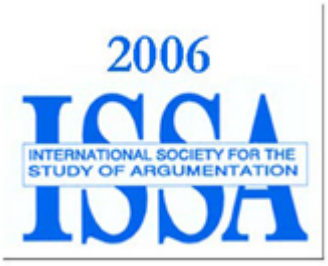
ISSA Proceedings 2006 – A Bottom-Up Approach To Argument Schemes: The Case Of Comparative Argument



The question of the internal structure of argumentation and the identification of the various argument schemes constitutes a central stake for argumentation studies. Analyzing argumentation requires that the analyst adopts a somewhat acrobatic but necessary median position in order to place himself at an intermediate level, between the "letter" of the argumentation (its very content, which is proper to a specific (text/discourse) and its "logical" structure (its possible translation into a general logical scheme, which misses most of the substance of the argumentation).

Distributing the various arguments we may be confronted to into general schemes, according to the nature of the relation which links the argument to the conclusion allows to distance oneself from the literal and specific content of an argumentative discourse in order to gain in abstraction. It then becomes possible to compare various argumentative speeches, dealing with various subject matters, but susceptible to mobilize argumentative strategies resorting to similar configurations of argument schemes.

Nevertheless, at the moment, researchers in the field of argumentation studies, and maybe in particular in the French-speaking sphere, have no systematic, coherent typology of argument schemes at their disposal.

The reference typologies are mostly directly inspired by that proposed by C. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca. Their classification may be of great help because of the variety of the argument schemes it comprises (and because of the associated definitions), but it is weakened by a lack of coherence in the proposed classification criteria and therefore, by the heterogeneousness of the categories considered as argument schemes. Beyond these theoretical difficulties, the application of the model – trying to identify argument schemes used by arguers in everyday discussions – is far from being simple.

This paper will focus on a broad group of arguments defined by the fact that they

are based on a comparison process. More precisely, on the basis of a similarity between two cases, such arguments focus on a characteristic of the case which constitutes the *analogue,* or the *source,* or *phoros* of the comparison, and extend it to the second case, which constitutes the *primary subject*, or *thema*, or *target,* of the argumentation.
In order to avoid the trap mentioned by Christian Plantin, who claims that "any proposition of synthesis of existing typologies finally results in an additional typology" (2005, p. 50), this paper will be limited to a non-exhaustive inventory of several parameters identified in various academic works, parameters which permit a sub-categorization of arguments based on a comparison.
Considering that an argument scheme is associated with a set of specific critical questions, we will test the relevance of such a sub-classification of comparative arguments for ordinary arguers. We will then investigate whether speakers, when engaged in an argumentative discussion, use "wide-spectrum" refutation strategies in order to counter an opponent's comparison, or whether they use specific refutation strategies according to the sub-type they are confronted with.

1. *Sub-classifications within comparative arguments.*
1.1.A first distinctive feature which introduces a sub-classification in the group of arguments based on a comparison opposes:
– comparisons which parallel situations or cases issued from two heterogeneous domains of knowledge (see, for instance, a beautiful example from C.S. Lewis, quoted by Govier (2001, p.350-351):
"You can get a large audience together for a strip-tease act – that is, to watch a girl undress on stage. Now suppose you came to a country where you could fill a theatre simply by bringing a covered plate onto the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let everyone see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food?)":
– to comparisons which parallel situations from the same domain of knowledge (most of the comparisons of the *a pari* type seem to belong this category ; see the example quoted by Garssen (1994, p.106):
"You should give Miriam an expensive birthday present, because on Alice's birthday you also gave her an expensive present".

For some authors, observing the homogeneity or the heterogeneity of the domains of knowledge involved in the comparison allows the introduction of subtypes

within the major type of "comparative arguments"; see for instance Snoeck-Henkemans 2003, who opposes *figurative* comparison and *literal* comparison on this criterion. But it may be given a more decisive importance, for instance by Perelman, who thus supports his distinction between comparison arguments (which he defines as a subtype of quasi-logic arguments) and arguments by analogy (a subtype of arguments establishing the structure of reality; see Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1988).
Although intuitively acceptable, in practice, the line between these two types of comparative arguments is often quite hard to draw. Maybe the distinction would be more adequately thought of as a gradual one, from arguments of comparison that bring together two cases from overlapping domains of reference, to arguments of comparison implying cases issued from maximally distant areas, with intermediate cases between these two extremes (for instance, when a comparison involves two situations within the same cultural area but temporally distant from one another – as in arguments from the precedent).

The first case of arguments by comparison (when the reference areas overlap) is very close to argumentation by example, who may even be considered by some authors as belonging to the comparative argument schemes. For instance, for Plantin (1996, p.50), "Inductive argumentation analogically generalizes to all cases an observation drawn from a few cases". Similarly, Amossy (2006), following Aristotle, equates argumentation by example and analogy (for instance, one chapter from her book *L'argumentation dans le discours* is entitled: "L'exemple, ou la preuve par l'analogie"). The same could be said of Schellens (1985) classification of argument schemes**[i]**.
On the contrary, authors like Perelman (who holds argumentation by example to be another subtype within the arguments establishing the structure of reality; see Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1988), or like Govier (2001), or Kienpointner (who considers inductive arguments as belonging to the warrant-establishing argument schemes; see Kienpointner 1992), clearly distinguish between comparative arguments and arguments by example (the same could be said of the pragma-dialectical classification of argument schemes, according to which arguments from example belong to the symptomatic type).

1.2. Qualitative/quantitative comparison: another way of differentiating comparative arguments consists in opposing comparisons based on quantitative considerations (*A is as p as B /A is more p or less p than B*) and comparisons

based on qualitative considerations (*A is like B*). For Perelman, qualitative comparisons are typical of what he calls "arguments by comparison", as opposed to arguments by analogy" – that is, he tends to merge the first and the second criteria. He justifies that he considers comparison as a quasi-logic process as follows:
"By saying "his cheeks are red like apples" or "Paris has three times as many inhabitants as Brussels", or "He is more beautiful than Adonis", we compare realities in a way which seems more likely to be proved than a mere resemblance or analogy claim. This feeling is due to the underlying idea of measurement behind these utterances, even if the slightest criterion for proceeding to this measurement is lacking. In this sense, comparison arguments are quasi-logic arguments." (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1988, p.326; the translation is ours)
We assume that criterions (1) and (2), though often associated, should be distinguished, for a figurative comparison may be grounded on quantitative considerations – and conversely.

1.3. A third criterion within comparative arguments relates to the epistemic status of the compared cases: the analogy may involve two real facts, or a real fact and a hypothetical, invented one. As Govier (2001) points out, the fictitious nature of the analogue is acceptable because its first quality is not its veracity, but rather the fact of being consensually evaluated – be it positively or negatively – by the audience. Thus she opposes *inductive* analogies and *a priori* analogies, that is, analogies that are not empirically based. Once again, criterion 2 and criterion 3 are linked: quantitative comparisons usually make sense if both elements of the comparisons are hold to be true. Note that the epistemic status of the compared cases may be relevant in some qualitative comparisons: this is the reason why we consider the last two criterions separately.

1.4. A fourth opposition within comparison arguments distinguishes between those assuming an essentially positive function (i.e., supporting one of the arguer's standpoints) and comparison arguments assuming an essentially negative function (i.e. rebutting the adversary's argument). The negative use of analogy has been labelled "rebuttal analogy", or "refutation by logical analogy", which is, as per Govier (2001, p.357), an analogy which is designed to refute the opponent's argument by showing that it is parallel to a second argument in which a comparable premise leads to a clearly unacceptable conclusion. The refutation by logical analogy may be seen as a subtype of the *ad absurdum* argument (see

Eggs 1992, for example).
Some additional oppositions permit characterization of other subtypes within comparative arguments. For instance, as Declercq (1992, p.108-109) points out, when the comparative argument has a narrative form, it may consist in a parable or a fable. When the comparison is aimed emphasizing the differences rather than the similarities between two cases, it may result in an *a contrario* argument; if it is based on a double hierarchy, according to Perelman, it becomes a argument *a fortiori.* This paper will focus on the first three criterions only.

2. *The evaluation of comparative arguments by ordinary speakers*
Let us now turn to the question of the evaluation of comparative arguments by ordinary speakers. When engaged in an argumentative discussion, the rebuttal strategies used by arguers in order to challenge the opponent's arguments are precious indicators of the argumentative norms they adhere to, and of their awareness of the various argument schemes involved in the argumentative process.
According to Eemeren, Grootendorst and Snoeck Henkemans (2002), the main critical question to ask about argumentation based on analogy is:
"Are there any significant differences between Z and X? Such differences can be pointed out in two ways: by claiming that Z has a certain characteristic that X does not have, or vice versa. Both forms of criticism are serious charges because basing argumentation on a relation of analogy assumes that X and Z share *all* characteristics relevant to the argument." (p.99-100)

This critical question guides most of the general refutations of comparative arguments, directly – by pointing out the differences presented as essential between the compared cases, or indirectly – by proposing a counter-analogy presented as more conclusive than the opponent's one because of its better adequacy to the target.
Nevertheless, these general strategies of refutation of comparative arguments (beyond wide-spectrum refutation devices such as the French very common injunction "il faut comparer ce qui est comparable") may take different forms according to the subtype of comparative argument involved in the discussion.
As far as the epistemic status of the comparison elements is concerned, one may expect that it entails specific modes of evaluation in an argumentative discussion. As Govier (2001) puts it, "Some aspects of inductive analogies [that is, analogies that are empirically grounded] make their evaluation different. The most obvious

of these is that in the inductive analogy, the analogue must describe something real, and the quoted facts must be genuine. Imaginary examples are fine for a priori analogies, but not for inductive ones. The similarities on which inductive analogies are based are between empirical aspects of the primary subject and the analogue. We cannot determine the extent of the similarity merely by reflecting on structural features, as we can for a priori analogies.' (…) Another significant fact about inductive analogies is that the cumulative effect of similarities is an important factor. In an a priori analogy, what is important is that the similarities relevant to the conclusion hold. If they do, it does not matter whether there are many further similarities or none at all. But in the inductive analogy, the sheer number//of similarities does matter. The closer the two cases, in detail, the more likely it is that the inferred conclusion will be true. This means that the evaluation of inductive analogies depends more on factual background knowledge than does the evaluation of a priori analogie" (p.370-371).

The importance of factual background knowledge is illustrated in the following example, where the author challenges the parallel drawn by a participant in a newsgroup between the US embargoes on Iraq and on Cuba.

(1)
Newsgroup: soc.culture.belgium
Certainly not, the embargo that strikes Iraq, associated with an intensive bombing, is in no way comparable to the embargo endured by Cuba, neither in its historical conditions, nor in its field of application.
(…)
Comparing the embargo on Iraq with the embargo on Cuba is a nonsense, they are essentially different.
Embargo on Cuba is an economic embargo imposed by the United States since 1960 and Cuba, member of the COMECON until 1989 has always traded more or less freely with the USSR and other Comecon members plus China. As a symbol of the communist resistance to the American imperialism Cuba was even very generously supported by USSR. The harder period for Cuba was the end of the soviet era in 1989 but since Castro decided to open the economy at the beginning of the 90s, the European Union started investing in and trading with Cuba. In 2001 Cuba welcomed over 2 millions tourists and Cuba was the first South America country to use Euro as a trading money with the EU countries. So please, try to compare what can be!

In this message, the comparison between the embargo on Cuba and the embargo on Iraq is challenged based on a detailed analysis of the historical context of the embargo on Cuba. The difference with the embargo on Iraq is not explicitly stated but the addressee is expected to infer it owing to his knowledge of its historical context.
The same observation can be made for quantitative comparisons, the refutation of which may focus on the balance between similarities and differences between the terms of the comparison, or on the accuracy of the quantitative data.
Let's now turn to the question of the homogeneity versus heterogeneity of the areas involved in the comparison.
Confronted with comparative arguments which parallel cases issued from highly heterogeneous domains of knowledge, the refutation cannot relevantly focus on factual differences between the compared cases, nor on the degree of proximity between them. On the other hand, the refutation may rather focus on what Perelman calls the "interaction" between the *phoros* and the *thema* provoked by the comparison. Besides the characteristic of the phoros that is meant to be transferred onto the thema, a phenomenon of contagion may be observed between other features of the phoros which extend to the thema of the argumentation (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1988, p.508).

Such an interaction can be subject to criticism, as illustrated by the following message, in which the author criticizes a comparison made by French politicians between students engaged in a protest movement and toothpaste (that is, between unquestionably heterogeneous elements). The comparison is the following:
"Students are like toothpaste: once out from the tube, there is no getting them back".

The comparison is criticized in a post on a political Internet newsgroup as follows: (2)
Newsgroup: fr.education.divers, fr.soc.politique
No need to be a qualified teacher in literature to realize that the image is not trivial, but clearly insulting. The compared term (students, a human population hence a priori worthy of respect) and the comparing term (toothpaste) are merged owing to a shared sordid characteristic: their alleged capacity of escaping in an uncontrolled flood which cannot be contained. Given the -established – level zero of consciousness of toothpaste, the students protest movement would be, as

toothpaste is, submitted to obscure physical laws, whose only 'raison d'être' (like the law of the slice of bread and butter that always falls on the bad side) is to cause maximum trouble to the Minister.
The comparison between students and toothpaste is denounced as activating more than the alleged shared characteristic (the fact that both are 'impossible to contain'): these additional features are 'the lack of consciousness' and the obedience to physical laws oriented towards causing maximal trouble to the environment. Thus the criticized comparison is seen as revealing a highly negative perception of the students' protest movement.
Here, the type of criticism of the comparison used in example 1 would make no sense, since from a factual point of view, there is no doubt that students differ very much from tooth paste.

As a conclusion, it seems quite hazardous to try and systematically match a specific evaluation device with each subtype of comparative argument. We would rather assume that the criticism of a comparative argument is likely to take specific forms if one considers very distant subtypes of comparative arguments, as in examples 1 and 2; the extreme poles of the opposition being a priori qualitative figurative comparative arguments, as opposed to quantitative, literal, inductive comparative arguments.
We will conclude with the observation that comparative arguments of the latter type, in polemical contexts, often elicit criticisms which require an ever-increasing degree of factual similarity between the compared elements. Such a criticism, in the end, may result in an outright rejection of comparison as an argument, on the ground that, following the French expression, "comparaison n'est pas raison", for comparative arguments always involves some kind of shift, which makes them specifically vulnerable to refutation.

NOTES

[i] According to Kienpointner, 'Les arguments peuvent-ils faire l'objet d'une classification exhaustive? Sur la complétude des typologies d'argument' (Conference on 'Structures argumentatives et types d'arguments', Paris, May, 26th, 2006).

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ISSA Proceedings 2006 – Argumentation And Education: Preparing Citizens In Cultures Of Democratic Communication

In classical democracy, John Quincy Adams once declared, "eloquence was POWER." Adams believed that eloquence had been dormant since Cicero until the American Revolution, when the rebirth of freedom and democracy "fostered the reinvigoration of the lost art of political eloquence" (Gustafson, pp. xiii-xiv). In his "inaugural address as the first Boylston Chair of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard University" in 1805 (Gustafson, p. xiii), Adams stressed the centrality of rational discursive processes to republican government: "Under governments purely republican, where every citizen has a deep interest in the affairs of the nation, and, in some form of public assembly or other, has the means and opportunity of delivering his opinion, and of communicating his sentiments by speech; where government itself has no arms but those of persuasion; where prejudice has not yet acquired an uncontroled (sic) ascendancy, and faction is yet confined within the barriers of peace; the voice of eloquence will not be heard in vain" (Adams, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*, pp. 30-31; qtd. in Gustafson, p. xiii).

Adams was speaking directly of rhetoric in ancient Athens and of rhetoric's importance in the new American republic; however, his insight is applicable to democracies in general: governance of the people, for the people, by the people is attainable only through rhetorical arts and skills. Public deliberation about choices of future actions, judgments of past actions, and commemorations of moments of public unity or renewal occur under conditions of uncertainty, where determinations are at best probable. Throughout history, flourishing democracy and robust public argumentation and rhetoric have been cognates: they share the same essence and sustain each other in the give-and-take of public deliberation. Together they forge what we have termed "cultures of democratic communication." Open societies have been hallmarks of public deliberative disputation; conversely, closed societies have stifled both public deliberation and rhetorical training.

Although advocacy skills have been and remain essential for citizens in democracies, modern republican forms of democracy typically cast most citizens in the role of argument critics, evaluating the public deliberations and expressing judgment through candidate, party, or proposition choice. Skills in both advocacy and critical evaluation are therefore important requisites for citizens in a democratic culture, and consequently development of such skills should be important components of educational objectives in democracies. Writing of his

experiences as President of the Sierra Club, J. Robert Cox noted:

Without the ability to challenge misleading claims, reasoning, or bias in the testimony of special interests, green advocates would lose meaningful opportunities to hold elected officials accountable or to expose potentially harmful practices to the wider public. The ability to demand "good reasons" or to question the credibility of political leaders or industry lobbyists' claims often have been the only means which public interest advocates have for the redress of environmental degradation. (p. 82)

In this paper, we argue,

1. democratic governance and free, open deliberative rhetoric are co-dependent;
2. argumentation skills (advocacy, analysis, criticism) are not naturally occurring phenomena, and certainly not in large population aggregates;
3. systematic inclusion of argumentation and criticism in educational curricula can further the growth of a culture of democratic communication in all democracies.

Specifically, we will argue for an "argumentational approach" to education that incorporates concerns with justification, evidence, and reasoning across specific disciplinary boundaries.

1. *Democracy and deliberative rhetoric are co-dependent*

If rhetoric is considered, as Weaver puts it, "in the whole conspectus of its function" (pp. 1354-1355), then we view phrases such as "rhetorical democracy" (see Hauser) as redundant: rhetoric and democracy are innately cognates. It is only when rhetoric is shorn of aspects of its function, such as invention or its deliberative dimension, that it survives in truncated form in a non-democratic, closed political system. It regains its full vitality, or at least the potential for its full vitality, when the system is again open, when the citizens have the freedom to participate in their own self-governance in meaningful ways. Hauser identifies two communication requisites for such 'openness': what he terms the "principle of publicity and the principle of free speech":

The publicity principle holds that a society has the right to assess all relevant information and viewpoints on public problems. As a corollary, it holds that a member of society has the right to call society's attention to matters that he or she regards as public concerns. The principle of free speech holds that a person has the right to express his or her opinion without being subjected to legal penalties. From these two principles we can elaborate a more complete statement

of basic rights protected by law and the necessary structures of public policy that guarantee a well-functioning liberal democratic state. Publicity and free speech are the *sine qua non* for those necessary guarantees to have effect and on which they ultimately rest. (6)

Argumentation/persuasion/rhetoric are the *agencies* of democracy, yet without open societies argumentation cannot flourish. They are 'co-dependent' on each other, or, literally, cognates in the sense that they 'share the same blood.' Democracy occurs in the domain of the uncertain; it is an exercise in choice in the realm of the probable rather than the certain – and the regulation of uncertainty through the exercise of ideas is the realm of rhetoric and argumentation. The 'co-dependency' between rhetoric and democracy can be seen both historically and theoretically.

Historically, democracy and training in argumentation and rhetoric have flourished together, as in classical Athens and the Roman Republic, and they have withered together, as in Imperial Rome and any number of authoritarian regimes throughout history (it is reputed that one of Lenin's first acts after the Bolshevik's ascent to power was to ban Aristotle's *Rhetoric*). The historical relationship between robust rhetoric, in the full conspectus of its function, and the relative democratic openness of the societies in which that occurs (as well as the opposite, in which rhetoric withers as authoritarianism waxes) is well rehearsed and does not require repetition here (See, for instance, Bizzell and Herzberg).
The historical pattern follows from the intractable inter-connections between rhetoric and democracy. Following the work of Kenneth Burke, we view democracy as a culturally engrained communication system premised upon the competence of rhetors and audiences, as well as on guarantees of fundamental political freedoms. Burke writes, we "take democracy to be a device for *institutionalizing the dialectical process*, by setting up a political structure that gives full opportunity for the use of competition to a cooperative end" (PLF, 444). Frans van Eemeren offers a somewhat similar perspective: "Democratization is an act of institutionalizing uncertainty: of subjecting all interests to competition. It is inside the institutional framework for processing conflicts offered by democracy that multiple forces compete. Although the outcome depends on what the participants do, no single force controls what occurs. Here lies the decisive step towards democracy: in the devolution of power from a group of people to a set of rules" (71-72). The rules themselves are negotiable and mutable through the

same process of argumentation.

Our view of democracy as a communication system is not offered as an alternative to more traditional, institutional and procedural models of 'democracy.' Rather, our emphasis on the communicative dynamics within other models is meant as a necessary supplement to those models. For instance, a mainstream approach to "civil society" stresses the "institutionalization" of non-governmental interests and sources of power, which can then serve as counter-forces to the abusive or oppressive wielding of state powers. In *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (1994) Louis Gellner posits "civil society" as "that set of diverse non-governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society" (p. 5; as cited in Taylor, Kazakov and Thompson, p. 2). Similarly, in *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (1995), Francis Fukuyama posits "civil society" as "a complex welter of intermediate institutions, including businesses, voluntary associations, educational institutions, clubs, unions, media, charities, and churches" which "in turn" are based on "the family" as "the primary instrument by which people are socialized into their culture and given the skills that allow them to live in [the] broader society and through which the values and knowledge of that society are transmitted across generations" (pp.4-5; as cited in Taylor, Kazakov and Thompson, p. 2). These concepts of civil society, which focus upon social structures and institutions, gloss over the very dynamic that empowers these non-governmental institutions as well as families and individual citizens, i.e., the communicative competence of the people involved. As communicative competence develops and grows into a culturally secured norm, the vitality of civil society and indeed of democracy itself will grow as well.

Perhaps here we approach Dewey's vision of democracy as "a *personal* way of individual life" (1940, p. 148), a notion that we see as entirely consistent with the "enacting of a dialectic," when understood in the Burkean sense of a competitively-cooperative non-resolutional dialectic. Dewey's elaboration suggests as much:

Democracy is the belief that even when needs and ends or consequences are different for each individual, the habit of amicable co-operation – which may include, as in sport, rivalry and competition – is itself a priceless addition to life.

To take as far as possible every conflict which arises – and they are bound to arise – out of the atmosphere and medium of force, or violence as a means of settlement, into that of discussion and of intelligence, is to treat those who disagree – even profoundly – with us as those from whom we may learn, and in so far, as friends. A genuinely democratic faith in peace is faith in the possibility of conducting disputes, controversies, and conflicts as co-operative undertakings in which both parties learn by giving the other a chance to express itself, instead of one party conquer by forceful suppression of the other – suppression which is none the less one of violence when it takes place by psychological means of ridicule, abuse, intimidation, instead of by overt imprisonment or in concentration camps. To co-operate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience, in inherent in the democratic personal way of life. (p. 151)

As a way of living, democracy enters the realm of the habitual: it is a way of interacting with others that stresses, among other things, the give-and-take of argumentative exchange, the enactment of dialectic, of difference. It is as a habit of living, a way of interacting, a particularized competence in communication that democracy is ultimately realized. Dewey comments that "democracy is a reality only as it is indeed a commonplace of living" (150).

As we wrote in the inaugural issue of *Controversia: An International Journal of Debate and Democratic Renewal,* "Democracy may or may not require certain economic prerequisites, such as a viable middle class; it may or may not have necessary implication in specific economic formulations, such as free market capitalism; it may or may not be characterized by specific constitutional, governmental or non-governmental institutions; it may or may not require certain voting procedures, representational practices, or party formulations. But it always requires controversy." And regulating, perhaps even resolving, controversy requires the competent practice of argumentation. Van Eemeren, for instance, notes that "argument plays a crucial part in the management of uncertainty that is inherent in the exercise of democracy" (82). It is thus clearly the case that in the western traditions of rhetoric, "the ability to argue in public and private domains" has been "linked with democratic process" (Andrews, Mitchell, Prior, and Torgerson).

Finally, although we tend traditionally to think of the association between rhetoric

and democracy at a societal level – in the speeches of politicians or the editorials or broadsides aimed at mass audiences – the interactional habits of democracy (and remember that John Dewey saw democracy simply as a 'habit of mind') permeate the spectrum of the communication culture. The inculcation of democracy therefore is not reducible to economic preparedness, to the conduct of elections, or any other particular structural element; although some of those structural elements may be necessary, they certainly are not sufficient, as is being so painfully demonstrated daily by ill-conceived efforts to impose 'democracy' top-down (often at the point of a bayonet) on cultures not disposed to the habits of mind Dewey finds so necessary. Columnist Joe Klein has also observed the problem: "It is common wisdom among serious democracy advocates that there are preconditions for successful representative government. There must be a solid middle class; there must be rule of law and freedom of speech. But a more elusive human quality is necessary as well: a drastic change of public sensibility from passivity toward active engagement." Democracy "demands that people take charge of their lives and make informed decisions" (Klein).**[i]**

2. *Argumentation skills do not develop without training*

Argumentation skills (advocacy, analysis, criticism) are not naturally occurring phenomena across large population aggregates, and it does not necessarily follow that the opening of political space for free speech will result in robust deliberative discourse or a culture of democratic communication; rather, skills in argumentation can and should be taught, and through that process a culture of democratic communication can be nurtured. Even in so-called advanced democracies such as the United States and Great Britain, there is a "skills gap" in the renewal of civic engagement and democracy. Our students and too often our faculty do not have training in argumentation – either for advocacy or for critical analysis of arguments directed toward them. As a result, all positions and claims tend to be viewed as equally valid 'opinions' without regard for reasoning or evidentiary support – and challenges to positions are too often interpreted as personal attacks. Controversial topics tend to be avoided. In the larger culture, models of arguments are sorely lacking: debate (in the sense of testing ideas and positions in a dialectical exchange) and political persuasion have devolved into acerbic monologues of vituperative viciousness. Critical analysis of arguments, in the sense of testing evidence and reasoning, is also lacking.

At the level of argument criticism – the rhetorical skill perhaps most frequently called into play for most citizens in modern representative democracies – the

current deficiencies are manifest. A recent study conducted by the American Institute for Research (AIR) found that "(m)ore than 50% of students at four-year schools and more than 75% at two-year colleges lacked the skills to perform complex literacy skills. That means they could not interpret a table about exercise and blood pressure, *understand the arguments of newspaper editorials*, compare credit card offers with different interest rates and annual fees or summarize results of a survey about parental involvement in school" (Feller. Emphasis added). The cultural models for argument analysis are also significantly lacking, as any even cursory viewing of televised political "analysis" shows reveals. Matt Miller observes, "Ninety per cent of political conversation amounts to dueling 'talking points.' Best-selling books reinforce what folks thought when they bought them. Talk radio and opinion journals preach to the converted. Let's face it: the purpose of most political speech is not to persuade but to win, be it power, ratings, celebrity or even cash." Tellingly, Miller concludes, "*Alienation is the only intelligent response to a political culture that insults our intelligence*" (emphasis added).

Frank L. Cioffi, writing in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, makes a similar point: "Our media do not provide a forum for actual debate. Instead they're a venue for self-promotion and squabbling, for hawking goods, for infomercials masquerading as news or serious commentary. In terms of discussing issues, they offer two sides, pick one: Either you are for gay marriage or against it, either for abortion or for life, either for pulling the feeding tube or for 'life'" (p. B6). "This failure to provide a forum for argumentative discourse has steadily eroded students' understanding of 'argument' as a concept" (p. B6). Like Miller, Cioffi sees alienation and disengagement from active citizenship as the ultimate outcome: "Students typically don't want to attempt 'argument' or take a controversial position to defend, probably because they've seen or heard enough of the media's models – Bill O'Reilly, Ann Coulter, or Al Franken, to name a few – and are sick of them" (p. B6). Too often, then, students become cynical and disengaged. George Mahaffey, one of the originators of the American Democracy Project, reports "Fewer than half of persons 15-26 years old think that communicating with elected officials, volunteering, or donating money to help others are qualities of a good citizen."**[ii]**

In addition, there is not sustained or systematic critical analysis of political argumentation, particularly not by individual citizens: instead, we wait for our pundits to attack their pundits, and then we join them in a symbolic victory dance.

But for democracy to function fully and to flourish toward its potential, each citizen should be equipped to analyze critically the argumentative and persuasive messages that besiege us routinely. No less an authority on propaganda than Joseph Goebbels offered the following insight: "Propaganda becomes ineffective the moment we aware of it" as propaganda (as qtd. in Taylor 1979, p. 230). An analogy to a magic show might best illustrate the point: when we first experience magic, we are in awe; we are moved. But as we learn about magic, we learn the methods and techniques of magic: we learn the trick. And then when we see a magic show, we may come to appreciate the deftness of the magician, their skill in the performance of the trick, but we nonetheless recognize it as a trick, and we are no longer in awe. We need our students – and our citizens – to recognize the tricks of political persuasion and to be appreciative of skilled argumentation but to be awed by neither.

Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, and Stephens have observed the ability of educational reform to affect the overall culture:
Higher education has the potential to be a powerful influence in reinvigorating the democratic spirit in America. Virtually all civic, political, and professional leaders are graduates of higher education institutions, and the general public is attending college in higher numbers. Over fifteen million students are now enrolled in higher education. About 40 percent are in community colleges, and unlike students in earlier eras, most are commuting students, many with jobs and families. This extensive reach places colleges and universities in a strong position to reshape broader culture. (p. 8)

3. *Training in argumentation and criticism will enhance a culture of democratic communication*
We start with the simple premises that some arguments are simply better arguments than others and that better arguments are more often productive of better outcomes than are weaker arguments. Moreover, in a 'democratic' system of governance, the role of argument is as important as the rule of law. [Of course, for the rule of law to be effective, the application of law in any specific case depends on argument to clarify the issues.] Unless argument assumes its rightful place in the conduct of public business, there is no means to properly test policy directives and initiatives.

Recent trends in argument and debate pedagogy, as well as recent popular commentary about argument,**[iii]** re-orient argumentation toward outcomes

laudable in terms of the growth of individuals *qua* individuals and their empathic functioning in interpersonal and group contexts; however, it may well have the effect of accentuating the disconnect between individuals and the public, civic sphere of argument. The emphasis on "invitational rhetoric" (Foss and Griffin) and notions like "constructive argument" (Mallin and Anderson) reposition argumentation away from the public sphere by featuring concerns with empathy, understanding the emotions of the other, the "solution" of salient inter-relational problems, and the non-conquest of the other, all of which concerns are perhaps more centrally focused in the personal sphere. As Cox observes:

An "invitational rhetoric," with its stress upon mutual respect and an effort to understand the viewpoint of the other, is a presumptive choice for many of us in beginning a conversation, but in the political arena, its terms and conditions are more often than not betrayed by the interests of power. "Argument," therefore, has been positioned as a means for clarifying and representing difference in a manner that allows its claims to be made transparent, rationalized, challenged, and defended/revised. As such argumentation and debate function ultimately as modes of "critical publicity" (Habermas), the achievement of moral force capable of mediating State or other entrenched power. (p.84)

Further, as Crenshaw and Lee note, "invitational rhetoric is not always possible or desirable if access to power and influence is not democratically distributed. Cooperative communication can easily become a form of velvet coercion . . . ." (p.109).

Such characterizations overlook what Zarefsky terms the essentially cooperative goal of argument in the public sphere, "deciding what to believe or do under conditions of uncertainty." Zarefsky continues:

The adversarial procedure is actually a means of quality control. Subjecting arguments to the critical scrutiny of an interlocutor helps to assure that the strong arguments will survive and that the weak ones will be discarded . . . . The metaphors of debate . . . are better understood as calling for careful choices consciously considered out of respect for one's interlocutor and the desire to make the testing of ideas productive and robust. (p. 80)

Prior to concern about "adversarial" or "cooperative" models of argumentation is the simple need for individuals – and in the educational context, students – to be able to parse arguments, to be able to recognize claims and the edifice of justification advanced to bolster or legitimize the claims, including evidence and

reasoning structures. But it is precisely here that current educational practices seem to fall dramatically short.

Adversarial models aiming at 'victory' and cooperative models aiming at empathy and understanding should not be conceived of as an either/or, but rather as alternative strategies that are situationally dependent. In fact, students and citizens need both skill sets as well as the *situational acumen* to know when each strategy is most appropriately adopted. (For instance, is "understanding" Holocaust denial sufficient as either a pedagogical or argumentational outcome?) Rather than become embroiled in an ultimately false dichotomy between "adversarial" or "invitational" models of argument, we should instead focus upon the *propriety of either within certain contexts*. Argumentation pedagogy should not be reduced to promotion of a favored model or static formula because argumentation is dynamic and heavily contextual and not reducible to idealized strictures that we may place upon it.

Sally Mitchell and Richard Andrews, writing about S. Toulmin, make the broader point:

The act of arguing is more dialogic and more contingent upon the contexts in which it is taking place than the Toulmin model of *argument* enables us to see. The power relationship between protagonist and antagonist (proponent and respondent are milder terms) will be a major factor . . . . Argument is particularly susceptible to context because it is essentially dialogic. It invites response in a way that narrative or lyric poetry often doesn't; its function is sometimes to heal rifts, sometimes to explore them, sometimes to engender them; but at all times one person's or one group's argued position depends on another's. Reification of interchange into 'argument structure,' as if the process were a monologue, hardly stands up to contemporary dialogue theory" (they cite Walton, 1999).

Some would argue that it is the adversarial nature of traditional argument theory that has produced the invective characteristic of much public argument today. We do not agree. Our concern is that in abandoning the emphasis on analysis, evidence, and critical thinking that characterizes traditional approaches to argument, we are failing to prepare future generations for participation in civil society. Proper training in the essential features of argument emphasizes rationality, or the parsing of claims and justifications, and de-emphasizes ad hominem approaches.

Adversarial systems of argument are necessary for argument to assume its

essential role in the context of public sphere. Only through adversarial argumentation can the testing of ideas occur. Only the adversary is motivated to explore the consequences of actions and/or policies in the full range of their possibilities. One need simply consider a few ill-fated policy directives with unintended consequences that were not fully explored in advance to realize the necessity of pursuing lines of argument to their logical conclusion before taking action, yet doing so within a commitment to the continued openness of the dialectical exchange, the process that Burke has termed "the use of competition to a cooperative end."

Education should be understood as a process with at least a dual function: to better the social collective as well as to prepare the individual student both intellectually and vocationally for life. There are, in other words, both public and personal rationales for higher education, and skill in argumentation is germane to both. As Mitchell and Andrews note, "Graduates from university are expected to be able to 'think' creatively and imaginatively about their discipline but also more generally to be able to apply that creativity to different contexts. Learning to argue, then, could be a central purpose and activity of attendance at university."

Writing in the inaugural issue of *Controversia*, William Rehg argues that training in argumentation is essential to ensuring public deliberation, but that it is not enough to expect students to be able to transfer training in formal logic or identification of informal fallacies. He notes that to "achieve transfer means that students must acquire not only a set of competences, but also something like a 'critical spirit' or habit of mind" (p. 27). Rehg believes that it is the argumentation scholar who is best situated to influence students to become better participants in deliberation. A pedagogical focus on argumentation needs to be resuscitated, perhaps across the curriculum but certainly in a sufficient number of classes that all students will be assured of training in the essential skills of citizenship. Classes where such training might be expected – such as dedicated classes in argumentation, debate, or public speaking – need to rededicate themselves to the task of citizen preparation. Writing about the connections between public speaking competency (including advocacy and critical skills) and democracy, McGee and McGee note a "worrisome retreat from the founding assumption of public speaking pedagogy" (p. 167), linking citizen competence in the arts of public speaking and the vitality of democracy. "If these trends continue," they warn, "the future cultivation of speaking competencies necessary to democracy may now become a happy accident, a leftover from earlier generations, a well-worn but now-neglected pathway [to democracy], rather than a product of any

specific instructional design or serious commitment on the part of communication faculty to cultivating such competencies" (pp. 167-168).

4. *Conclusion*

Democracy, as Dewey would have it, is a habit of mind. It is fundamentally a way of engaging in the world – reaching decisions about courses of action and interacting with others. Democracy demands citizen engagement, and engaged citizens demand democracy. Although the political scene may often seem a detached spectacle – a super-sized football match between competing parties, presented in Technicolor on a big-screen television, complete with passionate but ultimately incoherent color commentary – life itself is not a spectator sport. Placing the locus of action, and of responsibility for that action, on the individual ultimately means that in a democracy each person must have the tools for critical engagement. Gordon Mitchell underscores the point:

The lifeblood of American democracy courses through the arteries of an active, deliberating citizenry capable of participating meaningfully in public argument on pressing issues of the day. Given this, the surfeit of commentary noting widespread citizen alienation and withdrawal from public affairs should not be taken lightly . . . . The fate of efforts to right the course of American deliberative democracy will depend largely on choices made by those who have power to influence prospects for citizen comprehension and engagement in argumentation over salient issues of public interest (p. 148).

Training students in argumentation and the arts of advocacy and criticism will help to prepare citizens in cultures of democratic communication. Viewing such skills as the agencies of democracy, recognizing that democracy and rhetoric are cognates, it is incumbent on cultures of democratic communication to cultivate the powers of the competitive toward the cooperative. As Shulman reports, "The wise John Adams understood that if a democratic society were to function as intended, as 'a social compact, by which the whole people covenants with each citizen, and each citizen with the whole people,' such covenants can only be entered into by an educated citizenry blessed with virtue as well as wisdom and knowledge. Absent such intentionally sought accomplishments, a functioning democracy might well become a shattered dream" (p. viii, citing D. McCullough. 2001. *John Adams*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 221).

NOTES

[i] We have offered a discursive definition of democracy itself; other writers

adhere to more clearly variegated definitions of "democracy," which are then correlated with specific discourse practices. Roberts-Miller, for instance, writes, "Argumentation textbooks typically say that skill at argument is important in a democracy, but they do not make clear which model of democracy they imagine; in fact, very little (if any) of the current discourse regarding the teaching of democracy indicates awareness that there are different models . . . . Much of our disagreement about pedagogical practices is in disagreement about what it means (or should mean) to participate in a democratic pubic spehere" (3-4; as cited in Fulkerson). She offers 6 models of democracy, each with corollary implications for argumentation: the liberal model ("Enlightenment rationalism"), technocracy ("policy questions answered unproblematically based on information from experts"), the interest-based model ("in which special interest groups each seek to maximize power; difference often settled by bargaining"), the agonistic model ("rhetorical argumentation among competing views with the 'strongest' argument winning"), communitarianism ("groups somehow cooperate to subordinate different interest to the common good"), and the deliberative model. Her preference is for the latter, which she defines reflexively through her own approach to writing: "to be contentious and fair, to acknowledge weaknesses while still clearly advocating a policy, not to avoid conflict, but neither to rely on false controversy, and to interweave the personal and particular with more traditional notions regarding evidence" (p. 188; as cited in Fulkerson).

[ii] In addition to referencing the AIR study cited above, Mahaffey also cited other disturbing data reflecting on the preparedness of students as citizens in the American democracy; for example, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Survey of 112,003 high school students in 2004: "36% believe that newspapers should get 'government approval' of stories before publishing." Or, from a survey of 600 students age 13-17, National Constitution Center, 1998: "59.2% know the names of the three stooges. Only 41.2% know the names of the three branches of government . . . . 89% know the father in Home Improvement. Only 32% know the Speaker of the House."

[iii] Here we are specifically referring to trade texts such as Deborah Tannen's The Argument Culture.

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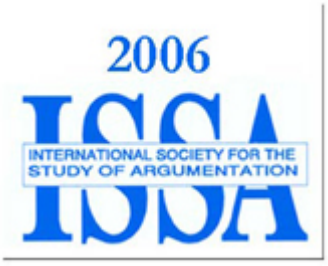
ISSA Proceedings 2006 – Against Making The Linked-Convergent

Distinction



1. *Introduction*

The intuition guiding the avowed distinction between linked and convergent argument structures is easy enough to grasp – in various arguments some of the premises appear to *link* together to form a single reason for the conclusion, while other premises appear to constitute separate reasons which independently converge on the conclusion. Though the intuition is easy enough to grasp, as James Freeman has recently pointed out: "the problem of clearly distinguishing linked from convergent argument structure has proven vexing." (Freeman 2001, p. 397) Indeed, the question remains whether the intuition truly captures a real distinction.

In recent work, I have argued against one of the top contenders for how to make the linked-convergent distinction. (Goddu 2003) Here I shall argue against making the distinction at all. In section 2, I shall sketch out the problem and briefly discuss why the problem has proven so vexing. My suspicion is that the problem is vexing because it is impossible to solve. I shall not, however, attempt to prove that here. Instead, in section 3, I shall argue that, even if we grant there is a distinction to be made, there is no good reason to bother making the distinction. In particular, I shall present and rebut the three reasons that have been given to justify making the distinction.

2. *Preliminaries*

Suppose we have a given set of premises {P1, …., Pn}, for a given conclusion C. If we are interested in this argument's structure, we are interested in how to partition {P1, …., Pn} into subsets. Each subset is a reason for the conclusion. If a subset contains more than one premise, then those premises are linked and at least part of the argument's structure is linked. If a subset contains exactly one premise, then that premise is independent and at least part of the argument's structure is convergent.**[i]**

Solving the problem of argument structure, then, is just a matter of finding some relation that accurately partitions the set of premises into sets of reasons. In particular, premises linked by the relation are in the same reason set and premises not so linked are not in the same reason set. The most plausible candidate for this relation is some articulation of 'dependent support'. To see this,

consider the ways various authors try to articulate the notion of linked – “each of which needs the other to support the conclusion” (Thomas 1986, p. 58); “each premise is somehow incomplete in itself” (Freeman 2001, pp. 397-98); “the premises work together as a logical unit in such a way that the amount of support offered by one or more premises is dependent on the other(s).” (Bassham 2003, p. 69)

So why is the problem of clearly articulating the linking relation so vexing? Firstly, there is little consensus on what conditions an adequate version of the distinction must satisfy. For example, is an adequate linking relation one that, in principle at least, would allow us to partition the premise set of *any* argument? On the one hand, the failure of a given proposal to assign a structure to various cases has been used as a reason to reject that proposal. On the other hand, Douglas Walton and Robert Yanal explicitly reject this ‘completeness’ requirement in defense of their preferred proposal. But without some consensus on even moderately clear conditions of successfully solving the problem of argument structure, the problem is going to remain intractable.
Secondly, there are numerous distinct and sometimes conflicting intuitions involved in the crucial concepts of ‘support’ and ‘dependence/independence’. On the one hand, the notion of support is often left unexplicated such that theorists rely upon their various intuitions to decide whether one statement supports another. [I fully admit that I will provide no improvement on this situation in this paper.] On the other hand, the various explications of the ‘dependence/independence’ of that support clearly show that there are multiple incompatible intuitions in play. For example, does it even make sense to talk in terms of one premise ‘influencing’ the support that another premise provides to the conclusion? Many say ‘yes’, but some say ‘no’ and the proposals for making the linked/convergent distinction differ accordingly. Even among those who say yes, intuitions differ over (a) whether the influence has to be zero for a premise to be independent or whether is just has to be below some (vague and unspecified) threshold, or (b) whether the influence has to be total for a premise to be dependent or whether it just has to be above some (vague and unspecified) threshold. With no clear set of success conditions available, adjudicating these differences in intuitions and the proposals that result from them is problematic at best.

While the lack of clear adequacy conditions and the multiplicity of candidate

dependence/independence concepts might be reasons for us to suspect that there is no viable linked/convergent distinction to make, they certainly do not prove there is no such distinction. Indeed, without a set of clear success conditions one can neither demonstrate that some proposal for the linking relation is adequate nor demonstrate that no proposal will be adequate. In order to refute the possibility of a coherent linked/convergent distinction, one would need to show that no proposal works for any plausible set of success conditions – a task I certainly cannot hope to undertake here. Instead I shall adopt another strategy. Putting aside my own suspicions that there is no coherent distinction to be made, I shall argue that regardless of whether there is a coherent distinction, there is no utility in making the distinction. The work we want to do in evaluating arguments can be done equally well without making the distinction. Hence, we ought not make it. I turn to the details of this argument now.

3. *Against Making the Distinction*

Given the difficulty of specifying the relations that are being picked out by the linked-convergent distinction, the utility of making the distinction ought to be significant in order for us to keep trying to solve the problem. Even if we grant for the moment that there is a linked/convergent distinction to be made, the significance cannot merely be that we are recording a true fact about the given argument. After all, we could, for example, partition the premise set according to the number of atomic sentences involved in each premise. Premises with a single atomic sentence would go into one subset, premises with two into another, and so on. I suspect this partitioning would be easier to accomplish than the alleged linked/convergent partitioning. Yet, most would agree that partitioning the premise set in terms of the number of atomic sentences is not worthwhile. So defenders of making the distinction need to provide some reason to bother with making the distinction.

According to James Freeman, "that for *logical* reasons we should want to distinguish linked from convergent arguments is easily shown." (Freeman 2001, p. 403) Freeman argues that the distinction has "distinct implications for argument evaluation" (p. 405). In particular, "with convergent arguments, the unacceptability of one premise need not destroy the cogency of the entire case given for some claim. Notice however that should two or more premises be linked, the unacceptability of one means that the entire reason constituted by these premises fails to be cogent." (p. 405, see also p. 413) Douglas Walton writes, "the key, then, to understanding the purpose of determining whether an argument is

linked or convergent resides in looking at the argument from a critic's point of view. The critic needs to know whether it is necessary to refute both these premises, or if it is enough to find fault with just one, in order for the whole argument to fall down." (Walton 1996, p. 175)**[ii]**

So, when it comes time to evaluate an argument, if we have determined its structure, i.e. whether some of the premises are linked or not, we will be able to see how much work needs to be done to refute the argument, at least in terms of rejecting premises. In particular, we need only refute one premise from each reason subset in order to reject all the reasons for a given conclusion. Why is rejecting a single premise from each reason subset sufficient? There is a strong and a weak answer to this question.

The strong answer is that only reasons provide support for conclusions. Hence, premises that are merely a proper part of a reason subset cannot provide support for the conclusion independently of being part of the reason. Freeman, who endorses what Walton calls the 'Suspension/No Support Test', viz. "If one premises is suspended, the conclusion is not given any support" (Freeman 2001, p. 411, p. 417) at least implicitly accepts the strong answer.

The weak answer is that only reasons provide sufficient support for conclusions. Hence, premises that are merely a proper part of a reason subset cannot provide sufficient support for the conclusion independently of being part of the reason. The premise might provide some support on its own, but not sufficient support. Advocates of what Walton calls the 'Suspension/Insufficient Support Test' would presumably accept the weak answer.

Unfortunately, counterexamples to both tests (and hence both the strong and weak versions of the key reason for making the linked/convergent distinction) seem legion. Consider, for example:

(A).
1. Either George is not male or George is a brother.
2. George is male.
3. Thus, George is a brother.

(A) appears to be a canonical example of an argument with a linked structure and yet it fails the Suspension/No Support Test, for surely premise 2 alone provides some support for the conclusion. More generally, take any example of a two-premise argument, P1, P2 / C that is accepted as convergent. Now construct the following argument:

(B).
1. Either not both P1 and P2 or C.
2. P1
3. P2
4. Thus, C

(B) also appears to be a canonical example of a linked argument structure and yet it must fail the Suspension/No Support Test, since premises 2 and 3 clearly support the conclusion independently of either each other or premise 1.**[iii]**

Perhaps, in order to save the reason for making the distinction, one might bite the bullet and just accept that argument (A) and instances of (B) constructed in the right way are really arguments with a convergent structure. Freeman, however, cannot bite this bullet, since Freeman understands support in terms of positive relevance and then *analyzes* relevance in terms of canonical inference rules. He writes: "A set of statements P1, P2, …Pn is relevant to a statement Q if there is some n-premised inference rule in C [the canonical set of inference rules] licensing the inferential move from P1, P2, …, Pn to Q." (p. 415). Indeed, in his explication he takes it for granted that standard inference rules such as *modus ponens, modus tollens*, and, disjunctive syllogism are canonical inference licenses. He writes, for example, "just as clearly – the challenger being a normal human being – the inference rule *modus ponens* is part of her stock of inference licenses." (p. 418) Freeman explicitly links his analysis of relevance to the linked/convergent distinction as follows: "Our general understanding is that premises should be linked when there is some multi-premises inference rule which renders them together relevant to the conclusion. Premises are convergent when for each there is some warrant or inference rule which constitutes that premise a mark for the conclusion or renders it individually relevant to the conclusion." (p. 417) Call what Freeman advocates here, the Inference Rule Test for the linked/convergent distinction.
Freeman holds that the Inference Rule Test and the Suspension/No Support Test give the same answers. After all, he writes: "Our explication of the linked-convergent distinction through relevance and its explication through inference rules means that our approach favors Walton's Suspension/No Support Test." (p. 417) But, as the examples above show, the Suspension/No Support Test and the Inference Rule Test do not give the same answers. (B)-type arguments fail the Suspension/No Support Test, but are instances of canonical inference rules.

Freeman has to give up something.

One option is to keep the Supension/No Support Test, but give up his analysis of relevance in terms of inference rules. In this case, Freeman has to bite the bullet and say that what appear to be canonical examples of linked argument structures are really convergent. Indeed, once one gives up on the canonical examples, what sort of cases is Freeman left with as examples of linked argument structures? One example that seems to satisfy the Suspension/No Support Test is the following:

(C).
1. The moon is out.
2. Grass is green.
3. Thus, all is well in Denmark.

After all, if either premise is suspended, then the other gives no support to the conclusion. But (C) seems to be, on first glance anyway, an example of a convergent argument structure.

On the other hand, Freeman could give up the Suspension/No Support Test, but keep his analysis of relevance and the Inference Rule Test. But giving up the Suspension/No Support Test (or the Suspension/Insufficient Support Test) means giving up his justification for making the distinction in the first place.
Interestingly enough, Walton himself rejects both the No Support and the Insufficient Support Tests, so it remains unclear on what grounds Walton holds his 'key purpose for determining' an argument's structure. At the same time, though not as strongly committed as Freeman, Walton also stresses the importance of logical form. He writes: "The main clue to judging whether an argument is linked or convergent is the argument's structure" (Walton 1996, p. 160)**[iv]** Perhaps then one might try to hold to the Inference Rule Test (or Clue) as a justification for making the distinction – remove part of the inference rule and the reason for the conclusion no longer exists.
One problem is that simple inference rules, in Freeman's sense of rules, are easily embeddable in larger inference rules. The (B)-type cases above show this. Start with canonical inference rules P1/C and P2/C. Given that disjunctive syllogism is a canonical inference rule, the following is an allowable inference rule, viz. either not P1 and P2 or C, P1, P2 /C. But in this case rejecting P1 does not remove all allowable inference rules to C from the premise set. Hence, a critic cannot rely merely on the argument's structure (at least according to the Inference Rule Test)

in order to determine which premises need to be rejected.

But a more significant problem is that an argument's form is not the relevant variable in determining which premises need to be rejected in order to refute a given argument. Consider the following argument:

(D).
1. The die is red.
2. The die shows an odd number.
3. Thus, the die is a cube.

Situation 1: There are 8 red tetrahedral dice with only even number faces, 1 red standard cube die, and 8 blue standard cube dice. In this case, the premises together force the conclusion, but separately each premise alone provides very weak evidence for the conclusion. Hence, we only need to refute one.

Situation 2: There are 8 red standard cube dice, 1 red tetrahedral die with only even number faces, and 1 blue standard cube die. In this case, both premises strongly support the conclusion independently of the other, but together conclusively support the conclusion. Hence, assuming that the context allows 88% to count as sufficient support, each premise alone sufficiently supports the conclusion and so both premises would have to be refuted.

Situation 3: There are 8 red standard cube dice, 1 red tetrahedral die with only even number faces, and 10 blue standard cube dice. In this case, premise one strongly supports the conclusion, while premise 2 does so only weakly, but again together conclusively support the conclusion. In this case, only premise one would have to be refuted. The situation can be adjusted yet again so that only premise 2 would have to be refuted.

Argument (D) is a single argument with a single logical form, yet all possible patterns of what premises would need to be rejected to refute argument D can be instantiated. Hence, which premises need to be rejected to refute an argument need not co-vary with the argument's logical form. If argument structure is linked to argument form, as both Freeman and Walton maintain, which premises need to be rejected does not co-vary with an argument's structure either. But then what is offered as the prime reason for making the linked/convergent distinction, i.e. giving the critic valuable information about which premises need to be refuted, isn't really a reason for making the distinction at all. [To see this another way,

consider situation 2 split into two cases: Case 1: The support required in the context for the argument to count as acceptable is preponderance of the evidence. In this case, both premises need to be refuted. Case 2: The support required is 100%. In this case refuting either premise is sufficient. But then the actual support that the premises give, both individually and together, is not the determining factor for what premises need to be refuted – the variable is the degree of support required in the context.]

Are there other reasons to make the linked/convergent distinction? Walton gives two other reasons: (1) the distinction helps identify whether an arguer begs the question and (2) the distinction helps in identifying unexpressed premises. I shall address these two reasons in turn.

Suppose the justification for P1 of the argument, P1, P2 / C is C itself. According to Walton, whether this is a case of begging the question depends upon whether P1 and P2 are linked or not. If they are linked, then the reason for C is justified by C itself, which is a case of begging the question. If the premises are not linked, then only one of the reasons for C is justified by C itself, so is not a case of begging the question.(Walton 1996, p. 36)
This reason is a very specific case of the key reason discussed above. In this case we have a reason to reject premise 1 (at least insofar as it is used to justify C). The question then is whether this rejection is sufficient to reject the argument for C. But whether P2 is sufficient by itself for C depends (as argument (D) shows) on whether the support P2 gives by itself is more than what the context requires in order to accept C. But, as we have seen already, whether P2 gives this required support fails to co-vary with whether or not P2 is linked to P1. Hence, whether an arguer has committed a begging of the question does not depend on the argument's structure.

Walton's only comment on his final reason, i.e. that the distinction helps in identifying unexpressed premises, is as follows:
Over and above the recognition that an argument has an identifiable form, however, our main method for identifying non-explicit premises will be the method of diagramming itself. For example, if a stated premise is part of a linked structure that clearly requires some other unstated but presumed premise to support its conclusion, then that unstated premise can be identified by the method of diagramming. Hence, a large part of the best method for filling in enthymemes is, in fact, the identification of linked structures, as part of the

method of diagramming. (Walton 1996, p. 249)

This reason appears to assume that we can identify linked-structures independently of our access to all the premises involved in that structure. After all, we are supposed to use the structure and the explicit premises to which we have access in order to fill in the missing premise(s) of the structure. But what are these alleged structures? Given Walton's commitment to using an argument's form as at least a clue to its logical structure, one might think these structures are logical forms such as modus ponens, etc. But Walton's first sentence seems to suggest that these structures are something over and above the argument's form. If they are something over and above an argument's logical form, Walton needs to specify what they are and how we recognize them before we can evaluate his claims that identifying argument structure will help us identify unstated premises. If, on the other hand, the linked structures we can identify prior to having all the premises are just logical forms such as modus ponens, etc, then determining an argument's structure becomes completely superfluous to identifying missing premises. It is the form that is doing the work, not the additional fact that arguments with that form are linked (or convergent). Even if we assume that all modus ponens or whatever are linked (an assumption I am not fully prepared to make), a person could identify a suppressed premise for a modus ponens without even knowing of the linked/convergent distinction. Hence, we can identify unexpressed premises without ever appealing to the argument's structure at all.

4. *Conclusion*

We do not need to make the linked/convergent distinction in order to
a. identify what premises can be rejected to refute a given argument,
b. determine whether the argument is a case of begging the question, or
c. identify unexpressed premises.

Hence, unless other reasons are forthcoming to justify making the linked/convergent distinction, we have no good reason for making the distinction. That the problem of specifying the linked/convergent distinction has proven extremely vexing is beyond question. Should we keep expending effort trying to solve this problem? Not if, as I have established here, there is no good reason to make the distinction.

NOTES

[i] Given this set-up, arguments with a single premise are automatically convergent. If this result is bothersome, just restrict the discussion to arguments

with two or more premises.
[ii] Walton repeats the claim again on p. 176. Note also that earlier, on p. 169, Walton gives a version that makes it sound like a test, i.e. if need to refute just one, then linked; if both then convergent.
[iii] To generate a counterexample to the Suspension/Insufficient Support Test, just start with an argument where at least one of P1 or P2 is by itself sufficient for the conclusion.
[iv] By 'structure' here Walton means logical form in the sense of modus ponens, etc., though his subsequent discussion of arguments with no known structure, i.e. form, indicates that Walton's understanding of 'structure' is narrower than Freeman's sense in terms of inference licenses.

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And The World: The Unexpressed Premises Of American Exceptionalism

On June 21, 2006, while attending a conference with leaders of the European Union, U.S. President George W. Bush met with reporters in Vienna. Asked by one European reporter about a poll suggesting that many Europeans regarded the United States as a greater threat to peace and stability than North Korea, the President, in apparent irritation, responded, "That's absurd!" (Stolberg, 2006, p. A14). Mr. Bush literally could not imagine how what he called post-September 11 thinking could threaten anyone, just as his questioner probably could not imagine how the President of the United States could seem to disregard the concerns of the Old World.

This episode illustrates in microcosm the problem I wish to discuss. It can be safely stipulated that recent years have seen a rather sharp discontinuity between American and European attitudes about the place of the U.S. in the world. Although it is tempting to do so, I cannot attribute this discrepancy merely to the character of the current President or to national differences in interpretation of the tragedy of September 11. Rather, it is the most recent manifestation of a long-standing tension in the discourse of U.S. foreign policy.

The claim I wish to advance is that American arguments about the U.S. role in the world frequently contain a premise, often unstated because widely accepted across American culture, that is not supported by many in other lands and indeed that would be offensive if it were made more explicit. Hence what functions successfully as an enthymeme in U.S. domestic discourse often falls flat when U.S. representatives attempt to defend their policies for an international audience.

The premise of which I speak is American exceptionalism, the belief that the United States *is* qualitatively different from other nations. Usually there is more to it than this stark statement. Being different, Americans do not see themselves as properly subject to the same norms and rules that govern others, and they are not prepared to acknowledge that the experience of other nations is necessarily

relevant to them. Moreover, for many, the implication of saying that the U.S. is different is that it is better, for reasons that I will discuss.
Lest there be any doubt, I should make clear that my goal is neither to defend nor to attack this premise, but to explain its deep resonance in American culture and to assess its implications for public argument.

1. *Dimensions of American exceptionalism*
The historian Thomas Bender recently has argued that the development of the United States can be seen in the context of larger global patterns of cultural development and expansion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Bender, 2006, pp. B6-B8). The dominant perspective by which Americans understand their history, however, is to focus on their national distinctiveness. On this view, such events as the settlement of the North American continent by European powers, the American Revolution, and the American Civil War are epochal in nature, marking a distinct "before" and "after" and distinguishing the American experience from contemporaneous events elsewhere. The recent claim by President Bush that "for Europe, September the 11th was a moment; for us, it was a change of thinking" (Stolberg, 2006, p. A14) is only the latest example of this tendency toward epochal thinking.

American exceptionalism could be understood as just a descriptive matter, an acknowledgment that in some respects the United States is different from other nations. That is the approach taken, for example, by Seymour Martin Lipset, who finds the U.S. in a superior relative position in some respects and a weaker one in others (Lipset, 1996). Moreover, Lipset contends, the relative strengths and weaknesses emanate from the same factors in American culture. But this is a tamer version of exceptionalism than is common in public discourse.
In general usage, "exceptionalism" has the meaning of "chosenness," of having been selected (presumably by God) to play a distinct role on the stage of history. On this reading, of course, exceptionalism implies not just difference but superiority. Americans are unlike other people because they have been given a special mission to fulfill. God is with them, guiding and directing them. President Bush's first inaugural address was explicit on this point, citing Thomas Jefferson's belief that an angel is guiding the U.S. ship of state through the storm.

The assumption of God-given American superiority has several consequences for public argument. First, it gives policy discussions a moral tone. This is not just a stylistic preference for religious references and allusions; it is also part of an

argument's substance. Lipset describes the United States as the most religious country in the world and notes that moralism influences the discussion of questions of policy. "A majority," he notes, "tell pollsters that God is the moral guiding force of American democracy" (Lipset, 1996, p. 63). This situation, of course, makes policy discussions not just problem-solving dialogues or searches for practical wisdom, but places to decide matters of moral principle, to make choices between good and evil. It is easy in such an atmosphere for any policy disagreement to be seen as an ultimate moral question.

Second, it becomes difficult for American advocates to compromise on argumentative commitments that they believe to be divinely inspired. If Americans "know" that their actions represent the fulfillment of God's plan, then it is hard to be patient with other points of view. The task is to show others the light of truth and, failing that, to work around them. Meanwhile, of course, what American arguers see as carrying out God's plan can be seen by those in other countries as arrogance and belligerence. It is very hard for those of other lands and cultures to take American pretensions to know God's will with equanimity, much less appreciation.

Third, the premise of American exceptionalism provides its believers with a teleological explanation for events. The person who is convinced that God is directing our national course knows how the story will end. Even if current realities seem discouraging, even as God's chosen suffer setbacks when they fall from divine favor, one should not fear: God's people will be redeemed in the end. A contemporary manifestation of this belief is President Bush's proclamation in his speech to a joint session of Congress following the terrorist attacks, "The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain" (Bush, 2001).

The fourth consequence of American exceptionalism, closely related, is that it minimizes the need for self-reflection or self-doubt. Since history is the working out of God's plan, human agency is significantly minimized. It is not our choices and actions that set the course of history; we are carrying out some larger, more cosmic plan. And who are humans to second-guess God's plan? Confident that they have been chosen to do God's will, that is what they must be about; if they have doubts, they must overcome them. And they certainly must not weaken in the face of criticism by others.

Finally, belief in this strain of American exceptionalism works to reduce or eliminate the need for justification of policies to an external audience. A traditional dialectical or rhetorical view of argument would suggest that the

audience is the ultimate judge of the argument. The arguer must make the appeal in the context of the audience's values and beliefs. So, for example, an argument about international cooperation would be tailored to the priorities of the other nations involved. But an all-powerful God does not require the approval of other nations. If God's truth is evident to American leaders, as a result of their having been "chosen," then their task is to proclaim and to act upon this truth. It is hoped that others will see the light, but whether or not they do, the position of the United States should not change. "Look, people didn't agree with my decision on Iraq, and I understand that," President Bush said last week (Stolberg, 2006, p. A14), without giving any evidence that the objections of others were taken into account as a factor influencing the choice of American policy.

What these five characteristics have in common, of course, is that they call for a different kind of argument. It is prophetic rather than petitionary, declarative more than collaborative, certain more than tentative. It does not invite the reciprocal risk-taking that characterizes dialectic and rhetoric. If those with whom American arguers interact do not share their vision and commitments, then the result of public discourse is likely to be the growing gap in understanding that I described at the outset.

2. *The historical resonance of American exceptionalism*

American commitment to this version of exceptionalism is not a new thing; it can be traced back to the establishment of European civilization in the New World. Although not the first settlers, the New England Puritans represent the rhetorical foundation of what is now the United States. On board the *Arbella* before landing, John Winthrop exhorted his fellows about the kind of society they would make. The goal of their community would be "to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord" and this required their keeping their covenant with God. If they met their responsibilities, then "the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will commend a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness, and truth than formerly we have been acquainted with." The community would be "as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us" (Winthrop in Miller, 1956, p. 83). The reason, of course, is that all would recognize that the community had been chosen by God, charged with special responsibilities but also singled out for favor.

The argument that the Puritans were exceptional was strategically useful for them. It justified their leaving the comfort of England and accepting the risks of a long ocean voyage and the uncertainties of frontier life. It justified their seeming

rebellion against the Church of England and their seemingly arrogant claim to "purify" the church. The confident promise of divine favor and ultimate success, in return for proper conduct, would offset the hardships and hazards of the journey.

At the time of the American Revolution, similar lines of argument were deployed. The colonists retained a strong attraction to England that was strengthened by the frequent use of the family metaphor. To break that metaphorical connection, influential pamphleteers such as Thomas Paine argued that monarchy was abnormal. Even so, they had to overcome the fear that England, with its superior strength, would crush any incipient revolt. In response to this fear, Paine stressed American advantages of natural resources and geographic position, but then he went further, speaking more cosmically about the American promise: "… we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now" (Paine, 1776 [1986], p. 120). Although much of Paine's tone is secular, the Biblical reference is unmistakable: God will re-enact the flood and, as He showed favor to the descendants of Noah, He will favor the saving remnant of His people, the American colonists, by enabling them to establish a new nation and thereby to rebuild civilization.

As with the Puritans, this use of the argument from exceptionalism was strategically useful. For readers who might accept in principle that the colonies should separate from England yet be deterred by the prospect of failure, the assurance of divine help and favor would be a powerful weight on the other side of the scale, shifting the balance of considerations and helping to justify revolution. The unlikely victory of the Americans over the British was sign evidence that Providence indeed had shined on the new nation. It validated their chosenness and their special relationship with God. And there would be other such validations across the years: the availability of George Washington as leader of the country at just the time that he was needed, the successful conclusion of the Louisiana Purchase which added immensely to the national domain, Andrew Jackson's miraculous victory over the British in 1815 in the battle of New Orleans, the simultaneous deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson on the jubilee fiftieth anniversary of American independence, the miraculous ascension of Abraham Lincoln who was credited with saving the union during its most difficult hour. Each of these events, and many others over the years (including, in recent times, the successful end of the Cold War), convinced American leaders anew that

their nation was indeed special, singled out for favor by God.

These frequent validations unmoored American exceptionalism from the strategic context of assuaging colonial fears, the context in which it originally was so useful. Over time it became a functionally autonomous belief. As such, it was not only a conclusion that was derived by inference from successful results; it was also a premise in arguments about how the U.S. should behave. In his Farewell Address, Washington used a geopolitical rather than theological explanation for American exceptionalism. To maximize its freedom of action, the new nation should not become embroiled in European quarrels, nor should it become involved in permanent alliances with European powers. The option to hold out and to chart our own course was available because of the exceptional position of the United States, separated from Europe by a wide ocean yet offering the lure of trading markets for all of Europe.

From Washington's warning to remain apart from the affairs of Europe (a warning that Thomas Jefferson, in his first inaugural address, codified into the principle of no "entangling alliances"), Americans reached the conclusion that they could and should act alone. Military might would not make them one of the world's great powers, but the fact that they were chosen by God embodied them to claim pride of place among the leading nations. That was why, for example, James Monroe and John Quincy Adams rejected the proposal for a joint declaration with Britain and instead chose a unilateral proclamation that the western hemisphere was off limits to European powers. This document, known as the Monroe Doctrine, was issued in 1823, and in the ensuing years the nations of Europe did largely leave the Americas alone (with exceptions such as the Falkland Islands and the establishment of British, French, and Dutch colonies in the West Indies and Guiana). This fact was no mere coincidence; for many Americans it "proved" that there was power in American *words*, in proclamations of our intention and desire. These documents had moral force – far outweighing military force – because America enjoyed God's favor (see Perkins, 1963).

A similar argument was used to justify further expansion to the west, even at the risk of war with Mexico. It was America's "manifest destiny," wrote newspaper columnist John L. O'Sullivan in the 1840's, to spread westward to the Pacific Ocean (see O'Sullivan, 1845 [1949], pp. 717-719). The popular "manifest destiny" phrase emphasized the inevitable course of history and the fact that it was a working out of God's plan. In seizing western lands, displacing Mexicans and

Native Americans, the U.S. was not practicing conquest, because the normal relationships between nations did not apply. An editorial in the *Boston Times* captured this sentiment:

The "conquest" which carries peace into a land where the sword has always been the sole arbiter between factions equally base, which institutes the reign of law where license has existed for a generation; which provides for the education and elevation of the great mass of the people, … and which causes religious liberty and full freedom of mind to prevail where a priesthood has long been enabled to prevent all religion save that of its worship, – such a "conquest," stigmatize it as you please, must necessarily be a great blessing to the conquered (cited in Welter, 1975, p. 69).

A similar argument was used during the 1890's to justify the American venture into imperialism. Further proof of American exceptionalism was the claim that we did not plan to occupy territories permanently, nor to turn them into colonies, but to bring the benefits of American freedom to those in the far corners of the earth.

One consequence of a widespread commitment to American exceptionalism was that involvement in war typically relied on moral rather than material justification. There is probably no clearer example than American entry into World War I. Relying on the belief that we were above dirtying our hands in European wars, the country refrained from joining the struggle until neutral rights were violated, and then justified its entry into the war with Woodrow Wilson's insistence that we had the responsibility to "make the world safe for democracy" by convincing the warring nations of Europe to transfer some measure of sovereignty to a new international body, the League of Nations. Wilson's war message assured his listeners that "we have no selfish ends to serve" and that America shall fight "for the principles that gave her birth and happiness" (Wilson, 1917; cited in Graebner, 1964, pp. 448-449). His steadfast – some say stubborn – insistence on the League of Nations covenant without reservations would lead to his political doom. That the U.S. ultimately would choose not to join the League was an ironic end to the story, but it does not belie Wilson's reliance on the exceptional moral position of the United States as a justification for war. It is the failure of other nations to share the high moral convictions of the U.S. that makes it necessary to make the world safe for democracy over and over again.

Belief in the special status of the United States and the special power of its declarations was particularly marked during the years of the Cold War. This belief

again was useful: it gave to the nation a way out of the dilemma posed by the advent of nuclear weapons. They were so powerful that they could not be used without risking nuclear annihilation. Yet the United States must convince other nations that we would be willing to use them as necessary; otherwise they would not function as a deterrent to a Soviet attack. As a substitute for bombs, national leaders issued declarations of American policy – calling for a rollback of the Iron Curtain, encouraging captive peoples of Eastern Europe to rise up against tyrannical regimes, "unleashing" Chiang Kai-shek to recapture the mainland if he were able to do so. If events turned out in our favor, that proved the moral force of American declarations; if they were adverse, that proved only that we had not been strong and forceful enough. When the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended, these events were widely taken as proof that the United States had "won" the Cold War, yet further evidence that the U.S. enjoyed God's special favor.

It is not surprising, then, that following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, many in the United States resorted to this same frame of reference to explain the dastardly deeds and to determine their response. In President Bush's account, the terrorists hate us because of our freedom, but we ultimately will prevail over them because we know that "God is not neutral" between freedom and fear. He also is reported to have said about the same time that God had placed him in office at just that moment for a special reason: to lead the world toward the conquest of terrorism. The conviction that he is carrying out a God-given mission is the source of the self-confidence and assurance that seems to many Europeans to be arrogance and closed-minded unwillingness to re-examine assumptions. His decisions are taken independently of military results, American public opinion, or criticism on the part of European allies. And many Americans, whether or not they like the results, admire the resoluteness of his stance and the self-assurance he displays. This fact helps to explain why 60 million Americans, including many who were opposed to this or that specific policy, nevertheless supported him for re-election. And it may help to explain why, even now, the U.S. Republican Party is rallying support for the midterm Congressional elections by insisting that the nation stay the course in Iraq, even though that is a policy with which a majority of Americans disagree. It does not matter what setbacks and reverses we suffer at any given moment; we are confident of how the conflict ultimately will end, because of the special role that God has called us to play.

What I have tried to suggest is that, across time, a variety of American actions in the world have been justified by the argument, often unstated, that they are the fulfillment of a divine plan which has been vouchsafed to Americans by virtue of

their being God's chosen. Yet many in other nations, especially in Europe, are unwilling to accept that often unstated argument, so they find American foreign policy to be belligerent and often incoherent. This helps to explain why justifications for America's role in the world are often seen so much differently in the U.S. and in Europe.

3. *The contemporary moment*

An obvious question presents itself, however. If the strand of American exceptionalism traces back over 300 years, how can we explain the fact that it is only in recent years that the U.S. has been so heavily criticized in Europe? The central answer is that until now, for the most part, uncomfortable American pronouncements did not need to be taken seriously by other nations.

For much of the 19th century, the United States was so weak that its pronouncements about its exceptional status could be safely ignored by others. The historian C. Vann Woodward has maintained that those years constituted an era of "free security," in which it was actually the British navy, protecting British interests, which served American interests at the same time (Woodward, 1960). If he is correct, then Americans could convince themselves that their safety resulted from God's favor, even as a hypothetical third-party observer would say that it resulted from British naval power. Similarly, most of the European powers had their own reasons for limiting the colonization of the New World in the aftermath of the Monroe Doctrine. So no harm is done in allowing the Americans to believe that their Doctrine really had some deterrent power in and of itself. And the recognition that American entry into World War I was a means to break a stalemate and bring the Allied Powers to victory need not obscure the oft-made claim that entering the war to vindicate a principle was a fulfillment of our God-given mission.

The strategic position of the United States dramatically changed, of course, as a result of World War II. Now, suddenly, along with the Soviet Union, the United States *did* occupy a position not unlike that about which her leaders spoke – whether or not they did so at the direction of God. To the degree that they signaled a course of action, the words of the U.S. *did* mean something. The U.S., abandoning a policy that went back to George Washington, did join alliances and help to lead them. The suddenly huge power of the United States demanded that other nations take American statements seriously, even if they did not always agree with them.

The bipolar world of the Cold War years began to come apart during the 1960's, with the Sino-Soviet split undermining the unity of the East and the Vietnam war that of the West. For the most part, the ensuing years were occupied with the search for East-West détente and with multilateral initiatives such as the assembly of the Persian Gulf War coalition in 1990 and 1991. It is only in relatively recent years that a particular combination of challenges presents itself: the asymmetrical warfare threats posed by terrorism that are virtually impossible to counteract by a nation acting alone, the persistent belief in American exceptionalism among those in the U.S., and the unwillingness of several European nations to defer to American perspectives or American leadership. This is a volatile combination.

Does the study of public argument offer any resources to deal with this situation? Perhaps so, if we return to the origins of American exceptionalism in U.S. foreign policy. The belief that Americans are "chosen" and have a special mission was used to justify intervening in other nations and becoming involved in conflicts. But it also was used to justify the opposite. From time to time a powerful line of argument was that the United States, as an exceptional nation, did not need to sully itself with diplomatic and military intrigue. If its power was moral, it could exercise that power as a role model, by providing a standard that others would wish to imitate – to be, in the 19th century parlance, the "beacon on the western shore." Choices *not* to become involved in some of the world's conflicts, such as the Greek revolution of the 1820's or the paroxysm that swept Europe in 1848, were defended by arguing that it was the special role of the United States to transcend these individual conflicts and instead to uphold model behavior that could be emulated by people everywhere who aspired to be free. Indeed, it was thought that the U.S. would *sacrifice* its moral advantage if it descended to the level of realpolitik. This notion was at least alluded to in an under-studied part of President Bush's September 20, 2001 speech, when he said, "We are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them." If Americans put their principles at risk by the way they responded to terrorism, they risked jeopardizing both.

The appeal to function as the "beacon" was used sometimes to justify isolationism, which is clearly not an option in the contemporary world. But multilateralism is. Sharing sovereignty between state and national governments is at the heart of the American experiment. It is possible to argue that today's international bodies, ranging from the European Union to the International Court of Justice, represent the next natural step in that evolution. And, of course, in

such bodies the claim of American exceptionalism would need to be tempered by the practical necessities of building coalitions and counting votes, just as rhetorical argumentation is always adapted to the needs imposed by the speaker's view of the audience.

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ISSA Proceedings 2006 – Preface

The *Sixth Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (ISSA)*, held in Amsterdam in June 2006, drew more submissions for presentations than any ISSA Conference before. After a strict selection procedure, 300 scholars were invited to present their papers at the

Conference. In addition, the Conference attracted some 200 interested colleagues and students who just wanted to attend the presentations and take part in the discussions. All in all, 500 people interested in argumentation assembled in Amsterdam to present papers and exchange views.

The 2006 ISSA Conference was, like previous ones, an international meeting place for argumentation scholars from a great variety of academic backgrounds and traditions, representing a wide range of academic disciplines and approaches: speech communication, logic (formal and informal), rhetoric (classical and modern), philosophy, linguistics, discourse analysis, pragmatics, law, political sciences, psychology, education, religious studies, and artificial intelligence. Besides philosophical papers dealing with argumentation and epistemology, there are, for instance, theoretical papers about meta-dialogues and strategic manoeuvring in argumentative discourse, empirical papers about argumentation and persuasion, and papers dealing with argumentative practices in law, politics and religion. There are also a number of case studies, papers about argumentation and education and the teaching of argumentation, and papers about specific topics such as Buddhist argumentation. Among the general topics that are treated are, as always, the fallacies, and – increasingly popular – argumentation and artificial intelligence. In the opinion of the editors, the Proceedings of the Sixth ISSA Conference fully reflect the current richness of the discipline.

More than two thirds of the papers presented at the Conference are included in the Proceedings. Some of the papers presented at the Conference were not offered for publication in the Proceedings and after the papers that were submitted had been reviewed meticulously some papers were not accepted. The editors decided to publish only those papers that met their quality standards. Some papers have been revised on the basis of the reviewers' comments. The Proceedings of the Conference are again published by Sic Sat. The 2006 Proceedings are published in two volumes. In addition to the hard copy publication, a CD ROM version is also available. For the reader's convenience, in the Proceedings the papers are arranged in the alphabetical order of the authors' surnames.

The three ISSA board member remaining after Rob Grootendorst's death are joined as Proceedings editors by Bart Garssen, who was also actively engaged in organising the Conference. Frans H. van Eemeren and Bart Garssen took care of

the practical details of the editorial process. As in the past, the editors were greatly helped by a large international team of experienced reviewers, who must remain anonymous. Their evaluations and constructive suggestions have enhanced the quality of these Proceedings, and the editors are grateful to them. In addition, we received invaluable assistance in preparing the Proceedings from the members of the Department of Speech Communication, Argumentation Theory and Rhetoric of the Universiteit van Amsterdam and from other members of the research group 'Argumentation in Discourse' of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). We thank all these argumentation theorists for their help in getting the manuscripts ready for publication. Last but not least, we would like to thank our publisher friends Auke van der Berg and Ingrid Bouws for their careful work in producing these Proceedings.

For their support of the conference, the editors would like to express their gratitude to the Board of the University of Amsterdam, the Faculty of Humanities, the Amsterdam University Association (AUV), the City of Amsterdam, Springer Publishing House, John Benjamins Publishing Company and the International Centre for the Study of Argumentation (Sic Sat) in Amsterdam. For financial support of these Proceedings they are grateful to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Dutch-Belgian Speech Communication Association (VIOT), the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), and, again, the International Center for the Study of Argumentation and Speech Communication (Sic Sat).

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ISSA Proceedings 2006 – Accepting Premises And Systems Of Belief

1. *Introduction*

Many informal logic texts inform their readers to test premise acceptability in order to determine whether or not support or justification for a conclusion in an argument is cogent or warranted (MacKinnon, 1985, Govier, 1985, for example). In some logic texts, premise acceptability is the first test which precedes and takes logical priority over tests of premise relevance and an adequate set of acceptably relevant premise to establish sufficient evidential grounds for a cogent argument. So, for example, Trudy Govier (Govier, 1985) argues for a priority ranking of the cogency test that she calls the A acceptance, R relevance, and finally in priority order the G or grounds test for argument cogency. One of the standard tests for premise acceptability is whether a premise satisfies the common knowledge condition. However, this test is considered potentially problematic because it is believed that common knowledge varies by context and situation. Some theorists, such as Bruno Snell in the *Greek Mind* and Julian Jaynes in the *Origin of Consciousness and the Bicameral Mind* (Harvard, 1986), argue for a psychological or in the latter case a psychophysical origin for historical variations in the common sense belief set. Common beliefs change over time, change by audience, and change due to varying knowledge conditions, as argued by N.R. Hanson in the *Patterns of Scientific Discovery* and Thomas Kuhn, in the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* (1972) his ironic contribution to the *Encyclopedia of the Unified Sciences*. So, according to these views, there is little 'common' about common knowledge.

At the same time, there seems to be the prevalent countervailing belief that common knowledge is universal; that is, there are some common beliefs that do not vary by time, context or situated knowledge base. There have been few thorough and systematic attempts to demonstrate the theoretical underpinnings of such claims to universal, common knowledge as the foundation for the presumptive acceptance of basic premises. James Freeman in his book *Acceptable Premises: An Epistemic Approach to an Informal Logic Problem* (2005) offers a

considered and sustained attempt to provide a critically argued philosophical foundation to test for the acceptability of universal common knowledge in order to provide the theoretical protocol for the common knowledge acceptability test. While generally supportive of Freeman's efforts (see my review of his text in *Choice*, November, 2005), I will (following his suggested approach) provide some critical challenges that could hopefully provide the means for useful changes to the text, both in terms of additions and re-thinking of some aspects of his common sense foundationalism in theory and practical application.

2. *Freeman's Foundationalism*

Freeman argues for an epistemic foundation for common beliefs. These beliefs ground what he calls *presumptively reliable premises* in an argument, premises if denied shift the burden of proof to the challenger since they have common sense epistemic and pragmatic theoretical warrant (Freeman, 2005, 21-72). The basic beliefs can be about experiential matters of perceptual fact, subjective introspective reports, the motive(s) of other minds which account for their successful behaviour and judgements and intuitively-based ethical values behind a sense of common conscience (Freeman, 2005, 369-371). Such beliefs, claims Freeman, are basic if they are immune to a plausible challengers' criticisms. In a dialogical context, when a proponent asserts a basic belief, which has pragmatic consequences for making successful judgements in an argument, the burden of proof to defend the basic claim moves to a challenger. The failure of a challenger to refute the fundamental premise establishes its contingent [subject to other possible challenges] presumptively reliable accountability. Freeman defends his analysis of common knowledge using Reid's notion of common sense. Freeman's trump on plausible objections to common sense conditions for universal claims about perception, introspection and ethical intuition is to theorize that each of us is equipped with a *life design plan,* (Freeman, 2005, 43-56) a natural (principle of our) human *constitution* (Freeman, 2005, 191, 212-213, 239, 242), or a moral *conscience* (Freeman, 2005, 274-275) which grounds common sense beliefs.

Freeman's account is detailed, and technically thorough, providing a needed theoretical foundation for presumptively reliable premises. However, following his own analysis, it will still be useful to present some critical challenges to his foundationalism. These challenges are intended to open up some further possibilities for enhancing his views. The challenges will be of two general kinds – theoretical and practical. The theoretical challenges should help to illuminate both inherent critical issues and some of the practical problems in applying his

views to arguments in the public domain. Arguments that occur in this domain occur in public debates about what policies or decisions should be made that involve the public good. These arguments have take place since the earliest discussions in the market place of Athens. Hence identification of theoretical challenges in this general context should help us to understand problems with the practical application of some of Freeman's claims about common or universal basic beliefs as they underpin arguments. This also follows Freeman's practical claim that we must consider the pragmatic consequences of accepting or rejecting any basic belief or premise.

3. *Theoretical Challenges to Freeman's Common Sense Foundationalism*

The first theoretical challenge to Freeman's foundational account is his claim that presumptively reliable beliefs have their authority in the theoretical construct of a natural human constitution, plan of life, or conscience (Freeman, 2005, 242-250). At worst, this may be an incidence of begging the question about the plausible authority for presumptively reliable beliefs. For example, it begs the question to claim that in the case of the sadist and the masochist that "the mechanism to feel satisfaction has been warped" since the theoretically imagined mechanism is supposed to provide the foundation for a normative account that cannot presume it exists (Freeman, 2005, 238). At best, this may be a place holder for a subsequent reduction to a Rylean inspired behavioural account in the *Concept of Mind* that eliminates the need for "mind talk" (similar to Freud's suggestion in *Civilization and its Discontents* that his tripartite psyche account will be replaced by a subsequent neurobiological account)

The second theoretical challenge, following Reid's common sense view, is that common sense is not uniform (Freeman, 2005, 126-135, 367). It is not illogical to have two common sense claims about the same subject or area in conflict with each other (Fearn, 2001, 91) So, it is logically possible for two presumptively reliable beliefs asserting opposing claims. For example, a common belief which is assumed to be presumptively reliable is that taking a human life is murder and wrong. At the same time, there is a presumptively reliable belief that taking the human life of a fetus is *not* murder. These are not binary opposites but they are conflicting common sense beliefs. The challenge is to identify how we can reasonably decide that one is more presumptively reliable than another. It is not clear if Freeman meets the challenge. It is Freeman's failure to recognize this challenge that contributes to his faulty presumption in favour of a universal, common sense foundation as the source of all basic beliefs.

The third challenge is a version of the *'ought-is'* confusion. Freeman's analysis seems more about what we ought to do than what we, in fact, do when we argue. This presents a gap that needs to be filled. Under ideal conditions, presumptive reliability can be established for basic beliefs and basic premises but much argumentation occurs in less than ideal conditions. It won't do, even on the basis of some ascetic observer scenario, to assume the presumptive reliability of a belief and then condemn a challenger for not satisfying the conditions of the burden of proof. The real world does not operate in this way. This game of argumentation is played under less than ideal rules by people using less than optimal knowledge of how to argue well. Freeman argues that plausible belief-generating mechanisms can generally be assumed to generate reliable beliefs. However, these ideal theoretical mechanisms may not be in play for both proponent and challenger. Indeed, traditionally philosophy has been open to the challenge posed by different belief-generating mechanisms. For example, existentialists such as Nietzsche challenge the belief-generating mechanisms of Hegel's rationalism and Lutheran dogmatism to establish the acceptable basis for beliefs.

The fourth theoretical challenge involves Freeman's consistent use of the perceptual analogy to account for shared intuitions, shared sympathies and universal moral sense (Freeman, 2005, 191-192, 238). Just as we have a perception of 'yellowness', we equally have a sense of empathetic sympathy, rightness and duty. However, Mill's classic example of comparing natural auditory sensations to equally natural, pleasurable sensations is a dis-analogy because, in the latter case, inclination, disposition, deliberation, and attention are required but not in the former. Pleasurable sensations are not significantly like auditory perceptions. For example, I don't intend to see or hear in the same way that I experience pleasure. As well, I don't correct mistaken judgements in the first case the same way I do in the second one. However, Freeman suggests that in terms of the basic beliefs inherent in common sense, perception, intuition and introspection provide a sound foundation or source for similar basic beliefs. This seems to be parallel to Mill's dis-analogy, especially since intuition and introspection are not analogous to perception.

The fifth theoretical challenge involves Freeman's use of testimony, personal and expert, as the content of basic premises in an argument (Freeman, 2005, 292-308). There is an ambiguity inherent in personal testimony, which he fails to acknowledge. My personal testimony may be a report of my feelings, personal preferences, subjective desires or likes, etc., whose authority is authenticated by

me in a belief generating process called *opinionation* (for a more extensive discussion of the differences between opinionation and argumentation (Gough, 2001). There is an ambiguity here about whether it is my personal feelings about x that give it authority or my asserting testimony about independent events that actually took place. Freeman seems unaware of this ambiguity (Freeman, 2005, 290-291) in his discussion of the acceptability of expert testimony. As well, there is a personal testimonial about what took place in a particular time at a particular location. The authority for this testimony is clearly different from that of an opinion. To further confuse the situation, I may be self-deceived about the source and nature of my own personal testimony. The challenge is to integrate these qualifications into the reliability test of presumptive acceptability of personal testimony.

There is a similar possible confusion in the case of expert testimony. To trust such testimony, personal interpretation needs to be incorporated into qualifications of what constitutes presumptively reliable expert testimony. For example, there was a failed attempt by the U.S. government to find experts to testify on the nature of religion in its efforts to establish that scientology was *not* a religion; this was due to the fact that no definition of religion was exempt from differing and conflicting interpretations. There were no interpretation free facts to appeal to in this case. Expert testimony is not exempt from personal and institutional interpretation especially since expertise is parceled off in very limited and constrained departments. An expert in psychoanalysis is not an expert in behaviourism or even some behaviourist school or theory.

These five theoretical challenges suggest that there may be critical problems with Freeman's foundational basis for deciding on presumptively reliable premises. Ideologically-based foundational beliefs may be an important part of our psychological belief-generating mechanisms and independent of the basic beliefs of others. So, it isn't that a challenger shares but challenges a basic belief of the proponent. The situation is not so accommodating. It is rather that the basic belief of the proponent may not be shared by the challenger and no amount of pragmatic hand wringing or shifting burden of proof can accommodate or rectify this fundamental difference. Any appeal to shared basic conceptual beliefs falls short of Freeman's shared common sense mechanisms and warrants.

These theoretical issues or problems with Freeman's account point to the critical issue that his own epistemological view is not neutral. Instead his epistemology is itself grounded in an ideology, an ideology found in a psychological or conceptual

system of beliefs. This underlies the practical problems with Freeman's approach to premise acceptability based on a universal common knowledge base.

4. *Conflicting Belief Systems*

There is a rhetorical tradition for understanding arguments based on the notion of conflicting systems of belief. On this view, beliefs are not independent of each other but make sense only within a system or a set. What one belief is connected to provides its plausibility (or acceptability) within the set. Systems of belief are relative to different individuals in different groups in different contexts. Any universal common beliefs are inter-subjectively or cross-culturally related on the basis of some kind of translation manual. The importance of belief systems in understanding the dialogical context of arguments has been identified by several people in the area [e.g. Gough, 1985, Groarke and Tindale, 2001, Rescher, 2001]. The systems of belief are conceptual and provide us with a way of coherently approaching the world and critically confronting the views of others. They provide security in one's individual identity within a system of beliefs and a sense of stability in one's world view. Within these systems, there are core, fundamental, or what Freeman would call, *basic* beliefs and there are (Quine, 1978) *peripheral* beliefs that are tempered by both empirical experience and the conceptual core content of the system of beliefs. Both kinds of beliefs may change over time or their location can change from periphery to core or core to periphery. This is a kind of hermeneutical to-and-fro movement from external limits to internal constraints and from external bombardments to internal amendments. Peripheral beliefs are subject to critical bombardment from outside the system and critical challenges from the core set within the system. The system is not based on correspondence relative relations but coherence relative relationships, in order to provide a meaningful base of the system's value or integrity. System integrity is more important to the system and its set of basic beliefs than any so-called "empirical reality check", since no such check is made outside or independent of the interpreted set of beliefs.

5. *Practical Challenges to Freeman's Common Sense Foundationalism*

To illustrate the role played by basic beliefs in conceptual systems, I will provide some examples of arguments from public debates both historical and current. It is my view that in these debates there is a conflict between basic fundamental beliefs and what different belief systems accept as presumptively reliable premises. So the need is only partially epistemic since there needs to be some

kind of conceptual, psychological, negotiation between belief systems in order to identify [a] what are in fact cross-system basic beliefs and presumptively reliable basic premises, and [b] ways of critically evaluating what are mistakenly taken to be basic beliefs and presumptively reliable premises. Following my earlier critical response to Reid's common sense epistemology, there may be conflicting common-sense beliefs which authorize different presumptively reliable basic premises. There is some confusion over border crossings and what mediation should take place to alleviate conflicts. Freeman may be correct in his view that we should argue from a universal common sense foundation, but it remains doubtful that we do argue from such a foundation.

There is an argument that has a long history in the ideas about the relationship of women to society that I call the Fit-by-Nature argument. Here are some common features in this argument:

6. *Basic Presumptions of the Fit by Nature Argument*
1. There is a natural condition of women, which separates them from men.[authorities for this source are religion + politics]
2. This condition which is common to all women is not something that any woman deliberated about or chose but rather something *she (and every other woman) discovered about herself and more significantly men discovered about her (and every other woman)*. [the authorities for this source are religion + science]
3. It is a FACT that women have this common condition or set of features. Such *facts cannot be contested, are non-controversial*, and so by force of logic must be accepted. [the authority for this source is primarily science]
4. This common, *natural condition is taken to be an acceptable discriminating feature to identify women* and separate them from men because no society or individual or group gave this feature to women. It occurred without the interference or intention of any human being, which is good.[the authority for this source can primarily be found in the history of views in philosophy]
5. There is a common belief that that which is natural is good. So, by analogous or parallel reasoning, what is natural to women must be good (following 4. above) and an uncontested or uncontroversial or factual good (following 3. above).
6. What is natural is found in the natural world, the world of nature. The way that we find things in the natural world is through observation. *Observation identifies for us physical (by definition, observable) features* of the natural world. [the authority for this source is primarily science + politics]

7. In the natural world, the value(s) of things or entities is often identified and categorized in terms of their natural function(s). *Purpose follows natural function.* If we discover something's purpose, then we discover its value or goal or aim or reason for existing. [the authority for this source is in science + philosophy]
8. The world of civilization or society should be governed by the natural world, in the sense that what is natural is what should be promoted in our society or civilization through its customs, traditions and regulatory laws or edicts. *Society should be the mirror of the situation in the natural world.* If something occurs in the natural world, then it should be valued in society. [see Assumption 9]
9. Sometimes the argument has the following nuance. What is natural is identified as what is approved by God. Since God created the natural world and everything in it, then the laws and features of the natural world which serve to continue its existence must be good and since all good comes from God, that which is natural must come from God. This view *links God with the natural world* so that the two cannot be separated. This view has a separate set of supporters and objectors. [Natural Law; see Assumption 10]
10. That which is natural has come about by some kind of design, either evolutionary or God-given design, and is not the result of any random or accidental set of occurrences. Accidental occurrences are generally not valued as much as deliberate or deterministically decided and not open to alteration on the basis of free will. [see Assumption 9]
11. That which is natural describes the role and function of women in society (and men). [see Assumptions 9 & 10]

There may be more assumptions at work in the ensuing argument, but these will be sufficient to demonstrate some of the presumptions and questionable assumptions at work in this argument, that seem to function as basic premises.

7. *The Argument built on the Basic Assumptions of the Fit by Nature Argument*
From the set of Assumptions above, the following support is offered in the argument.
1. Women are fit, by nature, to bear children. Men are, by nature, *not* fit to bear children. [or, another way of putting this same claim: There are identifiable physical biological differences between women and men. These are factually determined and not a matter of anyone's subjective values.]
2. Human beings are composed of a physical and a psychological nature, which is linked by our understanding of the causal relationship between the physical

nature and the psychological nature. [This is a version of a view known as dualism; we are all composed of a physical and non-physical nature.] Or, (alternative reading of this claim) a human being's physical nature is a replica or mirror of that human's psychological nature, making the two identical. [This is a version of a view known as monism, or physicalism or materialism]. One's nature includes tendencies, talents, dispositions, capacities and abilities, which may be unique according to one's gender.

3. Women are by nature [not by choice or anyone's deliberate actions (see Presumptions 3 & 6)] weaker than men. This is simply a matter of fact, which can be tested by any number of observations.

4. If women are by nature physically weaker than men (as in #3 above) then it follows that they must be psychologically weaker than men as well. [innate or determined by God: see Presumption 9]

5. Certain roles, positions, jobs or situations in society require strong (both physically and psychologically: see #2 above) individuals who naturally are able to take control and rule, rather than be ruled by events. These are positions of socio-political power or authority in any state or government.

6. In the natural world, outside civilization and society, the stronger naturally rules the weaker. [This situation is good and should be followed in any society or civilization, which hopes to be good by functioning well according to the natural order of the world: see Presumptions 2-5 and 8-10]

7. So, in society the male should naturally assume a position of rule over the female to preserve the natural order of the world of nature and society. Any political organization, which preserves the natural organization of the genders in the natural world, is good in the sense that it is more efficient and it preserves the well-being of everyone.

8. The discrimination against women in any political state is acceptable because it is not the result of any deliberate actions of one gender over the other but rather a natural discrimination [as such both deterministic-inevitable] defined by features beyond any individual's deliberate decision or control.

9. Men are fit by nature to assume various roles in society, which involve leadership, ruling, management and authority over women.

10. Society should direct, through the use of customs, practices, codes and enforced laws, men into certain roles and women into other roles, according to their respectively different natures.

11. The education of children should be based on their subsequent natural roles in society. (Mahowald, 1994)

8. *Basic Differences between Challengers and Proponents*

This fit-by-nature argument is an example of a set of beliefs which are connected and supported by an ideological worldview. From the first presentation of the argument by Glaucon, to Socrates in *The Republic of Plato* (Mahowald, 1994, 1-32), the argument is based on the fundamental belief that physical gender differences are significant for psychological, intellectual and political distinctions separating the two genders. Males are fit to rule and females are fit to be ruled. Mary Wollstoncraft, (Gough, 2005, Mahowald, 1994, 112-128) John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor, (Mahowald, 1994, 151-185) Simone de Bouvoir (Mahowald, 1994, 201-221), and others see the faults in this historically enduring argument (in all of its variations and nuances) finding that there is no epistemic research to support any of the claims. These claims are more ideological, part of an ideologically based system of beliefs rather than a consideration of empirical reality. Wollstonecraft finds the view so irrational as to be absurd (Gough, 2005) and Mill finds it completely lacking in any empirical comparisons to other "natural" possibilities (Mahowald, 1994, 152).

Freeman is correct to claim *there is a need for presumptively reliable beliefs common to a universal audience*; this is what ought to be the case, according to Mill, Wollestonecroft and others (Mahowald, 1994), yet he appears mistaken that there is such an audience that shares this same presumptively reliable belief about the nature of women. In spite of the extensive experience of both men and women, the fit-by-nature beliefs have survived for centuries, however impractical, perceptually unreliable or intuitively implausible they appear to be (according to Freeman). So, there is something missing from Freeman's foundation account of common knowledge and its reliable presumptions.

In case this fit-by-nature argument may appear to be an example of an historical anomaly, it will be useful to consider another argument currently prominent in the public domain. Despite extensive scientific evidence collected by proponents of the Kyoto Accord's restrictions on greenhouse gas emissions, conservative challengers claim that the evidence is not presumptively reliable. The reason for this conflict is fundamental to the differences between proponents and challengers in this public debate; the fundamental challenge, current to Kyoto, is similar to the earlier creationists' challenges to evolutionary theory and current intelligent design challenges to the theory of evolution.

A fundamental presumptively reliable belief of the challengers is that the

measurements or tests used to either make predictions or retrodictions (in the case of the effects of greenhouse emissions), are grossly inadequate. So it is not necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, given any amount of accumulated evidence which is based on an unreliable source. This basic belief is in conflict with the empirical scientists' belief that computational models and other measurement mechanisms are as accurate as necessary to give us good reasons to reduce greenhouse emission.

The conflict in this case is based on two conflicting basic conceptual beliefs, both presumed to be reliable. First there is the belief that a computational model is the best way to change the information content of systems to accurately predict inter-system relations and extra-system consequences within constant changes to the system. The challengers literally cannot see that this basic belief (and the mechanisms that support it) is reliable. Such inability to see can only be based on environmental factors, according to Freeman [since there is only minimal conceptual content to his "being appeared to" phenomenal account]. Instead, they believe that science is only as good as the stable unchanging evidential base of its predictions. It is difficult to imagine how an appeal to a shared set of presumptively reliable basic premises could occur and be used to attempt to resolve this conflict. However, that is precisely what we might hope an argument could accomplish. Again, Freeman appears right in his analysis of what is needed in such cases but it remains questionable whether there are ideological neutral, presumptively reliable beliefs of the kind he requires in such cases.

The following representative argument for global warming should give us some ground for making this criticism.

9. *Arguments For and Against Global Warming*

Background: According to ecologists, the earth is a closed system of interconnected species and organisms that is subject to internal change and attempts to retain, renew, and continue to exist as a dynamic entity.

Basic Assumption 1: The earth as a dynamic system continues to change but always following patterns that are internally predictable, with suitable computer modeling, over protracted periods of time.

Basic Assumption 2: The earth is a throughput system with energy coming into the system from without and waste from the use of energy remaining inside the earth (system) trapped in sinks.

Basic Assumption 3: The earth is a closed system (an economic system by

comparison is an open system) and strategies for responding to a closed system are not identical in efficiency or acceptability to an open system. Examples of closed systems are a biotic system or the system proposed by the Giaa proposal.
Basic Assumption 4: Although it is not necessarily formally logical, there is a widespread belief that the future in many relevant respects resembles the past, a regularity which is assumed in induction.
Basic Assumption 5: A system is coherent when all parts relate or connect to each other, given that the set of possibilities is finite.

Sub-Conclusion: Changes to the earth's atmosphere at the level of the biosphere can be best accounted for by considering the elevated levels of CO2, methane and hydrocarbon emissions (Desjardins, 1999, 259-286, 394-343)

10. *The Argument from Kyoto Opponents*
The arguments against the Kyoto Accord often have the following (or similar) components:
Presumption 1: All measurements of global warming fail to be adequate. All climate projections are merely computer models, through which scientists try to take into account as many variables as they can, with whatever mathematical formulas they believe apply. More sophisticated models take into account literally hundreds of factors but, by necessity, contain thousands of best-guesses, or are simply silent on certain subjects. No model is better than the assumptions that went into its designing. By definition, models are nothing more than a collection of scientific theories, prejudices and guesses. So, using computers to predict the future is simply a high tech veneer over the plain fact that climate modeling is sheer guesswork.

Presumption 2: The increased levels of carbon monoxide will either (a) not produce the ecologist's predicted outcomes, or (b) other more serious problems need to be remedied. This supports an argument against signing an international accord to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

11. *Conclusion*
On Freeman's account, a basic presumption in an argument can be undercut by relevant factors against its acceptance. However, the challenger to the proponent of the Kyoto Accord has a different set of presumptions, equally basic and in conflict to the proponent's basic presumptions. In this situation, science is of no help in forging a set of presumptively basic beliefs because the belief-generating

mechanisms of science are in doubt. The differences in basic beliefs between proponent and opponent of Kyoto restrictions are *ideological* which doesn't necessarily make them biased or distorted. Instead, these differences need to be addressed by a negotiated process of mediation, by which a shared set of presumptively reliable beliefs can be determined. This is a negotiated starting point not a presumptively reliable epistemic foundation.

If Freeman can accommodate this kind of psychological/ideological component to the epistemologically grounded/presumptively reliable basic set of beliefs, then his foundation will become fluid yet more psychologically and epistemologically reliable. Human beings have a sense of self-identity, satisfaction and community within a shared system of beliefs. If we understand this belief system and the confusions created by ambiguities in personal and expert testimony, then we can understand the tendency to try to preserve the integrity of the system's coherence rather than to respond to outside, peripheral challenges.

Shared intuitions, common value beliefs, and interpretations, in fact, need to be negotiated through considered argumentation, not presumed on the basis of "some aspect of our human constitution" or the need to "avoid some hypothetically unacceptable bad consequences" questioning our ability to make good judgements. It is not belief-generating mechanisms that are at fault but the ideological commitments behind the use of these mechanisms that create the conflicts in public debates and need to be mediated through considered argumentation. As one proponent of the rhetorical model of argument suggests, "the challenge is to try to see the problem *from the perspective* of the author, despite the vast distance between us. To imagine what the world looked like for Plato, is to think in terms of the assumptions and traditions that to a certain extent constrained his thinking. Then one can begin to assess his reasoning on its own terms, not on ours." (Tindale 1999, p. 76)

Following this suggestion, there is at least one possible example of such a mediation. The system of beliefs known as free-market environmentalism is fundamentally at odds with the system of beliefs of deep ecologists. In the first case, there is a basic belief in growth of self-created wealth. In the second set of beliefs there is a fundamental or basic belief in growth. Unlike the first system, the ecologist believes that growth is subject to the natural evolutionary conditions of the life system and as such should be in accord with maintaining the overall health, well-being or integrity of the ecosystem. These two sets of beliefs are in conflict over the basic beliefs at the core of each system. Growth is interpreted

differently according to each system (Gough, 2003).

There is nothing prima facie in common between these two basic beliefs about growth. However, the use of the idea of sustainable growth has been moderately successful in finding a negotiated mediation point between the two basic beliefs about growth. Economic growth is constrained by the limits of the ecosystem to maintain both the integrity of the economist's basic belief in growth and for the ecologist there are possible non-ecological uses of the natural world that are marginally potentially acceptable. This is tenuous mediation subject to rejections, compromises and constant revisions – it is a fluid not a fixed foundational base (Fisher, 1981).

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