ISSA Proceedings 2014 – What Could Virtue Contribute To Argumentation?

Abstract: In this paper**[i]** I argue that a virtue approach to argumentation would not commit the ad hominem fallacy provided that the object study of our theory is well delimited. A theory of argumentative virtue should not focus on argument appraisal, but on those traits that make an individual achieve excellence in argumentative practices. Within this framework, argumentation theory could study argumentative behaviour in a broader sense, especially from an ethical point of view.

Keywords: ad hominem, arguers, ethics, informal logic, pragma-dialectics, virtue.

1. *Introduction*

A virtue approach, characteristic of ancient ethical theories, such as Plato's, Aristotle's and the Stoics', is agent-based instead of act-based; it does not assess the moral value of isolated actions performed by an individual, but focuses instead on the character and traits of an individual that make her either virtuous or vicious. Within this paradigm, the crucial question is not "What should I do in this situation?" but "What kind of person should I be?".

Virtue ethics revived in the second half of the 20th century, attracting interest to the notion of virtue from within other fields than ethics. The most remarkable success is the case of virtue epistemology. Arguably, several of the virtues proposed in virtue epistemology – such as *intellectual humility, intellectual perseverance* and, most conspicuously, *fairness in argument evaluation* (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 114) – are not only epistemic but also intellectual in a broad sense, and thus it should come as no surprise that this approach has finally caught the attention of argumentation theorists.

The idea of developing a virtue approach to argumentation was proposed by Andrew Aberdein (2014, 2010, 2007) and Daniel Cohen (2013, 2009). Cohen has stressed the importance of the social and ethical dimensions of argumentation and he has warned against the mistake of focusing too narrowly on arguments as products and arguing as a procedure. His idea of the "admirable conduct of

arguers" involves much more than logic and dialectic, it "ought to stem from virtues, inculcated habits of mind" (2013, p. 482). Aberdein, on the other hand, has addressed in detail an obvious objection that could be raised against a virtue approach to argumentation: Would not any agent-based appraisal of argumentation commit the *ad hominem* fallacy?

In this paper I argue that the discussion about whether a virtue approach to argumentation could deal appropriately with *argument* appraisal is misleading. As I will show, the discussion misses the point of what a virtue approach really has to offer. A virtue approach should consider the importance of arguers themselves. In my view, a virtue argumentation theory could provide us important insights only insofar as we stop focusing narrowly on arguments. I will argue that a virtue approach to argumentation is not only possible but also desirable, provided that we have a clear understanding of what it involves.

2. *What's the point of a virtue approach?*

When Aberdein (2010) proposed the development of a virtue theory of argumentation, he identified several difficulties that such an approach would have to tackle. A major problem is the accusation that a virtue approach to argumentation would commit the ad hominem fallacy. A virtue approach to argumentation would involve the assessment of arguments on the basis of the arguer's traits, and that sounds pretty much like the definition of ad hominem argument. The question, then, has been whether the appraisal provided by a virtue argumentation theory would be an instance of legitimate or illegitimate ad hominem.

Aberdein correctly argues that, although in the past all ad hominem arguments were considered fallacious without distinction, most argumentation theorists accept nowadays that many instances of this kind of argument are actually legitimate. How could we distinguish between those instances of ad hominem argument that are legitimate and those that are not? The answer, according to Aberdein, is provided precisely by virtue argumentation theory (2010, p. 171):

Virtue theory may contribute a simple solution: negative ethotic argument is a legitimate move precisely when it is used to draw attention to argumentational vice. (Similarly, positive ethotic argument would be legitimate precisely when it referred to argumentational virtue.)

Ethotic arguments – that is, ad hominem arguments, those whose reasons refer to the *ethos* of the arguer – are therefore legitimate provided that they point to the arguer's argumentational virtues and vices. This seems like a plausible solution. However, this view has been challenged by Tracy Bowell and Justine Kingsbury (2013). They concede that, in certain circumstances, an individual's character may be relevant in deciding whether to believe what he says, and thus that there are legitimate ad hominem arguments. But they point out that legitimate ad hominem arguments are those that provide reasons not to believe a *claim,* and that ad hominem arguments that provide reasons to reject an argument are never legitimate (p. 26).

Bowell and Kingsbury's criticism draws our attention to an important distinction. It explains why the ad hominem problem appears to be such a great obstacle to developing a virtue approach to argumentation, whereas it has not been so for virtue ethics and virtue epistemology. Two levels can differentiated in which ad hominem arguments may take place**.[ii]** In the first level, which we could call *practical* or *argumentative,* an arguer puts forward an ad hominem argument in order to support or undermine the acceptability of a claim; that is, an individual argues for or against a given standpoint. In the second level, which can be called *theoretical* or *meta-argumentative* – although not only theorists but also the arguers themselves may operate in this level – the ad hominem argument is used for the purpose of showing the soundness or unsoundness of another argument.

Admittedly, argumentation theorists who argue for the legitimacy of (at least a subset of) ad hominem arguments tend to focus on those arguments that aim to undermine the credibility of witnesses or experts in order to show that their claims should not be believed *merely* because they say so. But, as Bowell and Kingsbury say (p. 26):

Legitimate ad hominem arguments provide reasons to doubt the truth of a claim on the basis of facts about the person making it. It is commonly supposed that it is never reasonable to reject an argument on the basis of such facts, however.

Nonetheless, Aberdein (2014) presents several examples of arguments in which facts about the arguer are used as reasons to doubt the soundness of other arguments, and that are arguable legitimate instances of ad hominem arguments. I will not discuss those examples here. The overview given above of the debate about the legitimacy of a virtue approach to argumentation suffices, for my

purpose here is to argue that the terms of this debate are misleading. The kind of virtue approach to argumentation that is assumed in this discussion is not, in my view, what we should seek.

I regard virtue approaches as having the agent – his or her character – not only as its grounds or basis, but also as its *main interest.* We could gain some insight into this question by taking a look at other virtue approaches. Virtue ethics has provided a greater insight into the nature of character, virtue, and education, than into which actions are right and which ones are wrong. As for virtue epistemology, although it has admittedly provided a certain kind of analysis of knowledge and beliefs, it is the subject's epistemic virtues the area on which it has actually cast light. Hence, why not take an interest also in arguers themselves? This is the motivation that, in my view, should lead to a virtue approach to argumentation. Virtue argumentation theory should be a *theory of arguers.*

Bowell and Kingsbury argue that "virtue argumentation theory does not offer a plausible alternative to a more standard agent-neutral account of good argument" (2013, p. 23). They may be right; the appraisal of arguments and the study of the soundness of arguments may well be a task which is most accurately and efficiently performed by act-based theories. I agree with Aberdein that there are some instances of ad hominem arguments – meta-argumentative, or arguments of the kind that provide reasons to believe that another argument is unsound – that are legitimate. However, the examples provided by Aberdein still leave us very little ground for a virtue theory of argumentation. It seems that we do not have at our disposal the theoretical resources which are necessary for the development of a complete virtue theory of the soundness of arguments.

A virtue approach, therefore, might be of little use for assessing the soundness of arguments. However, in my view, that is not the appropriate task for a virtue theory of argumentation. As I envisage it, a virtue approach would have many more benefits, of which the appraisal of arguments is probably the least significant. If we move from our current focus on arguments to an interest in arguers, this would have the benefit of allowing us to undertake a broader and richer study of argumentation. As I will show in the next section, such study could provide important ethical and educational insights for argumentation theory.

3. *Argumentation in a broad sense: ethical insights*

We, as arguers, produce much more than just arguments understood as logical-epistemic units. There is much more to assess than merely the soundness of arguments. When we argue, we communicate in a certain way, we use some words and not others, we are respectful or disrespectful, we are willing to change our mind or stubbornly protect our beliefs, we make our interlocutor feel free to express herself or we intimidate her. Furthermore, we can argue too much or too little, at an opportune or at an inopportune moment.

All these are examples of behaviours that take place in the context of argumentative discussions and *depend on the arguer's character*. These are precisely the kind of issues that a virtue theory of argumentation could (and should) address. The study of argumentation is not just about soundness, and argumentation is not merely a way to propagate true beliefs or reduce false beliefs. Argumentation is, first and foremost, a social activity of a special kind; it is, as Daniel Cohen put it, "a way of participating in the community" (2013, p. 475).

As in any other social activity, the behaviour of the participants can serve to promote or to damage those values and practices we most appreciate, not only inherently argumentative values such as *reasonableness* (Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004) or *honesty,* but also social values in a broader sense, such as *equality, fairness*, or *democracy.* Hence, an arguer will be considered virtuous not only when the arguments she puts forward are sound and her interventions comply with the procedural rules of a model of good argumentation – such as the pragma-dialectical model -, but also when she behaves in every respect in a way that promotes good social practices and increases others' welfare.

There lies the importance of a virtue approach to argumentation. The soundness of an argument is doubtless an important topic, but it is not enough to grasp all the implications of the practice of argumentation. An approach that addresses the issues related to the arguer's *behaviour,* which ultimately depends on the arguer's *character,* would be able to address these needs.

If we are interested in analysing that kind of features of argumentation, then we should obviously take into account the ethical implications of argumentation. The necessity of an ethical approach to argumentation has already been stressed by Vasco Correia (2012, p. 225): "The point to be made here is that arguments may be correct from a logical and dialectic perspective and nonetheless 'unfair' and

tendentious."

Correia stresses the great value of a virtue approach to prevent bias in argumentation, a key issue with which logical and dialectical approaches cannot deal accurately. Moreover, a virtue approach could have practical benefits (pp. 233-234):

The advantage of developing argumentational virtues, by contrast with the intentional effort to be impartial, is that these virtues tend to become a sort of "second nature" […] that allows us to reason in fair terms almost effortlessly, without a conscious and persistent effort to remain impartial.

Let me illustrate the kind of insights that an ethical approach could provide with an example, taken from the 2005 film *Thank you for smoking*. In the following scene, Nick Naylor, protagonist of the film, is speaking with an elementary school student:

Kid: *My Mommy says smoking kills.*
Nick Naylor: *Oh, is your Mommy a doctor?*
Kid: *No.*
Nick Naylor: *A scientific researcher of some kind?*
Kid: *No.*
Nick Naylor: *Well, then she's hardly a credible expert, is she?*

Both by informal logic standards and by pragma-dialectic standards, Naylor's intervention seems pretty good. With his accurate questions, he succeeds in rebutting the kid's argument, which is admittedly very weak, without violating any of the rules for a critical discussion nor any of the "ten commandments" for reasonable discussants (Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). The questions that Naylor asks in fact refer to one of the critical questions that have been proposed by informal logic for assessing arguments from authority: given an expert *E* and a proposition *A*, "Is *E* an expert in the field that *A* is in?" (Walton 2006, p. 88). This example shows that Nick Naylor is no doubt a skillful arguer and knows how to apply the principles of informal logic.

Nevertheless, I believe there is *something* wrong with Naylor's interventions. I find at least two major problems with Naylor's intervention:

(1) Naylor is a well-informed adult, and as such he surely knows that there is a

considerable amount of evidence which supports the kid's standpoint – that smoking kills. Naylor is not defending any standpoint, he is merely calling into question the kid's argument. Nevertheless, Naylor should have pointed out to the kid, as a matter of honesty, that there are better arguments supporting her position than the one she produced.

(2) By rebutting the kid's argument, Naylor is undermining her confidence in the belief that smoking kills. Given the way Naylor puts his counter-argument – and the kid's early age -, the lesson that she will probably learn is not that, although she has a point, her argument should be improved, but simply that smoking does not cause death. And this, from an ethical point of view, is problematic to say the least.

These problems show exactly the kind of issues into which a virtue argumentation theory could give us an insight. I hope this example suffices to show that a virtue approach would provide a different perspective from those of informal logic and pragma-dialectics. Although such an approach is unlikely to prove useful for appraising the soundness of arguments, it would allow us to find solutions to problems which most of us could not even see before.

In order to allow for analyses like this one, we need to adopt an ethical point of view, and, as the following example will show, in a properly understood virtue approach the ethical issues arise naturally. However, in order to achieve this enterprise, we first need to abandon our narrow focus on arguments as independent entities.

4. *Example of an agent-based approach*

Wayne Brockriede (1972) sketched a brief analysis of three types of arguers that seems to me like the perfect example of an agent-based approach. He drew an analogy between arguers and romantic partners, classifying arguers into three types. Brockriede's metaphor is all the more adequate for my purposes because he classified arguers according, not to the kind of arguments they put forward, but to their behaviour. The three kinds of arguers are:

(1) *The rapist*: He wants to maintain a position of superiority. His main goal is to force assent, to conquer by the force of the argument.

(2) *The seducer*: He operates through charm or deceit. The seducer tries to charm his victim into assent by using tricks and fallacies.

(3) *The lover*: He acknowledges the other person as a person and wants power parity. The lover asks for free assent and criticism, and he is willing to risk his very self in the discussion.

Brockriede concluded that the (p. 9):

argument has another function as important as any intellectual creation of the "truth" of a situation, and that is the personal function of influencing the fulfillment and growth of the selves of the people in the transaction.

Brockriede's metaphor strikes me as very insightful and relevant to the defence of a virtue approach to argumentation for one reason: although the author does not state it explicitly, the paper implies that both rapists and lovers *put forward sound arguments.* It's not the soundness of their arguments what differentiates them but their *character* and *behaviour.* This entails that an act-based approach – such as informal logic – would not be apt to distinguish between both types of behaviour; all it can do accurately is identify seducers, who do make use of tricks and fallacies. The difference between rapists and lovers does not lie in the kind of arguments they produce but in whether they treat the other as a peer or as an inferior being, whether or not they are willing to accept criticism – even to ask for it – and question their core beliefs, whether they see the practice of argumentation as an opportunity to grow or as an opportunity to conquer. For this reason, Brockriede says (p. 1):

I maintain that the nature of the people who argue, in all their humanness, is itself an inherent variable in understanding, evaluating, and predicting the processes and outcomes of an argument.

Of course, I am not arguing for the adoption of Brockriede's classification in particular. The importance of that classification lies actually in two assumptions that support it. First, an agent-based approach has, by its very nature, ethical implications. Ethical analyses fit comfortably in – and arise naturally from – any virtue theory. Second, an act-based approach, one focused on evaluating the argument, cannot be enough. We need a virtue approach for a complete and thorough understanding of the argumentative practice and its ethical implications.

5. *Conclusion*

The ongoing debate on the feasibility of a virtue approach to argumentation has

focused on whether such an approach would be a useful tool for argument appraisal. Given a specific argument, the question is whether a virtue theory of argumentation could provide an assessment of its soundness. However, as I have argued, we must admit that this is not the task that a virtue approach is designed to do. Informal logic is focused on the study and assessment of arguments, and a virtue approach should not be developed just to undertake the very same task. Instead, a virtue approach would give us the opportunity to adopt a different point of view, without which the study of argumentation cannot be considered complete.

As stated in the introduction, the crucial question for a virtue approach is not "What is the right thing to do in this situation?" but rather "What kind of person should I be?". The motivation for developing a virtue approach is precisely this question: "What kind of arguer should I be?" Being a virtuous arguer involves much more than just producing sound arguments, it involves things that go beyond the scope of informal logic and pragma-dialectics, and the ethical implications of the argumentative practice are among these things. That is what makes a virtue approach to argumentation interesting and necessary.

A virtue theory of argumentation will not come just to keep talking about soundness. Instead, it will provide insights into the argumentative practice that we were lacking, and perhaps could not even notice before.

NOTES

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ii. Paula Olmos called my attention to these two levels of discourse.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Don't Drink That Water!: The Role Of Counter-Intuitive Science In Conspiracy Arguments

Abstract: In this essay, we focus on one of the most persistent examples of the 'intuitive validation of conspiracy' type of argument—the conspiracy theory that claims that fluoridating public water supplies is an attack on public safety. We argue that the controversy surrounding water fluoridation highlights the potential for conspiracy proponents to supplant complicated phenomena with intuitive observational data used to support the opposite of the scientific consensus.

Keywords: conspiracy theories, counter-intuitive arguments, water fluoridation

1. *Introduction*

How could President Kennedy's head move backward if he was shot from behind? How could the American flag wave on the moon if there was no atmosphere to move it? How could the Twin Towers have collapsed on 9/11 at the speed of free fall if there were no bombs in the buildings? Although these three conspiracy

theories span decades of history and locations to the moon and back, they all share a common argumentative feature: they rely on intuition to argue against the scientific explanations for the complicated phenomena involved. In this essay, we focus on one of the most persistent examples of this 'intuitive validation of conspiracy' type of argument – the conspiracy theory that claims that fluoridating public water supplies is an attack on public safety. We argue that the controversy surrounding water fluoridation highlights the potential for conspiracy proponents to supplant complicated phenomena with intuitive observational data used to support the opposite of the scientific consensus.

2. *Counter-intuitive science: the challenge of complicated explanations for a complicated world*

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the primary definition for intuition is "the action of looking upon or into; contemplation; inspection; a sight or view" (intuition, 2014). Although that definition helps highlight the importance of observation for intuition, the entry includes another definition that demonstrates the strategic advantage of deploying intuition-based arguments in a public controversy. The alternate definition for intuition is, "The immediate apprehension of an object by the mind without the intervention of any reasoning process" (intuition, 2014). Appeals to 'knowing' the world without the intervention of any reasoning process are antithetical to the basic tenets of the scientific method which prioritize a rigorous process of reasoning, not the immediate apprehension of an object.

History is replete with examples of the tension between intuition and science. Indeed, some of the most famous scientific discoveries were initially rejected because they defied the intuition of the day. For instance, the notions that the Earth is round and that it orbits the Sun not only defied appeals to intuition but also generated immense public controversy (Whitehouse, 2009). There have been numerous scholarly works dedicated to explaining the history of scientific findings that are counter-intuitive including Julian Havil's *Impossible?: Surprising Solutions to Counterintuitive Conundrums* which chronicles paradox after paradox which have counterintuitive solutions that often defy public and scholarly acceptance (Havil, 2008). Our argument here is that conspiracy theories are a special type of argumentative discourse that exploits the tension between intuition and science to generate and sustain public controversies. This pattern of discourse can result in substantial changes to public policy in favor of intuition

rather than science. We will now turn to controversy surrounding water fluoridation as an example of this argumentative strategy in action.

2.1 *The water fluoridation controversy: a case study in counter-intuitive science*
On January 25, 1945, the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, began a public health intervention to prevent cavities and tooth decay by adding fluoride to its public water supply. The experiment was based on a set of medical research findings that had started in 1901 by a dentist named Dr. Frederick McKay who was initially interested in helping diagnose and solve a medical condition that comes from consuming too much fluoride called fluorosis (The Story of Fluoridation, 2014). In the process of studying the condition, Dr. McKay with the help of other dentists, discovered that one of the positive benefits of consuming fluoride was that it reduced the likelihood that people would experience cavities and tooth decay. The key question became: "How much fluoride should a person consume to gain the medical benefits without risking the negative health implications that come with fluorosis?" A group of researchers, including the head of the Dental Hygiene Unit at the United States National Institute of Health, came to the conclusion that a fluoride level of 1.0 parts per million was a safe amount of fluoride to add to the water supply (The Story of Fluoridation, 2014).

With the research in hand, the City Commission of Grand Rapids voted to become the first city in the world to add fluoride to the public water supply to help prevent cavities and tooth decay. Over the next 15 years, researchers tracked the cavities and tooth decay present in the city's residents, including 30,000 school children. The results were astonishing. The children born after fluoridation had 60% fewer cavities and the treatment also reduced permanent adult tooth decay by 35% (American Dental Association Council on Access, 2005). The results were so impressive that cities across the United States started adding fluoride to their public water sources. Today, nearly 170 million people drink from public water systems that are fluoridated (American Dental Association Council on Access, 2005). According to the National Cancer Institute:

fluoride can prevent and even reverse tooth decay by inhibiting bacteria that produce acid in the mouth and by enhancing remineralization, the process through which tooth enamel is "rebuilt" after it begins to decay. (National Cancer Institute, 2012)

The success of the public health intervention is also, in part, due to the relative

costs involved. According to the American Dental Association, for most cities, it costs only 50 cents a person per year to fluoridate the water supply and "every $1 invested in water fluoridation saves $38 in dental treatment costs" (American Dental Association Council on Access, 2005).

After evaluating both the effectiveness of the intervention and the relative costs involved, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared that water fluoridation was one of the "Ten Great Public Health Achievements" of the 20th century (Center for Disease Control, 1999). In addition to that impressive designation, fluoridation has also received the endorsement of 95 major medical organizations including the Academy of General Dentistry, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Association for Dental Research, American Association of Community Dental Programs, American Association of Dental Schools, the American Dental Association, the Centers for Disease Control, and the National Cancer Institute (Barrett, 2002). One might think that the historic success of the intervention and the widespread medical endorsement of the practice would make this treatment one of the least controversial public health decisions that a local government could confront. After all, unlike public smoking bans, prohibitions on the use of trans fats, or even restrictions on the size of soft drinks, there are no major corporate interests negatively affected by the practice of fluoridation. In fact, the very people that would reap the greatest economic benefit from an increase in cavities and tooth decay, dentists, are among the most vocal proponents of fluoridation.

While our assessment of the motivations involved may be persuasive, the more complicated truth is that fluoridation has been and continues to be one of the most controversial public health interventions of the past 60 years. In just the past two years, approximately 68 cities across the globe have decided to abandon fluoridation including major American population centers like Portland, Oregon (Communities Which Have Rejected Fluoridation Since 1990, 2012). How, then, has it been possible for a practice that is so widely accepted and praised in the scientific community to become so controversial and ultimately to be rejected by communities across the globe? We believe that part of the problem rests in the argumentative obstacles surrounding the counter-intuitive nature of the science. Namely, how could it possibly be good for us to consume a toxic substance that is often scraped from industrial waste and then added to our public water supplies? In the next section we analyze how conspiracy proponents have crafted

arguments based on intuition to help convince local governments that the complicated nature of the scientific explanations for the phenomena is in reality a cover-up for the fact that fluoride is a direct attack on the public health of their communities.

3. *Defeating fluoridation with appeals to intuition*

As is the case with most conspiracy theories, there is no single author or text that is the sole authority on the subject. Instead, conspiracy arguments circulate through a variety of discourse communities. As a result, our analysis cannot account for every conspiracy argument that has been lodged against fluoridation. There are, for example, arguments that fluoridation was used by the Nazis in the concentration camps; that fluoridation was a clever way to deal with the industrial waste from our nuclear weapons program; and that the fact that the government hired the godfather of public relations, Edward Bernays, to create a pro-fluoridation public health campaign proves that the goals were nefarious from the start. Although some of these arguments also include appeals based on intuition, we have focused our presentation today on the arguments that fluoridation is an attack on the public health of the population.

Our review of the conspiracy arguments reveals three sets of objections to the safety of fluoridation that are rooted in appeals to intuition. First, conspiracy theorists attack fluoridation by amplifying the worst case scenarios associated with consuming too much fluoride. Upon initial inspection, this argument makes intuitive sense. After all, Dr. McKay's original research was an attempt to diagnose and cure the molten teeth of communities in Colorado that were consuming too much fluoride and suffering from fluorosis. Rather than engaging in the complicated science of determining what the appropriate level of fluoride consumption is, conspiracy theorists argue that these worst case scenarios are *ipso facto* proof that there is no safe level of fluoride in the water. For example, most of the anti-fluoride conspiracy theorists point to an infamous industrial accident in 1943 when a DuPont factory spilled a massive amount of fluoride into the local environment. According to the conspiracy theorists, the fluoride spill resulted in the death of poultry, sickened horses, destroyed a peach crop, produced high levels of fluoride in the blood of the local people, and resulted in "cows [that] became so crippled they could only crawl on their bellies to graze" (Water, n.d.). We are not attempting to defend the DuPont spill, but we do think that it is important to point out that objecting to the practice of controlled

fluoridation because of an uncontrolled industrial accident that had nothing to do with fluoridating the public water supply is a tenuous argument at best.

We do not deny that arguments based on the worst case scenarios of mass fluorosis have an intuitive appeal, but the more complicated scientific method explains why these types of arguments are dangerous for the public decision-making process. There are scientific debates over the appropriate amount of fluoridation. Some argue that over time people have started consuming more fluoride from sources outside of the public water supply – namely toothpaste which includes a greater amount of fluoride today than in 1945. The refusal of the conspiracy proponents to engage the scientific discussion and instead to focus on the worst case scenarios as a justification for doing away with all fluoridation is an appeal to the public and government officials to make impulsive decisions based on intuition rather than to engage in the complex deliberation that comes with assessing scientific risk.

The second set of arguments based on intuition focuses on alternative uses of fluoride to amplify the public's belief in the toxic nature of the substance. For example, one conspiracy theorist writes, "…sodium fluoride is a dangerous poison and has been a primary active ingredient in a wide variety of insecticides and fungicides" (Tracey, 2012). There are other conspiracy websites that list the major manufacturing companies and their products with captions that emphasize how ridiculous it would be for a parent to feed those products to their children. Once again the intuitive appeal is unscientific but persuasive: why would you put something into your body that is so damaging that it is used to kill other organisms?

The answer, of course, is that the science associated with fluoride and proper dosing is more complicated than that disturbing description suggests. At face value, not every active ingredient in a pesticide is the ingredient that is actually doing the killing. Whitney Cranshaw, a professor at Colorado State University, does not even list fluoride in his review of the major active ingredients used in pesticides and insecticides (Crenshaw, 2013). More importantly, fluoride is a *naturally* occurring mineral that is found in different levels of almost all water sources. The fact that it is used in a variety of other ways does not in itself demonstrate that the mineral is dangerous. In fact, the practice of fluoridation often involves *removing* excess fluoride from the public water supply to make sure that it is at safe levels. The conspiracy theorists' intuitive arguments rest on an

apparently self-evident appeal that the more natural the water is, the healthier it will be without any discussion of the fact that the fluoride discovered in the people of Colorado came from the natural water supply they were using and not from some industrial additive. The complicated truth is that when a local government votes to end the process of fluoridation it may, in fact, be increasing its residents' consumption of fluoride.

The third set of intuition-based arguments acknowledges the naturally occurring nature of fluoride, but challenge the practice of fluoridation because it involves purchasing sodium fluoride from major industries. These conspiracy theorists are obsessed with pointing out that sodium fluoride is a byproduct of major industrial processes and those industrial manufacturers are making money from an industrial byproduct that they would otherwise have to pay to dispose of properly. They argue that since these industries benefit from selling their industrial waste to public water utilities they are invested in skewing the health data and/or covering up the true health effects. Here is an example of one of these arguments:

fluoride is a toxic byproduct in the manufacture of nuclear arms, aluminum, cement, steel, and phosphates. Millions of tons of this poison are produced every year. Imagine the cost of containing and disposing of those mountains of waste every year. It's in the billions. But what if lobbyists from these industries could present "scientific studies" paid for by the industries, and provide for a continual stream of media presentations about the health benefits of fluoride, and create unimaginably lucrative positions for "research" and "education" within the American Dental Association and the AMA, and do all these things in a consistent and unending way, year after year? What are the economic advantages of that? Simple: instead of paying money to dispose of toxic waste, money could now be made by selling fluoride to the water companies of the nation. They'll use the public water supply as a sewer for industrial wastes. And now with these new billions added instead of subtracted, there's plenty to go around, for everyone involved. Out of the Red, into the Black. Somewhere Machiavelli smiles. (Water, n.d.)

This argument involves an intuitive appeal to public perceptions of industrial waste and the motivations of large corporations. The simplistic narrative, however, that since fluoride is purchased from corporations then those corporations must be directly involved in skewing the scientific data is overly reductionist at best. Assuming that municipalities want to fluoridate their water

supplies, it would be far more expensive to engage in the process of creating fluoride solely for the purpose of fluoridating the water supply rather than using the industrial byproduct. The assumption that the American Dental Association and the 95 other health organizations that have endorsed fluoridation are all in league with big business is a classic conspiracy argument, but loses its persuasiveness when the audience moves beyond the initial shock of its intuitive appeal and into the pragmatic reality of the difficulty in covering up such a conspiracy. Although it is difficult for many people to accept, it is possible that a 'win win' situation involving major corporations and local governments is, in fact, also in the best interest of the public at large.

4. *Conclusion: training advocates to argue against conspiracy intuition appeals*
The world is confronting a greater and greater number of controversies surrounding complex scientific phenomena. As the controversies grow, conspiracy theorists have successfully inserted themselves into the public deliberation process. From global warming to vaccines to peak oil, conspiracy theorists have used arguments based on intuition to disrupt and short circuit deliberation involving complex science. A recent study conducted by a group of social scientists at the University of Chicago found that 49% of respondents believe at least one conspiracy related to medicine (Oliver & Wood, 2014). It further found that 37% of the respondents agreed, "The Food and Drug Administration is deliberately preventing the public from getting natural cures for cancer and other diseases because of pressure from drug companies" (Oliver & Wood, 2014). We believe that there is no way around the fact that the people responsible for explaining and defending the more complex scientific explanations for societal practices need training in how to argue against appeals based on intuition.

Analyzing the public discourse surrounding the conspiracy over fluoridation reveals three areas of argument studies that advocates would benefit from understanding. First, we believe that advocates need to master the science of the controversy while focusing on translating that science into arguments relevant for public deliberation. Scientists are often very careful in a public setting. They are more likely to use hedging statements and talk in terms of risk. Both practices are helpful for the scholarly study of a phenomenon, but, with rare exception, they do not translate well into public deliberation. In other words, scientists are so careful about drawing conclusions that their arguments appear weaker when contrasted to the powerful pathos appeals that accompany the objections based on claims

rooted in intuition. The fact that the anti-fluoride arguments are based on intuition makes them more accessible and thus more appealing to the audience.

Second, we believe advocates need to be prepared to argue by analogy. Relying on scientists as public advocates is helpful, but they are often reluctant to engage in a discussion of analogous scientific controversies because it is beyond their area of expertise. In the water fluoridation controversy, for instance, there are too few advocates for fluoridation prepared to argue based on the analogy to chlorine which is a substance that is also toxic if consumed in an extreme amount, but that few people can deny has helped prevent a widespread set of diseases. The conspiracy proponents who insist that fluoridation is simply not natural and therefore a threat to public health will struggle to explain how public water utilities should deal with cholera, typhoid fever, and hepatitis all of which have been remedied through chlorination (Water Quality and Health Council, 2003). To argue from an analogy, however, requires the advocate to be prepared to speak to issues beyond their immediate expertise.

Finally, we believe advocates need to construct stronger defenses of the scientific consensus. The global warming controversy and the fluoridation controversy share the rhetorical dilemma that the scientific community does not really consider either of them to be a legitimate controversy. There are, of course, a small number of scientists who resist the consensus and therefore are venerated by conspiracy theorists. If, however, a local government official is listening to a presentation on a complicated scientific phenomenon that has reserved scientists on one side and passionate arguments from intuition on the other side, the advocates of science need to be articulate about the advantages of *preferring* the scientific consensus in public policy. This goal is a difficult task that is growing more difficult by the day as interpretations of science become more politicized. Failure to defend the institution of science encourages crucial policy decisions to be based on "The immediate apprehension of an object by the mind without the intervention of any reasoning process."

In conclusion, we want public advocates to continue to fight the good fight on crucial scientific controversies. In fact, by following our three recommendations we hope advocates will learn to fight the *better* fight. It is work that is often very challenging and comes with all of the sets of difficulties associated with debating strong-willed conspiracy proponents. As communities continue to struggle with complex scientific phenomena, there will be more opportunities for conspiracy

theorists to engage in public controversies so we hope that advocates of science will take the conspiracy arguments seriously. It is easy to mock them for their inadequate treatment of science, but mocking cannot deny the fact that these appeals to intuition have succeeded in 68 cities around the globe.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Conductive Argumentation, Degrees Of Confidence, And The Communication Of Uncertainty

Abstract: The paper argues that there is an epistemic obligation to communicate the appropriate degree of confidence when asserting conclusions in conductive argumentation. Contrary to the position of some theorists, we argue that such conclusions frequently are, and should be expressed with appropriate qualifications. As an illustration, we discuss the case of the Italian scientists tried for failing to convey to the public appropriate warnings of the risks of the earthquake in L'Aquila.

Keywords: conductive argumentation, judgment confidence, expression of uncertainty

1. *Prologue*

On April 6, 2009, a magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck L'Aquila, Abruzzo, resulting in considerable devastation and the death of 300 people. Seven Italian officials and scientists were subsequently put on trial for manslaughter. The accusation was that scientists presented incomplete, inconsistent information which falsely assured the public and caused the deaths of 30 residents. The usual practice when an earthquake was likely was for residents to sleep outside, but it was alleged that because of the assurance, these individuals remained in their houses and were killed in the quake (Ashcroft 2012). The prosecution argued that the assessment of risk communicated to the public was unjustifiably optimistic and

that lives could have been saved had people not been persuaded by the assurances to remain in their houses (Hooper 2012). In 2012, the scientists were found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to six years in prison.

We will return to this case later. We have no intention to try to evaluate its merits, but we shall examine the issues it raises regarding the obligation to communicate an appropriate degree of certainty or uncertainty in one's judgments.

2. *Introduction*

This paper begins by making the argument that a degree of uncertainty is an unavoidable aspect of conductive argumentation. The arguments which comprise instances of conductive argumentation vary in terms of the degree of support that they provide for their conclusions; for this reason the strength of the judgments warranted by particular instances of conductive argumentation will vary as well. We argue, further, that this variability imposes an epistemic requirement on arguers to apportion the confidence of their judgment to the strength of the reasons. Moreover, because of the dialectical nature of argumentation, there is the additional requirement for arguers to communicate the appropriate degree of certainty or uncertainty when making judgments in the context of an argumentative exchange.

3. *Argumentation and uncertainty*

The traditional focus for the philosophical study of argumentation has been individual arguments, in terms of both their structure and their evaluation. The model of argument which has been dominant has been deductive argument, i.e., an argument whose premises entail the conclusion. Provided that the premises are true, the conclusion follows with certainty. Uncertainty may, of course, still arise with respect to the truth of the premises.

This requirement of inference certainty does not, however, fit a great deal of actual argumentation, as has been pointed out by theorists since the inception of the Informal Logic movement. In probable reasoning, for example, the conclusion does not follow necessarily but only with some degree of probability (Blair & Johnson 1987, p. 42). The situation is similar for inductive reasoning: "Inductive inferences vary from weak to strong; there is no all-or-nothing critique such as 'valid-or invalid' available" (Blair & Johnson 1987, p. 42).

Theorists have, however, been increasingly broadening their focus from

exclusively individual arguments to the entire enterprise of argumentation. Argumentation can be conceptualized as a socio-cultural activity (Hitchcock 2002, p. 291) which is dialectical in the sense that it involves an interaction between the arguers and between the arguments (Blair & Johnson 1987). This focus is much broader than the making of individual arguments. Rather, arguments are put forward, criticisms and objections offered, responses proposed, and, frequently, revisions made to initial positions (Bailin & Battersby 2009). It is this practice of argumentation that is our focus here, and in particular the practice of conductive argumentation (or conductive reasoning). By conductive reasoning we are referring to the process of comparative evaluation of a variety of contending positions and arguments with the goal of reaching a reasoned judgment on an issue (Battersby & Bailin 2011). Such judgments are generally based on the weighing of both pro and con considerations.

The focus of many theorists working in the area is, however, on individual conductive arguments rather than on conductive reasoning. Conductive arguments are, as Govier puts it, "arguments in which premises are put forward as separately and non-conclusively relevant to support a conclusion, against which negatively relevant considerations may also be acknowledged" (Govier 2011, p. 262). In our view, however, viewing conductive reasoning in terms of individual arguments fails to due justice to the dialectical nature of argumentation (Battersby & Bailin 2011). In addition, attempting to make conductive reasoning fit into the traditional model of argument structure has resulted in unnecessary conundrums, for example how to analyze counter-considerations (are they premises? counter-premises?) or how to diagram these anomalous types of arguments. Our focus, in contrast, is on conductive reasoning more broadly. According to this perspective, the structure of conductive argumentation is viewed in terms of a balancing of competing arguments and claims rather than as a single argument.

4. *Uncertainty in conductive argumentation*

There are a number of reasons why conductive argumentation does not lead to conclusions which can be asserted with epistemic certainty. These include inferential uncertainty, the inherent uncertainty of particular claims and judgments, the open-endedness of the reason-giving process, and variability in the weighing of pro and con considerations. Because of these factors, the degree of certainty with which conclusions of conductive argumentation can justifiably be

held will vary.

Inferential uncertainty is a feature of conductive reasoning just as it is with inductive reasoning. Given that particular claims are true, there is still the question of how much support they give to the conclusion.

The uncertainty has also to do with the inherent uncertainty of particular claims and judgments which go into the reasoning process. The likelihood of factual claims is an important factor in evaluating their weight as the greater the likelihood of the claim, the more weight it can add to the conclusion. Likelihood is, however, often difficult to determine. To compound the difficulty, any argument leading to a judgment about what to do must also take into account future states of affairs which are usually even less certain than judgments about current states of affairs. What one can do in both these cases is to use the available information, history, contextual factors, and statistical tools to make reasoned judgments. And in the area of moral issues, while there are some widely accepted general moral principles, their application in particular cases inevitably creates some degree of uncertainty, the degree depending on the strength of the supporting arguments (Battersby & Bailin 2011).

The uncertainty arises also from the nature of conductive reasoning itself. One important factor is the open-endedness of the reason-giving process. Competent conductive reasoning requires laying out the dialectic – the arguments on various sides of the debate, as well as objections to the arguments and responses to the objections. No survey of arguments will be exhaustive, however. The possibility always exists that additional reasons and arguments will be put forward which might affect the outcome of the reasoning (Battersby & Bailin 2011). This being said, the more extensive the review of the available evidence and argumentation, the stronger the support for the resultant judgment.

Uncertainty also comes in due to the process of weighing the various reasons pro and con. There is sometimes variability amongst arguers in the evaluation of the comparative strength of evidence and arguments on different sides of an issue and disagreement about the appropriate weight to be apportioned to various considerations. This is not to say that weightings are (primarily) subjective. Weightings can be justified (or criticized) by appeal to objective factors and considerations (e.g., the likelihood of claims, appeal to widely shared values and principles,). Nonetheless, there may not be consensus on how some

considerations should be weighted and there may be more than one judgment which is defensible given the context (Battersby & Bailin 2011).

Because of the uncertainty of particular claims, the variability in the evaluation of the comparative strength of evidence and arguments, the different weightings given to various considerations, and the open-endedness of the reason-giving process, an instance of conductive reasoning can, at best, offer good reasons and strong support for a conclusion but not certainty.

This does not mean, however, that it is not possible to make warranted judgments in instances of conductive reasoning. Guidelines exist for making reasoned judgments and criteria exist for their evaluation (Battersby & Bailin 2011). What it does mean is that there will always be some uncertainty with respect to the judgments emerging from the process of conductive argumentation and that the strength of the judgments warranted by particular instances of conductive argumentation will vary.

5. *Confidence in judgment*

The strength of the evidence and argumentation in support of conclusions in conductive argumentation will vary from case to case (Battersby & Bailin 2011). In some cases the evidence for a particular judgment may be overwhelming. There are, for example, very strong reasons to believe that smoking causes cancer or that the enslavement of human beings is morally unjustifiable. In other cases the weight of reasons may favour a particular judgment but not without significant opposing reasons or counter considerations. Claims about the causes of climate change might fall into this category. In still other cases, the reasons may be insufficient for reaching a judgment, for example in debates about life on other planets. Thus, in robust argumentation, warrant is usually a matter of degree.

Engaging in the process of argumentation imposes certain epistemic requirements on arguers: that they present arguments justified by the available evidence, address appropriate objections and provide reasonable responses, and revise their initial position when warranted. But the variability in the degree of support for different judgments also imposes an additional requirement on arguers: that they apportion the confidence of their judgment to the strength of the reasons. Not all judgments warrant an equal level of confidence. It is important to be clear that we are not referring to subjective confidence – how

confident an individual may happen to feel about a judgment, but rather rational or warranted confidence – the level of confidence that is justified by the reasons and evidence.

The following is a schema which we have developed to represent the level of confidence warranted by different weights of reasons:

• A *very confident judgment* is warranted when the weight of reasons clearly supports the judgment.
• A *reasonably confident judgment* is warranted when the weight of reasons strongly supports the judgment but there are still strong countervailing considerations.
• A *tentative judgment* is warranted when the weight of reasons is not overwhelming but is supportive of one position, and we can make a judgment *on balance.*
• A *suspended judgment* is warranted when the reasons for different positions are closely balanced or when there is insufficient evidence to make a judgment.
This schema has similarities to the categorization used for classifying the strength of causal inferences in science (US Department of Health, 2006).

These four levels of judgment confidence are not discrete but can be seen as marking positions along a continuum. The categorization allows for a range of possibilities in between.

Apportioning one's confidence in a judgment to the strength of the reasons is always epistemologically significant. It is when there is a need to act on the basis of our judgments, however, that the issue of how justified our confidence is in our judgments becomes crucial. The greater the consequences of action (or inaction), the greater the need for a level of argumentative support that warrants a confident judgment. A useful comparison can be made to legal judgments. In criminal cases, where there is a great deal at stake (freedom versus imprisonment, or even life versus death), the standard of proof is beyond a reasonable doubt, which requires a level of evidence sufficient to warrant a very confident judgment. In civil matters, where there is usually less at stake, the standard of proof is usually balance of probabilities, which clearly requires only an on balance judgment.

6. *Degrees of certainty or uncertainty*

The fact that argumentation is dialectical imposes yet a further requirement on arguers. It is not just a matter of apportioning one's confidence in a judgment to the strength of the reasons. There is also a requirement to communicate the appropriate degree of certainty or uncertainty when making judgments in the context of an argumentative exchange.

There are many ways in which one's confidence in a judgment and hence the degree of certainty or uncertainty may be expressed:

• A very confident judgment implies a high level of certainty and would be marked linguistically by such phrases as "I am very confident that," "it is clear that," "there's little doubt that," "the evidence strongly indicates that."
• A reasonably confident judgment implies a moderately high level of certainty and might be indicated by such phrases as "I am reasonably sure that," "it seems very likely that," "the evidence by and large indicates that."
• A tentative judgment implies some degree of uncertainty, although not enough to preclude making a judgment. A tentative judgment may be indicated by such phrases as "it appears on balance that," "the weight of evidence tips somewhat in favour of," "my tentative conclusion is that."
• A suspended judgment implies a high level of uncertainty and would be indicated by such phrases as "there is not enough evidence to make a judgment," "the reasons on both sides seem equally balanced," "the judgment will have to be deferred until more evidence is available," "the jury's still out on this."

7. *An objection*
Curiously some theorists have denied that conductive arguments can have a conclusion that expresses uncertainty. In a recent posthumous publication, Adler argues against the claim that countervailing considerations detract from the support for the conclusion in a conductive argument:

The claim that I dispute is that once the conclusion is drawn, the counter-considerations continue to diminish its support (Adler 2013, p. 4).

As a consequence:

… the conclusion of a Conductive Argument is characteristically detached and accepted without (epistemic) qualification (Adler 2013, p. 6).

And further:

Let me summarize my reasons for taking Conductive Argument to characteristically lead to unqualified conclusions that are accepted and asserted (Adler 2013, p. 6).

If we understand him correctly, he is arguing that if we are asking an interlocutor to accept our conclusion, then we are always asking him to accept the conclusion without the modifiers of "all things considered," "on balance," "it is very likely that" etc.

It is significant that Adler's objection is framed in terms of conductive arguments while we frame the issue in terms of conductive argumentation. The difference in framing is important in terms of the consideration of his objection, a point to which we shall return.

We would maintain that qualified conclusions are common in conductive argumentation. In arguments for factual claims, expressing uncertainty is not unusual, e.g., "The forecast notwithstanding, it looks like it might rain." "Even though he doesn't like parties, Tom is a good friend so he'll likely come to my birthday party." "There are many fine contemporary authors, but she is probably the best of her generation." The communication of the degree of certainty of findings is also a common practice in the kind of argument to the best explanation exhibited in scientific reasoning and scientific reports. The following excerpt from an IPCC assessment report on climate change explains the confidence levels used in the report:

The degree of certainty in key findings in this assessment is based on the author teams' evaluations of underlying scientific understanding and is expressed as a qualitative level of confidence (from very low to very high) and, when possible, probabilistically with a quantified likelihood (from exceptionally unlikely to virtually certain). Confidence in the validity of a finding is based on the type, amount, quality, and consistency of evidence (e.g., data, mechanistic understanding, theory, models, expert judgment) and the degree of agreement. SPM-2

The following examples from the report illustrate the use of these confidence levels:

(1) It is *virtually certain* that globally the troposphere has warmed since the mid-20th century. More complete observations allow greater confidence in

estimates of tropospheric temperature changes in the extratropical Northern Hemisphere than elsewhere. There is *medium confidence* in the rate of warming and its vertical structure in the Northern Hemisphere extra-tropical troposphere and *low confidence* elsewhere. {2.4} PSM-4

(2) It is *likely* that anthropogenic influences have affected the global water cycle since 1960. Anthropogenic influences have contributed to observed increases in atmospheric moisture content in the atmosphere (*medium confidence*), to global-scale changes in precipitation patterns over land (*medium confidence*), to intensification of heavy precipitation over land regions where data are sufficient (*medium confidence*), and to changes in surface and sub- surface ocean salinity (*very likely*). {2.5, 2.6, 3.3, 7.6, 10.3, 10.4} SPM-13

Although Adler's argument seems to be directed toward conductive arguments in general ("the conclusion of a Conductive Argument is *characteristically* detached …"), many of his examples involve practical reasoning, where the conclusion is a decision or recommendation about whether to act. Apparently, he would reject a conclusion that "we should probably do X." Yet, in practice, we do often qualify a recommendation by "we should probably," "on balance the best thing to do seems to be," "there are good reasons to" etc.

Given the frequency of qualified conclusions in conductive argumentation, one might wonder what Adler's reasons are for denying their possibility. The basis of his argument is a logical one – that in order for a conductive argument to be cogent, i.e., in order for its conclusion to be correctly accepted as true, the conclusion must stand on its own.**[i]** His focus is on cogent arguments, that is arguments that end inquiry. The alternative for Adler is not qualified conclusions but rather suspended judgment.

It is here that the problem of viewing conductive argumentation in terms of individual arguments becomes manifest. Adler's analysis has some plausibility when applied to examples such as the classic argument offered by Wellman: Although your lawn needs cutting, you ought to take your son to the movies because the picture is ideal for children and will be gone by tomorrow (Wellman 1971, p. 67). Most of the examples offered by Adler, however, (e.g., mandated health care insurance, stricter rules to restrict immigration, building nuclear power plants) are instances of complex, dialectical argumentation. (Indeed, the distinction between conductive arguments and conductive argumentation is one

that Adler himself appears, in places, to acknowledge: Adler, p. 2, footnote 1). In such cases, it is inappropriate to expect certainty (for all the reasons outlined above). It is inappropriate to expect conclusions that are "true". What we can expect, instead, are judgments that have varying degrees of support.

Adler's argument does have some prima facie plausibility in that for practical arguments, either we should act, we should not act, or we simply do not know what to do. Indeed, it does seem that when we decide to do something, we have "detached" the decision from the reasoning through our commitment to action. But the detachment is in effect a pragmatic detachment which does not necessarily indicate unqualified confidence, nor will it necessarily end inquiry. On fairly straightforward practical issues, for example which camera to buy, making a decision will likely mark the end of the inquiry. But this may simply be because the action is *a fait accompli* and does not necessarily indicate a high level of confidence that we have made the right choice. With more complex issues, however, even once an action has been taken, inquiry does not necessarily end, e.g., the U.S. government has made a decision with respect to mandated health care insurance, but the debate has certainly not ended.

It seems to be Adler's view that it is only detached, unqualified conclusions that "discern or advance and settle new or interesting or important truths, that are worth believing for ourselves or for our audience. They increase our information and expand our corpus of beliefs" (Adler 2013, p. 6). We would argue, on the contrary, that it is appropriately qualified conclusions that really add to our justified beliefs. We are justified in holding our beliefs on such issues with varying degree of confidence commensurate with the strength of the support. Jane's belief that there should be government mandated health care insurance is one she may hold with considerable confidence given the strength of the reasons in favor and the weakness of the reasons against. She may hold the belief that we should not build nuclear power plants with considerably less confidence given the force of the reasons for as well as against. Adler seems to hold that only unqualified conclusions put "arguers and inquirers in a position that is appropriate to guide further judgments and action" (Adler 2013, p. 6). We would argue, on the contrary, that appropriately qualified conclusions are, in fact, more reasonable guides to action. The conclusions of conductive argumentation are judgments and it is a requirement of reasonableness that such judgments should reflect the degree of support provided by our reasons.

8. *Communicating confidence and certainty*

We have been arguing, then, that there is a requirement to apportion one's confidence in a judgment to the strength of the reasons in support of the judgment. We would argue, further, there is also an epistemic and moral responsibility to communicate the appropriate degree of certainty or uncertainty when making judgments in the context of an argumentative exchange. This responsibility arises from the dialectical and interactive nature of conductive argumentation. According to Johnson, that an exchange is dialectical means that "as a result of the intervention of the Other, one's own logos (discourse, reasoning, or thinking) has the potential of being affected in some way" (Johnson 2000, p. 161). In other words, the reasoning and judgments made by others can and often should affect my reasoning and judgments and form part of the basis for my actions. Just as offering well justified judgments in the context of an argumentative exchange can contribute to others holding better justified beliefs and undertaking better justified actions, so also can communicating one's judgments at the appropriate level of confidence. Acknowledging uncertainty or confidence as part of one's judgment or decision to act can inform others of how much confidence you or they should have in the judgment. Communicating a judgment at an inappropriate level of confidence, for example with more confidence than is warranted by the evidence, may contribute to other interlocutors holding beliefs or acting in ways that are poorly grounded.

This responsibility is especially significant when one is in a position of epistemic authority. Experts have an obligation to provide reasons for their judgments, however in contexts requiring expertise, recipients of the judgment are often not in a position to assess the reasoning in any detail. These judgments are generally accepted largely on the basis of trust in the expertise and reliability of the authority. Thus the level of confidence that is expressed in the judgment is an important aspect of the information communicated in the judgment. Returning to the IPCC report, it would be have been misleading if the report had omitted the confidence levels in their various finding. This is especially important as such judgments often form the basis for decisions regarding action, or may themselves be recommendations for action. Compare the following judgments by a physician: (1.) "I have carefully evaluated all the evidence and would not recommend surgery. It is my judgment that it would not help." (2.) "I have carefully evaluated all the evidence and would not recommend surgery. It is my judgment that surgery is very unlikely to help and the surgical procedure is very risky. But I

cannot be 100% confident because there have been a few similar cases where it appears that a surgical invention may have helped to prolong life." To offer the same conclusion without an indication of the confidence level would be a misleading way of putting forth one's conclusion. In cases where the argument leads to a somewhat uncertain conclusion based on a balancing of conflicting considerations, failure to indicate the presence of these considerations is an epistemic failure. Given that the purpose of conductive argumentation is to consider countervailing considerations and yet come to a reasonable conclusion, failure to communicate the degree of justification or certainty that the arguments provide also violates basic norms of communication.

9. *The l'Aquila case*

The trial of the Italian scientists and officials in the L'Aquila earthquake case is a pertinent one to examine with respect to the issue of the communication of certainty or uncertainty. The earthquake had been preceded by a swarm of small quakes, and the charge against the defendants was that they did not do their duty in communicating the likelihood of a major earthquake to the citizens of L'Aquila.

One of the scientists tried, Enzo Boschi, the then-president of Italy's National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology, is said to have compared the situation to a large quake that struck L'Aquila in 1703. Boschi is alleged to have said at a meeting in L'Aquila on March 31, 2009, "It is unlikely that an earthquake like the one in 1703 could occur in the short term, but the possibility cannot be totally excluded." In a press conference after the meeting, Department of Civil Protection official Bernardo De Bernardinis, also a defendant, is quoted (and on video record) as saying that the situation was normal given the context, posing "no danger," and urging residents to relax (Pappas 2012).

The details of the case are complex and include allegations of political pressure, and of misrepresentation of material. We have no intention to try to evaluate the merits of the case, nor are we in a position to do so. Nonetheless some of the issues raised are pertinent to our discussion. The statements of both Boschi and De Bernardinis would have been grounded in the knowledge that earthquake swarms are very common in seismically active regions such as Abruzzo but only a very small percentage are precursors to major quakes. In fact, seismologists claim that it is virtually impossible to predict major earthquakes. Yet we can note a difference in the level of certainty communicated in the two judgments. Boschi's judgment that a major earthquake was unlikely could be characterized as a

reasonably confident judgment, but in alluding to the possibility of such a quake, it communicated a degree of uncertainty in the judgment. De Bernardinis, in contrast, seemed to be making a very confident judgment that there was no danger of a major quake. His judgment made no reference to the possibility, slight though it may have been. The risk was indeed very low, but not non-existent. Thus his pronouncement, communicated to the public, that there was "no danger" was epistemically overly confident, expressing an unreasonable degree of certainty.

The scientists and officials in question were considered epistemic authorities and the level of certainty communicated by them to members of the public appears to have affected the public's actions. A local investigator, Inspector Lorenzo Cavallo, is quoted as saying: "The Commission calmed the local population down following a number of earth tremors. After the quake, we heard people's accounts and they told us they changed their behaviour following the advice of the commission" (Watt, S. 2011). This account is corroborated repeatedly by witnesses testifying at the trial (Billi 2013).

The specifics of this particular case are complex and contested, and it would be inappropriate and imprudent to attempt to pass any judgments. One thing that we do think that the case demonstrates, however, is a strong recognition of the responsibility to communicate the epistemically appropriate degree of certainty or uncertainty in our judgments. It is unreasonable, (epistemically inappropriate) to make or hold a judgment without the appropriate degree of uncertainty given the evidence. It is, in addition, a communicative and perhaps a moral failure to communicate a judgment without the appropriate expression of epistemic uncertainty.

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NOTE

i. Surprisingly given his thesis, Adler does acknowledge that "there are loads of arguments that end with qualified conclusions, including, 'plausible' or, more equivocally, 'the best explanation is'" (p. 7). But the rest of his argumentation leads us to believe that he would reconcile this apparent contradiction by asserting that such arguments are not cogent, i.e., they are not arguments which

can be put forward for acceptance.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – The Integration Of Pragma-Dialectics And Collaborative Learning Research: Argumentation Dialogue, Externalisation And Collective Thinking

Abstract: This paper describes extensions of pragma-dialectical theory for analysing learning processes in students' argumentation dialogues. It is argued that although pragma-dialectics is the most appropriate theory in this context, it needs to be 'psychologised' by the consideration of additional discursive, dialogical, epistemological, interpersonal and affective dimensions of dialogue. In conclusion, prospects for new rapprochement between argumentation theory and psychology are discussed.

Keywords: collaborative learning, argumentation dialogue, pragma-dialectics, psychology, externalisation principle

1. *Introduction*

Over the past two decades, a specialised subfield of collaborative learning research (Dillenbourg, Baker, Blaye & O'Malley, 1996) has emerged, called "collaborative argumentation-based learning" (see, for example, the collective

works: Andriessen & Coirier, 1999; Andriessen, Baker & Suthers, 2003; Muller Mirza & Perret-Clermont, 2009). Its general aims are to understand how and what students could learn (apart from argumentation competencies themselves) from engaging in pedagogical activities based on argumentation, such as debates, writing argumentative texts, or joint problem-solving that involving spontaneous phases of argumentative interaction. However, collaborative argumentation-based learning research has been mostly carried out either on the basis of everyday notions of what "argument" is, or else by drawing on a limited set of argumentation theories (e.g. the model of Toulmin, 1958) that that are not necessarily well adapted to the task at hand, i.e. analysing argumentative interaction.

This paper explores the relevance and utility of the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (e.g. van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984) for analysing students' argumentation dialogues in a way that brings to light interactive learning processes. I propose firstly that the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation is the most appropriate approach to analysing students' argumentation dialogues given — quite simply — that it is a theory of argumentation in *dialogue*, and that the components of the theory are generally applicable to the data. Secondly, I propose that in order to understand collaborative arguing to learn, within a specific domain, notably with respect to conceptual elaboration, a broad pragma-dialectical framework is also well fitted to the task, provided that additional dimensions of social interaction are taken into account. For the empirical support of the relevance of these dimensions to analysing students' argumentation dialogues, this paper draws on the author's previously published work (for example, Baker, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2009) on the analysis of corpora of students' problem solving dialogues in physics, biology and geography.

In the first section below, the main components of pragma-dialectics are discussed with respect to their degrees of correspondence with processes at work in students' argumentation dialogues. In the ensuing section, additional dimensions of dialogue that need to be taken into account in educational situations — beyond the pragmatic and the dialectical — are described, in relation to interactive learning processes. In conclusion, relations between pragma-dialectics and psychology are discussed, together with the extent to which the set of dimensions of dialogue discussed in the paper could be combined in a coherent theoretical and methodological approach.

2. *Components of the pragma-dialectic model and their correspondences with students' argumentation dialogues*

For reasons stated in introduction, the components of the pragma-dialectical model do provide an appropriate general framework for understanding how students' argumentation dialogues have potential for learning. However, each of the components needs to be 'psychologised' (or 'naturalised', to use the terminology of Grize, 1982, 1996) in order to understand relations between dialogue and (changes in) thinking. As discussed in conclusion, pragma-dialectics explicitly eschews consideration of psychological change 'outside' the dialogue. Below, each of the following main components of the pragma-dialectical model are discussed (stages of discussion, speech acts and perlocutionary effects, rules of conduct for reasonable argumentation, and methods for reconstructing argumentative discourse) in terms of their correspondences with the reality of students' argumentation dialogues.

Confrontation phase. This phase usually does not exist in students' dialogues: students often just move straight into opening and argumentation; or if the confrontation phase does exist, it is often reduced to a repetition of the same proposal with repeated refusals to accept.

Opening phase. In students' problem-solving dialogues, dialectical roles are unlikely to be so clear as those of "proponent" and "opponent", with their strong degrees of commitment. This is because in a learning situation, given that knowledge is supposed to be under co-construction, it is not realistic for students to have clear commitments to the tentative solutions that they propose (Nonnon, 1996). In pedagogical debates, concerning issues where personal value systems are at stake (e.g. ecology), such commitments can occur, and typically, students' views become more polarised. But in more scientific domains, such as physics, students may often shift from opponent to proponent roles, for a given thesis, as they explore around the question.

Argumentation phase. Without specific pedagogical preparation — asking students to read texts, multimedia materials on the topic, analyse possible arguments, in short, to invent or activate their arguments — this phase may often be very short indeed, simply because students are not able to find arguments with respect to topics which are new to them (i.e. to be learned).

Concluding phase. In students' dialogues, this phase is often simply left out: the

students just stop arguing, moving onto something else. Perhaps interpersonal relationships between adolescents preclude making explicit who has "won" or "lost? Adolescent 'cultures' may even preclude conflict and argumentation altogether, being more oriented towards what young people share (such as taste in rock music, hair and clothes styles) rather than what divides them (Pasquier, 2005).

In sum, the main phases of pragma-dialectics are in fact relevant and useful for analysing students' argumentation dialogues, provided one bears in mind that the phases can be more or less extended (or even deleted), depending on the more global pedagogical sequence in which the argumentation dialogue occurs. Extensive preparation, and framing or scripting of the debate will often be required in order to elicit argumentation at all.

There are two main questions with respect to *perlocutionary effects* (convincing, belief, acceptance, …) of argumentative speech acts: what is the nature of students' attitudes in argumentation dialogue? And, how do attitudes change as a result of argumentation dialogue?

Along with Edwards (1993), I would concur that the question "what do children really think?" when they engage in dialogue is either unanswerable or else meaningless: the relation between language and thought is not so simple (see the conclusion to this paper). Even with interview techniques, or questionnaires, we cannot escape the circle of dialogue (despite methodological precautions, interviews and experiments are also social encounters); and what is expressed in dialogue by each interlocutor is a function of mutual adaptation as well as individual thought. What students "really" think is not the point of dialogue analysis: the point is what interlocutors do and say, and how this evolves.

This view is coherent with the meta-theoretical principle of "externalisation" in pragma-dialectics; but this does not mean that psychology is necessarily 'external' to the dialectical process since, under a suitable analytical approach, dialogue 'is' collective thinking. The theory of learning in and by argumentation dialogue that would be coherent with pragma-dialectics would therefore be one of stabilised evolution of the nature of dialogue, across situations.

But this view is not incoherent with the very idea of cognitive and dialogical attitudes. Thus the philosopher of language L. Jonathan Cohen (1992) has

proposed a distinction between belief and acceptance: belief is a disposition to think or feel (it can not be decided upon), acceptance is a decision to reason with what is proposed by the interlocutor, to take it as a premise, 'as far as it goes'. This seems to correspond better with students' engagement in collaborative problem solving, where — since by hypothesis or design, we are concerned with learning situations — none of the students really knows 'the answer' and so can not adopt a firm standpoint.

The second question mentioned above was: how do attitudes change as a result of argumentation dialogue? One approach to answering this question is to record individual students' opinions regarding a thesis before debating, together with their arguments, then to ask individuals to update their views (opinion, arguments) in the light of a debate (Baker, 2003, 2009). The changes before and after can be correlated with characteristics of the debates. Results show that students' changes in attitudes are almost never as clear as dialectical theories would like: one never sees students straightforwardly dropping their proposals once refuted, nor does one see them straightforwardly accepting successfully defended proposals of their opponents. Students may, of course, be constrained to concede or accept, on the scale of a specific argumentation sequence; but usually, each student will persist in maintaining his or her own views, throughout the dialogue. In other terms, it takes more than a short argumentation sequence, whatever its characteristics, to change deep-seated views. It is possible that this relates to the maintenance of the self, as a relatively stable self-construction: what would a person be like who radically and irrevocably changes his or her fundamental beliefs, on the basis of every dialogue they engage in? Beliefs surely change over a longer period of time than the usually short interactions that are considered in educational research. But changes do occur, and they are usually much more subtle than definitive acquisition or abandonment of proposals: for example, "realising that what one thought was true for certain might not be", or "maintaining one's position, but in a more open, subtle, nuanced form, that recognises possible counter-arguments". Unwillingness to lose face (Brown & Levinson, 1987) by admitting defeat is also an explanatory factor of the persistence of views across dialectical outcomes.

With respect to the famous 'ten commandments' of pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984, pp. 151-175), two questions arise in this context: do students' dialogues largely conform to these rules? And, what is the nature of

the rules themselves? The following dialectical rules are particularly relevant:

• "participants must be able to freely state their views" — obviously, in larger groups, it is is rarely the case that all participants can freely express their views, for reasons because of "production blocking";
• "attacks must be defended" — this is a rule that is generally followed and explicitly enforced (otherwise, someone is likely to say "well, what do you have to say to that?"). An exception often occurs in the case of simple conflicts, where one student simply refuses to accept a proposal, without giving reasons;
• "attacks must not be repeated" — they often are repeated, but in a reformulated way, which can be positive for learning to the extent that it corresponds to negotiation of meaning of key domain concepts.
• "dialectical outcomes must be made explicit" — this is rarely followed, probably because of the need to preserve face, to not too explicitly push home the victory and make the other look stupid; usually, the students just stop, think again and move onto something else.

In sum, it is difficult to reply definitively to the question "do students argumentation dialogues generally conform to the ten pragma-dialectical commandments?", because of the necessarily limited number of cases that can be analysed. The main rule that is respected is the one concerning the necessity to defend against attacks. But then, if this is not respected, there could probably be no argumentation dialogue at all. This may relate to the second question mentioned above, concerning the nature of pragma-dialectical rules. According to dialogic logic (Barth & Krabbe, 1982), the purpose of dialectical rules is to ensure convergence on a determinate outcome (a winning or losing proposal) in the most efficient way. But if it is generally the case that the rule requiring defenses against attacks is the most basic or fundamental, then this amounts to the necessity for achieving agreement on what type of dialogue (Walton & Krabbe, 1995) is being engaged in (argumentative). In other terms, pragma-dialectical rules can be seen as special cases of a general "cooperative contract", according to which, 'as everyone knows', you should not waste other people's time (e.g. by stalling), and you should generally put the group objective — finding the most acceptable solution — before personal misgivings.

Finally, the aim of reconstructing argumentative discourse is to 'uncover' the pragma-dialectical structure from the inter-discursive texture, for the purposes of evaluating it (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson & Jacobs, 1993). This involves,

for example: deletion (of repetitions, of parts irrelevant to argumentative structure); addition (of missing premisses and reasoning); permutation of the linear structure towards an argumentative structure; substitution (of clearer expressions of ambiguous statements). But it is possible that the 'deleted parts" are those where the factors that are most important for learning may reside. These include processes of negotiation of meaning of proposals (e.g. in repeated attacks in a reformulated form) that, whilst they can be used to abusive ends (such as avoiding the issue, or defeat), constitute the principal vehicles of conceptual change.

In summary, although pragma-dialectics is the most appropriate theory of argumentation for understanding collaborative argumentation-based learning, each of its components needs to be transformed, or 'psychologised', for this purpose. Nearly all stages of discussion can be omitted by students, and even the argumentation phase itself often depends on preparatory activation of arguments. Students' cognitive and dialogical attitudes are characterised by weak commitment and volatility, given that it is difficult to adopt firm stances with respect to knowledge that is undergoing co-construction in the learning situation. Only the most basic pragma-dialectical rule, requiring defense against attack, is generally respected.

Certainly, such a large gap between what students' argumentation dialogues and the pragma-dialectical model is not a criticism of that model, since it aims to be both descriptive and normative. Rather, it indicates the necessity for research on collaborative argumentation-based learning to integrate other dimensions of dialogue, beyond the pragmatic and the dialectic, into a coherent theory and model of learning in and by argumentation dialogue. These additional dimensions, discussed below, include the discursive negotiation of meaning, the interactive regulation of emotions and the nature of the interpersonal relation.

3. *Other dimensions that need to be taken into account for arguing to learn*

Pragmatic and dialectical dimensions of students' dialogues are at the heart of collaborative argumentation-based learning. They relate to pragmatic (perlocutionary) effects of argumentation dialogue mentioned above (change in view) in relation to dialectical processes and outcomes, and to learning to engage in such types of interaction (learning of dialectical rules and strategies). But in order to study a broader range of attendant learning processes, five other dimensions need to be considered, as follows.

The *epistemological* dimension refers to the nature of what is being discussed within a particular domain — based on perception in the current situation, on reasoning, having a particular social origin (e.g. what the teacher previously said) — or across specific domains — for example, scientific versus socio-technical domains. It is important in determining how students' attitudes are likely to change ("epistemic entrenchment": Gardenförs, 1988) and the weight that will be given to arguments. In addition, in scientific domains, students have difficulty in achieving coherence (cf. "knowledge in pieces", to use diSessa's, 1988, formulation), whereas with respect to societal issues, value systems and ideologies come into play, in which case, these systems will be more resilient to change and must be considered as wholes.

The *discursive* dimension concerns the ways in which 'work' is done on cognition through language, by the performance of cognitive-linguistic operations (Grize, 1982; Vignaux, 1988) in dialogue. This includes making new conceptual distinctions (argument by dissociation), reformulating, generalising, predicating, inferring, and so on. Interactive pressures relating to verbal conflicts of opinions may particularly stimulate this.

The *dialogical* dimension concerns the interplay of socially inscribed discourse genres, the more or less reformulated expression of what one has already heard (Bakhtine, 1977). Learning in educational dialogue can be seen, at least partially, as the appropriation of, or the articulation between, students' everyday discourse genres and school genres (Wertsch, 1991), such as the very specific genre "argumentative discourse" (e.g. Baker, Bernard & Dumez-Féroc, 2012).

The *interpersonal* dimension refers to the relationship between students, more or less friendly, as well as their different social identities (e.g. male or female) influence the extent to which they can and will deepen verbal conflicts, possibly endangering their relationships (e.g. Kutnick & Kington, 2005).

The *affective* dimension is highly important in the case of argumentative interactions, given the threat to the interpersonal relation imposed by the thematisation of verbal conflicts. Affective regulation will interact with knowledge co-elaboration and the determination of the argumentative outcome (Baker, Andriessen & Järvelä, 2013). Affect enters into the very heart of argumentation, in that the choice of argumentative strategy (direct defense, or else attack the attack?) has been shown, experimentally, to correlate with the extent to which the

attack is perceived as aggressive (Muntig & Turnbull, 1998).

Therefore, in order to understand the full range of types of learning processes and outcomes relating to students' argumentation dialogue, it is necessary to study the relations between the seven dimensions of dialogue described above (pragmatic, dialectical, discursive, epistemological, dialogical, interpersonal and affective). This enables the study, in relation to the ongoing pragma-dialectical process (relating to change in view), of conceptual learning (discursive dimension), broadening of the field of knowledge taken into consideration (epistemological dimension), the appropriation and articulation of school and everyday discourses (dialogical dimension), as well as the influence of the interpersonal relation, with all the affects that will be associated.

The integration of such dimensions into a coherent theoretical approach is, I believe, possible and useful, but would constitute a major research programme. It would require at least the integration of pragma-dialectics with theories of belief revision and cognitive dissonance, theories of discourse, of Bakhtinian dialogism, of interpersonal relations, facework and emotion. But that is what would be required in order to more fully understand the learning potential of engaging in argumentation dialogue.

4. *Conclusion*

In this paper I have discussed the extent to which the normative aspect of pragma-dialectical theory is descriptive with respect to students' argumentation dialogues, and the additional dimensions of dialogue that would need to be integrated with this theory in order to come to a fuller understanding of the learning potential of these types of dialogues. By way of conclusion, I shall mention a few more general considerations on a theoretical level, in terms of the possible marriage between argumentation theory and psychology, beginning with the view from argumentation theory. I propose that argumentation theory has a too restricted view of the psychology to which it could relate: other — discursive, dialogical — psychologies could make a better fit.

The role of psychology in relation to argumentation theory is seen by the "new rhetoric" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958, p. 12: my translation) as follows:

The theory of argumentation, aiming, thanks to discourse, to obtain an efficacious action on minds, could have been treated as a branch of psychology. (…) The

study of argumentation would thus become one of the objects of experimental psychology, where varied argumentations would be tested with varied groups of listeners, sufficiently well known so that one could, on the basis of these experiments, draw conclusions of a certain generality.

This is learning from argument as accepting or acquiring theses by being persuaded by arguments. But as described above, argumentation, whether in discourse or dialogue, can have many more varied effects on speakers, hearers and interlocutors; for example, it can change the way they conceptualise the domain of discourse, or broaden their perspectives on the range of points of view pertaining to a debate, or even enable them to appropriate the discourse genre. In other terms, this vision of the role of psychology in relation to argumentation is too restricted. Turning to pragma-dialectics (Van Eemeren, Groodendorst & Snoeck Henkemans, 1996, pp. 276-277),

[t]he study of argumentation should not concentrate on the psychological dispositions of the people involved in an argumentation, but on their externalized — or externalizable — commitments.

But this vision of argumentation and psychology depends on a view that psychology is only concerned with the 'inner' mental states of individuals. Such a distinction between language and thinking has been largely criticised by philosophers of language (Wittgenstein, 1978, 109e, 339):

[t]hinking is not an incorporeal process which lends life and sense to speaking, and which it would be possible to detach from speaking, rather as the Devil took the shadow of Schlemiehl from the ground.

Some recent psychological theories also call into question such a vision, in considering dialogue itself as a process of collective thinking (e.g. Allwood's, 1997, theory of dialogue as collective thinking; the discursive psychology of Harré and Gillett, 1993; Fernyhough's, 1996, Vygotskian theory of thinking as internalised dialogue; or Lave and Wenger's, 1991, theory of situated cognition and learning). According to these approaches, 'private' thoughts — whilst their existence is intersubjectively undeniable — have nevertheless no role to play in the analysis of thinking in and by dialogue, unless they become intersubjectively known, and influence the course of the dialogue itself. Lapidary statements of this position would be: the thinking is 'in' the dialogue, or even dialogue 'is' collective

thinking. There is therefore no necessity to expel thinking from pragma-dialectics, or to restrict it to direct effects of persuasion. In other terms, the relations between argumentation, dialogue, thinking and learning do not have to be only conceived in terms of the 'outer' as the province of argumentation and the 'inner' being relegated to psychology, because there are psychologies that aim to cross-cut the inner/outer divide.

The analysis of students' argumentation dialogues, integrating the seven dimensions described above, would therefore constitute at the same time an analysis of public, externalised commitment and of the evolution of thinking, learning, as a collective process. This would form the basis for a new *rapprochement* between argumentation theory and psychological theory.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 –

Controversy, Racial Equality, And American World War I, Cemeteries In Europe

Abstract: Approximately two million U.S. soldiers were deployed to the Western Front during WWI. The vast majority of those killed were repatriated to the United States and buried in racially segregated plots. Still, nearly 32,000 remain in U.S. cemeteries in Europe which are not segregated by race. Controversy may arise over the transgression of boundaries and borrow from both discursive and nondiscursive arguments. These integrated cemeteries constitute an argument grounded in materiality against racial segregation.

Keywords: argumentation, American cemeteries, controversy, distribution of the sensible, material argument, nondiscursive argument, Rancière, World War I.

1. *Introduction*

The American Expeditionary Force deployed more than two million U.S. soldiers to the Western Front during World War I. Despite the desire of many to leave the nearly 80,000 American dead in overseas cemeteries, the vast majority were repatriated to the United States at the request of next of kin. Many of them were buried in U.S. national cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery for example, and, following accepted practice, were placed in racially segregated plots. Still, not all were returned and nearly 32,000 remain in eight U.S. cemeteries in Europe (six in France, one in Belgium and one in England). There was one remarkable difference between the cemeteries: Those in the U.S. were racially segregated, while those in Europe were racially integrated.

This essay examines this occurrence as a significant moment in the controversy over racial equality. Goodnight (1991, p.2) notes that controversy may arise over the transgression of boundaries and borrow from a "broad range of both discursive and nondiscursive argument." We contend that the presence of integrated cemeteries in Europe constitutes an oppositional, material argument against the then accepted practice of racial segregation. We also believe that Jacques Rancière's (2004, p. 1) concept of the "distribution of the sensible" offers valuable insights into the function of this nondiscursive argument.

2. *U.S. cemeteries and the "distribution of the sensible"*

Goodnight (1991, p. 2) observed that, "Controversies permeate contemporary life," and, along with Olson (Olson & Goodnight, 1994, p. 249), placed them "at those sites of struggle where arguers criticize and invent alternatives to established social conventions and sanctioned norms of communication." Certainly controversies flourished about American participation in World War I, including whether the United States should even enter the war. But some of the most interesting had to do with the relations between African American and white soldiers, black Americans' role in the military, and the obligations and limitations of citizenship vis-à-vis African American soldiers. African American newspapers routinely reported on, challenging and praising as appropriate, such practices as separate training for African American troops, the replacement of black officers by whites, and the performance of black units such as the highly decorated 93rd Division which was attached to French forces, and so on. Ultimately, approximately 10 percent of the nearly 4 million American men in military service during this period were African American.

Even in the aftermath of the war, racial tensions, quite strong prior to American entry into the War, remained a significant factor as segregation and white supremacy became more strongly entrenched. The military reflected civilian attitudes as a review board at Fort Meade, for instance, denied the request from an African American officer to remain on active duty with the regular army, stating that he was "unqualified by reason of the qualities inherent in the Negro race" and that "Negroes are deficient in moral fiebr [sic], rendering them unfit as officers and leaders of men" (Colored officers and the regular army, 1919, p. 4). Although this ruling was later overruled by the Secretary of War, it nevertheless reflected the broader cultural milieu.

As bodies of U.S. soldiers were repatriated to the United States at the request of their relatives, racial segregation was the norm, even in death. As Francis (2003, p. 222) observed, a cemetery can be viewed "as a 'collective representation', a sacred, symbolic replica of the living community that expressed many of the community's basic beliefs and values." That reflection of contemporary social practices was affirmed in an account of construction plans for the World War I section at Arlington National Cemetery: "At the eastern point the Negro soldiers are to be buried; the graves for the white soldiers begin at the other end of the ground" (Commission of Fine Arts, 1920).

Given these practices, it seems astonishing for the U.S. cemeteries abroad to have been racially integrated and even more so for that decision to have been made by the U.S. Army. At the time of the Armistice in November, 1918 there were approximately 2,400 American burial places in Europe (Smith, 1926). Following repatriation, the remaining soldier dead were concentrated into eight permanent cemeteries. From the beginning, no question existed but that these cemeteries were to fulfill an important function beyond simply the disposal of bodies. The Assistant Secretary of War noted (Hayes, 1920) that,

the work of beautifying them may be pushed forward speedily, in order that they may serve alike as a symbol of the Nation's gratitude to its departed sons and a demonstration to all peoples for all time of America's response to a great threat.

The War Department invited representatives from the Commission of Fine Arts to provide guidance for the beautification of the cemeteries, and the Gold Star Fathers' Association (Bentley, 1922, p. 51) recommended that, suitable objects of art and architecture…be produced…and erected in each of said cemeteries to depict the ideals for which American heroes have fallen and to inspire thereby the people of Europe with the lofty and unselfish purpose of America in waging war on foreign soil.

It is here that Rancière's (Rockhill, 2004, p. 57) notion of the "distribution of the sensible, or the system of divisions and boundaries that define…what is visible and audible within a particular aesthetic-political regime," offers important insights. The U.S. cemeteries constitute an argument about American sacrifice and artistic standards. Their "logic of demonstration is indissolubly an aesthetic of expression" (Rancière, 1999, p. 57). These "artistic practices," as Rancière's notes (2004, p. 13), "are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility." These cemeteries made American sacrifice visible and formed new relationships with European audiences. The fact that they were racially integrated meant that they were able to continue their public diplomacy mission even as charges were leveled during the Cold War about America's racial practices by the Soviet Union. One can only imagine the political embarrassment that would have ensued in the twenty-first century had those cemeteries been segregated.

3. *U.S. cemeteries as material, oppositional argument*

That leads, we believe, to another important function of the overseas cemeteries. They constituted a strong oppositional argument to the practice of racial segregation in American cemeteries and, implicitly, against the cultural practices which sanctioned that segregation. No clear, consistent practice seemed to exist regarding the arrangement of graves in the early, temporary cemeteries. In some, officers and enlisted soldiers were separated as were white and Negro troops. In others, all were buried regardless of rank, race and whether they served honorably or not (United States Senate, 1923). Nevertheless, as concentrations into the permanent cemeteries began, the "question of re-arrangement of the graves was taken up" by the Graves Registration Service (GRS). As the Cemeterial Division in the Office of the Quartermaster General noted in November 1920,

the principle has been laid down by the War Memorials Council and approved by the Secty [sic] of War to the effect that there shall be no segregation of bodies in our permanent cemeteries overseas, on basis of military commission or rank, etc." (Office of the Quartermaster General, 1920).

As Lt. Thomas North (North, n.d., p. 19), ABMC, working with the GRS as permanent cemeteries were being finalized, noted, the remains "were interred without distinction of rank or race according to the regular patterns designed by the landscape architects of the AGRS." In a remarkable silence in the archives, no indication exists as to who made the final decision to integrate the cemeteries, although evidence does indicate that the GRS was diligent in assuring that no identifying markers of race were visible prior to the installation of the permanent headstones of carrara marble. A 1924 memorandum (Canty, 1924) to the caretaker of the Oise-Aisne American cemetery ordered that the inscription on one temporary cross be changed to read "Unknown U.S. Soldier" instead of "Unknown Colored Man."

Equally surprising, given the state of race relations in the United States, was the relative absence of audible controversy surrounding this practice within the domestic public sphere. Congressman Bland (1919, p. 4), from Indiana, did testify before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs that, "White and colored are buried alike, no discrimination having been shown." Even in the Hearings on *Alleged Executions* (United States Senate, 1923, p. 493), Senator Watson attacked the practice of burying the "dishonored" dead, those identified as having died by execution, among those who served honorably, but was notably silent on

the racial question:

Senator Watson. Were the negroes as a rule buried in the same cemetery as the whites?
Capt. Wynne. Yes, sir; they were all soldiers.
Senator Watson. That is all. I have nothing further, Mr. Chairman. (Wynne, 1922, p. 493)

Even the mainstream press (Bodies of men hanged buried beside heroes, 1922, p. 1; Attacks military burials in France, 1922, p. 10) reported the exchange with a focus on those "hanged for 'unmentionable crimes'" while still noting that blacks and whites were buried together, including the remark that "all were soldiers." Years later, protesting the segregated trips at Government expense to Europe for Gold Star Mothers (those who had lost husbands or sons during the war and whose bodies remained in Europe), the Baltimore *Afro-American* (Jim crowing the dead, 1930, p. 1) commented that, "In some French cemeteries Negro troops were buried in segregated areas." It is perhaps that the potential controversy on this issue was too strong to broach in a serious public debate (Splichal, 2006, p. 109).

Even if no audible social controversy existed domestically over the practice of integrating military cemeteries in Europe, the presence of Negro graves buried among their white compatriots nevertheless constituted a powerful oppositional argument to the practice in both civilian and military domestic cemeteries. Olson and Goodnight (1994, p. 252) noted that,

nondiscursive arguments usher into the public realm aspects of life that are hidden away, habitually ignored, or routinely disconnected from public appearance. By rendering these aspects noticeable and comment-worthy, performed arguments expose social conventions as unreflective habits and so revalue human activities.

Just as these cemeteries redefined the "distribution of the sensible" in terms of relations between the United States and the European allies after the War, so, too, did these cemeteries reconstitute the political subject in terms of race relations. Those who created the integrated cemeteries in Europe were, following Rancière (2009a, p. 24), political performers

who have … the peculiar role of inventing arguments and demonstrations – in the

double, logical and aesthetic, senses of the terms – to bring nonrelationship into relationship and to give place to the nonplace. This invention is performed in forms that are not metapolitical 'forms' of a problematic 'content,' but forms of materialization of the people….

Rancière (2010, p. 39) further maintains that,

Political argumentation is at one and the same time the demonstration of a possible world in which the argument could count as an argument, one that is addressed by a subject qualified to argue, over an identified object, to an addressee who is required to see the object and to hear the argument that he [sic] 'normally' has no reason either to see or to hear. It is the construction of a paradoxical world that puts together two separate worlds.

The presence of integrated cemeteries put together two separate worlds creating a different kind of "common sense" where visibility was conferred upon those formerly invisible and where those formerly invisible were now aware of their visibility. The headstones of white and black American soldiers, sharing the same field of honor, demonstrated the possibility "to construct different realities, different forms of common sense – that is to say, different spatiotemporal systems, different communities of words and things, forms and meanings" (Rancière, 2009b, p. 102). These cemeteries, in contrast to Arlington, shift the role of African Americans from those who are visibly marginalized (the invisible?) to those who are equally present with all other American soldiers. The totality of American sacrifice is now visible, not just to Europeans as the War Department intended, but to all Americans including African-Americans. The visible presence of Black soldiers' headstones now integrates them irrefutably into the national narrative. As Kirt Wilson (1995, p. 206) wrote concerning Radical Republicans' account of American history during Reconstruction that included Blacks' role in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War,

They identified the nation and its success with the courage of black soldiers; moreover, they implied a link between the two races. In the radicals' rhetoric, blacks and whites were alike because they shared a history and a loyalty to the United States. Just as both races had red blood, both had shed that blood for the country's sake.

This new "distribution of the sensible" permitted by the cemeteries "help[s]

create the fabric of a common experience in which new modes of constructing common objects and new possibilities of subjective may be developed…." (Rancière, 2010, p. 142).

It creates, in other words, "new configurations between the visible and the invisible, and between the audible and the inaudible, new distributions of space and time – in short, new bodily capacities" (Rancière, 2010, p. 139).

4. *Conclusion*

As Goodnight (2005, p. 27) observed,

The focal issues of a period may shift, but once initiated controversies do not so much die out as become dormant, only to reappear in more virulent form later, when small changes unsettle the balances of well-known paths of argument….

The absence of overt public controversy over domestic segregated military cemeteries during the inter-War period came to an abrupt conclusion when then the War Department was planning for the repatriation of African American soldiers from World War II. As *The Chicago Defender* (War department continues segregation, 1947, p. 10) reported, the Quartermaster General's Office ordered that, "Present regulations, procedures and policies pertaining to segregation of grave sites in national cemeteries will be continued." Those policies required that separate sections would be developed for white officers, black officers, white enlisted men, and black enlisted men, according to the Baltimore *Afro-American* (Burial rule changed by war department, 1947, p. 12). Following a national uproar within the African American community and protests to the War Department, Secretary of War Robert Patterson overturned the Quartermaster General's office. He directed that

no distinction be made between the location of graves of officers in new sections of national cemeteries. The policy of providing uniform burial facilities without distinction as to rank or race of deceased veterans will be effected progressively as new sections are laid out" (Army drops caste system in cemeteries, 1947, p. 5).

Although it would still take more than a decade before the Department of Defense implemented the policy fully (MacGregor, 1981, n.p.), the "common sense" of racial equality seemed a bit more plausible than when the overseas cemeteries were integrated immediately after World War I. The argument forwarded by those

cemeteries, however, showed the possibilities of new and different relations between political subjects and citizens – a new distribution of the sensible.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 – Interpersonal Argumentation Through The Context Of Distributed Cognition: The Case Of Christian Sermon

Abstract: According to the biocognitive paradigm, communication is joint activity aimed at creating a consensual domain of interactions, including linguistic interactions. Applying this approach to the study of interpersonal argumentation gives an opportunity to view language in communication as a part of social and physical environment. The most important component of this environment is socially and subjectively conditioned values, patterns of social behavior. We argue that the aforesaid component is an implicit constituent element of persuasion.

Keywords: Communication, the Coordinative Function of Language, Distributed Cognition, Ethos, Strategic Maneuvering, Topos.

1. *Background*

In a vast literature argumentation is considered as a rationally organized type of discourse. Primarily, it is analyzed from the point of view of the persuasive function of argumentative speech. Secondly, it is often seen as a means to resolve a difference of opinion. For the present purposes, the notable feature of argumentation is that it is seen as verbal and social activity, or behavior. In this regard, issues focusing on speech communication seem very promising as a way to tackle such problems in the study of argumentation as the production and interpretation of argumentative speech, its understanding, the problem of

context, individual argumentative competence. However, despite the wealth of literature on argumentation studies, scholars specializing in speech communication don't often seem to be working "from a clear and common perspective" (Eemeren, 1996, p. 191). So, the aim of this paper is (1) to introduce a new approach to linguistic research in argumentative interactions which is closely connected with communicative and cognitive science, and (2) present a method of analysis illustrated by examples of arguments from the Bible.

2. *Three generations of cognitive science*

Application of a cognitive approach to argumentation theory requires some justification. Even though speech act theory, Gricean theory, conversation analysis, discourse analysis are firmly established and well-known frameworks, they can hardly be described as cutting-edge, especially after the cognitive turn in linguistics circa 1990. Thus, accepting the linguistic component and using appropriate methodology, argumentation theory should take working of language science. One can speak of three generations of cognitive science (Howard, 2004; Kravchenko, 2009a; 2009b; Steffensen, 2012) in the context of its impact on linguistics.

The first generation is characterized as the cognitive science of the "Disembodied and Unimaginative Mind". That is a research program pursued in classical artificial intelligence and generative linguistics which draws its descriptive apparatus from set theory and logic (Howard, 2004, xii). According to this program language is a fixed system of symbols, or a code in which "every sign form expresses a certain meaning (or a set of related meanings) attached to it" (Kravchenko, 2008, p. 54).

The second generation is characterized as the cognitive science of the "Embodied and Imaginative Mind". It rejects set theory and logic to pursue putatively non-mathematical formalisms like prototype theory, image schema, and conceptual metaphor (Howard, 2004, xii). Language in second generation cognitive science is understood as a kind of cognitive activity (such as one individual speaking to another) that arises from mental processes. In this regard sender`s utterances trigger neural happenings in rescepient`s brain (with Steffensen (2012) expression).

Generally, a cognitive approach to the study of argumentation focuses on the nature of argumentation mechanisms causing the change in the mental state of

the addressee of the argumentative message. Hample (1985) proposes to focus on the cognitive dimension of argument – the mental process by which arguments occur within people. According to Sergeev (1987), a system of arguments is the product of mental activity of a subject of conviction expressed by the language of inner representations. Baranov (1990) provides a detailed description of argumentation interaction as a process of knowledge acquisition using the "computer metaphor" and analyzes the possibility of changing the mental state of an addressee by means of "natural language argumentation". Likewise, Briushinkin (2009) treats argumentation as mental action intended to change the "world model" of the addressee. There are researches devoted to cognitive models of conscious and various cognitive procedures formalization. Oswald (2007) analyzes the problem of interpretation of an argumentative message, showing the inadequacy of Speech Act Theory suggesting that some module of meaning construction be construed. Korb, McConachy and Zukerman (1997) attempt to build a "cognitive model of argumentation" based on probabilistic modeling of natural reasoning.

The presented researches emphasize the common feature of the first two generations in cognitive science. That is described by Kravchenko (Kravchenko, 2009b, p. 103) tendency to consider cognitive ability with the connection of mental activity only within the heads of individuals, or at least, within their bodies ("internalist account"). The function of language in this view is to transfer messages (thoughts, meanings, intentions) from sender to receiver, which are input-output systems (the "conduit metaphor"). On this view communication is a process in which one expresses what one thinks or feels so that others can know what one thinks or feels, thus, meaning is seen as a function or translation of expression. This viewpoint is seriously criticized in contemporary research as invalidating many linguistic models. O`Reilly and Munakata (2000, p.14) associate this approach with "introspections into conscious aspects of human cognition" which are proverbial "tip of the iceberg floating above the waterline, while the great mass of cognition that makes all of this possible floats below, relatively inaccessible to our conscious introspections".

The Third Generation of cognitive science ("The imaged and simulated brain" in terms of Howard) influenced by biological theory of cognition (Maturana, 1970) has emerged in recent years. Unlike its two predecessors, this direction treats cognition as integrated processes that take place, not only in the human brain, or

body, but also in its extracorporeal environment. As such, social aspect of cognition is important. Proponents of this wave of cognitive science deny that language is a tool or symbolic code for the transfer of thoughts, rather they emphasize its embodiment and co-actionality: “concrete bodily actions, whether it involves the visible parts of the body (gestures), the invisible but not inaudible parts (voice), or the extra-bodily environmental resources” (Steffensen, 2012, p. 514). Communication, to use the terminology of the biologically oriented paradigm for the study of cognition and language (Maturana, 1980; Clark, 1997; Kravchenko, 2008; 2012), is not exchange of information; rather, it is joint activity aimed at creating a consensual domain of interactions, including linguistic interactions or orienting behavior (the “dancing metaphor”). Maturana`s concept of languaging, (Maturana, 1987) as a consensual domain of interactions emphasizes that the most important function of language is coordination.

There are publications which can be considered as contribution to the cognitive approach for the study of argumentation from the third wave of cognitive science perspective. Gilbert coins the notion “interpersonal argumentation” (Gilbert, 1997; 2003). Even though the researcher doesn`t distinguish his understanding of argumentation as cognitive related, as will be shown later, Gilbertian approach allows us to examine arguments from the abovementioned viewpoint.

Guillem (2009) examines socio-cognitive aspects of argumentative communication and raises the issue of inequality of written and oral communication. According to the author “the fact that arguing can be equated to reasoning, therefore, does not mean that it is a purely internal process that takes place within the individuals’ minds and thus cannot be observed”. As explained by Guillem, such forms of “social cognition” as shared attitudes, ideologies, norms and values are crucial from the point of view of their influence on forming arguments and their perception (Guillem, 2009, p.730).

Kolmogorova (2013) explores semiotic basis of interpersonal argumentation. The author detects three levels of its objectification on the base of empirical material – “cognitive-linguistic argumentation”, “social-speech argumentation”, and “personal argumentation” (Kolmogorova, 2013, p. 124).

Cognitive mechanism of counterargumentation in the sphere of mediation practice with applying methodological principles of social autopoesis is offered by Barebina (2013).

3. *Distributed cognition and interpersonal argumentation*

Biological theory of cognition is attended by many scientific directions such as synergetics, autopoesis conception, social systems theory, biolinguistics, biosemiotics, and distributed cognition theory.

Researchers of distributed cognition (Hutchins, 1995; 2001; Cowley, 2009) argue that cognitive processes are extended through material artifacts, social interaction and are distributed across time and space, allowing humans to coordinate their interactional behavior in their cognitive niches on the cultural, historical and time scales. Thus, the distributed language view focuses on language as a key aspect of social (dialogical) activity distributed over different time scales. It is a framework that involves the coordination between individuals, artifacts and the environment.

Gilbert suggested the name *interpersonal argumentation* for the hybrid approach under discussion for studying all aspects of social influence in verbal interactions. He demonstrates that "a narrow understanding of argument as necessarily linguistically explicable is incorrect", thus, "argument must be understood as a broad and open practice" (Gilbert, 2003). The notion of interpersonal argumentation refers to arguments which are considered as not isolated statements, but representations of human attitudes, emotions, beliefs, intuitions as opposed to construing arguments as autonomous sets of assumptions and premises. The suggestion that several components – "emotional, visceral (physical) and kisceral (intuitive)" – are vital to argumentative communication because they affect both arguments and results allows us to analyze interpersonal argumentation as a phenomenon closely related to distributed cognition.

Applying this approach to the study of interpersonal argumentation gives an opportunity to view language in communication as part of the social and physical environment. This environment refers to various artifacts, gestures, audible and visual signals, graphics, symbols of computer technologies. All these constitute the environment of modern human being. The most important component of this environment is socially and subjectively conditioned values, patterns of social behavior, stereotypes which are distributed across the members of a social group in space and time. We argue that the aforesaid component is an implicit constituent element of persuasion which can be investigated through the category of "topos" as a part of argumentative discourse.

4. *Method of analysis*

The concept of strategic maneuvering as the subject of substantial and systematic theoretical research offers a method of analyzing how the arguer's tries to reconcile aiming for the most beneficial effect with being reasonable (Eemeren, 2010; Rees, 2009; Zarefsky, 2008). As stated in (Eemeren, 2010, p. 93) "*strategic maneuvering always manifests itself in argumentative practice*" (emphasis added – B.N.) in the form of choice on three levels: the choice from the available "topical potential", adaptation to "audience demand", and the use of "presentational devices".

The suggestion that the framework of topos is structured by modi of logos, ethos and pathos in the practice of interaction within a particular communicative context as a social system and realized in most cases by the language use allows us to analyze interpersonal argumentation from the viewpoint of distributed cognition. The implicit structure forming the category of topos as a basis of argumentative behavior corresponds with the three fundamental characteristics of distributed cognition identified by Hutchings (Hutchins, 2001)cognition is

1. distributed across the members of a social group,
2. involves coordination between internal and external (material or environmental) structures,
3. distributed through time in such a way that the products of earlier events can transform the nature of related events.

This understanding of argumentative speech through the concept of distributed cognition may be illustrated using arguments from the Bible. The Bible is frequently interpreted as "the Infallible Word of God" which is spread in the Christian society. The assumption that the Bible is a gospel message, transformed by people many times allows to consider this book as both: ideal and material cognitive artifact. This is an artifact of a special kind. It is unique because it has cultural models, ethic norms, patterns and schemes of behavior, images and scenarios that are socially and subjectively significant. The Bible is a part of the human socio-cultural environment. By stating this, we mean that a great amount of topoi from the Scripture is widely represented in such lexical and phraseological units of the language as proverbs, interjections, quotes, catch phrases, names, and historical places. Here are some examples:

(1) *Spare the rod and spoil the child* («Those who withhold the rod hate their children, but the one who loves them applies discipline» (Proverbs 13:24));

(2) *As you sow so shall you mow* («Don't be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap» (Galatians 6:7));

(3) *…by sweat of one`s brow* (By the sweat of your face will you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken…" (Genesis 3:19));

(4) *Golgotha* («Carrying his cross by Himself, He went out to a place called Skull Place (in Aramaic, Golgotha)» (John 19:16-18));

(5) *…a prophet without honour* («A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his own house (Matthew 13:57)).

Bibleisms from the Gospel are constantly used in speech, in literature, in headings of articles and book titles, as well as in politicians` performance. Scriptural symbols, images of Jesus, pectoral crosses, ikons, and gestures were and are also part of everyday life. This internal structure (in Hutchin`s terms) can be described as an experience of inner communication with the Bible which is different for each person. Thus, we can investigate the second type of distributed cognition – the coordination between external and internal structures. The Biblical subjects can be considered as a corpus of topoi which have their spatial and temporal scale. Using the Biblical word, the arguer can appeal to ethical standards, traditions, code contained in the ethos of the Bible as a part of the topos. It gives an opportunity to effect the addressee through appealing to authority of the Bible (using authoritative arguments in classical taxonomy). Intellectual, semantic, historical component potentiates various strategies of argumentation.

The conception of strategic maneuvering enables us to analyze how the arguer uses the topical potential of the Bible and its presentational devices (direct quotation, lexical and phraseological units) to reach the most satisfactory outcome of argumentative speech.

The result of argumentative speech depends on how the field of audience interaction with the Bible is formed. Arguments from the Bible addressed to an audience of mixed religious beliefs (non Cristians and non believers), are somewhat able to affect it. As shown above, the domain of interaction with the biblical texts to a greater or lesser extent, has been formed as part of the human social environment. However, such arguments can be considered as a guide to action for deeply religious people, and they believe that "the Word of God"

changes human way of thinking.

We will analyze the argumentative passage of Christian sermon “When Hope Is Dead, Hope On!”. The author William E. Sangster was one of the great British Methodist preachers of the 20th century. This message was preached for the British people during the most difficult periods of the World War II.

(6)
Many people think of hope as a poor, precarious thing, an illusion, a vanity, a disease of the mind. The cynic has said, “He, who lives on hope, will die starving”. Cowly said, “Hope is the most hopeless thing of all”. The soldier is apt to turn bright promises aside with a despondent question, “What hopes?”. Schopenhauer, the
distinguished German philosopher, looked upon hope as the bait by which nature gets her hook in our nose, and makes it serve her interests, though they may not be our own. That is the common assessment of hope in the world – a poor, vain, deceptive thing.
But hope is not so thought of in the New Testament. Paul makes Faith, Hope, and Love the cardinal virtues of Christendom. “And now abideth faith, hope, love”. He speaks also of “the patience of hope” and of “hope that maketh not ashamed”. All through the New Testament, hope is spoken of in that same high way. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews bursts out into that daring paradox, “A hope both sure and steadfast”.
Now, how did this sharp contrast arise? An illusion: a steadfast reality. A dream: a fact. A disease of the mind: a cardinal virtue. Hope cannot be both. Is the world right, or the New Testament? Is it a bit of folly or is it precious beyond price? What is the solution of the dilemma?
The answer is not difficult. They are talking of different things. There is a higher and a lower hope. There is a genuine quality and a counterfeit. There is a real article and a substitute. There is gold and there is gilt. Let us look at each of them in turn…
(http://www.newsforchristians.com/classics.html)

In accordance with the chosen method of analysis we will show how the arguer strategically uses the topical potential, adapts his message to the views and preferences of the audience and exploits some presentational devices. Analytically, four stages can be distinguished both in an argumentative dialogue and a monologic message. The presented passage is a confrontation stage in

which a difference of opinion manifests itself through an opposition between one or more standpoints.

4.1. *Strategic maneuvering evaluating*
From the available topical potential the arguer selects the most appropriate topos for the audience under the circumstances which is connected with the theme of hope.

One of the presentational devices is an antithesis arising from contraposition of two opponents opposing (*World* and *New Testament*) in regard to how hope should be understood. The author forms a kind of argumentative dialogue (lines 1-14) between the first side members (*people, cinic, soldier, scientists*) and the second one (*Apostle Paul, the text of New Testament, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews*). Among the other presentational device one can note a hypothetical question and the antithesis on the phrasal level (line 4-18).

The statements from the first group are put forward as arguments (line 1-4) for better adapting the chosen topos, while the arguer mentions an entire audience, each member of which can be the author of these statements. A slight shift towards rhetorical aim is being traced, that is, strategic maneuvering in regard to the position of this party, known as "Hasty Generalization" fallacy. Dialectically it is not correct to posit that "*the common assessment of hope in the world*" as "*a poor, vain, deceptive thing*" based on the opinions of people listed is totally accepted. However, in accordance with the objectives of the article, it is more interesting for us to analyze the strategic use of topical potential of the sermon. The theme chosen by Sangster rather presupposes an appeal to emotions and intuition (ethos) than to logic (logos). It is known that there are several hundred topoi in the Bible related to the theme of hope These topoi are a kind of figures of scenes with their spatial and temporal scales. This allows the author, by quoting from the Scripture, to expand the topical potential of the sermon so as to form a series of disagreements between the two groups («*An illusion: a steadfast reality. A dream: a fact. A disease of the mind: a cardinal virtue*») and perform the aim of argumentative message at the given stage.

Obviously, the purpose of the whole speech is to convince the audience to think and act in a certain way and also to renew and strengthen their faith.

Realization of the third principle of the distributed cognition phenomenon, when

earlier events, mentioned in the Books of the Scripture affect the subsequent events in people`s life, is clearly seen using this example.

5. *Conclusion*

Going back to the purposes of the article, we claim that the presented approach still requires a thorough scientific reflection. However, we can say that it opens a new vista of argumentation study in the aspect of communication. For instance, the biocognitive paradigm and in particular the theory of distributed cognition offers an alternative to transmission model of communication and dissolves the traditional divisions between the inside/outside boundary of the individual and the socium/cognition distinction.

An important conclusion is the fact that the fields of argumentation studies and communication studies have much to gain from one another. The biocognitive theory and its accompanying research areas have strong explanatory potential in explaining the issues in the argumentative communication functioning in various fields of human activities. The argumentative discourse by virtue of its tough addressing presents a fruitful ground for investigation the language orienting function.

We argue that *ethos,* which is realized in the socially and subjectively conditioned values, shared by members of a community, patterns of behavior, some stereotypes, images while being one of the constituent of the category *topos*, is also an implicit component of persuasion in interpersonal argumentation.

It is noteworthy that the concept of strategic maneuvering, which postulates that in the argumentative discourse the arguer`s goal – to win the debate, to convince the audience is always traced, confirms the conclusion of even a radical variant of biocognitive theory concerning the adaptive function of language.

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