or analytical techniques and methods of argument evaluation that are characteristic of that part of argumentation study usually called informal logic, that concentrates on the use of normative standards and methods to evaluate the reasoning used in arguments presented in particular given cases. Central to this field is the study of argument diagrams, fallacies, definitions, missing premises, and so forth – the kinds of skills featured in the many textbooks on informal logic and critical thinking. These skills have a somewhat narrower focus that the broader concerns of argumentation study in speech communication, and represent a different kind of concern with arguments than that of rhetoric.

Johnson and Blair (1994, p. 15) express the relationship by saying, "informal logic may be seen as a branch of argumentation theory". But this way of expressing it seems to me not quite right. Argumentation theory is a theory, and what it is usually taken to be is the pragma-dialectical theory of the Amsterdam School, represented by (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1984). But the exact realtionship between this theory and the theory of formal dialectic, exemplified in the systems of dialogue logic developed by (Hamblin, 1970 ; 1971), (Rescher, 1977), (Mackenzie, 1981 ; 1990), (Barth and Krabbe, 1982), (Hintikka, 1992), and (Walton and Krabbe, 1995), has not yet been clarified. The system of rules for the critical discussion proposed by van Emeren and Gootendorst (1984 ; 1987 ; 1992) was not expressed in a formalized way. Just how it is to be formalized, or whether it can be formalized, or whether it has some formal basis as a sytem of dialogue in the logical sense, are questions that have not yet been answered.
It seems then the exact place of what is called informal logic in all this developing framework to be used for argument evaluation is far from settled. As Johnson and Blair themselves put it (1994, p. 4), informal logic, at the moment, is a research program that lacks a "paradigm for focus". It is an area of research and techniques and interests that is fairly well defined as an ongoing activity that several groups of researchers with overlapping interests are taking part in. And it seems to be generally accepted by most in these groups (though by some more than others) that the Hamblin-style system of formal dialogues represents the underlying structure or set of structures that provide the underpinnings of the

methods that are currently in use (along with the technique of argument diagramming that is being developed). But here we are on the verge of a more general kind of field called "dialectic" by Hamblin.

5. Ancient Roots of Dialectic

One way to get a different slant on informal logic is to look at the history of the subject. It may seem to many that it just appeared in the 1970's, out of a perceived pedagogical need, so to speak. But it does have history – a curious one, described in relation to fallacies in Hamblin (1970), and further in (Walton and Brinton, 1997). The roots of the subject go back to the sophists, but the first one who presented the subject in a systematic way was Aristotle. Essentially, what happened is that Aristotle founded the field of "analytics", or what we now call logic, as having two subfields – the formal logic, which was, for Aristotle, the theory of syllogisms, and the field of "dialectic", or practical logic, the methods of which were outlined in the *Topics,* and its last chapter, On *Sophistical Refutations*. For Aristotle, dialectic was the study of arguments used in controversies, based on premises that were widely accepted opinions (endoxa). The purpose of dialectic (although this is quite controversial) seemed to be to raise critical questions about commonly used arguments on matters of controversy of the day, and to judge the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments on both sides of a dispute. This kind of technique was familiar to the Greeks, as indicated in the Platonic dialogues, for example. But it fell into disuse. What happened was that the syllogistic logic was so popular, even dominant, in the history of logic right up until the twentieth century, that the idea of dialectic was lost (or placed well back on the sidelines, and not taken seriously as a scholarly subject for research or further development). Logic became equated with formal logic.

On Aristotle's theory however, it was possible to make a distinction between rhetoric and dialectic. And it was possible to see dialectic as a kind of applied logic, or use of formal logic along with other tools, to evaluate arguments used in a given case where the context was one of a dispute or goal-directed conversational exchange. Aristotle even went so far as to distinguish different kinds of dialectical reasoning, or frameworks of conversational argument use. But there is considerable controversy among scholars about exactly what Aristotle meant by dialectic. The whole idea seemed alien and antiquated to modern preconceptions about logic. The kind of logical training or "mental gymnastic" the ancients appear to have taken seriously as a thinking skill has never (until quite

recently) played any serious role as a part of logic.

One solution to the terminological problem of the identity crisis would be to revert to the ancient term ‘dialectic’ as the word for the field of applied or informal logic. The problem with this proposal is that this word is now associated in popular usage with the dialectical theory of historical development of Hegel and Marx. This idea is a far cry from the notion of dialectical reasoning of the Greeks, is in many ways quite antithetical to it (to borrow a Hegelian term), and is, in general, quite unsuitable to have any place in logic. The problem then is whether it is realistically possible to get this term back, as something to be taken seriously in logic, given its existing connotations outside logic. However, such a rehabilitation has already partly began to take place, due not only to Hamblin (1970), but to the merging field of computational dialectics. So it may be in the future that the old term ‘dialectic’ could come to be used to stand for what is now called informal logic.

6. Applied Epistemology

At present, however, it is unlikely that graduate or advanced level philosophy courses in “dialectic” will be offered. But there is another possibility. Informal logic could be offered at an advanced level under the present heading of epistemology. Something like this possibility is suggested by Mark Weinstein’s paper in the volume, ‘Informal Logic and Applied Epistemology’ (Johnson and Blair, 1994). Weinstein (1994, p. 143) sees the reconfiguration of informal logic as a field through its integration with applied epistemology as a way of broadening the role of critical thinking so that the analysis of arguments used in scientific inquiry is also seen as an important part of the undertaking. One thing that could happen, on this new way of viewing critical thinking, is that the techniques now studied under the heading of informal logic could be taught in an epistemology course under the heading of “applied epistemology”.

One attraction of this move would be that epistemology, a subject that has never attracted much, if any serious attention outside philosophy departments, could be made much more appealing as a subject that could be seen as having an applied dimension. At the same time, it could be connected up with introductory level courses in informal logic, giving epistemology more of a central place in the curriculum, and a continuity with other material that is important to teach in service courses, and as a skills course that has important uses in philosophy as well.

The down side of this proposal is that traditional epistemology has been centrally based around the concepts of knowledge and belief. The term episteme itself refers to knowledge. But theorists of formal dialectic – including (Hamblin, 1970 ; 1971 ; 1987), (Cohen, 1977 ; 1992), van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984), (Walton, 1995), and (Walton and Krabbe, 1995) – have advocated the view that evaluation of arguments in this area needs to be seen as based on acceptance (commitment). According to Hamblin (1970) an arguer's commitment commitments are the propositions she has gone on record as accepting in a dialogue. Commitments are seen as not being the same as beliefs. Indeed, what is worrisome in basing the dialectical study of argumentation on belief (or knowledge, if taken to presuppose belief) is psychologism, the idea that normatively evaluating an argument as correct or incorrect should be a function of the actual beliefs of the arguer. The general problem here is that there needs to be a fairly clear line of demarcation between psychology (and other empirical fields) as a study of how people actually think, and logic, as a field that evaluates how arguers ought to think, or anyhow what they ought to accept or not as correct arguments. At any rate, although the question of psychologism is very controversial, the advantage of following Hamblin's advice, and basing dialectic on acceptance rather than actual belief is that a lot of problems associated with psychologism are avoided.

The problem with classifying informal logic as applied epistemology is the heavy emphasis of traditional and current epistemology on the central notions of knowledge and belief, while the study of fallacies has shown that commitment-based argumentation is much more important for informal logic (even though the study of argumentation based on knowledge and/or belief) also has a place. So the fit between the two subjects is not good, as things stand. However, in recent years there has been a shift in epistemology towards social epistemology and the study of defeasible reasoning. If epistemology were to be taken more in this direction, there would be more of a fit with informal logic.

But the thing is that, right now, epistemology has very little appeal outside philosophy, as a field that has any practical use, or that should be taught to wider audiences at universities. The advantages for informal logic of classifying itself as a type of epistemology are not clear, and do not seem to be there.

Critical thinking seems to have a lot of the same content as informal logic. In fact, it is not easy to distinguish between the two subjects. Critical thinking seems to be the educational wing of informal logic. It is a subject that is especially featured

in education schools, and in technical colleges or two-year colleges where the teaching of practical skills is the emphasis. However, because of the growing popularity in universities of marketable skills, and the need for improving writing and literacy skills, critical thinking has been rapidly growing in acceptance as an area that will get big enrollments, and that is regarded with approval by administrators. Critical thinking is so marketable in fact, that introductory informal logic texts now almost all use the phrase in their titles. It has become the key word to signal recognition of this general field we have been calling informal logic or argumentation.

One possibility then is that "critical thinking" could become the generic term for the field, and informal logic could become a more specialized subfield in which aspects of logical reasoning (and perhaps the study of the fallacies) could become its more specialized subject matter. Then critical thinking would concern itself generally more with critical reading and writing skills. So critical thinking would have a logic component, which would be based around informal logic, as well as formal logic. But it would be based more centrally around language skills, and skills of comprehending argumentative texts of discourse, of asking critical questions in interpreting and and evaluating such discourse, and of learning writing skills for various purposes.

7. Resolving the Identity Crisis

Of all the various possibilities considered, the last one appears to me the most likely to occur (although not necessarily to the exclusion of the other possible developments). Critical thinking is a growth industry, and for good reasons. It represents a much needed skill in the present circumstances. What it lacks is a coherent and theoretically well-developed central method, or set of techniques, based on serious research. The biggest problems are the lack of a serious and systematic connection between the present research in argumentation theory and informal logic and what is being taught in the introductory level courses in critical thinking, and the lack of courses in the area of informal logic being taught at the graduate level (especially in philosophy departments). So-called "baby logic" courses have grown and grown, and feature more and more "informal" content, but there has been no connection with graduate level courses or PhD. thesis work (or, at any rate, very little, so far).

So the identity crisis is not merely terminological in nature, or a question of what the subject, or subjects at issue ought to be called. It is a deeper one of informal logic being seen as "Mickey Mouse" by the conservative guardians of formal logic,

and of any kind of logic as being viewed with suspicion by postmodernists. We seem to be stuck in a rut where acceptance of this field as a serious area of study by many who are the opinion leaders in philosophy is grudging at best. But the immediate future doesn't look hopeful either, as the postmodernist way of thinking would appear to be opposed to any kind of logic, and especially to an informal logic that might actually have some bite in criticizing obscure thinking, or errors of argumentation.

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