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ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Preface

The *Eighth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation* (ISSA), held in Amsterdam from 1 July to 4 July 2014, drew again more submissions for presentations than any ISSA Conference before. After a strict selection procedure, 320 scholars were invited to present their papers at the Conference. In addition, the Conference attracted some 200 interested colleagues and students who attended the presentations and took part in the discussions.

The 2014 ISSA Conference was, like previous ones, an international meeting place for argumentation scholars from a great variety of academic backgrounds and traditions, representing a wide range of academic disciplines and approaches: (speech) communication, logic (formal and informal), rhetoric (classical and modern), philosophy, linguistics, (critical) discourse analysis, pragmatics, law, political science, psychology, education, religious studies, media studies and artificial intelligence.

During the conference, papers were presented on academic argumentation, analogy argumentation, argument and computation, argument schemes, argumentation and cognition, argumentation and criticism, argumentation and culture, argumentation and epistemology, argumentation and ethics, argumentation and finance, argumentation and media, argumentation and norms, argumentation and probability, argumentation and religion, argumentation and speech acts, argumentation and style, argumentation in the public sphere, argumentation structures, argumentative strategies, critical discourse analysis, critical thinking, debate, definitions, education and learning, empirical research, ethos and pathos, fallacies, historical backgrounds, interpersonal argument, legal argumentation, medical argumentation, multimodal argumentation, narrative argument, political argumentation, political argumentation and national transitions, political discourse, practical argument, the Perelman approach, the Toulmin approach, theoretical issues and visual argumentation. In the opinion of the editors, the Proceedings of the Eighth ISSA Conference reflect the current richness of the discipline.

The Proceedings of the Conference are published on CD ROM by Rozenberg Publishers. For the reader's convenience, in the Proceedings the papers are arranged in the alphabetical order of the authors' surnames.

The four ISSA board members, Bart Garssen, David Godden, Gordon Mitchell and Francisca Snoeck Henkemans served as editors of the Proceedings. The editors were helped in their reviewing by members of the Department of Speech Communication of the University of Amsterdam. In addition, we received invaluable assistance in preparing the Proceedings from our research assistant Eugen Popa. We thank him very much for his help in getting the manuscripts ready for publication. Last but not least, we would like to thank our publisher Auke van der Berg for the production of these Proceedings.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Toward Polylogical Analysis Of Argumentation: Disagreement Space In The Public Controversy About Fracking

Abstract: This paper offers a new way to make sense of disagreement expansion from a polylogical perspective by incorporating various places (venues), players (parties), and positions (standpoints) into the analysis. The concepts build on prior implicit ideas about disagreement space by suggesting how to more fully account for argumentative context, and its construction, in large-scale complex controversies.

Keywords: argumentation, controversy, deliberation, disagreement space, fracking, polylogue.

1. *Introduction*
Deliberation in the contemporary globalized, mediated environment presents an opportunity for reflecting on method in argument analysis. As we have argued

before (Lewiński & Aakhus, 2014), one key conceptual issue is this: while multi-party and multi-position argumentation (*polylogue*) is prevalent, the analytic apparatus in argumentation studies tends toward dialectical analysis of dyadic disagreements. Such an analysis is posited on a set of often tacit assumptions about argumentation: it typically takes place in a fixed and definable setting where two parties (proponent vs. opponent) exchange reasons and criticisms in order to justify (or refute) some standpoint over which they disagree. Argumentation is thus presumed to be a communicative activity which expands along the lines of a disagreement space co-constructed by the two parties through their argument-relevant speech acts (see Jackson, 1992; van Eemeren et al., 1993, pp. 95ff.).**[i]**

In this paper, we propose how to make sense of disagreement expansion from a polylogical perspective by incorporating various *places* (venues), *players* (parties), and *positions* (standpoints) into the analysis. We use a case about transporting oil by train drawn from the broader controversy about extraction of shale gas and oil resources using hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"), to which various players (e.g., companies, federal regulators, local communities, environmentalists, professional associations) contribute their conflicting views and arguments. In this way, the controversy develops as a polylogue, which is discourse (*logos*) among many (*poly*), that is, a dia-logue more complex than simple dialogue (discourse between two) typically used to model and analyze argumentation (Lewiński, 2014). The paper contributes to argumentation theory by developing polylogical analysis, which is important for advancing understanding of large-scale, multi-party argumentation (Aakhus & Lewiński, 2011).

2. *Argumentation analysis of public controversies over energy production*
To see how the dyadic assumptions about argumentation hide the polylogical character of disagreement expansion in public controversies, we consider some analyses of argumentation over energy production, as it is a constant source of contemporary public controversy. The economic, social, political, and environmental impacts of various technologies (coal, natural gas, oil, nuclear power, hydropower, wind and solar energy, etc.) are hotly debated between all the parties involved: from producers, distributors, state regulators, environmental groups, consumers, to local communities affected by energy production.
A good example of such a controversy extensively analyzed with the tools of argumentation theory is Royal Dutch Shell's involvement in the oil production in

Nigeria in the 1990's (van Eemeren, 2010, Ch. 6; van Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999, 2002; Johnson, 2002; Leff, 2006; Tindale, 1999, Ch. 5). Among the key issues of this public debate was Shell's cozy relationship with the Nigerian military regime, its lack of concern for the environment and local communities and, in particular, its alleged complicity in the death of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a prominent Nigerian dissident and environmental activist. Shell decided to manage these issues by publishing an advertorial "Clear thinking in troubled times" in major world newspapers in November 1995 – which served as the basis for analyses mentioned above.

In their pragma-dialectical analysis, van Eemeren & Houtlosser clearly identify the complexities of the argumentative situation in this case. Shell addresses "the general public" with an attempt to refute the accusations leveled against the company by campaigners such as Greenpeace. Therefore: "Dialectically speaking we have here two opposing parties – Shell and the campaigners – and a third party – the public – that is supposedly neutral" (2002, p. 148). Later, using an updated terminology, van Eemeren argues that the skeptical "general public" is Shell's *primary audience* accessed via an ostensible argument with the oppositional *secondary audience,* the campaigners. Indeed, careful management of disagreement with the two is "a crucial element in Shell's strategic maneuvering at the confrontation stage" (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 169). This is achieved by "dissociating the general public […] from the campaigners who reacted against Shell's involvement in Nigeria. […] This strategic separation between the public and the campaigners has the advantage to Shell that the company can treat the public as a possible ally" (pp. 169-170).

The pragma-dialectical study meticulously analyzes the textual and contextual elements in Shell's advertorial, and precisely reconstructs the structure of its arguments. Yet, despite openly conceding there are (at least) three parties to the controversy, and that this fact is one of the main vehicles for Shell's strategic maneuvering, pragma-dialectics still relies on a dyadic model of communication. For instance, in the *dialectical profiles* of the reconstructed discussion between Shell and its opponents, the primary audience – "the general public" – merges with the secondary audience – "the campaigners" – into a single category of "opponents", presumably to clear room for a dyadic dialectical analysis (van Eemeren, 2010, pp. 171-173). We see this as a blind spot, which significantly weakens the purported goal of the entire analysis: the "determining of the strategic function of argumentative moves" in this controversy (van Eemeren,

2010, Ch. 6; see Lewiński & Aakhus, 2014).

What is evident in Shell's advertorial is argumentative dynamics that goes beyond a simple dyadic clash between a proponent and an opponent. There are, instead, numerous distinct groups which might oppose, doubt, or be concerned with Shell's position. Tindale makes this clear in his analysis of the case: Shell "can expect a wide audience ranging from the hostile to the sympathetic to the indifferent" (1999, p. 127). While "the indifferent" largely correspond to the neutral general public in van Eemeren's analysis and "the hostile" are "the campaigners", Tindale discusses yet another "subgroup of principal interest" for Shell's argument: the "sympathetic, but concerned" "members of the business community, particularly investors in the company, who have an economic interest in the issue" (1999, p. 127). Interestingly, for Tindale, Shell's argumentation is heavily driven by the appeal to "the business component of its audience", entirely left out from van Eemeren's study: "A bottom-line position that permeates the discourse is that Shell has no expectation of pulling out from Nigeria. The company's future economic success in the region rests in part on convincing investors of this." (1999, p. 128).**[ii]**

With this rhetorically-based analysis, we arrive at an understanding of a disagreement where at least four parties play a part: Shell, anti-Shell campaigners, Shell's concerned investors, and the general international public. This, arguably, is still a simplification. One can easily see Shell's competitors in the region, the Nigerian government, potential litigants (Saro-Wiwa's family), affected communities in Nigeria, and legal authorities in Nigeria and Holland (Shell's headquarters) as other possible stakeholders/players/parties in this very controversy.**[iii]** If Shell's text indeed "has been constructed with care and deliberation" (Tindale, 1999, p. 127), then we can reasonably expect that such (actual or potential) sources of doubt and disagreement have been carefully and deliberately managed in this one-page message.

The analyses of energy production controversies based on dyadic assumptions thus hide important complexities of argumentation as it happens in public controversies. Most notably, there are many players claiming a stake in the production process and its consequences, which leads to many positions being advanced and refuted in many places where energy production is carried out and discussed. If we want to analyze and evaluate such a controversy for what it is – a multi-party dispute, that is, multi-party argumentative interaction – we need a

model of such an interaction. We call this model a *polylogue*. If the aim of argument analysis is only to assess the rationality of a single argument or evaluate the maneuvers of a particular arguer, then dyadic assumptions might suffice. However, public controversies are dynamic, multi-party activities that unfold over time in a variety of places. Such controversies often take on a particular form of life that is in turn constitutive of the content, direction, and outcomes of the very matters and activity that gave rise to the controversy in the first place (e.g. Schön & Rein, 1994). Understanding the logic of an argument or the reasonableness of a particular move by an actor is necessary but wholly insufficient for establishing an argumentative analysis of the controversy. What is needed is an argumentative understanding of the logic of the controversy, which can be developed through analysis of the polylogical expansion of disagreement.

3. *Reconstructing argumentation as polylogical expansion of disagreement*
3.1 *Public controversies as polylogues*
Some basic assumptions of argumentation theory are still greatly shaped by the way legal proceedings are conducted – a lasting influence that began with Aristotle and was perpetuated in the work of Toulmin (1958) and Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969). Argumentation happens in a fixed venue (court of law), has pre-defined rules and a cast of characters, and amounts to a dyadic clash of two contradictory positions (guilty vs. innocent in a criminal trial) sustained by two confronting parties (accuser vs. accused). The analysis of Shell's advertorial using the pragma-dialectical model is a good example of this approach.
We argue that public controversies such as oil production and transportation quite clearly break these assumptions. The venues are constantly shifting and are strategically selected, designed, and argued about; players are numerous and fluctuating; and positions do not amount to a dyadic contradiction but rather involve a set of multiple contrary standpoints. In this way they become polylogues, that is, dialogues other than simple dialogues, or dyadic interactions. This, in itself, is unremarkable, given that most public interactions are in fact multilateral. What is remarkable, though, is that argumentation theory applies its dyadic, legally-inspired models to capture the strategic shape and rational quality of such polylogues.
Our main argument is that such complex situations – quite typical for public controversies – cannot be easily "fit into" the simple dialectical framework consisting of an opponent facing a proponent. As we argued before (Lewiński & Aakhus, 2014), it is possible for some localized episodes of argumentative

exchanges, but it does not add up to an adequate account of the entire multi-party dispute. Similarly, the somewhat static and asymmetric rhetorical account of an *arguer qua speaker* facing (possibly multiple) *audience*(s) does not do full justice to the interactive discursive dynamics of an ongoing public dispute of this sort (Lewiński & Aakhus, 2014).

3.2 *Activity breakdown and the emergence of argumentation*
A breach or breakdown in human activity provides an important point of entry for argumentation analysis as suggested in the pragmatic theory of argument advanced by Jackson and Jacobs (e.g. Jacobs, 1989). Argumentation from their perspective is not a standalone activity or practice but is woven into the very tapestry of communication. Central to their theory is that argument functions as repair in human activities – that is, argument arises because it functions as a method for repairing the content or process of some ongoing activity. The activity in which people engage offers the natural grounds for raising doubts, objections, and disagreement as well as for proof and justification (e.g. Jackson & Jacobs, 1981). Moreover, the substance and direction of any human activity is subject to the capacity of participants, and any third-parties or systems, to jointly manage the shape of the disagreement space through the relevant or digressive design of their argumentative moves (Jacobs & Jackson, 2006). While Jackson and Jacobs develop their account within settings of interpersonal argumentation, we find that the insight is remarkably scalable to any human activity (e.g. Aakhus, 2013).

Our point of entry into our current reflection on method for polylogical analysis is a news story published in the *New York Times* on January 25, 2014 entitled "Accidents surge as oil industry takes the train" (Krauss & Mouawad, 2014). Unlike Shell's advertorial, this is not a dramatic and carefully crafted piece of rhetoric but instead a news story reporting on a turning point event. By selecting this text, we move away from focusing on an exceptional speech or a speaker towards a text that openly reflects on the social, political, and technical infrastructure that enables large-scale coordinated human activity. This is important for polylogical analysis, which seeks to articulate not only the arguments made but the argumentative activity and the function of arguments and argumentation in human activities. Since the text used here reports a breach or breakdown in human activity, it provides the analyst a form of "infrastructural inversion" where what is otherwise taken-for-granted in human activity as normal and unnoticed is exposed and made temporarily strange and ready for

examination (see Bowker & Star, 1999). Among other important methodological concerns for analyzing argument, infrastructural inversion is a method for a pragmatic analysis such as advocated by Jackson and Jacobs. In particular, it draws analytic attention to making visible how argumentative activity is embedded within broad human activities and how argumentation shapes and is shaped by the conduct of human activity.

3.3 *Exploding trains*

Fracking (or: hydraulic fracturing) is a method of extracting natural gas and oil (the so called 'shale' gas and oil) from deep layers of 'shale' rock. It consists of an older technology and a new technology. The older technology involves fracturing rock by injecting high-pressurized liquids (water with added chemicals and sand) and thereby releasing the gas and oil trapped there. The newer technology involves drilling that can maneuver in nearly any direction rather than simple vertical drilling of prior eras. This method has been recently used on a massive scale in the USA, increasing its oil production by 50% (from 2008 to 2013). This has turned the USA into one of the biggest gas and oil producers in the world and changed the availability of petroleum resources for consumption around the world. Because of this, the fracking business has been hailed as the chief agent of the USA's energy security, a job creator, and provider of cheap energy to American industry and consumers. Yet concerns remain. There are environmental hazards (documented cases of water pollution, methane emissions, micro-earthquakes, etc.), questions about the actual economic impact on local communities, and shifts in energy policy and investment away from non-carbon based energy sources. Consequently, there is an ongoing public controversy over fracking's economic, environmental, social, and political impact that stretches from local communities around extraction sites to USA's oil-driven global politics.

An important but overlooked aspect of shale oil and gas production is its transportation. Fracking takes place in new areas otherwise disconnected from traditional oil and gas production pipeline infrastructure. Hence a massive surge in the amount of oil shipped by rail: from 9,500 carloads in 2008 to 400,000 in 2013 (4,200% more). Not unexpectedly, rail supplies can hardly keep up with the increasing demand for efficient and safe large-scale transportation. Tragic accidents occur, such as the explosion of a train in Quebec, Canada, in July 2013 which killed 47 people. In 2013 alone, there were more spills than in the entire 1975-2012 period (Krauss & Mouawad, 2014). One of such major spills occurred

in the town of Casselton, North Dakota, on December 30, 2013 where a train carrying crude oil crashed into a derailed grain train causing a major fire and oil spill. This has been a widely reported accident that further fueled the public debate about the safety of shale oil production and transportation.

Shale gas and oil production is a massive human undertaking made up of an interconnected web of activities coordinated through communication across time and space through many kinds of venues. The text of the news story thus opens up the landscape of the controversy and makes visible many parties and their beliefs and opinions about how the transportation of shale oil should be conducted. It is these beliefs and opinions that get drawn out and into the explicit discourse about transporting oil. The argumentative activities through which disagreement space around human activity is expanded and contracted can be understood by examining its possible venues, parties to the disagreement, and contended positions.

4. *Analysis*
4.1 *Places*
The news account reveals many places, or venues, where disagreement about the transportation of shale oil is managed. The news story provides some insight into and appreciation of a labyrinth of venues that are connected in more-or-less relevant ways around the matter of transporting shale oil.

There are five venues that stand out in the account. First, there is reference to informal public encounters, such as Kerry's Kitchen "where residents gather for gossip and comfort food especially the caramel rolls baked fresh every morning."**[iv]** Second, there is reference to formal closed 'disciplinary' meeting between principal actors in shale oil transportation: "Railroad executives, meeting with the transportation secretary and federal regulators recently, pledged to look for ways to make oil convoys safer – including slowing down the trains or rerouting them from heavily populated areas." Third, there is reference to formal private meeting where 'negotiations' between the industry representatives and regulators take place: "After the recent meeting with regulators, the American Petroleum Institute pledged it would share its own test data about the oil, which they have said is proprietary." Fourth, there is reference to private, informal deliberation: "Adrian Kieffer, the assistant fire chief, rushed to the accident and spent nearly 12 hours there, finishing at 3 a.m. 'When I got home that night, my wife said let's sell our home and move,' he said." And, finally, there is the news

story itself which points to a privately structured public media space for communication about the incident.

While it is not possible to offer an extensive analysis of these venues referred to in the news story, it is important to note that the juxtaposition of these venues in the account suggests that there is no one institution, field, sphere, or conversation that defines and contains the disagreement. Instead we begin to see a complex infrastructure of venues where those with a stake in the shale oil production and transportation engage each other. Each venue is a means for argumentation to repair the breakdown in the shale oil production and transportation caused by the explosion. Each venue suggests argumentative conduct aimed at the various doubts, differences, and disagreements brought to life by the derailment and explosion.

While conventional pragmatic analysis of argumentation has begun to take into account the rules of the settings where argumentation happens by considering the formal argumentative activity types characteristic of various institutions (e.g. legislative assemblies in political argumentation), conventional pragmatic analysis treats these as stable social structures to better understand the arguments and maneuvers of particular actors within the setting. By contrast, the news account offers an infrastructural inversion that draws into light the dynamic relationship of venues that is otherwise tacit, taken for granted, and even hidden from plain sight. From this vantage point, an analyst begins to see the varying ways disagreement expands through the creative struggle among the parties to pursue and place argumentation. There are concerns by industry and government over where best to handle the issues, whether through formal judicial proceedings or, as in the present case, a private disciplinary meeting among regulators and industry. This may illustrate a form of *venue shopping* where parties seek the most favorable place to handle a difference (e.g., Pralle, 2003). There are concerns by industry over the information available about oil and gas production and, in the present case, there may be a form of *venue entrepreneurship* where some participants seek to strategically alter some rules of engagement, such as when an industry representative worked with government to create a site where industry controls the dissemination of official industry information to stakeholders. Closer analysis of additional background may also reveal efforts at *venue creation* where parties seek to create an entirely new place to engage in argumentation. Thus, venues become part of the argumentation as parties seek to

shape and discipline the pursuit and expansion of disagreement by selecting, altering, or creating venues for argumentation.

4.2 *Players*

The initial framing of the controversy in the *New York Times* news report is noticeably dyadic. The journalist is clearly trying to put in motion some simple adversary dialectics between oil "producers" and their "critics": "In the race for profits and energy independence, critics say producers took shortcuts to get the oil to market as quickly as possible without weighing the hazards of train shipments." Such two-sidedness has become a landmark of modern journalistic writing as a vehicle for impartiality and comprehensiveness (Cramer, 2011).

In its entirety, however, the news story reveals a complex network of distinct players and their multilateral, rather than bilateral, relations: local residents (coffee shop owner, firefighters), North Dakota state authorities (state governor), federal "safety officials" (National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB chair) and "regulators" (Federal Railroad Administration, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, DoT Secretary), third-parties (former administrator of the PHMSA, rail transport consultant), and industry groups (Association of American Railroads, The Railway Supply Institute, American Petroleum Institute). At a certain level of abstraction, one can of course extract some basic disagreement between the pro-side (producers) and the contra-side (critics). This, however, is not a level interesting to an argument analyst who wants to understand the "logic" behind taking up particular lines of disagreement, design of arguments and criticisms, as well as constraints and affordances a given social or institutional role carries. Since these differ, so do different players' positions and arguments. Take for example the difference between federal "safety officials" and "regulators". The former are tasked with investigating the causes of accidents and suggesting adequate recommendations. The latter are to develop and implement concrete and binding regulations, something they do in negotiation with all the parties involved, including the industry. Regulators might be, then, "critics" of the "producers" but likely in a way different than safety officials are. Similarly, local residents, who care for the safety and well-being of their communities, cannot be taken to constitute one argumentative party with the state authorities concerned with having a sustainable, revenue-generating business at home. The former argue that "we should slow the production, and the trains, down", the latter's "first priority was improving tank cars" so that, supposedly, they can better serve the burgeoning oil

business. Both, then, take up some disagreement with "producers" regarding the way oil is produced and transported, but take it into a markedly different direction.

To conclude, there appears to be no *Public* or *Opponent* in the classic rhetorical or dialectical sense – instead, the controversy involves a variety of stakeholders, as determined by those who call-out and make claims on actions of others.

4.3 *Positions*

The multilateral network of relations among the players makes it hard to reconstruct this controversy in dyadic terms also at the level of positions various players defend. Again, the dyadic tendency of argumentation theory would guide us into seeing it as, basically, a two-sided disagreement. The main bone of contention would be the activity of shale oil and gas production. One the one hand, we would get those who claim, "Yes, let's frack as much as we can!", on the other those who would want to ban fracking altogether (clearly, there are actual players who claim just that – arguments of some oil industry actors vs. radical environmentalists). Then, however, we quickly notice a variety of mediating "yes, but" positions: from "YES, let's frack, but improve slightly the drilling technology so that less spills occur" to "yes, let's conditionally frack BUT ONLY IF other sources of energy are unavailable." The disagreement space becomes populated with all kinds of incompatible positions and arguments that do not easily fit the simple pro-con divisions.

The *New York Times* report indeed reveals a complex, polylogical network of disagreements on the issue of transporting oil by train. The Railway Supply Institute, an industry group representing freight car owners, defends their current practices by maintaining that "existing cars 'already provide substantial protection in the event of a derailment'." This position is challenged by another industry group, Association of American Railroads (companies that manage the railroads). According to them, tank cars should be "retrofitted with better safety features or 'aggressively phased out'." Their arguments for this position seem purely prudential – without safer transportation, oil business will not grow as expected; in the words of a former administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration: "Producers need to understand that rail-car safety can become an impediment to production." Additionally, as other third-party consultants claim, "railroads and car owners can no longer ignore the liabilities associated with oil trains, which could reach $1 billion in the Quebec

accident."

Now, these disagreements *within* the oil transportation business are just a side dish in the broader controversy. The main courses are made of opposition from government, local communities, as well as environmentalists (not referred to in this very report). Federal "safety officials" "have warned for more than two decades that these cars were unsuited to carry flammable cargo", and their arguments are based in concerns over citizens' and environmental safety, rather than prosperous business. Finally, local communities have a distinct position of their own: because they need now to restore "shattered calm and confidence", "[m]ost people [in Casselton] think we should slow the production, and the trains, down." They thus question not just the technical details of production and transportation, but rather the very rationale for these activities. This puts their position in opposition to all the above-mentioned, including the federal officials who might not be doing enough to protect the common people.

In this way, disagreement is not limited to contradiction. Accordingly, the expansion of disagreement space is not limited to a dyadic dynamics between two contradictions; instead, it involves a polylogical network of multilateral relations.

5. *Conclusion*

In this paper, we highlight how to make sense of disagreement expansion from a polylogical perspective by incorporating various *places* (venues), *players* (parties), and *positions* (standpoints) into the analysis. By articulating positions, disagreement expansion can be seen as something generated by players attempting to manage an interconnected web of commitments relative to their multilateral relations to others. Disagreement is not limited to contradiction. By articulating players, disagreement expansion can be seen as co-constructed through the calling-out actions of multiple players and the anticipation of being called-out. Disagreement is not limited to contending with one other party and thus argumentative strategy is not limited to message design but is opened to communication design as it is found in the variety of instruments for communication which parties develop to manage their role in a complex web of relationships. By articulating venues, disagreement expansion can be seen as something that happens through a network of communicative activities that develops in the course of managing broader human activities. The content, strategies, and parties to argumentation are not necessarily limited to the demands of one kind of communicative activity but are often relevant to and

implicated in other communicative activities in the network. Disagreement is not limited to one given, fixed place but finds its way into a variety of places and often motivates the reconfiguring or invention of places for argumentation. Thus, by articulating the polylogical expansion of disagreement space, argumentation analysis can engage the logic of controversies rather than taking context to be given or treating it as static for other analytic aims.

While disagreement space has been treated as a dialectical product from a dyadic perspective, the original conceptualization affords a polylogical analysis. It is not an inherently dyadic concept and the concept needs to be developed to address complex, contemporary argumentation. By introducing particular analytic concepts (positions, players, and places) for reconstructing disagreement expansion, we are suggesting that the reconstruction of argumentation can more fully take into account the infrastructure for communication, which makes argumentation possible, at a variety of scales. Moreover, we are articulating a means to account for how argumentative contexts are constructed and become a conscious target for strategic construction in order to shape human sense-making about broad human activities. For those interested in moving argumentation analysis beyond the assessment of a single argument or the evaluation of the maneuvers of a particular arguer, such conceptual and methodological considerations are needed (see Aakhus, 2013; Aakhus & Lewiński, 2011; Lewiński & Aakhus, 2014).

NOTES
i. There is nothing inherent in the disagreement space concept that limits it to the dyadic presumption. Indeed, a close look at the examples and analysis in van Eemeren et al. (1993), especially chapters 5-7, suggests that disagreement space is a discourse-centric phenomenon that can incorporate many parties and positions (see Aakhus & Vasilyeva, 2008). We develop this intuition in our present paper.
ii. Johnson (2002, p. 41) and Leff (2006, p. 203, n. 2) both make a similar argument in their analysis of this case. Indeed, looking from the perspective of the strategic objectives of a modern corporation, the entire argumentation in Shell's advertorial is eventually subordinate to its claim of "future economic success". Shell is addressing various stakeholders with complex argumentation, stating that they are a growing and socially responsible company which, therefore, is worth dealing with, whether as an investor, government, business

partner, community member, activist, or customer.

iii. In an endnote, Tindale himself recognizes that "we can imagine other interested subgroups", and mentions Shell's competitors and Nigerian expatriates opposing the government (1999, p. 215, n. 1).

iv. All quotations in the analysis are from New York Times report "Accidents surge as oil industry takes the train" (Krauss & Mouawad, 2014).

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Don't Feed The Trolls: Straw Men And Iron Men

Abstract: The straw man fallacy consists in inappropriately constructing or selecting weak (or comparatively weaker) versions of the opposition's arguments. We will survey the three forms of straw men recognized in the literature, the straw, weak, and hollow man. We will then make the case that there are examples of inappropriately reconstructing stronger versions of the opposition's arguments. Such cases we will call iron man fallacies.
Keywords: Iron man fallacy, Straw man fallacy, Weak man fallacy

1. *Introduction*

As some of recent work has shown, there is more to the problem of straw manning than the *distortion* of an opponent's argument. Some forms of straw man, such as the *weak man*, rely on accurate, even *scrupulously accurate*, depictions of arguments for criticism. Other forms, such as the *hollow man* do not actually involve representations of anyone's actual argument or view. Nonetheless, these strategies, and others to be discussed here, are dialectically problematic for much of the same reasons the distortion form of straw man is, in that they, to use some metaphorical language, misrepresent the dialogical lay of the land. We will argue here that two further features complete the account of the fallaciousness of the straw man: (1) a move to close the argument with the straw man victim (and those with similar views) and (2) a move to paint the straw man victim as unworthy of being taken seriously. What makes the varieties of straw man fallacious can also be used to show that not all forms of straw men arguments ought to be considered fallacious. Finally, the considerations that distinguish fallacious from non fallacious straw men also uncover a related phenomenon, *iron manning,* or the practice of making an opponent's argument *stronger* than it is. We will argue that there are both appropriate and fallacious versions of this tactic.

2. *Varieties of the straw man*

Our aim in this section is to show that
(1) there is a variety to the straw man,

(2) there's more involved in the phenomenon than manipulation of commitments ploys, and
(3) that non fallacious, but formally identical variations of each of these forms exist.

2.1 *The representational form of straw man*

Let's call the textbook form of the straw man the "representational form." This consists in the first instance distortion of an opponent's argument, followed by a decisive refutation. Consider:

APA
Philo: A lot of people have suggested that the American Philosophical Association amend the practically obligatory Eastern APA interview on account of the expense, inconvenience, and stress for all involved.
Sophia: Come now Philo, I hardly think that completely abandoning the system is desirable, so we ought to reject their suggestions.

APA meets the basic schematic requirements for the straw man in that we have (1) two arguers and (2) criticism of one by the other. We can also tell that the criticism here hinges on the *representation* of the first arguer's position. The first arguer maintains that the APA ought to *amend* the Eastern APA hiring process because it is expensive, inconvenient, and stressful for everyone. But the second arguer attacks a related, but substantially different claim, namely that *abandoning* the system is ridiculous. Philo not suggested that the system be *completely* abandoned; rather, she has suggested that the APA *amend* the process. Sophia has misrepresented Philo's view, and dismissed the misrepresentation as weak.

2.2 *The weak man*

Consider another variation of the straw man argument. Call it the *weak man.* In its broad outlines, the weak man consists in
(1) *selecting* the weakest of an opponent's *actual* arguments,
(2) *actually* defeating it, and
(3) then drawing or implying deeper conclusions about the argument or the arguer in question.

Consider the following exchange:
Locavorism

Serenity: The culinary and ecological movement known as "locavorism" maintains that favoring sustainably and ethically raised local and seasonal produce is superior to the more dominant industrial model. After all, it does not depend on petroleum-intensive fertilizer, it's not transported across the country (or the world in many cases), and it sustains local agricultural economies.

Archer: The claims of the locavorism movement are ludicrous, the alleged fuel savings in food transportation amount to very little if any overall petroleum savings. Locavorism is loco.

In this case, the locavore maintains that a number of different reasons independently and convergently support the single conclusion that locavorism is a wiser policy than high intensity industrial agriculture. The critic singles out one of them, the alleged fuel savings, and refutes it, implying he has dealt a blow to the argument as a whole. The locavorism critic might even have an especially decisive and sound argument, but even granted that, much would remain to consider in favor of locavorism. The weak manner hopes to exaggerate the importance of the weak argument, but barring that, he can focus critical scrutiny on the ideological fellow travelers of the person making the weak argument

2.3 *The hollow man*
In a third variation of the straw man, one invents an entirely fictitious and decisively silly position, attributes it to a purportedly real, but vaguely defined opponent, knocks it down, and thereby suggests the opposition isn't worthy of rational discussion. The "tell" for this version of the straw man, is often the infamous "some say" or "some might say" phrase that obscures the identity and therefore absolves the speaker of the charge of lying. Many of you are likely familiar with the controversy surrounding Rush Limbaugh's tendency to make jarring remarks. Unsurprisingly many have rushed to his defense. Among them was the *Wall Street Journal's* Peggy Noonan:

Peggy Noonan
"Why would the left be worse? Let me be harsh. Some left-wing men think they can talk like this because they're on the correct side on social issues such as abortion. Their attitude: 'I backed you on the abortions you want so much, I opposed a ban on partial birth. Hell, I'll let you kill kids at any point until they're 15, I'm cool. And that means I can call women in public life t – – – s, right? Because, you know, I think of them that way.'" (WSJ 3/16/2012)

Like the weak man, the hollow man does not involve *distorting* any argument so much as *inventing* an entirely new one. In this example, Noonan does not bother to identify the bearer of the view other than to say that "*some* left-wing men" think this.

3. *Are there legitimate uses of the straw man?*
The various schemes of straw men are defined by the way one arguer represents the views of another: badly, selectively, or falsely. The question is whether one can badly, selectively, or falsely represent someone's views without being guilty of fallacy.

Consider: it would be very hard to teach philosophy without employing some variation on the straw man scheme frequently and energetically. With regard to this reason, Ribiero notes that (2008) that distortions formally identical to straw man distortions occur frequently in the classroom from pedagogical need:
(1) historical interest,
(2) pedagogical ease,
(3) and practical availability. There seems, in fact, to be an intuitive case for using the various schemes of the straw man pedagogically. Representational straw men might be employed to drive home particular pedagogical points.

A teacher of music, for instance, might exaggerate the bad habit of her music student:

Music Teacher
Music teacher to student: you need to work on your intonation. At the moment it sounds like a tortured cat.

The teacher has distorted the student's behavior by hyperbole, but the point is to fix the student's awareness on her poor intonation. A similar case might be made for the other two straw man ploys. A weak man might be used as practice.

Gay Marriage
Brad: I've heard quite a number of arguments against gay marriage in the conservative press lately.
Angelina: I have too. I heard one particularly bad one from a blogger at RedState.com:he argued that if homosexuals are allowed to marry, nothing would prevent him from marrying his box turtle.
Brad: Wow, that's hilarious.

In this example, Brad signals that there are several arguments against gay marriage. We can imagine that some are better than others. Angelina responds by attacking what is likely to be weakest of them, a kind of textbook version of the slippery slope fallacy. Answering it first improves further discussion.

For a *hollow man case*, continue our pedagogical consideration. Open just about any introductory logic text, and one will find the exercise sections full of arguments few sensible people would make (though we're often disabused of this notion). It's just easier, however, to do it this way, for the point of the fallacy exercise is to get at the form of argument, not to pin failings on specific people.

Though all of these examples fit the straw man ploy in its various forms, none of them are in our view fallacious. In *Music Teacher*, the instructor attacks an exaggerated version of the student's performance to highlight a difficult to appreciate pedagogical point. In *Gay Marriage*, Angelina goes straight for the weakest of the arguments for the anti-gay marriage position, and so weak mans that view. But she does not draw the inference that this view is representative of the best of the opposition. Weak manning sometimes serves the dialectical purpose of clearing away weak arguments, which nonetheless may have a lot of adherents, and which nonetheless occupy much in demand dialectical space.

These representative, but non fallacious, straw man ploys highlight two important features about what makes most straw man arguments fallacious in the first place. The fallaciousness does not primarily consist in the distortion of someone else's argument (as in the representational straw man), in the purposeful selection of the weakest of someone's arguments (as in the weak man), or finally in the invention of weak arguments or arguers (as in the hollow man); all of these can be very useful dialectical tools. *What makes these tactics fallacious is how they are deployed.* The varieties of straw man are fallacious if they are deployed (1) to close off argument prematurely and (2) illegitimately impugn an opposing arguer's competence. So, for instance, the hollow man is fallacious when one makes up an idiotic argument, knocks it down, in order to suggest that the opposition, however vaguely defined, lacks sufficient critical skill, as in the *Peggy Noonan* example above. Such people's views are unserious and not worthy of further consideration. The other two examples show a similar tendency to tar the target with an accusation of a bad argument. In APA, the arguer is alleged to have made an extreme suggestion; in *Locavorism*, the arguer is alleged to be insufficiently reflective or to associate with insufficiently reflective people.

4. *Iron manning*

If what makes the varieties of straw men fallacious is their exclusionary, or closing, function, then it is easier to distinguish fallacious cases of straw manning from non fallacious ones. The fallaciousness of strawman arguments is indexed to context. Views or arguments that warrant careful consideration in one situation may not deserve them in another. *This means at times it may be permissible (and necessary) to exclude some views from consideration on the basis of cursory arguments.* In other words, while fallacious straw men involve the exclusion of arguments or arguers from justly deserved consideration, in light of the function of the straw man to distort over time, there is good reason to think that unreasonably or overly charitable interpretations of arguments (of arguers) can also qualify as fallacious. It's certainly fallacious, in other words, to distort a person's argument in order more easily to it knock down (and malign the person as a competent arguer); however, by parity of reasoning, a charitable distortion to present an unserious arguer as serious is equally problematic. We call this the iron man. Consider the following cases.

4.1 *Eric Cantor*

Eric Cantor is the Republican Majority Whip in the House of Representatives. In an interview with Leslie Stahl on CBS's 60 Minutes (1/1/2012), Stahl asked Cantor to square the fact that Ronald Reagan raised taxes during a recession with the current Republican Party view – allegedly inspired by Reagan – that taxes ought never to be raised. In response, Cantor denied that Reagan ever raised taxes. His spokesperson interrupted the interview, alleging that Stahl did not have her facts straight. She did. Coming to Cantor's defense, one blogger (Jim Hoft) made the following claim:

Stahl, was not being honest. When Ronald Reagan took office, the top individual tax rate was 70 percent and by 1986 it was down to only 28 percent. All Americans received at least a 30 percent tax rate cut. Democrats like to play with the numbers to pretend that Reagans [sic] tax increases equalled [sic] his tax cuts. Of course, this is absurd.

…Unfortunately, Steve Benen at the Washington Monthly continued to misrepresent Reagan's record on tax cuts. It's just soooo difficult for liberals to understand that tax cuts work. Sad.

Notice that Hoft has offered a different and (much more defensible) view on

behalf of Cantor: on aggregate, taxes were lower after Reagan's years in office than before. This was not the point under consideration. The net effect of this is to distort the proper evaluation of Cantor's claim and Stahl's criticism.

4.2 *Westboro Baptist Church*
The Westboro Baptist Church is known for demonstrating at the funerals of fallen soldiers. At their protests, they hold up signs alleging that the death of the person is God's punishment for the tolerance of homosexuality in America. In light of this, consider the following exchange.

Sally: The Westboro Baptist Church boycotted my local synagogue, carrying signs that say "God hates fags." Their views are patently ridiculous; far from even the fringe of conservative Christianity. People should just ignore them.
Priscilla: Yes, but aren't they really suggesting that our fate as a nation is bound up with the moral fibre of the American people? As we lose our sense of commitment, steadfastness, and courage, we will not realize our plans.

Priscilla raises some interesting points, but they are vaguely related to the actual content of the Westboro Church's protests and Sally's objection. The question is whether these particular arguments from the Westboroites deserve consideration. And so iron-manning can be an occasion for broader discussion, but one iron mans so that we do not have to discuss this particular argument.

4.3 *Philosophy student I*
We have discussed above how teaching philosophy to undergraduates often depends on strategically employed, non-fallacious straw men. As it is necessary sometimes to straw man views, it is also necessary to iron man the student's view. With this in mind, imagine the following teacher-student exchange.

Alfredo: Rawls' "Original Position" seems impossible to me. I mean, how are we to know what sorts of things we'll be interested in if we don't know anything about ourselves?
Professor Zoccolo: That's an interesting point, Alfredo, you're suggesting that Rawls's Original Position does not take cognizance of how we are constituted by our social relations. Thinking them through abstractly seems problematic.

Alfredo's view certainly trends communitarian, but it would be a stretch to suggest that this is what he meant. Unlike the previous cases, however, iron-manning Alfredo shows him how to improve his contributions to the discussion.

4.4 *Philosophy student II*

The norm of iron-manning student views can yield good results. It shows students how to improve their thoughts. However, it can yield classroom disaster, as it can encourage more poorly stated views. Iron-manning the student makes it such that the teacher does the work in crafting the views. Moreover, time in the classroom is too short to take all the off-the-wall views seriously. Sometimes, iron-manning undercuts a serious classroom. Consider:

Professor Barleycorn: Descartes' argument in the First Meditation is that very little of what we take ourselves to know securely is certain. It may all be a dream. Or it may all be an illusion of a very powerful demon.
Bradley: Dude! I had a dream like that one night – that I was in the clutches of an evil demon. And he made me do things ... like terrible things ... to chickens. And then, when I woke up... it was all true. The terrible stuff to chickens stuff, that is. That was all after I drank too much cough syrup with my beers. Did Day-Cart have a Robitussin problem?

Bradley is way off base. For sure, his weird story deserves a moment of reply, but it is best for all involved that a lengthy analysis of Bradley's views on the matter aren't devoted class time. Some views are best left unexamined. Next time, Bradley should read. And lay off the syrup.

5. *Discussion*

From these cases, the basic form of iron man argumentation can be discerned. First, as a dialectical form, the iron man requires two speakers, A and B. A proposes some argument *a* and/or some position *p*. But *a* and *p* are not defensible. B takes up with A's case with a reconstruction, *a** and *p**, that given the state of dialectical play are (comparatively more) defensible. Often this strategy is done for the sake of an onlooking audience, C, which may be interested in A's views or the issue of whether that *p*. So far, again, we can see that there is a dialectical distortion, just as there is with straw-manning, but instead of degrading the opponent's argument (as with the straw man), the opponent's case is improved. Hence our term iron man.

There are compelling epistemic reasons to regularly iron man one's opposition, as the truth will come out in contexts of maximally responsible and detailed argumentation. Since our epistemic objectives in argument are truth and its understanding, the most intellectually robust opponent is the best, and if one does

not encounter but must construct such an opponent, then so be it. Moreover, there are ethical (and political) reasons why iron-manning may be appealing. At its core, iron-manning is a form of interpreting others communicative acts with charity. The demands of recognition, further, for underrepresented groups obtain so that their interests can be heard and have effect. Iron-manning is in the service of this. Finally, again, there are pedagogical reasons why iron-manning may be required.

So what, then, could be wrong with iron-manning? We hold that there is a fallacy of inclusion for the same reason that there is a fallacy of exclusion.

Let us return to the cases. As we saw with *Philosophy Student II*, there are pedagogical reasons why iron-manning can be objectionable, as the point of class discussion is for students to improve their own views, not having it done for them. It is here that we begin to see the trouble with some forms of iron-man: in taking some poorly articulated views seriously, improving them and submitting them to scrutiny, one makes an investment of time and intellectual energy. The trouble is that there are many investments that are unwise.

Consider, further, a feature of discussion after content presentation. There is evidence now that suggests that rude or irrelevant online comments after a posting or story actually distort reading comprehension of the original piece. That is, the more comments that don't get the original point you are exposed to or the more rude comments in the discussion thread, the less likely it is that you will, afterwards, correctly recall the details of the posting. This is now being called, "The Nasty Effect." Derailed discussion not only is a waste of time, but it is miseducation.

Now consider the strategic use of iron-manning with the Eric Cantor case. The trouble is not with improving the view *per se*, but with the way the improvement is deployed. In this case, (a) the iron man is presented as Cantor's view, and (b) thereby it is used as evidence that Stahl is (and liberals generally are) fact challenged. But this is a distortion not only of Cantor's position, but of Stahl's, too. By iron-manning Cantor, one straw-mans Stahl, his critic. Her criticisms now seem off-target and ill-informed, when they, in fact, were not.

These two elements of iron-manning converge. When one iron mans a poorly presented view, one may encourage those who have posed the view by taking

them seriously, and thereby impugn their critics. Again, sometimes this is appropriate, as some views need time and patience for their development and some speakers require maximal charity in interpreting their communicative acts. But sometimes it is inappropriate, as one can be held hostage by these speakers. On blog comment threads and chatboards, there are many who are uninformed and contribute with unhinged criticism. They are out to hijack discussion, to hold forth, to be the center of attention. These are, in internet lingo, *trolls*. Taking the trolls seriously, interpreting them with charity, and responding to them thoughtfully yields only grief. *One must not feed the trolls*.

Indeed, too often philosophers and informal logicians overlook the fact we very often find ourselves having to evaluate just *this argument* from this arguer, even if this argument could be stronger, or *this arguer* could use some help. We have argued here that even charitable alterations of arguments or arguers distort the dialectical landscape are often unacceptable, for exactly the same reason why straw-manning is unacceptable. The only difference is that the straw man excludes arguments worth listening to; the iron man includes arguments not worth listening to. In all, we've identified a few rough criteria for knowing when iron-manning is fallacious:

1. When it is clear that the argument to be reconstructed is not likely to be either relevant or successful.
2. When it is clear that the improvement of and response to the argument will take more time than is allotted, and there are other, more clearly salient, issues.
3. When, even if 1 & 2 do not obtain (that is, when there may be something relevant and there is plenty of surplus time and energy), it is clear that responding to *this speaker* under *these circumstances* encourages further badly formed arguments.
4. When the positive reconstruction of the argument (iron man) in question yields mis-portrayal of the arguments prior critics as attacking a straw man.

This rough set of criteria are, in the end, an overlap of (a) issues in cognitive economy (maximizing epistemic efficiency), and (b) issues in maintenance of a properly run dialectical field. We hold 1&2 are epistometric questions, and 3&4 are dialectical questions. Hence, the basic thought that sometimes feeding the trolls is (a) a waste of time and energy, and (b) it ultimately isn't anything but bad for the way we argue.

6. *Conclusion*

We have argued in this paper that the dialectical phenomenon known as straw manning is much more varied than many accounts suggest. In the first place, straw manning involves more than simple distortion. It also includes forms of selection (weak manning) and invention (hollow manning). Second, not all instances of straw manning are fallacious. Finally, and somewhat ironically, charitable variations on an argument suffer from the same failings as fallacious straw men, though their mistake lies in the inclusion of arguments deserving of exclusion.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – The Very Idea Of Ethical Arguments

Abstract: If non-cognitivism is true, an ethical argument cannot be a sequence of propositions as traditionally understood. I take steps towards developing an account of ethical argument that, as far as it goes, is, I believe, compatible with a particular version of non-cognitivism, namely expressivism.

Keywords: attitudinal consistency, attitudinal relevance, attitudinal validity, cogency, expressivism, non-cognitivism, propositionalism.

1. *Introduction*
I begin with an account of non-cognitivism:
According to non-cognitivism, there are no moral facts or truths…. Moral judgements don't attempt to, and don't ever, state facts. Their purpose isn't to

describe any sort of moral reality. Instead, they serve as expressive vehicles, primarily giving vent to our emotions, prescribing courses of action, or expressing our non-cognitive commitments. As such, they aren't the sort of things fit to be considered either true or false. (Shafer-Landau, 2003, p. 18)

[F]or... non-cognitivists, there is nothing that can make moral judgments true – no moral facts or moral reality that they could possibly correctly represent, nothing they are true of (*ibid.*, p. 20, note 8).

Starting from the idea that there is no moral reality that agents are trying to appreciate or depict in their moral judgements, non-cognitivists have analyzed such judgements as the expression of non-cognitive states (*ibid.*, p. 153).

This last point is worth emphasizing. Non-cognitivists don't start with the claim that moral judgments are expressive vehicles; rather, their expressive analysis of moral judgments is their alternative to the view that the purpose of moral judgments is to describe some sort of moral reality, and is motivated by their metaphysical claim that there is no such reality.

If, as non-cognitivism holds, moral judgments (or ethical judgments – I will use these terms interchangeably) are neither true nor false, then they aren't propositions as traditionally understood, for as traditionally understood a proposition is either true or false, and this is the view I will take here.

If ethical judgments aren't propositions, then ethical *arguments* aren't arguments in what Woods, Irvine, and Walton (2004) call "the narrow sense," namely "sequences of propositions, one of which is the argument's conclusion, the rest of which are the argument's premises" (p. 2). There are more than a few textbooks which take arguments as such to be propositional. If arguments *as such* are propositional, then ethical arguments are impossible if noncognitivism is true. On one view, this is a problem for textbooks that take arguments as such to be propositional; on another view, it's a problem for non-cognitivism.

The philosopher Michael Smith takes it to be a problem for non-cognitivism. In a critique of the non-cognitivism of moral irrealists (who deny that there are belief-independent moral truths), he says that "the whole business of moral argument and moral reflection only makes sense on the assumption that moral judgments *are* truth-assessable" (Smith, 1993, p. 403). Now it certainly seems that moral judgments are truth-assessable, for it makes sense to say of a moral judgment such as 'slavery is wrong' that it is *true* that slavery is wrong, or that it is *false*

that slavery is wrong. Thus, the philosopher Simon Blackburn, who is a highly sophisticated non-cognitivist, speaks of what he calls "the propositional grammar of ethics" (Blackburn, 1985, p. 6). If moral judgments don't express propositions, then their propositional grammar is misleading. Suppose it is misleading, and that non-cognitivism is true. Are ethical arguments nevertheless possible? In this paper, I will develop an account of ethical argument that, as far as it will go, is, in my view, compatible with what I will take to be a particular version of non-cognitivism, namely expressivism.

2. *Expressivism and propositionalism*

According to Parfit (2011), moral expressivists hold that "[w]hen we claim that some act is wrong, we are not intending to say something true, but are expressing our disapproving attitude toward such acts" (p. 380). In more general terms, expressivism, as I will understand it, holds that the utterance of a moral judgment is the expression of an attitude.[i] (I will make this characterization more precise below.) Further, since expressivism (as I understand it) is a version of non-cognitivism, its analysis of (the utterance of) moral judgments is motivated by the (non-cognitivist) claim that there are no moral facts and no moral reality that moral judgments purport to describe.

I will follow Alex Grzankowski (2012) in taking attitudes to be intentional mental states and in taking a mental state (or other phenomenon) to be intentional "if (and only if) it is about something" (p. 4). Some, if not all, attitudes are propositional. Propositional attitudes are intentional mental states which have propositions for their objects (ibid., p. 5).

According to Grzankowski, "theorists interested in intentional states have focused almost exclusively on [propositional attitudes], some even explicitly maintaining that all intentional states are propositional attitudes" (ibid., p. 1). If attitudes are intentional mental states, and if all intentional states are propositional attitudes, then all attitudes are propositional; if this is the case, and if the (sincere) utterance of a moral judgment is the expression of an attitude, then the object of the attitude expressed is a proposition. But expressivists (qua non-cognitivists) will say (and here I make more precise my initial characterization of expressivism) that the attitude expressed in the sincere utterance of a moral judgment is neither true nor false, and so its object is not a proposition as traditionally understood. Accordingly, expressivists must either hold that not all attitudes are propositional, or grant that all attitudes are propositional but claim that the object of a

propositional attitude, though it must be a proposition, need not be a proposition as traditionally understood. I won't consider the second of these options, but I will say something about the first.

If not all attitudes are propositional, then some attitudes are intentional states whose objects are not propositions. Thus, to take an example of Grzankowski's, if liking is a non-propositional attitude, and "if a subject likes Sally … the object of his attitude is not a proposition concerning Sally, nor does his standing in a liking relation to Sally depend upon a propositional attitude" (ibid., p. 5).

The view that, on the contrary, all attitudes *are* propositional, Grzankowski calls propositionalism. Propositionalists hold that "the most fundamental objects of the attitudes are propositions" (ibid., pp. 2-3). Grzankowski distinguishes two versions of propositionalism. Version A holds that "[f]or every attitudinal relation between a subject and a non-propositional object, there is a propositional attitude or attitudes (of that subject's) in terms of which it can be analysed" (ibid., p. 7). Version B holds that "[f]or every attitudinal relation between a subject and a non-propositional object, there are propositional attitudes (of that subject's) upon which it supervenes" (ibid.).

Grzankowski challenges both versions of propositionalism. He argues that "there are attitudes that relate individuals to non-propositional objects and do so not in virtue of relating them to propositions" (ibid., p. 1). Examples of such attitudes "include loving, liking, hating, and fearing, though there are probably many more" (ibid.). Expressivists will say that the sincere utterance by a subject of a positive (negative) moral evaluation of a non-propositional object expresses a positive (negative) attitude (of the subject's) towards the object. For expressivists who think that not all attitudes are propositional (and I will mean all and only such expressivists when I speak of expressivists hereafter) the philosophical issue (following Grzankowski) is whether, for every such attitudinal relation between a subject and a non-propositional object, (a) there is a propositional attitude (of that subject's) in terms of which the relation can be analyzed, or (b) there are propositional attitudes (of that subject's) upon which the relation supervenes.

Expressivists must reject (a), for it is tantamount to analyzing away (positive and negative) non-propositional attitudes (cf. Grzankowski, 2012, p. 10).

What about (b)? It is a special case of Grzankowski's second version of propositionalism. He explains that on this version, for S to V y, where 'V' is a psychological verb such as 'like' or 'fear' and "'y' is a non-that-clause noun

phrase" (ibid., p. 6), S's bearing "some or other propositional attitude relation to a proposition concerning y … is sufficient for his V-ing y" (ibid., p. 8). Grzankowski argues that "propositionalists cannot meet this sufficiency requirement" (ibid., p. 10). No doubt "Jim wouldn't like Jackie if he didn't think she existed," but his thinking she exists obviously isn't sufficient for his liking of her. Nor, as counterexamples will show, is his believing "that Jackie is nice," or his liking "that Jackie is kind" (ibid., p. 11). A similar strategy is available to expressivists. Suppose that S disapproves of factory farming. Presumably she wouldn't do so if she didn't believe that factory farming is practised, but this belief isn't sufficient for her disapproval. Nor would be her believing that factory farming is cruel: she might not disapprove of cruelty, or she might but nevertheless approve of factory farming all things considered. (Here and below I take 'cruel' to mean 'causing pain or suffering'; cf. *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, 1998.)

Suppose, however, that S does believe that factory farming is cruel, and for this reason disapproves of it. Then her non-propositional attitude of disapproving of factory farming is a consequence of her having a propositional attitude. It is also a consequence of her believing (dispositionally if not occurrently) that her belief that factory farming is cruel is a reason for her to disapprove of it. Is the latter belief sufficient for her disapproval? Not necessarily: she might believe that she has reason to disapprove of factory farming but not do so – or so an expressivist might elect to argue. But suppose that S's believing that her belief that factory farming is cruel is a reason for her to disapprove of it is sufficient for her disapproval. Then it is possible for a subject to be "in a non-propositional attitude in virtue of being in a propositional attitude state (or states)" (Grzankowski, 2012, p. 8). Does it follow that a moral judgment the sincere utterance of which by a subject is the expression of such a non-propositional attitude (of the subject's) is a true-or-false proposition? Expressivists can argue that this does not follow. For (i) it does not follow (expressivists can argue) that there are "moral facts or [a] moral reality that [such a moral judgment] could possibly correctly represent, [something it] could be true of" (Shafer-Landau, 2003, p. 20, note 8). (ii) Nor does it follow that in uttering such a judgment a subject would be "trying, but failing, to describe" something (ibid., p. 20). Expressivists can argue for (i) because it is their denial of there being a moral reality that motivates their interpretation of (the utterance of) a moral judgment, not their interpretation of (the utterance of) a moral judgment that motivates their denial of there being a moral reality (cf. ibid., p. 153). They can argue for (ii) because they are not error theorists: they do

not hold that moral judgments have truth-values but, because there are no moral facts, are false. (cf. Brink, 1999, p. 588).

3. *Towards an expressivist account of ethical argument*
I will take an argument to be an *ethical* argument just in case it has an ethical conclusion. On a different view, an argument is an ethical argument just in case it has an ethical conclusion and at least one ethical premise. On the view I'm taking, an ethical argument may have one or more ethical premises, but this isn't necessary for it to be an ethical argument. Consider the following argument:

Argument (1):
Factory farming is morally reprehensible because it causes animals to suffer.

This argument apparently depends upon a claim to the effect that a human practice which causes animals to suffer is morally reprehensible. A claim to this effect may be considered to be a tacit premise of the argument, or it may be considered to be a background assumption relative to which the stated premise is positively relevant to the conclusion. The view that an argument is an ethical argument just in case it has an ethical conclusion leaves open both of these interpretations.

An ethical conclusion, or an ethical premise, is an ethical sentence. The ethical sentences with which I will be concerned will be what I will call *simple* ethical sentences. A simple ethical sentence, I wish to stipulate, is a sentence that has, or is analyzable as having, exactly one ethical predicate, in the grammatical sense, which it predicates of exactly one term. A sentence of this sort evaluates the extension of the term of which its ethical predicate is predicated. I will refer to the thing(s) comprising this term's extension as *the object(s) evaluated by the sentence.* The sentence 'cruel practices are wrong' is a simple ethical sentence in my stipulated sense. It predicates the grammatical ethical predicate 'are wrong' of the term 'cruel practices,' whose extension comprises all such practices. The sentence evaluates cruel practices, and so, in my usage, such practices are the objects it evaluates. I would add that all this remains true, *mutatis mutandis*, if the sentence's ethical predicate is taken to be its *logical* predicate, namely 'wrong.'

Expressivists are not at liberty to take an ethical argument, as here defined, to be a sequence of propositions, but they can take an ethical argument to be a

sequence of sentences, one of which is the argument's conclusion, the rest of which are the argument's premises and are put forward as reasons for accepting the ethical sentence that is the argument's conclusion.

When may a person be said by an expressivist to *accept* an ethical sentence? Here is a possible answer. A person, S, accepts ethical sentence E, at time t, just in case at time t S holds towards the object(s) evaluated by E an attitude of the type that, on an expressivist interpretation, would (defeasibly) be taken to be expressed by an utterance of E. ('Defeasibly,' because, for one thing, an utterance of an ethical sentence might be insincere.) Suppose, then, that an expressivist takes this to be what it is for a person to accept an ethical sentence, and also takes an ethical argument to be one in which the premises are put forward as reasons for accepting the ethical sentence that is the argument's conclusion. Then she may say (and I think should say) that the premises of an ethical argument are put forward as reasons for holding an attitude of the type that, on an expressivist interpretation, would (defeasibly) be taken to be expressed by an utterance of that sentence.

Consider again the argument that factory farming is morally reprehensible because it causes animals to suffer. The arguer treats the premise that factory farming causes animals to suffer as a *reason* for accepting the conclusion that factory farming is morally reprehensible. Expressivists can say that for the arguer to treat the premise as a reason for accepting the conclusion is for her to have a certain attitude towards the fact (as the arguer takes it to be) that factory farming causes animals to suffer: it is for the arguer to be unfavourably disposed towards this feature of factory farming. The arguer might express this attitude propositionally by saying that this feature of factory farming (namely, the fact that it causes animals to suffer) *matters* – it's morally relevant; more specifically, it counts *against* factory farming.

This is an ethical attitude. Can expressivists say that ethical attitudes admit of justification? I believe they can, and that their best option would be to accept a reflective-equilibrium account of ethical justification – an account that accommodates the expressivist thesis that (sincere) utterances of ethical judgments express attitudes. On such an account, the test for justification will be how well a person's ethical attitudes fit with one another and with her related non-ethical beliefs. A *good* fit will require consistency, and so a reflective-equilibrium expressivist will require an account of attitudinal consistency. Here is such an account. An attitude pair is consistent if there is a possible world in which

both attitudes are fulfilled at the same time, and inconsistent otherwise. Thus, the attitude of favouring execution for murder is consistent with the attitude of opposing execution for manslaughter because there is a possible world in which execution is the punishment for murder but not for manslaughter. In contrast, the attitude of opposing execution for murder is inconsistent with the attitude of favouring Felix's execution for murder because there is no possible world in which there are no executions for murder and Felix is executed for murder. There is more to be said about what a reflective-equilibrium expressivism would look like, or could look like, but I won't say more about this here. Instead, I will apply the account of attitudinal consistency that I have just presented to the following argument.

Argument (2)
1. All cruel practices are wrong.
2. Factory farming is a cruel practice.
Therefore,
3. Factory farming is wrong.

Assume that at time t S accepts 1 and therefore has a negative attitude towards all cruel practices; more specifically, let us suppose, S disapproves of such practices. S also accepts 2, and 2 is true. But S rejects 3: his attitude towards factory farming is one of non-disapproval, but not one of indifference; rather, he approves of factory farming.

On these assumptions, at time t S disapproves of all cruel practices but approves of a particular practice which he believes, correctly, is cruel. Is there a possible world in which these attitudes are both fulfilled? This depends on whether there is a possible world in which factory farming is practised but is not cruel. Suppose that it is conceptually impossible for factory farming not to be cruel; then premise 2 is necessarily true, and there is no possible world in which factory farming is practised but is not cruel. On this assumption, there is no possible world in which there are no cruel practices but there is a practice of factory farming, and so there is no possible world in which the attitude of disapproving of all cruel practices and the attitude of approving the practice of factory farming are both fulfilled. Thus, if S were to accept the premises of Argument (2) but reject the conclusion because he approved of factory farming, then, if premise 2 is necessarily true, there would be an inconsistency in his attitudes. If S accepts the premises of Argument (2), and if premise 2 is necessarily true, then S cannot, on

pain of attitudinal inconsistency, reject the conclusion if he does so because he approves of factory farming.

4. *The account continued*
4.1 *Attitudinal validity*

The preceding example shows that it is possible for an expressivist to have a concept of what might be called attitudinal validity. Such a concept might be defined as follows for an ethical argument with at least one ethical premise (as well as an ethical conclusion) and with at least one true-or-false non-ethical premise and no non-ethical premise that is neither true nor false. Such an argument is attitudinally valid for S at time t if at time t S cannot, on pain of attitudinal inconsistency, both accept the argument's premises and reject the conclusion. This condition is satisfied if and only if S's rejection of the conclusion would be a consequence of his having an attitude inconsistent with an attitude his holding of which explains his acceptance of the (or an) ethical premise of the argument.

Let us apply this account of attitudinal validity to Argument (2). If at time t S were to reject the argument's conclusion because he approved of factory farming, this attitude of his would be inconsistent with an attitude (disapproval of all cruel practices) his holding of which explains (on our previous assumptions) his acceptance of the argument's ethical premise (all cruel practices are wrong). Thus, S could not, on pain of attitudinal inconsistency, both accept the argument's premises and reject the conclusion, and so the argument is attitudinally valid for S at time t. But the attitudinal inconsistency would arise only given our assumption that the argument's non-ethical premise (factory farming is a cruel practice) is a necessary truth, and this fact prompts the following question: for an ethical argument to be attitudinally valid for a subject at a time, must it have at least one true-or-false non-ethical premise that is necessarily true? The answer is no. Consider the following argument:

Argument (3)
1. Execution for a conviction of murder is always wrong.
2. Felix has been executed for a conviction of murder.
Therefore,
3. Felix's execution was wrong.

Assume that at time t S accepts 1: she disapproves of execution for a murder

conviction. She also accepts 2, and 2 is true. Suppose that S were to reject 3 because she approves of Felix's having been executed for his murder conviction. A world in which this attitude is fulfilled is one in which Felix has been convicted of murder and executed. A world in which the attitude of disapproving execution for a murder conviction is fulfilled is one in which there are no such executions (and never have been). Since there is no possible world in which these attitudes are co-fulfilled, they are inconsistent. Thus, S could not, on pain of attitudinal inconsistency, accept the premises of Argument (3) but reject the conclusion if her rejection of the conclusion were a consequence of her approving of Felix's having been executed for his murder conviction. Thus, Argument (3) is attitudinally valid for S at time t. This analysis assumes the truth of premise 2, but premise 2 is not a necessary truth. Thus, for an ethical argument to be attitudinally valid for a subject at a time, it need not have at least one true-or-false non-ethical premise that is necessarily true.

In the preceding discussion, I have assumed the possibility of a person's rejecting the conclusion of some ethical argument (with an ethical premise) because he holds an attitude inconsistent with an attitude his holding of which explains his (assumed) acceptance of the ethical premise. But is this a possibility – logically speaking? Could it be, for example, that at time t a person disapproves of all cruel practices, yet approves of a particular practice which he believes, correctly, to be cruel? Suppose it could not. Then it would not be possible for S at time t both to accept the premises of Argument (2) and also to reject the conclusion as a consequence of his having an attitude inconsistent with an attitude his holding of which explains his acceptance of the argument's ethical premise; hence, on my proffered account of attitudinal validity, Argument (2) would be attitudinally valid for S a time t. And likewise in any such case.

4.2 *Attitudinal relevance*
An expressivist account of ethical argument will require an account of when the premise(s) of an ethical argument are (positively) relevant to the conclusion. Plainly, this will not be an account of (positive) propositional relevance; rather, it will be an account of what I will call (positive) attitudinal relevance. I will give such an account in a moment. First, however, recall our earlier stipulation that S accepts ethical sentence E at time t just in case S holds towards the object(s) evaluated by E an attitude of the type that, on an expressivist interpretation, would (defeasibly) be taken to be expressed by an utterance of E (e.g., an attitude

of disapproval).

Now let 'E' be an ethical sentence and let 'P' be a true-or-false non-ethical sentence. If S accepts E at time t, she then has a certain attitude towards the object(s) evaluated by E. If she has this attitude because she believes P, then for her P is positively attitudinally relevant to E. An expressivist might add that if S accepts E and believes that she does so because she believes P, then she regards (her belief that) P as her reason for accepting E.

Consider, for example, the following sentences: (1) Factory farming is cruel. (2) Factory farming is wrong. For an expressivist, a sincere utterance of 2 would be the expression of a negative attitude towards factory farming. If S accepts 2 she has such an attitude, and if she believes 1 and accepts 2 because she believes 1, then for her 1 is positively attitudinally relevant to 2.

Next, consider Argument (2) once again:
1. All cruel practices are wrong.
2. Factory farming is a cruel practice.
Therefore,
3. Factory farming is wrong.

On the present account of attitudinal relevance, for S at time t the premises of Argument (2) are jointly positively attitudinally relevant to the conclusion if S accepts the conclusion because she accepts premise 1 and believes premise 2.

To take the account a step further, consider the following example:

Argument (4):
1. Life imprisonment for murder is a more effective deterrent than the death penalty.
2. The death penalty has resulted in the execution of wrongly convicted persons.
Therefore,
3. Life imprisonment for murder is morally preferable to the death penalty.

Counter considerations to 3:
a. Life imprisonment for murder is much more costly than the death penalty.
b. The death penalty is a better fit for the crime of murder than the death penalty.

S accepts premises 1 and 2 as true (possibly after doing some research). Each

inclines him to some degree to favour life imprisonment for murder more than the death penalty. Thus, for S each is positively attitudinally relevant to 3, since he would hold this attitude if he accepted 3 and did so because (or partly because) he accepted 1 and 2. S also accepts as true counterconsideration (a), and for him it is negatively attitudinally relevant to 3 because it makes him less inclined to favour life imprisonment for murder over the death penalty (and thus to accept 3) than he would be given just (his acceptance of) premises 1 and 2. S doesn't accept counterconsideration (b) but for him it is nevertheless negatively attitudinally relevant to 3 because he believes that if he did accept (b) he would be still less inclined, and perhaps on balance disinclined, to favour life imprisonment for murder over the death penalty. Upon reflection, he accepts 3 because he accepts premises 1 and 2 as true and because for him (I shall assume) they outweigh counterconsiderations (a) and (b).

4.3 *Cogency*

An expressivist account of ethical argument will, I shall suppose, include an account of what it is for an ethical argument to be cogent. Here I will suggest an expressivist account of cogency (just) for what I will call a Type 1 ethical argument, namely an ethical argument with at least one ethical premise and at least one true-or-false non-ethical premise and no non-ethical premise that is neither true nor false. A Type 1 ethical argument is cogent for S at time t if at time t:

(a) S is justified in accepting the argument's ethical premise(s);

(b) S is epistemically justified in accepting as true the argument's non-ethical premise(s);

and either

(c) the argument is attitudinally valid for S

or

(d) for S, his acceptance of the premises would be sufficient, but not conclusive, reason for him to accept the conclusion.

Condition (a): S is justified in accepting the argument's ethical premise(s) at time t if, for each such premise, he is justified by a reflective equilibrium test in holding an attitude of the type that, on an expressivist interpretation, would (defeasibly) be taken to be expressed by an utterance of the premise.

Condition (d) is satisfied at time t if and only if (i) were S to accept the conclusion at time t he would do so because he accepted the premises (in which case for him

the premises would be positively attitudinally relevant to the conclusion) or because he accepted the premises and for him they were not outweighed at time t by any counterconsiderations then known to him; and (ii) the argument is not attitudinally valid for S at time t (so that for him his acceptance of the premises would not be conclusive reason to accept the conclusion).

5. *Conclusion*

I have said nothing about the vexed problem of how, or whether, "expressivists can make sense of sameness of meaning [of an ethical sentence] in asserted and unasserted contexts" (Shafer-Landau 2003, pp. 23-4). (An example of the latter would be the occurrence of an ethical sentence as the antecedent/consequent of a conditional sentence.) Nor have I said anything about the no less vexed problem of how, or whether, expressivists can differentiate between the attitudes expressed in ethical utterances of, for example, the following forms: 'x is right,' 'x is permissible,' 'x is supererogatory.' (Cf. ibid., pp. 24-25). In these and no doubt other respects, my proffered expressivist account of ethical argument is incomplete. Moreover, I do not claim that, even just as far as it goes, it is an adequate account of ethical argument. My interest, rather, is in whether, as far as it goes, it is compatible with expressivism, hence an account that expressivists are free to give, and I believe it is.

NOTE

i. I take prescriptivism to be a different version of non-cognitivism. Prescriptivism holds that moral judgments have a prescriptive meaning and a descriptive meaning, and that in virtue of their prescriptive meaning they prescribe or guide conduct. Prescriptivists can allow that prescriptions express attitudes, and expressivists can allow that attitudes can be expressed in the form of prescriptions, so there can be common ground between prescriptivists and expressivists

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – The Synthetic Function Of Doxastic Dialectics

Abstract: Regarding the synthetic function of doxastic dialectics, the present investigation will approach a single aspect: the metaphysical transubstantiation. We intend to explain, in personal terms, this idea which was introduced by P. Grice (1991) and to which we have briefly made reference several times. Grice's idea supports our hermeneutic argument: the semantic nature of belief, crystallized by the dialectical mechanism of controversy, acquires persuasive prestige owing to a paradigmatic transfer: from a discursive paradigm to an axiological one. The demonstration will develop the thesis according to which belief has a self-referential dimension.

1. *General remarks*
1.1. *Remarks regarding doxastic dialectics*

At the beginning of our exploration of doxastic (/belief) field (Amel, 1999), we took for granted the cognitive autonomy of an alternative to epistemic truth, that of doxastic truth, which we call the *persuasive truth***[i]**. In contrast with the epistemic truth, which represents the logical determination of *episteme,* the doxastic truth represents the ontological density of *doxa*, intelligibly perceived in its meaning. We should emphasize the following two aspects: a. regarding the field of investigation – in our opinion, doxastic dialectics does not refer to the pre-epistemic stage of truth, but is limited to the field of supersensible reality (the 'reality' of values), a cognition meaning-oriented; b. regarding participants' *bona fide* – the condition, in virtue of which doxastic dialectics develops its investigations, excludes the premise that notices a *cleavage of justification*, as A.Kasher calls it**[ii]** (1986), namely, excludes any kind of contextually distorted utterance of belief.

The remarks regarding doxastic dialectics are selected from our previous studies about the respective issue (Amel 1999, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014):
1. Doxastic dialectics is the exclusive procedure that establishes the fundaments of axiology.
2. Generally speaking, the dialectical study of persuasive truth is a kind of semantic logic, trying to explain how to determine the doxastic meaning.
3. The semantic logic compatible with the doxastic field is based on a rational procedure that follows, in hermeneutical terms, the process of *understanding* (the meaning), not *knowing* (the truth).
4. From the philosophical point of view, the rationality of the meaning investigation is pursued dialectically in both senses of the concept of 'dialectics':
a. 'dialectics' as *antithetic* reasoning, challenging the subjects' cognitive intentionality;
b. 'dialectics' as a *formative* process, during which the pragmatic subjectivity gets phenomenological dimension.

1.2*. The goal of the present investigation*
1. The investigation has in focus the *synthetic mechanism of doxastic/belief dialectics*.
In the first study about doxastic dialectics (Amel, 1999), we have mentioned three theoretical functions of doxastic (/belief) dialectics: the dissociative, the justificatory and the synthetic function.
2. Having in view the subjective and rhetorical involvement of the persuasive

truth, we find profitable to approach the 'rationality' of doxastic thinking in phenomenological terms. With Husserl, *belief is a thetic act*, namely a 'speech act' in consciousness. Phenomenology acknowledges the cognitive priority of belief (Husserl, 1931: 301), a definition that supports our dissociative approach. From cognitive point of view, the dissociative function proves its importance, because it establishes cognitive intervals between *belief* – an idea posited in consciousness, *doxa* – the conceptual representation of the respective idea of value in reason, and *opinion* – corresponding to the discursive, namely the contingent form of belief. In our previous studies the attention was especially focused on the mechanism of decidability in doxastic dialectics, by demonstrating that the justificatory procedure requires operations on the three levels mentioned above.

3. The present investigation, which has in focus only the synthetic mechanism of doxastic/belief dialectics, will approach a single aspect: the *metaphysical transubstantiation.* We intend to explain, in personal terms, this idea which was mentioned by P.Grice (1991) and to which we have briefly made reference several times. Initially, the concept of *metaphysical transubstantiation* gave us the possibility to offer a general explanation of the *dialectical* mechanism of *doxa*. Grice's idea supported our hermeneutical argument: the semantic nature of the 'truth' of beliefs, structured by antithetic rationality, gets persuasive prestige owing to a paradigmatic transfer: from a pragmatic paradigm to an axiological one. Due to the phenomenological perspective in which our enterprise approaches the doxastic dialectics, the concept of metaphysical transubstantiation will be treated inside the laboratory of the hermeneutical synthesis, which is the human consciousness. The metaphysical transubstantiation becomes the explanatory key of the meaning enquiry of beliefs, by revealing the rationality of the hermeneutical mechanism.

4. For a comprehensive understanding of the doxastic rationality, our demonstration will develop the thesis in conformity with which *belief has a self-referential dimension.* During doxastic dialectics, subjectivity acquires cognitive dimension, progressively becoming conscious of it. In phenomenological terms, subjectivity represents the *origin* of the thinking activity. It holds the power of translating the sensitive matters into intelligible ones. The beliefs' contents, experienced and assumed by the subject/the speaker in his consciousness, represent thetic acts (acts in consciousness). The reference to the metaphysical transubstantiation supports the phenomenological explanation of the MORAL OBJECT**[iii].** During the doxastic dialectics beliefs acquire 'objectivity'. If Grice's

concept regarding metaphysical transubstantiation is conceived 'in extenso', the cognitive dialectics – meaning oriented – goes through more than one operation of cognitive synthesis. The self-referentiality of belief is finally crystallized in the form of the MORAL SUBJECT (=self-consciousness), ontologically reoriented.

5. The deep logic of belief dialectics explains the dynamics of self cognition.

2. *The beliefs' structure of forces*
2.1. *Belief as a speech act*
Looking backwards, to reach the origin of the force of belief, we discover the "pragmatic dimension" of beliefs/ opinions, in conformity with which we are entitled to say that beliefs have performative force. Two aspects are important to be mentioned: one regarding the subject who expresses his beliefs (/utters his opinions), and another regarding the dialog partner to whom the belief is confessed. In the pre-epistemic stage, the function of dialectics is to demonstrate that the affirmations contained by the subjects' beliefs are correct.

(1)
I think/ my impression is this child is well developed for his age.

When beliefs refer to a supersensible reality (the substance of values), a normal subject is extremely careful to justify his position as a locutor, and to explain the partner and to himself what reason he has to affirm a certain opinion about a moral reality. He is ready to offer explanations that could support his utterance.

(2)
– (I believe) this boy is very wise: Do you know what he once said to me? Errando discitur!
– He knows Latin?
– I am wondering less he is using Latin aphorisms – to give himself airs -, but it is astonishing to see a child reflecting about his own behavior, trying to improve it ... etc.

The self-referentiality of the utterance that contains a belief is explained by the subjective dimension of beliefs. We plead for an interpretative power of subjective thinking which is governed by both pragmatic and introspective rationality. A rational speaker, conscious of the Principle of Uncertainty characterizing doxastic thinking, becomes responsible for what he says. The speaker is a problematizing subject. His thinking, antithetically**[iv]** developed, engenders a self-reflective

attitude. His words are oriented towards his own mind in order to measure the extension of the meaning he intends to formulate. As we have already mentioned: with Husserl, belief is a thetic act, namely a 'speech act' in consciousness. The dissociative function of dialectics stimulates the subjective reflection.

(3)
– This child knows very well what he wants: he has personality.
– You think personality means to be voluntary, self-willed or obstinate ?
– I have said: he knows what he wants.
– In my opinion, personality means to have power of discernment.
– You mean moral personality, but there are people who have pragmatic personality.

In an axiological dispute, the subject's cognitive intention is stimulated by the partner's discursive position, helping him to clarify his own thoughts. The 'ideal reality' of axiology becomes the object of a moral reflection, during which consciousness assumes the sense of this 'reality' by self-reference. We call the respective cognitive act – moral reflection, an inner experience, deprived from ethical involvement. The original power of self-reflection becomes performative: *cogito ergo sum ergo loquor.* That is our definition of *belief* (see Amel, 1999). The premise of the self-referentiality of beliefs motivates the conclusion that beliefs, as acts in consciousness, assure the original burst of languge**[v].**

It is insufficient to say: 'beliefs' affirm that and that'. The subject's self-referentiality engenders the subject's will to manifest himself and to 'impose' the meanings of his words on the dialogue partner. *Any belief has the intention to utter a verdict,* which means that beliefs have the illocutionary force to institute reality, a reality that should be followed or avoided. The illocutionary force of expressive acts is not contested, but their validity is. While during epistemic dialectics the Principle of Rationality requires proofs which can validate the referential route of a verdict, during doxastic dialectics interlocutors appeal to semantic/ hermeneutic proofs, an enterprise which is not deprived of rationality. Hermeneutics can justify the subjective authority to promote a sense by four such proofs: original, paradigmatic, normative, generative**[vi].** In our prior studies about doxastic dialectics, we have developed some of them.

2.2. *Dialectical proofs within doxastic cognition*
a. The *original proof is given* by the *self-referentiality* of the belief-speech act. 'To

assume a sense' in consciousness means to promote a sense – by the 'authority' of being experienced in one's own mind.

b. The *paradigmatic proof* is given the moment the principle of Uncertainty calls upon a Principle of Transcendence, when the self-reference of belief is raised to a categorical position, able to prepare its conceptualization. The doxastic conceptualization is a synthetic (or constitutive) operation, having a justificatory target. By arriving at this stage, the role of dialectics is to raise the dispute up to the metalanguage level (see the above example: 1 vs. 2, 3), in order to consolidate the paradigmatic grounds of believing by or in axiological categories. During this process the MORAL OBJECT may find its determination:

(4)
– What do you mean by *being wise*, with reference to a child? What do you precisely mean by *wisdom*?

The moral object becomes the *doxa's a posteriori referent.* The interval engendered by the dissociative function of dialectics between *doxa* and *belief* is temporarily recovered, due to the validity of paradigmatic proofs; but their validity is only probable. Doxastic dialectics is a creative not a regulative process. It is language dependent, and the *persuasive truth* remains a question of permanent meaning inquiry**[vii]**.

c. The *normative proof* was less mentioned by us in our previous studies regarding doxastic dialectics. All the hermeneutic investigations that support the logic of doxa, namely that of the 'persuasive truth' of values, are normatively oriented. Categorical proofs extend hermeneutics by many associative operations, including even an inquiry of *Zeitgeist*. At this stage, doxastic dialectics tries to consolidate the axiological hierarchy, universally valid.

d. What we mean by *generative proof* will be explained in the following chapter.

3. *Metaphysical transubstantiation*
3.1. *Grice's argument*
Grice's idea concerning the metaphysical transubstantiation is an argument in favor of the *metaphysical objectivity* of values (Grice 1991: 35). It represents the procedure for the redistribution, but not the invention, of properties. For example – properties accidentally meant for *humans* become essential properties of a new psychological type called *persons* (cf. idem, 114).

Grice's argument concerning the metaphysical transubstantiation corresponds to what we define as being the *paradigmatical proof*, an argument regarding the axiological consciousness of a (speaking) subject. The way Grice demonstrates the objectivity of values is equivalent to our interpretation of the MORAL OBJECT, a transfer from a pragmatic quality into a phenomenological dimension of belief. Because belief is a cognitive act in consciousness, self-referentiality gets rational authority, able to validate the grounding arguments of value**[viii]**. Our *original* and *paradigmatic arguments* represent the objectifying terms of belief, and they drive dialectics toward its semiotic stage. The process could be equated to Grice's *finalist* arguments. From this perspective, his demand for absolute values becomes rational. See the stages of metaphysical defense, established by Grice:

1. (There are) cases in which a value concept … is attached originally, or *directly* to a given bearer;

2. If the concept of value is to be authentic and not merely 'Pickwiking' in character, then it is required that it be supported by a kind of finality which extends beyond the 'overlap' with a mechanistically substitutable finality;

3. That metaphysical house-room found for the notion of absolute value is a *rational demand* (cf. Grice, 1991:116-117).

3.2. *The two levels of metaphysical transubstantiation*

With Grice – who is looking for a proof that could support the objectivity of value – the metaphysical transubstantiation represents the transfer from *humans* to *persons.* In our interpretation, the relevance of that proof is *moral*, by its power to objectify the inner sense of human consciousness.

The 'persuasive truth" of supersensible reality could not be proved other way than by making it intelligible in the form of a conceptual synthesis. From a phenomenological point of view, the cognitive synthesis passes through two levels of metaphysical transubstantiation: conceptual (an axiological category) and semiotic. Actually, there is more than one operation of transubstantiation: the axiological/ moral sense→ the sense of the self →the sense of *human condition*→ the *existential* sense, culminating by a semiotic expression. From a comprehensive perspective about belief, the target of doxastic dialectics is not limited to the stage when the moral content is *objectified.* The MORAL OBJECT is transubstantiated into a MORAL SUBJECT (=the self-consciousness), which represents the becoming reality/ object of the *self. The deep logic of belief dialectics explains the dynamics of self cognition*. The rationality of this type of

cognition, which examines a dynamic 'object', is given by a *generative proof.* Therefore, in this subchapter we shall extend the explanation in this direction.

a. The *metaphysical transubstantiation* opens two dialectical movements, such as we have mentioned at the beginning of our commentary: one, trying to establish the clear conceptual definition of axiological ideas, and another, during which the formative impulse of consciousness is triggered. In both these directions, the subjects crystallize in their consciousness the conditions for a better evidence of self-referentiality. The synthesis of the *moral objects* (axiological ideas), could be considered, in Grice's terms, a *rational demand*, in conformity with which the subjectivity becomes a *moral person*.

The major difficulty in bringing paradigmatical proof begins when the metaphysical transubstantiation acquires phenomenological dimension. This is the moment when the categorical sense of a value is acquired by subject's consciousness. The paradigmatical proof is a dilemmatic moment. The moment of doxa's conceptualization opens the "inner infinity of the dialogue", as Gadamer said, actually a metadialogue. During the metadialogue, the dialogue partners try to settle the semantic difference between similar concepts, having in view that each of them is relevant for a different level of consciousness (psychological vs. spiritual; temperamental vs. spiritual etc.)

(5)
What is the difference between *pride* and *dignity*?
What is the difference between the *polemic inflammation* and the *intellectual passion?*
Etc.

The correct conceptualization of doxa is hindered by frequent hesitations with reference to particular situations. In the collective mentality these metadialogues are considered 'semantic exercises', but actually they are phenomenological tests. Due to the conceptual oppositions displayed during doxastic dialectics, the subjects' moral reflection establishes level oppositions – in usual terms called "values hierarchy" -, helping to crystallize the structure of the *self.* The subject, in his hermeneutical inquiry, should be prepared to avoid social prejudices, which are very 'persuasive', because otherwise the hermeneutical effort would be deprived of moral relevance.

(6)

In the Romanian public mentality, deeply infused by a specific skepticism, called *băşcălie* (a kind of Engl. *tongue in cheek*), a self-controlled responsible person is qualified as an idiot, a conformist fellow.

Doxa, as a concept, represents the linguistic shape of the supersensible object of value, the *idea* that this concept should name. Frequently, doxastic concepts are mistakenly defined, even mixed up with *dogma*, because of a lack of clear distinction between philosophy and ideology. For a correct definition of the value ideas, doxastic dialectics opens its large field of debates, all trying to consolidate the moral and spiritual representation of life**[ix]**.

b. Generally speaking, the metaphysical transubstantiation has spiritual fundaments. Subjectivity is a moral agent, having the power to spiritualize the life people live in. The effort to establish the clear inventory of abstract concepts has more than a "logical" target, that of offering authoritative arguments for individual definitions.

(7)

When we are listening to Beethoven's 5th Symphony, the following question may be asked: Does it express a *Teutonic/ heroic feeling* or does it open a *metaphysical/sublime vision*? The real question regards the two opposite concepts, the meaning of which is developed in mind.

The formative structure of consciousness is intentionally SELF-oriented. The MORAL OBJECTs become the inner objects of reference, due to which the MORAL SUBJECT finds its structural fundaments and acquires objectivity. The world of the Ego is in continuous extension. The moral becoming is looking for a *sense*/ a direction in life. There is a natural tendency to get an answer to the big existential mystery, a cognitive process that includes the art / the entire human creation into it. The art productions are considered the *generative proof* of believing, the highest step of understanding, inside which the consciousness is crystallized in a symbolic vision. The figurative meanings associated to each name of contiguous objects represent only the beginning. The human language reflects this tendency:

(8)

Bridge, door or *window, circle, light and darkness, different animals etc.*

These examples are part of long series of symbols to which the mythical thinking

makes reference. Subjectivity is cognitively troubled to decode the language of life, as the poet said: to read the world and to understand it. *'To read the world"* by inventing scenarios, allegories, cryptograms, etc., means to find an interpretative language that has *generative power*, due to which doxa extends its moral dimension. The human "second play" is the symbolic form which concentrates the idea of the human condition and in which the contiguous first game (= the everyday life) reveals its meaning.

The formative power of subjectivity was largely debated by art criticism. Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* offers the best argument of what we define as the *semiotic transubstantiation* of axiological universe. The Romanian philosopher, Gabriel Liiceanu, begins his complex analysis of the semiotic nature of art productions with a definition of the *symbol* in the same terms we have explained the metaphysical transubstantiation. "Each general consideration regarding symbolic productions is compelled to consider the double foundation of symbolic work in the human mind: *the need to visualize the abstract and the need to transcend the visible"* (2005, 7). In the same book, we have found an argument regarding the objectifying function of the symbolic forms. The artist, by his introspection, is able to instantiate the inner perception. G.Liiceanu, based on the book of Börsch-Supan/Jähnig, *Gaspar David Friedrich*, München, 1973, p.14, says:

(9)
The problem in these pictures isn't what the characters, hypnotized by the horizon, actually see, but what we see, looking at them. And we see what Friedrich says: 'The look which transpierces the profoundness of the landscape is turning back towards the inner self' (of the person who is looking, and whom we see from behind) (p.190).

A superficial explanation may say that the metaphysical transubstantiation leading to symbolic forms is due to a linguistic transfer: from a referential (literal) language to a semiotic (figurative) one. From cognitive point of view, the symbolic forms wrap up the beliefs in such a way that the deep vision receives ontological substance. The synthetic power of symbolic forms has several degrees of concentration, in conformity with the subject's cognitive clear-sightedness. The most important thing that occurs during the semiotic transubstantiation is the creative effort to reach the level of exemplariness. The metaphysical transubstantiation is part of a subjective dynamics, governed by the same principle of rationality which, during the epistemic process of the *creation of*

theoretical models, affirms: the 'theoretical model' should be consistent (in our terms "relevant"), *exhaustive* ("comprehensive") and *simple* ("concise").

It is the moment to remind what L. Hjelmslev said (1947:11) referring to the goal of a scientific theory: "*The aim of a theory* is to elaborate a procedure in conformity with the principles of the theory … The description shall be *free of contradiction* (self-consistent), *exhaustive*, and as *simple* as possible." (p.11)

The *generative proofs* offer the authority or stand under the authority of an interpretative key – a doxastic archetype. The semiotic force of a doxastic archetype is the result of a gradual synthesis operated within the moral contents.

4. *Conclusion*
The synthetic function of *doxastic dialectics*, more than the other two -dissociative and justificatory, assures the *ontological fundaments* of ethics and aesthetics. The moral sense represents an immanent condition of beliefs, their ontological density. A comprehensive view about Grice's concept allows us to see in the process of the *metaphysical transubstantiation* the formative will of subjectivity to get an integrated vision of life. The inner necessity of the Ego to crystallize its *self* represents the cognitive challenge of man's consciousness. In creating a virtual image of human condition, the subjectivity has the power to project, in conceptual and semiotic forms, a 'reality' of a second degree.

4.1. *Belief as a reason to adopt a certain attitude (social or metaphysical)*
This seems to be a pragmatic axiom. If we reopen the commentary about the beliefs' structure of forces, the 'rationality' of the projecting power of beliefs becomes obvious (a *persuasive truth*).

(10)
"I believe in the power of ideas to change things"
(M.Dascal's saying, in G.Scarafile, 2010: 18).

From philosophical perspective, Marcelo Dascal's saying and many similar formulations emphasize the point where beliefs and behavior are connected: *I believe (my belief is): ideas (beliefs) have force.*

The transubstantion of the pragmatic sense into the moral sense/object represents only the beginning of a complex synthesis of the *moral subject* (=the 'object' of self consciousness). The competence of subjectivity to establish a clear

definition of values and their hierarchical disposition is part of the becoming process of the self. The *final cause* of self consciousness is to be able to refer to oneself as being a *categorical* instance looking for a *sense* in life, for a direction, for a correct, *ethical* action.

The opposition *moral object vs. moral subject,* presented above, is not identical with Grice's opposition *human vs. person*, but represents a cognitive extension of Grice's *rational demand.* The cognitive gain, offered by the synthetic function during the double *metaphysical transubstantiation*, emphasizes the power of subjectivity to be the 'point' of an active articulation of thinking. One should not neglect that the synthetic function of doxastic dialectics has normative consequences. After a serious confrontation between generative and normative proofs, the MORAL SUBJECT acquires ethical legitimacy. Whether this legitimacy is disputable or not is another theoretical/ philosophical problem.

4.2. *To read the world and to understand it*
This is an intuitive remark of spontaneous hermeneutics. With this formulation we are in the neighborhood of the Heideggerian hermeneutics, which was the point of departure of the approach we have chosen regarding doxastic dialectics.

Our argumentation in favor of a progressive abstraction of doxa, encourages the idea that the laic hermeneutics of beliefs is a 'rational' way to follow the persuasive truth. An interesting similarity between the laic hermeneutics of doxa – developed by us through several metaphysical transubstantiations – and the hermeneutics of sacred texts supports the same conclusion. See the way the Judaic hermeneutics explains the meaning of the sacred texts:

The Judaic hermeneutics of *Torah* (the *Bible*) establishes four methods of interpretation, all united under the acronym pardas: *pshat* – plain (interpretation), *remez* – allusive (a kind of 'intertextuality'), *drush* – homiletic and sod – esoteric**[x].**

NOTES
i. The conceptual power of the syntagm persuasive truth hit us while reading Parmenide's Poem (I, 28-30): "You must hear about all things, both the still heart of persuasive truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true conviction."
ii. "There is a cleavage of justification. The speaker may be asked both for the

grounds of his belief, that what he has asserted does hold, and for the reasons he has had for saying what he believes to be the case." (Kasher 1986: 286). See also Amel (1994). Pragmatic reasons (such as the cleavage of justification), and especially phenomenological ones determine us to mention the theoretical importance of the dissociative function of doxastic dialectics (Amel, 1999) (see further on).

iii. This is the moment of intersection between pragmatics and phenomenology. Due to this intersection, the philosopher establishes the point where the argumentative intentionality is related to cognitive intentionality (see here the phenomenological concept of intentionality: "It belongs as a general feature to the essence of every actual cogito to be a consciousness of something" Husserl, 1931:119) The inner experience of meaning becomes a rational entity – an OBJECT – for/in consciousness.

iv. The antithetic thinking is a structural function of both rationality and perception. See Gadamer's remark about Socrates' art of conversing: "an exercise of thinking in opposites" (198o: 93). See also the eloquent title of Jacqueline Sudaka-Benazéraf's book about Paul Klee's illustrations to Voltaire's writings, Car le blanc seul n'est rien.

v. "Language is the house of Being/ Die Sprache ist das Haus des Sein" (See Heidegger, Humanismus, 1957: 24; 1959:166). Cf. Heidegger (1976: 313): „Im Denken das Sein zur Sprache kommt. Die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins. In ihrer Behausung wohnt der Mensch."

vi. In this theoretical context, generative is meant in Chomskian and not Aristotelian sense (See the Aristotelian four causes of a phenomenon: generative, formative, final and material).

vii. "There is a productive ambiguity, the multiplicity of interrelated aspects of meaning, which articulate the field of knowing" (Gadamer, 1980: 111). See also: Gadamer's interest regarding the Platonic turn to discourse (idem), Gadamer's affirmation "le dialogue en tant que démarche herméneutique" (1976: 229), and Gadamer's general idea about the "inner infinity of the dialogue".

viii. The cognitive power of self-referentiality can be proved by Heidegger's affirmation regarding the foundational position of subjectivity: "Die Subiectivität ist die wesenhafte Gesetzlichkeit der Gründe, welche die Möglichkeit eines Gegenstandes zu reichen kann" (1977: 137).

ix. "Inevitably, a doxastic philosopher is a prisoner of language. The provisional scheme of interpretation (when opinions are delivered) cannot overcome the argumentative ability of the thinker, and, consequently, the "persuasive truth" is

frequently obscured by preconceived meanings that are associated to basic concepts" (Amel, 1999: 11). See also: Gadamer's philosophy concerning the hermeneutical circle (1976, 1977).

x. HaRav Menahem Hacohen, Introduction, (1996: 5). See also: "What is common to all the faces of Torah is their beauty, which gratifies those who want to enjoy the fruits of the tree of knowledge and breathe the flavor of the pardes of Torah" (idem).

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