

ISSA Proceedings 1998 - The Guggenheim: A Rhetorical Turn In Architecture



1. Introduction

This essay represents a preliminary report on ongoing conversations between Michael Lorimer and myself over the connections between architecture and rhetoric. Michael not only teaches architecture but he is also a practicing architect. He has designed churches, hospitals,

homes and office buildings, and added an extension to the local art museum. In order to indicate the tenor of our exchanges, let me offer a transcript of a recent dialogue we had at Michael's home over a cup of tea.

"There is for me," I began, "a profound difference between structures designed for religious organizations and those designed for domestic or commercial purposes. Commercial buildings find their foundations in the bottom line, while Catholic and Protestant Churches as well as Taoist and Buddhist temples, by way of contrast, have as one of their purposes the inspiration and instruction of the faithful. We recognize this difference in our experience of sacred in contrast to secular space."

Ponderous, I admit, but it reflected my honest experience and a modest amount of thinking on the subject. Michael is a good listener, but he had an odd look on his face. When I had finished, he leaned back from the table and, without even a hint of irony, responded. "There is," he said, no real difference, from an architectural point of view, between secular and religious structures. Both take as their goal the manipulation of people. What you refer to as "the sacred" and assume a difference in the response of those who enter such spaces has much to do with structure. Is the purpose to fill people with awe or to engender a sense of community? Is it to move them, in procession, from one point to another or to have them gather together as a family? A reverential attitude arises out of certain kinds of structures and is blunted by others. Your attitude about "sacred space" is evidence that the structure achieved its desired effect. He saw that I was puzzled, so he went on to explain this in architectural terms:

Department stores, churches, and casinos all try to divorce you from the outside.

None of them has clear glass windows. Airports and fast-food restaurants, on the other hand, try to move you quickly from point A to point B, from inside the structure to outside the structure. Harsh lighting, uninviting colors, noise, a clear vision of the out-of-doors announces their purpose and accounts for the response, seemingly voluntary, of flyers and customers. This all made sense to me, but I asked him if he thought that reflected what architects he knew generally thought or how they are trained in the universities or if this represented his peculiar take on the subject.

The above is a reasonably accurate transcription, as I took notes on it during and immediately after the exchange. I report it less because I think it conveys something profound, though it certainly did for me, but because it highlights a way of knowing that precedes recorded history and continues to inform the production, reading, and interpretation of books and articles. It is a way of knowing that operates in villages and towns, developed and developing countries, among the rich and poor, those who possess word processors and those who have never heard of them. I report it because academic writing, by its very nature conceals this process, substituting in its place a product, a text flattening out everything into soundless marks on a page or, in the case of this conference, represents presentations filled, one hopes, with lively exchanges afterward into a chapter in these "conference proceedings."

It is important to mark this product-process confusion for a number of reasons, not the least of which is to avoid the silliness that comes from a gradual disengagement from the world of affairs into a quasi-monastic retreat into books, libraries, and web-sites. Leaving off this little polemic in favor of earthy, here and now dialogue, I return to the topic of the new Guggenheim, a rhetorical turn in architecture, and the degree to which Michael's understanding of architects and architecture, which is remarkably friendly to rhetoric, is somehow representative.

2. The Rhetorical Function of Contemporary Museums

This last question weighed upon me: how much weight to place on Michael's analysis. Understand me here. I value his insights and find them profound, but what I wanted to avoid was assuming this his rhetoric-friendly analysis was widespread in the profession. In researching the New Guggenheim, Michael came across an article about museums in, *World Architecture*:

Museums are attracting more visitors than ever before, and although the building

boom in Europe is over, in many countries, especially in North America, architects are benefiting from opportunities for new galleries and museums to satisfy the demand. The key to their success is tourism, and the accompanying ticket and merchandise sales (Cost 1997: 106).

Apart from the importance of profits in understanding museums is the emphasis on building them to attract audiences. What this refers to is an effort to attract audiences able and willing to spend money (which is to say that somewhere near the heart of the museum industry is a conscious and quite concrete effort to create a structure that will accomplish this task). It is not too great a stretch here, given the various kind of museums that one might build – children's, science, high-tech, rock and roll, sports halls of fame, as well as art – that those who design these structures must give some thought to the available means of persuading audiences to enter into their enclosed, semi-sacred spaces.

3. Rhetoric in Relation to "Great" Architecture in the Past

I wondered about the extent to which this kind of analysis, linking building with money, audiences, and politics, worked in relation to "sacred spaces" in the past. The great cathedrals, for example, and the early more academically oriented museums. Michael had recently lectured the faculty and graduate students at UC Berkeley on two seemingly disparate tracks of his work: (a) the use of computers in design (he had in fact recommended CATIA – a software used to design aircraft – to Gehry's firm as appropriate to his approach to architectural design, and it was this software which enabled the successful realization of the Guggenheim), and (b) the restoration of historic structures.

On the extent to which the practical, consciously manipulative was present in early architecture, Michael was not certain. This was so in part because it was a question of conscious intent and in part because, as he remarked, his graduate education had focused on modernist theories of building and on form and material to the exclusion of socio-political and economic issues related to pushing projects and securing commissions.

For twenty years, I had kept a three volume paperback edition of primary documents on art and architecture edited by Elizabeth G. Holt. They stood on my shelves as potential reference works, something someday I might consult. One evening I glanced through them. Michael had told me about the great architect, Abbot Suger, who had built the first Gothic Cathedral at the abbey of St.-Denis in the twelfth century. Happily Professor Holt had included a selection from Suger's

memoirs. In English and not in the original Latin, of course, and nearly a thousand years later, his words were nevertheless haunting. They spoke of the purpose of renovation and they fixed on the need to persuade. But persuade in the context not of the here and now of a mundane world but a world toward which the great Gothic Cathedrals pointed as they fluted upward toward the heavens.

Its an odd language, at least to those of us who have backed away from Christianity (or were never there in the first place) and do not feel the need to read theology, but it is a language that locates architecture in relation to potential audiences and desired effect. Suger's copper-gilt inscription on the gilded bronze doors he had cast talks about the effect he was seeking:

Whoever thou art, if thou seekest to extol the glory of these doors,
Marvel not at the gold and the expense but at the craftsmanship of the work
Bright is the noble work; but, being nobly bright, the work
Should brighten the minds, so that they may travel, through the true lights,
To the True Light where Christ is the true door.

In what manner it be inherent in this world the gold door defines:

The dull mind rises to truth through that which is material

And, in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion.

On the lintel over the doors, the abbot's words continue to establish the distance we here and now stand from in trying to fathom the role of architect there and then:

Receive, O stern Judge, the prayers of Thy Suger;

Grant that I be mercifully numbered among Thy own sheep.

As a lamb of God, the architect builds to brighten the minds of the faithful, enabling them to see in the wondrously crafted doors to the Church a deeper and more profound meaning, the earthly doors becoming a metaphor for Christ the true door through which one must pass in order to be received into heaven. The doors are gilded, so that the dull mind might be resurrected, so that those obsessed by the wealth of this world might encounter a richer and more rewarding truth.

The same reasoning guides Suger's discussion of the altar:

Into this panel, which stands in front of his most sacred body, we have put, according to our estimate, about forty-two marks of gold; [further] a multifarious wealth of precious gems, hyacinths, rubies, sapphires, emeralds and topazes, and also an array of different large pearls - [a wealth] as great as we had never

anticipated to find (Suger 1957 [orig. eleventh century]: 25).

It does not require much of a leap to see how attractive such a display might be for pilgrims and the visible precedent it sets for making sizable donations. The size of the donation being related both to the nature of the indulgence sought and to what was previously given and to how much this or that abbey or Cathedral might, through its magnificence, command.

I called our friend, Professor Hohmann and asked him how Suger might have responded to our equation of St.-Denis with rhetoric. That the clergy should be resolute and effective in propagating the faith would have struck him as natural enough, but he (Suger) would have thought of rhetoric and architecture as correlative arts, related to be sure, but not to be confused. One had to do with persuasive speech, the other with transforming stone, glass, wood and metal into buildings. Michael, on the other hand, thought that the ethos of the period did not distinguish between manifestations of the divine, cosmic order be they spoken, written or built of stone. Later I happened on a collection of essays by the classicist, Harry Caplan. In an essay on medieval preaching, he commented on the carvings of dame rhetoric to be found on various churches and cathedrals throughout Europe.

Michael and I had also talked about museums. I wondered when they had been invented and what had been their purpose. Again I consulted my little reference work and here happened across one Alexander Lenoir who, in 1791, had been charged in the aftermath of the French revolution with organizing a depot for art objects acquired from the Church. The paintings went to the Louvre, while the medieval and renaissance sculpture, church furnishings, and stained glass went into the Musée des Monuments Français. *The Oxford Companion to Art* tells us that he arranged in the cloister and gardens at a convent in Paris some 500 examples of French art that included the finest French work of the Middle Ages now known to us.

Lenoir in his memoirs speaks with pride about his efforts at recovering the royal vaults from the Abbey of St.-Denis which had been burned to the ground during the civil war. After the defeat of Napoleon and the restoration of the monarchy, Lenoir was made Administrator of Monuments at St. Denis. In 1816, the Museum was suppressed and most of the exhibits divided between the Louvre and the École des Beaux-Arts or returned to the monasteries and families from which they had been taken. Lenoir's schemes of classification, however, arranging art

according to historical periods (Carolingian, Merovingian, etc.), and his genealogical approach (arranging art work chronologically in an effort to show its rise and decline, as one moved from one room to another) influences art museums up to the present day.

Neither Michael nor I had ever heard of Lenoir. But what was not relevant to our thinking was his argument about the importance of his Musée in 1803. Here he strikes a distinctly pragmatic note: A museum in its institution ought . . . to have two objects in view: the one political, the other that of public instruction. In a political point of view, it should be established with sufficient splendor and magnificence to strike the eye and attract the curious from every quarter of the globe, who would consider it as their duty to be munificent amongst a people friendly to the arts . . . (Lenoir 1966 [orig. nineteenth century]: 281). I think what this meant, in the context of the Napoleonic wars and France's efforts to cement alliances against the English and their allies with France and throughout the world, was that the Musée was ideologically important. Evidence of a superior culture, it could inspire in others a willingness to tender support.

Michael read through my little pass at drawing Suger and Lenoir, St.-Denis and the Musée into our conversation. I thought it thin, not anything that I knew much about beyond reading a couple of selections in an anthology, but both of us found it suggestive. Churches and museums are not simply given, structures we happen onto, enter into, and talk about with our friends. In the here and now of constructing such buildings, we may speak of purpose, design, and effect on specific audiences – the faithful, Christians, revolutionaries, nationalists, potential allies, etc.

A few days later, Michael called. He said that he had a book on the first known architectural design for a building anywhere in the world, the plan of St. Gall drawn up in the eighth century. He brought this book over which turned out to be a three-volume set authored by Horn and Born and published by UC Press. Huge books, they looked as though they contained newspapers. Michael explained that, since its discovery in the eighteenth century, generations of scholars have argued over the plan. It had apparent inconsistencies having to do with a shift between the measurements provided in the text and the actual scale of the drawing. The monastery it so painstakingly laid out seemed never to have been built. Horn and Born, he said, proved quite conclusively that the inconsistencies were actually the result of monastic upheaval of the time, a conflict between two orders with radically different views on the nature and function of monastic life in relation to

the individual and society.

I looked at those books he had dumped down on my table, they were enormous, and asked him if he had ever read them. Many times he said, though not in the last few years. It turns out he had purchased them while still in college and that for him they represented a kind of retreat from day to day cares and confusions. I looked through them briefly. They are a triumph of scholarship and also, as Michael pointed out, an entry into monastic politics and the purposes served by buildings great or small.

4. The Rhetoric of the New Guggenheim

Fortified in the belief that a link between rhetoric and architecture could be shown historically, that it was a fact of contemporary life, at least as Michael understood it and current writing in architectural journals talked about it, and that it was, to coin a phrase, intellectually sweet, we continued assembling documents having to do with Bilbao. Michael cut out articles from journals he subscribed to about the new museum. Both of us did computer searches for information relative not only to the museum but also to Basque nationalists, the history of Bilbao, etc. What follows leaves off the autobiographical approach, organizing our conversations in a way that reveals the utility of a method of analysis which a colleague of ours, and my wife, Professor Wen Shu Lee calls “rhetorical contextualization” (see her essay in this volume).

Instead on fixing on rhetoric as a particular object, carefully differentiated from other objects, rhetorical contextualization seeks to recover the socio-historical dimension of any cultural artifact. Understanding it as “speech,” an artifact recovers the notion of speaker or author and with it intent or purpose. As a text, it invites interpretation and does so, as speech necessarily does, in relation to audiences. A critical take on rhetorical contextualization inquires into who did not and does not get to speak, what did not a does not get said, who does and who does not count as the appropriate audience/s.

Rhetorical contextualization situates and transforms an artifact into a relational thing, placing it in relation to what it affirms and what it negates, it also provides for an uplifting vertical move, what Wen Shu calls “inter-rhetoricity.” Inter-rhetoricity contrasts with “inter-textuality” through its efforts to recover both the text and the speakers and audiences in trying to understand historical events as well as efforts to talk about them and then to talk about such talk. Inter-textuality encounters “texts” that range from artifacts to everything that can be talked about and places them in hypothetical space. Inter-rhetoricity encounters texts

ranging from the ridiculous to the sublime, but insists on establishing some human scale in trying to get at their meaning and significance.

Considering the new Guggenheim as speech raises issues that might be lost in paeans to great art (or architecture) and the assumption that great art is both timeless and placeless. Why did the Guggenheim foundation decide to build a museum at Bilbao? This is a group of people. They have names. We know that Thomas Kerns, the Guggenheim's new director, approached people in Venice and Vienna about building a new museum and was turned down.

Why were the Basques in Bilbao interested in building a museum there? So much so that they were willing to provide \$100,000,000.00 for that purpose and, at the same time, relinquish their right to pass on the structure being built? Karen Stein, writing in *Architectural Record*, hazards an answer. In 1991, she writes, members of the Basque regional government concluded that an international institution of contemporary art would bring them cultural prestige and a steady stream of tourism and more importantly tourism dollars to their state capital, Bilbao (Stein 1997: 75). Why were the elites in Spain willing to allow this project to go forward, and it should be remembered that the King of Spain was there to inaugurate the building when it opened. And what was the architect, Frank Gehry, trying to do with this vast, shiny, titanium skinned effort?

On the other hand, we do not know the view of the Church in this matter or, more to the point, Basque nationalists for whom the modernist, late modernist, or postmodern design – an internationalist and decidedly non-Basque in its inspiration and associations – must be considered a political and cultural affront? What were the views of the citizens of Bilbao about the structure or about having such a museum built there?

From questions about the speaker/creators or collaborators and those who were left out and not part of the collaboration, we turn to questions about the speech/text? What is it? An art museum! But what sort? One that, in its structure, dominates, at least in its publicity and certainly in its visual impact in relation to what surrounds it, anything and everything it houses. A post-modern or late-modernist structure housing modern art, the labels are breath-taking and must not be allowed to conceal what this text does not contain. Little that is Spanish and virtually nothing Basque, save for *Guernica*, the painting by Picasso depicting the execution of Basques by Spanish fascists, members of Franco's invading army. A painting promised by Spain (a loan from the museum in Madrid) but which has not yet arrived. When and if it does, it seems unlikely that its connection with

Spanish fascism or Basque nationalism will be heavily featured. And if mentioned, it will more than likely be overwhelmed, since it will be surrounded by concentric circles or resolutely non-representational art whose political content, fresh perhaps at one time or another, has bled back into a dark and spreading aesthetic pool of priceless art.

Nothing there will call attention to the more recent executions by Spanish agents or the bombings and executions conducted by Basque guerrillas. Nothing there will focus on the connection between Guggenheim senior whose moneys derived from mining and from breaking up unions in the Western United States. Nothing will indicate that the Guggenheims are Jewish and that Spain expelled its Jews during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella or that Spanish fascists during the 1940s, including General Franco, came close to bringing Spain into the war on the side of Germany (Churchill authorized the expenditure of what amounts to a bribe of \$100,000,000.00 to keep Spain from entering the war on the side of the Axis powers).

Little or nothing will be said about the origins of the structure itself. The fact that Gehry visited the proposed site and demanded that it be changed and that, after the change, the Guggenheim announced a design competition, inviting an Austrian and a Japanese architect, neither of whom were known for designing museums, to apply and gave them three weeks to submit a plan. Gehry, who had months to prepare, not surprisingly won the "competition." The other designs were never shown. The fact that someone in Gehry's firm, trying to determine what skin to drape over a traditional post and lintel structure, noted that the price of titanium had taken a huge dip, owing to Russia's need to raise capital quickly. These facts - the fixed "competition," the mundane approach to structure, and the opportunistic use of titanium - will not be inscribed in copper and gilt on the museum doors. Neither will the fact that well-known builders of museums, Richard Meier for example the designer of the new Getty museum, orient their work around providing adequate space and natural lighting for the objects on display or that they and others of their guild have noted that the Guggenheim is ridiculously ill-designed in this regard with its little sky lights and windows high above.

5. Architectural Criticism and Rhetoric

But then the function of the structure is only secondarily about housing art. Its primary function is, as with other new museums, to attract tourists and tourist dollars. This explains something else that will not be talked about inside the

museum: The intricate PR campaign (flying in “architectural critics” from newspapers and TV networks and the like to attend the grand opening to be wined and dined for a week at no expense to themselves with an eye to encouraging them to write “dispassionate, objective, neutral” reports of the event) designed prior to the opening. Herbert Muschamp, architecture critic for the *New York Times*, met Gehry in Bilbao for a preview of the museum: “Do you want to see the building?” he asks, when we meet at my hotel. What a card” (Muschamp 1997: 58). Muschamp’s title is “The Miracle in Bilbao.” “If you want to look into the heart of American art today,” he writes, “you are going to need a passport. You will have to pack your bags, leave the USA and find your way to Bilbao, a small rusty city in the north east corner of Spain” (Muschamp 1997: 54).

The puffery is remarkable. Sue Peters wrote a feature story in the *San Francisco Examiner Magazine*, entitled “Basque-ing in Glory”:

There are no Jeff Koons’ “Puppy” Chia Pets for sale yet, nor even an faux titanium mini-museum key chains. This is a good sign that this city in Northern Spain isn’t rushing to exploit its new tourist attraction. But it may soon have to face the fact that it is home to one of the most significant modern buildings of this century, and if you build it – even in a little-known post – industrial town in the heart of Basque country – people will come.

What kind of people will come? They won’t be just the art critics: Already, school groups from nearby France, retirees from San Francisco and New York, and local families are making the pilgrimage to the new Guggenheim Museum, whose brilliant architecture defies description – and even photography [a considerable claim given the spread of photos ranging from the front of the magazine and five more in the article (Peters 1998: 58). We will get back to this in examining the audiences for the Guggenheim, but we want to hang onto the extent and success of the PR campaign to reach these audiences.

Since neither of us (the authors of this essay) watch TV, we will have to trust our theoretical instincts in predicting massive campaigns covering the opening on CBS, ABC, and NBC “news” and various cable channels. Magazines like *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *US News* also, not surprisingly, featured this event. The “text” of the Guggenheim was being designed even as the structure was being built and, from the standpoint of buying advertising time, it was a multi-million dollar campaign befitting the introduction of a new line of cologne.

Who are the speakers, the players, and who are not? Already, given who the

speaker/agents are in the process, members of the Guggenheim foundation, the Basque and Spanish elites, Kerns (the director of the Guggenheim), Gehry himself, we can map out various speaker audience relationships. Kerns, for example, had to put together a coalition that included members of the above groups who determined whether or not funds would be gathered and dispersed to build something, a museum before Gehry ever got involved. If Kerns could not persuade key decision makers in these groups of the viability of his ideas and later Gehry's "design," the structure would never have made it off the page or out of the computer.

The Guggenheim elite persuaded the Basque elite that building a museum was somehow in their interests to the point of ponying up a hundred million dollars (or was it the Basque elite, armed with a hundred million dollars, persuaded the Guggenheim elite that it should plant its museum in a depressed, rust-belt city in a war zone). What this line of questioning suggests is that we begin envisioning dialogue, negotiation, persuasion as central to the process of design and construction. It further suggests that, with a coalition in place, the money raised, and the building under construction becomes, in our thinking if not in our speech, reified, a "given." It becomes an "art museum", instead of a project whose purpose has to do with attracting tourists, to take only one example.

Once the coalition of decision makers in these various groups is in place and Gehry has been engaged, another audience looms intimately related to whatever shared sense of purpose guides coalition deliberations and collaborative activities. This is the aggregate of PR machinery existing in various countries operating in different media that have the potential of reaching the audiences of potential tourists whose travel plans and willingness to spend is part of the object. Who was responsible for targeting the opinion leaders in the media interested in promoting the arts and more specifically the arts envisioned by the Guggenheim project we do not know. But there is no doubt, surveying the broad based, favorable, and efficacious response from newspapers, magazines, and TV, that somewhere someone or some group was responsible for designing and implementing a campaign.

The strategies employed in this campaign and in the "stories" planted and inspired by this campaign to persuade viewers and readers to place themselves imaginatively in Bilbao, to examine their travel funds to realize this vision, to take the steps necessary to actualize the visit, this constitutes suasion of various speakers in relation to different audiences. Among them wealthy retirees, faculty

and students, culture vultures, women's tours, etc. which, by PR consultants, may be broken down demographically according to age, income, education, nationality, gender, etc. and according to technology.

Another venue for reaching the target audiences, one combining money and travel, lies in the internet. The Guggenheim has a home-page and so does one of the Basque groups, though not the separatists. The Guggenheim page makes no mention of Basques when it celebrates the museum at Bilbao, and the Basque page makes no mention of the Guggenheim and its cultural implications for the Basque people or its economic consequences for the region. Internet surfers, unaware of the politics of web-pages and the importance of what is included and excluded, may be tempted to take in the prose, the pictures, and a succession of informational windows a-critically which is to say equate what is given with what is real or what ought to be or necessarily is.

The audiences who are not included in these calculations are, among others, the poor, those who do not care about "high culture," travel, or talk about the arts. Certain groups of Basques, the separatists for example, may be ignored at one level only to play a role at another as an audience which needs to be neutralized. The agreement to make *Guernica* the centerpiece of the museum may be understood as a message sent to an audience in a position to oppose or disrupt the project and another audience whose willingness to be taxed to create this museum must also, at some point, be taken into consideration.

6. Conclusion

At the theoretical level, we are content with displaying the potential for pressing certain questions associated with the rhetorical tradition, questions having to do with speaker, message, and audiences (who are the players, and who are not; what is said, and what is not said). Through rhetorical contextualization even the most esoteric text can be dislodged from a hypothetical world of ideas to particulate in the systems that work to create such texts. Through it, the text recovers its place in history. Put another way, no text can be detached from speakers on the one hand or audiences on the other and a critical response to this re-engagement obliges us to identify those who are or have been systematically left out in the production and interpretation of such artifacts.

At a practical level, in relation to the practice of architecture in our time, rhetorical contextualization marks systems in various communities that prevent citizens from participating in or deliberating over the structure of the most important structures in their communities. Yes, there is a text, in the more

expansive meaning of the term, but it is a text created by and attended to by people with names. To admit this and to seek out those names (and the people so named) scales down the talk to the truly human, human beings in the here and now of trying to make sense of the world in which they find themselves. Put another way, we have tried to scale down our own talk, step out from behind our professional vocabularies and our disciplinary boundaries to make sense of the world in which we find ourselves.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 - The Irony Of "Debate": A Sociological Analysis On The Introduction Of 'Debate' Education In Japan



Man kann gerade unter dem Schein der Ausmerzung aller praktischen Wertungen ganz besonders stark, nach dem bekannten Schema: "die Tatsachen sprechen zu lassen", suggestiv solche hervorrufen.

[Exactly under the pretence of effacing all practical value-judgements, in imitation of the well-known scheme "let facts speak", one can call forth such value-judgements in a strongly suggestive way.] – Max Weber, 1917

1. Recent trends of "debate" education in Japan: Through the perspectives of sociology

The aim of this paper is to present an *introductory* analysis on the discourses used in "debate" education through the perspectives of sociology, especially in relation to two problematiques in Max Weber's sociology. Particularly, I like to show that these sociological perspectives are necessary, to understand recent discourses surrounding the word "dibeito", which appeared in the course of the introduction of "debate" education in Japan.

I would like to use the word "debate" education in a rather broad sense: I am assuming here; any teaching activity that claims to teach "debate" as its subject, no matter what the connotations of the word "debate" seems to be "mistaken" from an observer's viewpoint. Thus, not only the discourses in school education but also, for example, the discourses appearing in "how-to debate" books for the businesspeople are the target of this study. Among such discourses on "debate" education, I'd like to show that, an "ironic" situation is appearing recently in Japan, which may be hardly imaginable from an optimistic viewpoint, believing the universal applicability and political neutrality of "debate" education.

1.1 The irony of "debate"?

Since the beginning of the 1990s, numerous books that have the word "dibeito" in their titles have been published in Japan. (At least 51 books in 7 years. See the table in section 2.1) The word "dibeito" is obviously taken from the English word "debate", and it is written in katakana-letters, a phonetic letter-set which is often used to write down foreign names and "gairai-go" [imported words], imitating the pronunciation of the "original" language.

This publishing boom of books titled "dibeito" is itself an interesting phenomenon in many senses: Quite a lot of those "dibeito" books can be classified as "how-to-be-a-successful-businessperson" kind of handbooks, which assume Japanese office

workers for readers. Those business handbooks were the majority in the 1980s. Then, from the mid-1990s, “dibeito” textbooks for teachers and students in the secondary education appeared in numbers. However, interesting as it is, the publishing trend itself is not the focus here.

We like to focus on the very fact that the word “dibeito” is used. If you look up the English word “debate” in an English-Japanese dictionary, you will find “touron” or “ronsou” as the corresponding Japanese words. Books published in the 1990s have the word “dibeito” much more than “touron” as their titles.

Among those books with “dibeito” in their titles, it needs no “scholarly” training to notice that not a few of them explicitly express political messages (in the narrowest sense that can even be called “nationalistic” messages) even in their titles. Let me give a few examples translated in English: “Invasion or self defense?: White-hot dibeito on Dai-toa-senso [Great East-Asian War]” (Fujioka 1997b).**[i]** “To dibeito on Nippon [Japan]: Challenging the taboos in Japan” (Kitaoka 1997b). “How to dibeito on South Korea: To refute to South Korea thoroughly” (Kitaoka 1996)

The author of the latter two books, Kitaoka is introduced as “an authority of dibeito as methodology” (Kitaoka 1997a, imprint) and has indeed published many books on “dibeito”. In the text of one of his book, the word “dibeito” is even more explicitly connected with a political message.

“Dibeito is the ace-in-the-hole weapon to adamantly counterattack against the unreasonable blames and demands from Korea. Dibeito is the method to protect the kokueki [state’s profits].” (Kitaoka 1996: 7)**[ii]**

In this book, Kitaoka explains “dibeito” as a “dialectical idea that allows, thesis and anti-thesis among matters” and “an idea which considers relatively, and is a scientific idea.” (Ibid. 75) And according to his idea of “dibeito” and “science”, he shows ten or more fictitious “dibeito” between a Japanese person and a Korean person, such as “the Japanese colonization of Korea was not an invasion of Korea.” (Ibid. 112) Those are called “dibeito”, even though he does not shows any actual or published opinion of the Korean nor cites any Korean literature.

The usage of the word “dibeito” in political messages can also be found in a more “elaborated” sense. Fujioka, a professor of pedagogy, claims the necessity of “dibeito” education for the reformation of history classes in elementary and secondary education in Japan. He claims that the present history classes and the history textbooks are biased by what he calls “jigyaku-shikan” (in his own

translation, “masochistic historical views”). (Fujioka 1997a: 2) Fujioka recommends “rekishi dibeito” [historic debate] as a remedy against such bias: “What is now most important, is to reconsider various questions, avoiding various stereotypes among the interpretation of history. Those who oppose to rekishi dibeito are, those who oppose to reanalyze these stereotypes as they are.” (Fujioka 1997b: 7) Hence, he picks up the above-mentioned topic on whether the “Dai-toa-senso” was a war of self defense or not, and claims that such “rekishi dibeito” should be debated in school education. (Fujioka 1994: 117)

He and his group “Atarashii rekishi kyokasho wo tsukuru kai” [the group for a new history textbook] have aroused a widely recognized dispute in Japan, so called “kyokasho ronso” [the textbook-debate] from around 1995. (Oppositions to him can be found for example in: Sanuki & Kanbara 1996) This dispute can be regarded as the Japanese cover version of the German “Historikerstreit” [historians’ debate] in the 1980s. It is no surprise that we can find discourses homologous to that of Fujioka there. (See for instance, Nolte 1987: 223-225) Most naturally, the criticism that Habermas cast to the opponents there, revealing their intentional or unintentional naivete toward the political connotations of historical studies, seems exactly appropriate for Fujioka, too:

The debate about the correct answer to this question [of the uniqueness of the Nazi crimes] is conducted from the first-person point of view. This arena, in which none of us can be nonparticipants, should not be confused with discussion among scientists and scholars who have to take the observational perspective of a third person in their work. (Habermas 1989: 237; 1987: 251)

My intention here is not to point out that these discourses are symptoms of neo-nationalistic revivalism, nor that these discourses are arousing such revivalism. (Though, I do believe the need for the social-scientific survey to track the social-transactions among these discourses.) What I think should be focused, is that these discourses using the word “dibeito” *carry* such political connotations in Japan. There is one thing worth noting here. The above mentioned authors themselves both claim “democratic” ideals of “dibeito”:

Fujioka writes “dibeito” is necessary for Japan to “develop as a democratic state under international-cooperation” (Fujioka 1994: 16); Kitaoka writes that “Dibeito is ... the fundamental thought of the present democratic societies.” (Kitaoka 1995: 27) The ironic thing is, they are, on the contrary, using *their* concepts of “dibeito” to function as a vantagepoint for their politically connoted discourses. Kitaoka

labels the Korean as:

“ ‘Han’ [grudge] is the jounen [inescapable sentiment] of the Korean people. ... They become hysterical. As I repeated in my theory of dibeito, the ‘emotions’ and ‘ideology’ such as Han is the enemy of science.” (Kitaoka 1996: 123), Fujioka uses “dibeito” as a touchstone to find out masochistically “stereotyped” minds:

“As mentioned above, rekishi dibeito is a strong means to reconsider history boldly, and is a touchstone to distinguish those who tenaciously survey the truth, from those who rely on propaganda and has no guts to relativize the stereotypes they have.” (Fujioka 1997b : 7)

In both senses, the word “dibeito” is used as a keyword to segregate and to empower their opinions. In their discourses, the word “dibeito” is used as justifications to segregate or to ignore certain discourses from the beginning, enabling them to put certain limits to “open” dialogues.

1.2 Two relevant problematiques in the sociology of Max Weber

Segregative discourses produced in the name of democratic dialogue – The focus of this study is to analyze what background situation of discourses allowed such schizophrenic usage of “dibeito”, which I like to call the irony of “debate” in Japan. To analyze this background situation, I propose to consider this matter in relation to two important problematiques in sociology, both of which can be traced back to Max Weber.

First is the problematique of “Wertfreiheit” (value-freedom). Weber consistently argued that even scholarly discourses are inevitably involved with practical value-judgements, especially value-judgements in the political sense. (See the quotation at the beginning of this paper. Weber 1988b : 489-540; in English 1976: 69-98) It should be regarded that the study of argumentation is no exception. In fact, I have already taken this first problematique into account, to describe the situation above.

The second is the methodological problematique on “Verstehen” [understanding, interpretation]. Weber had developed his methodology of verstehende Soziologie to cope with the problems of Wertfreiheit. He emphasized that any scholarly conceptions should be regarded as mere fictions, “Idealtypus”, which takes only some part of the vast reality into account from an observer’s intellectual value-relevance (“Wertbeziehung”). Though fictions as they may be, they will be meaningful if they are conceptualized by the interpretative scrutiny that follows two phases; A) to relativize even the “prima-facie” concepts or ideas, by conducting historical and cultural comparison to examine where actually their

characteristics lie; and B) to genealogically track down the historical process that gave such characteristics. [iii]

Considering these sociological problematiques, the following two assumptions will be rejected:

1. To assume that the above-mentioned political usage of “dibeito” as *abuses* of argumentation theory, which is politically “neutral” in nature: Here instead, the very idea that there is a politically “neutral” or “objective” natured argumentation theory, will be doubted.
2. To assume that the above-mentioned discourses are irregular “deviations” from the “authentic” concept of “debate”, caused by the backwardness of Japanese education of argumentation: Here, on the contrary, the following doubts will be cast. What is the “authentic” concept of “debate” in the first place, and how can we know that? Isn’t it too naïve to assume that future development in argumentation theories will solve the matter? Weren’t there a peculiar background situation of discourses that fostered or enabled the irony of “debate” in Japan?

Regarding the last line of questions, this study takes in a similar viewpoint to that of Said in his analysis on “Orientalism”. He, developing Foucault and Nietzsche’s view of scholarly discourses, stressed the naivete of the assumption that “scholarship moves forward”, and of the possibility that even scholarly discourses can be “conditioned” by the language they are using. (Said 1979: 202-203) Here, I’d like to reveal what “conditions” lie at the root of this irony of “debate” in Japan.

I have no intention to claim that the study here is highly original in the sense of *sociological* theory. In fact, I am more than willing to admit that this study was aroused especially by the brilliant effort of Kosaku Yoshino’s sociology of cultural nationalism. (Yoshino 1995, 1997) Still, I would like to call the analytical methods here just “sociological”, as the problems here is not limited to those of “nationalism”.

Before starting the analysis, I have to express that this sociological study is “introductory” in two senses: First, obviously, this study took only limited textual discourses into account. Secondly, and more importantly, this study intends to be introductory *as a matter of principle*. The aim of the study here is not to give closed conclusions, but to cast *open-ended* hermeneutic questions in the study of argumentation.

Needless to say, this study is not a wholesome historiography of the “debate” education in Japan. This provides only a partial view of the vastly diverse reality in Japan, in the relevance (Wertbeziehung) of the observer, who stands at the crossroads of sociology and the study of argumentation.

Even though limited in these senses, I believe this will contribute somehow to discuss the practical questions that are now being faced especially in Japan: How and in what language we should teach argumentation. And maybe, even beyond that – to reflect the imaginary argumentative boundary between the “East” and the “West”.

2. The invention of “dibeito”: Its characteristics and the process of its distinction

2.1 “Dibeito” vs. “touron”: The invented contrast

As we have seen above, many books that have the katakana-letter word “dibeito” are published recently. However, the usage of the word “dibeito” in the book titles does not have a long history at all. The Table shows the number of books on “debate” education that have the words “dibeito” or “touron” in their titles, held in the National Diet Library.**[iv]** As it is shown in this Table, it is not until the 1970s that the word “dibeito” is used in the titles.**[v]** Of course, this does not mean that the books on “debate” education were not published until then. It should be regarded that those books had just used the word “touron” instead.

Table Number of books on ‘debate’ education with words ‘touron’ or ‘dibeito’ in their titles (in the database of the National Diet Library, 5 jun 98)

	Touron	Dibeito
1948-50	3	0
51-55	8	0
56-60	3	0
61-65	2	0
66-70	3	0
71-75	0	1
76-80	3	4
81-85	3	5
86-90	3	8
91-95	11	34
96-97	6	17

Table Number of books on ‘debate’ education with words ‘touron’ or ‘dibeito’ in their titles (in the database of the National Diet Library, 5 jun 98)

The observation of Narahiko Inoue, a professor of speech communication, seems

to support this view in his study on the tradition of debate" in Japan:

Those who advocate debate have been suggesting that debate is different from traditional Japanese *touon*. Such people used to advocate a new way of *touon* (e.g., Fukuzawa in the Meiji era and Kanchi immediately after World War II). More recently a new term *dibeito* has been used to *emphasize the difference*. (Inoue 1996: 158, emphasis as it is, alphabetization of Japanese modified)

But, there is one small but significant point that I would like to argue against Inoue's observation. My analysis on the discourses used in "dibeito" and "touron" textbooks suggests that, *not* just the new term "dibeito", but the emphasis on the difference between "dibeito" and "touron" should be considered as a recent phenomenon.

Looking far back 50 years, the books on "touron" published not so long after the WWII show no explicit distinction between "touron" and "dibeito". For example, in two different handbooks for "touron" published in 1948, there are passages which suggest that the word "touron" is used as the translation of the English word "debate". (Asahi shinbunsha kikakubu 1948: 44, 51, 69; Tamura 1948: 78) However, no contrast between "touron" and "debate" can be found. In a handbook written in 1953, one passage that contrasts "touron" and the English word "discussion" can be found:

" 'Disu' [Discussion] is, in the narrow sense, 'a dialogue to seek consensus and cooperatively solve problems.' On the contrary, 'touron' is 'a dialogue between the affirmative and the negative concerning the opposite points.' (Even though it too seeks consensus in the end, it shows confrontation at the surface.)" (Okubo 1953: 163)

Here also, "touron" is suggested to be the translation of the English word "debate", as Okubo refers to English books that have the word "debate" in their titles. (*Ibid.* 210)

It was not until 1975 that the first discourse (as far as I could find) that explicitly contrasts "dibeito" and the Japanese word "tougai" (which is almost synonymous to "touron") appeared:

" 'Tougai' in Japan is a gray colored thinking for general consensus, and not a democratic means to divide black and white. Therefore my opinion is, the Japanese translation of the word 'debate' should be 'dibeito' likewise." (Matsumoto, M. 1975: 46)

Matsumoto, the chairman of what is called the Kokusai dibeito gakkai [international society for the study of dibeito] and a professor, is introduced in many books as the “pioneer” or “premier specialist” of “dibeito” in Japan. (See. Okamoto 1992: 53; Fujioka 1994: 17) As Inoue rightly protests, Michihiro Matsumoto may not be the one who introduced “debate” education in Japan (Inoue 1996 : 159). Still, it can not be denied that he and his many books on “dibeito” played a great role in the prevalence of the katakana-letter word “dibeito”. In his translation of an English textbook on debate, he writes that: “The most audacious decision I made during the translation is that to use ‘dibeito’ as it is, to translate ‘debate’. Suppose if you translate ‘debate’ to ‘touron’. ‘Touron’ can be found everywhere in Japanese societies, too. But does such ‘touron’ meet the basic requirements of debate? ... I have strong doubts to that.” (Matsumoto, M. 1978 : 183)

Matsumoto repeatedly produced discourses that contrast the difference of “dibeito” and “touron”. (See: Matsumoto, M. 1990: 18-21; 1995 : 18) Presumably, usage of the katakana-letter word “dibeito” contrasted to “touron”, was an invention by Matsumoto himself. After such invention, discourses using “dibeito” have been reproduced, increasing rapidly in number, as the above Table shows. To avoid misunderstanding, I like to emphasize that my point here is not that the word “dibeito” was invented recently, in the mid 1970s. The English word “debate” and the word “dibeito” in katakana-letters were used in Japan, at least, not so long after the WWII. **[vi]** I am arguing that the contrast scheme of “dibeito” vs. “touron” is a quite recent invention.

2.2 “Dibeito” and the “unique communication style of the Japanese”

After that invention of the “dibeito” vs. “touron” contrast, it took no more than 20 years for that invented contrast to be used widely, not only by the authors of business handbooks but also by many scholars and teachers who are engaged in “debate” education. Many (or, most of which I could refer to) of the recent introductory books on “dibeito” have a section that defines ‘dibeito’ in comparison to “touron” and other communication styles in Japan. (See: Okamoto 1992 : 16-25; Satou, K. et al. 1994: 12-19; Kitaoka 1995 : 16-19, 46; 1997a: 34-38; Matsumoto, S. 1996: 12-21; Kawano 1997 : 9-18)

The definitions of “debate” vary significantly among them. It can even be said that those definitions are *arbitrary* done by each author, and the only thing common among these definitions are, that they are defining the word “dibeito” in contrast

with “touron”. For example, in a handbook of “dibeito” for teachers, it is stressed that “dibeito is different from touron as, it is a touron done as a game ... The important thing is do it ‘as a game’.” (Okamoto 1992 : 18) And in a business textbook: “It is a great misunderstanding and abuse to understand dibeito as a giron [conversation] or touron. ... Dibeito is essentially a scientific methodology to create knowledge, a technical skill to create new knowledge.” (Kitaoka 1997a : 34)

It is not the focus of this study to analyze why these discourses emphasizing the contrast between “dibeito” and “touron” got so popular in Japan, and is getting popular still.**[vii]** Nor is it our focus, to discuss which definition is “proper” or “authentic”, by classifying these various “dibeito” definitions.

What we should focus here, is the effect of the invented contrast to the “dibeito” discourses: Discourses on “dibeito” obviously started to include various arbitrary definitions. In relation to this, one important thing can be pointed out. Even though the definitions of “dibeito” vary among each textbook, strong similarity can be found in the discourses that explain the reason why “dibeito” should be learned. In those discourses, the need to learn “dibeito” is mentioned in connection with the “unique characters of the Japanese/Japan”. To describe this, here again I like to quote from Matsumoto’s books that I think are the earliest texts that show such characteristic:

“In Japanese minds, there have never been any logic necessary to dibeito, no matter where you look for it.” (Matsumoto, M. 1975 :30)

“However Japan is different. We of the single ethnicity, can *sasshiau* [sympathize with] each other in the same language. Looking historically, we have no experience of intellectual confrontations that the affirmative and the negative side clash on a proposition, and to let judges decide on it at public places. We even made not effort to foster that, as the technical skills of dibeito did not develop in Japan.” (Matsumoto, M. 1978 : ii, emphasis as it is)

In these texts, “dibeito” is treated something alien to “Japan” or the “Japanese”, something that hadn’t existed among them till now. And this type of discourse that treats “dibeito” as *alien* to the unique traditional “Japanese communication style” or the “Japanese national character”, is seen very common in “dibeito” textbooks. (See: Konno 1979: xii; Iwashita 1980 : 16-19; Matsumoto, S. 1987 : 8-11; Matsumoto, M. 1990 : 219-220; 1995 : 2-3; Okamoto 1992 : 20-25; Satou, S. 1994 : 77; Kitaoka 1995: 28-31) And in most cases, it is expressed that the

Japanese should learn “dibeito” as a remedy or a compensation for such lack.[viii]

Yoshino, in his study on cultural nationalism, surveyed the “nihonjinron”, namely, the “vast array of literature which thinking elites have produced to define the uniqueness of Japanese culture, society and national character.” (Yoshino 1995 : 2) According to him, “publications on Japanese uniqueness reached their peak in the late 1970s but continued into the 1980s.” (Ibid.) The discourses on the “unique character of the Japanese” described in the above “dibeito” textbooks show exact homology to the “nihonjinron” that Yoshino summarizes: “It is frequently argued in the *nihonjinron* that essential communication is performed non-logically, empathetically and non-verbally.” (Ibid. 16, emphasis as it is)

In contrast to recent “dibeito” textbooks, the “touroon” textbooks in the early post-war era, do not show the “nihonjinron” traits. As it can be imagined easily, they stress “democratic” ideals or avoidance of “dogmatism” as the reason to learn “touroon”. (Asahi shinbunsha kikakubu 1948 : 1, 5, 10; Tamura 1948: 3)

There is, for example, a passage that mentions “we get emotional easily. And we know the cheap insular prejudice are doing harm.” (Tamura 1948: 38) Also passages that mention the lack of the “touroon” training among the Japanese can be found. (Okubo 1953: 4, 168) However, different from the “nihonjinron”, these passages do not attribute such lack to the *unique* characteristics of the Japanese communication style. Moreover, “touroon” is not described as alien to Japan. We can even find the following passage:

“It can not be said that the touroon now taking place in Japan have reached perfection. However I think they have had great effects on the students, to provoke their spirit of inquiry, to foster their analytical ability, and to make them learn wholesome and wide-ranged knowledge.” (Tamura 1948 : 84)

There is little doubt that the publishing boom of “nihonjinron” in the 1970s had strong affinity with the discourses that couple “dibeito” and the “unique characteristics of Japan or Japanese”.[ix] And even 20 years after the peak of “nihonjinron” publication, not a few “dibeito” textbooks are still colored by discourses homologous to “nihonjinron”. In those discourses, the alien character of “dibeito” is emphasized, selectively attributing such characters to the word “dibeito”. It can be easily imagined that, this made it easier for arbitrary definitions of “dibeito” to be produced and to be reproduced.

3. Conclusion: Necessity of interpretative reflections on “debate” education.

3.1 Discourses on “dibeito” as political resources

As the recent ironic situation among the word “dibeito” in Japan show, even discourses on “debate” education can have political connotations. Some may protest, advocating the neutrality of “debate” per se that, the examples given here are *not scholarly* discourses and hence they are out of the question. However, as the warning of Weber, Habermas, and Said tell us, such positions are simply too naïve of the possibility that, even the scholarly discourses can not escape from being put to certain political contexts. Moreover, such positions may close the door to the study that can reveal what background situation of discourses allowed such usage of scholarly discourses.

To cope with this ironic situation, I have proposed to take in two sociological problematiques. And according to the interpretative methods suggested by those problematiques, I have genealogically traced the discourses on “dibeito”, not distinguishing whether they are “scholarly” or not. And thus I have exposed two peculiar traits in the background situations that *condition* the recent “dibeito” discourses.

1. Recent “dibeito” discourses are produced, following the invented contrast of “dibeito” and “tounon”. And as the result of the contrast, it became easier for these discourses easier to have various *arbitrary* definitions.
2. “Dibeito” discourses are often coupled with the “nihonjinron” discourses. Such coupling not only gave justification to the above contrast by emphasizing the alien character of “dibeito”, but also, at the same time, labeled the existing Japanese communication as having unique characters: “non-logical”, “empathetic”, and “non-verbal”.

These background situations allowed the recent irony of “debate” in Japan. Owing to these background situations of discourses, “dibeito” became a useful resource especially to obtain certain political superiority during controversies, as “dibeito” can be defined arbitrarily according to ones interests, and at the same time, it can be used to label other’s opinion “non-logical”.

3.2 Beyond the irony of “debate”: Argumentation and “cultural difference”

This small episode in Japan concerning the unexpected situations that the “debate” education encountered, itself reveals the necessity to reflect on the language that “conditions” our modes of thought. Whether it is intentional or unintentional, discourses on “intercultural” subjects can produce or reproduce arbitrarily invented “contrasts”, which can easily contribute to certain political

discourses. And this conclusion is never limited to the study of argumentation in Japan, as “cultural difference” is treated as a big subject in the field of “Western” argumentation. (See: Hollihan and Baaske: 1994 : 31-32)

I am not arguing here, that any discourse that treats “cultural difference” related to argumentation is a fraud. Nor is it my intention to stress the commonness and universality of argumentation. This very episode in Japan tells us that, at least something in the milieu of discourses is “different”, and such “difference” brought about the unexpected results. However, needless to say, it is risky to merely rely on existing discourses on “cultural differences”. They can always be based on hasty generalizations, poor historical analysis, and most of all, naivete toward the language that “conditions” them, as Said demonstrated in his study on “Orientalism”.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that some sort of study on the “cultural difference” of argumentation should be conducted. Apparently, one of the reason that allowed the mythical discourses that couple “dibeito” and the “Japanese traditional communication style” is, the lack of interpretative reflections on the concepts used in the study of the argumentation in Japan. The lack of such study has indirectly contributed to the rise of the present “ironic” situation in Japan, and is contributing still.[x]

NOTES

i. Using the word “Dai-toa-senso” itself obviously has political connotations, since Fujioka himself explicitly contrasts that with the normally used words to describe the War. (Fujioka 1997b: 357) Normally, the War is just called “dainiji sekaitaisen” [WWII] or “taiheiyō senso” [War in the Pacific] or “ni-chū senso” [Japan-China War]. The word “Dai-toa-senso” is probably taken from the propaganda during the wartime.

ii. Throughout the whole paper, square bracketed phrases, using [], are all inserted translations by Yano.

iii. It is convenient to systematize Weber’s interpretative method in two phases. (Yano 1995) For example, the famous “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” follows this method: A) First he relativize the concepts such as “Kapitalismus” [capitalism] and “Rationalismus” [rationalism]. He first treats capitalism and rationalism as existing in any culture. (See: Weber 1988a 37-43, 62; In English: 1976: 55-58, 78) And then he comes up with a more deeply analyzed characteristic of modern-western capitalism. B) Then he traces back historically to clarify the dynamics that fixed the characteristics of modern-

western capitalism and rationalism.

iv. The numbers in the table are not the raw numbers of books that hit the words “touron” / “dibeito”. I have excluded books that have no relation to “touron” or “dibeito” education, in the sense I have explained in Section 1. The publishers are supposed to present all publications to the National Diet Library, and it is the largest single library in Japan. However, I must remind that the data presented here is not at all conclusive. I have noticed some books lacking from the database entry and from the Library itself.

v. The first book that has “dibeito” in the National Diet Library is published in 1975 (Matsumoto M. 1975). According to other database (NACSIS WEBCAT), an English book that has the word “debate” is published in 1972. (Klopf and Kawashima. “Effective Academic Debate”. Tokyo: Gaku shobo.) Though regretfully, I could not find the book itself.

vi. According to Klopf and Kawashima, English “debate” tournaments were held in Japan quite soon after WWII. (Klopf and Kawashima 1977: 5)

vii. This is a really difficult subject to discuss. This should not be simply attributed to the interest of the readers, such as the need of international communication skills etc. For example, it can easily be assumed that, the “market interests” of the publishers are involved in this; emphasizing the difference is the cliché of any advertising strategy.

viii. In one “dibeito” textbook for teachers, a warning against the overestimation of “dibeito” is mentioned. There too, “dibeito” is contrasted with the “traditional Japanese view of communication.” (Nakazawa 1996: 194-195)

ix. Interestingly, Yoshino even picks up Michihiro Matsumoto as “one of the best examples” for his analysis on the “nihonjinron”. (Yoshino 1995: 14-17; 1997: 106-111)

x. Recently, not only how to teach “dibeito”, but whether to continue teaching “dibeito” are put to question. For example, Takai argues that the education of “dibeito” itself is dangerous. He groups the above mentioned Kitaoka, Fujioka, and any other attempts of “dibeito” education. (Takai 1997) It is highly probable that such grouping is the result conditioned by the “dibeito” / “touron” contrast.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Truth and Argument



Truth is deeply complicit in argument wherever logic is, for independent of the purposes of different argument kinds, in so far as they use standard logic they are compelled by its underlying theory of truth. And the notions of truth underlying the two giant contributions in the history of logic: that of Aristotle, and that of the

logicians preoccupied with the foundations of mathematics in the early twentieth century - show deep theoretical and even metaphysical assumptions that make them suspect as the underlying theory of a logic adequate to support the theory of argument as currently construed. That is, argument seen as the rational core of ordinary and specialized discourse of the widest variety of sorts. Such a theory of argument with a clear empirical and practical component cannot assume the usefulness of underlying images of logic drawn from rather different conceptions of how reason manifests itself in discourse.

First: as to the problems with the logical core James Herman Randall, in his classic exposition of Aristotle, offers a complex view of the relationship between truth, logic and inquiry. The *to dioti* - the why of things, connects apparent truths, the *peri ho*, with explanatory frameworks, through the *archai* of demonstration, that serve as *ta prota*, the first things - a true foundation for apparent truths. Although Aristotle was more 'post modern' than many of those that work in his tradition, the *archai* after all were subject matter specific, the envisioning of *archai* readily knowable if not known, reflected a classic and overarching optimism about knowledge. This enabled Aristotle to graft a determinate logic onto the various indeterminacies inherent in much of inquiry.

Logic is central in dialogue as well: *to dialegesthai*, the premise seeking activity that seeks to identify the appropriate *archai* of kinds of things. The theory of the syllogism, along with eristics, offers the basic tools of the *logikos* or *dialectikos*, one who thinks and questions.

When all works well, the result is the demonstrative syllogism, *apodeixis* which shows the necessity of a that, a *hoti*, in light of the *dioti*, the cause, in relation to the *archai*. From whence the *archai*? Quoting Randall, by ""experience" of facts,

by repeated observations, we become aware of the *archai*, the universal that is implicit in them." Citing Aristotle: "When the observation of instances is often repeated, the universal that is there becomes plain" pp. 42-3. Such a crude inductivist epistemologically has little appeal to moderns and offers little danger for modern views of inquiry, but Aristotle's logic, remains within the normative core. That is perhaps even worse for understanding inquiry, for unlike the crude inductivism which is quickly seen as too crude, his logic has both necessity and inherent plausibility. The result: the basic truth structure of his logic has been built into the normative structure of reasoning from his time till now.

The problem is how to distinguish the *archai* from among *endoxa*, the merely accepted opinions prevalent at the time. Again Randall "It is *nous*, working with and in the midst of facts, working in the subject matter itself, that "sees" the truth of the *archai*" p. 44. Not in Platonic isolation, to be sure, but in the context of subject matter. But still, this *noetic* 'recognizing' shares with Plato's view a phenomenological (Randall calls it 'psychological' (*ibid.*)), rather than a logical account of what it means to come to see the truth of *archai*.

Even given the primitive necessity of noetic recognition of *archai*, the *archai* must still prove their logical worth by being the framework within a subject matter becomes truly known. *Archai* yield the conceptual structures that is determined by syllogistic reasoning from them to consequences. As Randall puts it. "'Science' *episteme*, is systematized "formalized" reasoning; it is demonstration, *apodexsis*, from *archai* ... [it] operates through language, *logos*; through using language, *logismos*, in a certain connected fashion, through *sylogismos*" p. 46. *Sylogismos* points back to the basic constraint on *nous* that it see beyond the accidental and the particular, that it deal with the essential the *ti esti*, and so syllogism deals with what all of a kind have in common.

Syllogistic reasoning within *episteme* deduces the particular from what all particulars of the kind have in common, and in dialectic looks at the proposed *archai* or *endoxa*, through the strongest possible lens – counter examples as understood in the traditional sense of strict contradictories, systematized, then canonized as the square of opposition.

All of this is so familiar that it seems hardly worth recounting, but without the deep conceptual understanding of the context, the problem with syllogism, and particularly with the theory of truth that underlies the practice of offering counter-examples, the issue will not be clear.

The focus on *episteme*, on *theoria* places the bar high for those who would

propose archai. The 'inductive' epistemology of concept formation along with the noetic interpretation of their apperception presupposes that human beings can know reality with an immediacy that seem silly given the course of scientific discovery over the past several centuries. Too much conceptual water has gone under the bridge to think that concepts are to be seen clearly within percepts. Rather, the conceptual frameworks that human beings have elaborated, modified and discarded have been multifarious and extend far beyond the imaginative capabilities of Aristotelian views that take the perceptually presented as representative of underlying realities. Once the enormous difficulty of the task of finding the conceptual apparatus that will undergird a true picture of reality is realized, Aristotle's demand that concepts hold true without exception becomes a serious drag on inquiry. Yet it still prevails, built into the very meaning of logic as used.

Why this is so, is in part because of the power of the next major advance in logical theory. Syllogism, the only completed science as late as Kant, took on a new life when the issues of the foundations of mathematics became the central concern of theorists. The historical connection is not hard to trace; for from Plato on mathematics was seen as the prototype of knowledge, and its truths a model for the outcome of inquiry. Galileo and Newton linked mathematics to science and so it is no surprise that the logical model, based on the needs of mathematics retained its grasp on theorists of science as recently as logical empiricism. But there is more to that story, for the enormous advances of the twentieth century took the rudimentary mathematization of syllogism by Boole and others, to a theory whose major achievement: completeness, became a model for both what logic is and how it should be understood.

The magnificent achievement of Russell and Tarski offered a model for understanding logical inference and offers an elaboratable structure - quantification theory, that congruent with much of syllogism, offered a clarity of understanding that surpassed anything dreamt of by centuries of logicians. The Aristotelian core remained, now rethought in terms of extensional interpretations of function symbols that offered a new grounding for the all or nothing account of argument built into the square of opposition. The Boolean interpretation of Aristotle's quantifiers retained the high demand that universal claims are to be rejected in light of a single counter-instance, as did the modern semantics of models within which a natural theory of truth was to be found. Mathematizing the clear intuition of correspondence, Tarski's theory of truth gives the stability

needed to yield vast areas of mathematics and even offered some precious, but few, axiomatizations of physical theory. The price was that the truth was relativized to models, yet there was no reason to think that any of the models in use in science were true. This remark requires clarification.

Since the optimistic days in Greece when the early meta-analysis was innocent of many real examples, the claim that archai are “noused” from particulars with ease seems a historical curiosity, irrelevant to human inquiry. For the history of human inquiry in the sciences, contrary to Aristotle, showed that the identification of archai is no easy thing. Rather centuries of scientific advance have shown the utility of all sorts of truish or even down-right false models of phenomena. Concepts, and the laws, generalizations, principles and etc. that cashed them out into claims, have shown themselves to be mere approximations to a receding reality. As deeper elaborations of connections among concepts, and underlying explanatory frames, have characterized successful inquiry, truth in any absolute sense becomes less of an issue. The issue is, rather, likelihoods, theoretic fecundity, interesting plausibility and etc. The operational concepts behind these: confirmation and disconfirmation, however, in the once standard philosophical reading (Hempel and the rest) retained the absolutist core that Aristotelian logic exemplifies – amplified by quantification theory. Even Popper saw falsification as instance disconfirmation.

Much work since then has offered a more textured view; I think here of Lakatos and Laudan. Students of science no longer see the choice as between deductivism as standardly construed as an account for scientific explanation and some Feyerabendian a-logical procedure that disregards truth. Students of science see, rather, a more nuanced relation between theory building and modification. Argument theorists and informal logicians should be thrilled at this result for it opens the door for what they do best: the analysis of complex arguments. But not if they are crippled by the very logic that has dominated the discussion so far.

Truth, one of the key meta-theoretical underpinnings of logic – along with entailment and relevance – looks rather different when we move from traditional accounts to scientific practice. Let’s take an example.

Second: a constructive theory of truth

If you ask a sane moderately informed person what the world is really made of in just the general sense that Greeks might have asked, the answer is something like “atoms.” Let’s start there. At the core of modern science stands the Periodic Table. I take as an assumption that if anything is worth considering true of all of

the panoply of modern understanding of the physical world it is that. But why? And what will learn by changing the paradigm?

The periodic Table stands at the center of an amazingly complex joining of theories at levels of analysis from the most ordinary chemical formula in application to industrial needs, to the most recondite – particle physics. The range of these ordinary things – electrical appliances to bridges, has been interpreted in sequences of models, developed over time, each of these responding to a particular need or area of scientific research. Examples are no more than a listing of scientific understanding of various sorts: the understanding of dyes that prompted organic chemistry in Germany in the late 19th century; the smelting of metals and the improvement of metal kinds, e.g. steel; the work of Faraday in early electric theory; the the development of the transistors and the exploration of semi-conductors. This multitude of specific projects, all linked empirically to clear operational concepts, has been unified around two massive theoretic complexes: particle physics and electromagnetic wave theory. The deep work in science is to unify theories. The mundane work in science is to clarify and extend each of the various applications and clarify and modify existing empirical laws, and this in two fashions: 1) by offering better interpretations of empirical and practical understanding as the underlying theories of their structure becomes clearer. 2) By strengthening connections between underlying theories so as to move towards a more coherent and comprehensive image of physical reality, as underlying theories are modified and changed. On my reading of physical chemistry the Periodic Table is the lynch pin, in that it gives us, back to Aristotle again, the basic physical kinds.

We need a theory of truth that will support this. And, surprisingly perhaps, I think the image is just what current argumentation theorists need as well. Since argument is not frozen logical relations but interactive and ongoing, we need a logic that supports dialectical advance. That is, we need a dynamics of change rather than a statics of proof. We need to see how we reason across different families of considerations, different lines of argument, that add plausibility, and affect likelihoods. Arguments are structured arrays of reasons brought forward; that is, argument pervades across an indefinite range of claims and counter-claims. These claims are complex and weigh differently as considerations, depending on how the argument moves. So we need a notion of truth that connects bundles of concerns – lines of argument, and to different degrees.

Back to quantification theory. Quantification theory was developed in order to solve deep problems in the foundations of mathematics. And the standard interpretation of mathematics in arithmetic models proved to be a snare. What was provable is that any theory that had a model, had one in the integers, and models in arithmetic became the source for the deepest work in quantification theory (Godel, most obviously). But the naturalness, even ubiquity of a particular model kind did not alter that fact that truth in a model could only be identified with truth when a model of ontological significance was preferred. This seems to have escaped Tarski's followers who spent little effort in exploring the difference. Now, truth in a model is an essential concept. Without it we have no logic. But the identification of truth in a model with truth just reflects the metaphysical and epistemological biases of the tradition with the univocal character of mathematics as it was understood then. If I am right, it is not truth in a model that is that central issue for truth, but rather the choice of models that represent realities. And this cannot be identified with truth in a model for it requires that models be compared.

To look at it another way, if we replace mathematics with science as the central paradigm from which a logical theory of truth is to be drawn, the identification of truth with truth in a model is severed. For there is no model in which scientific theories are proved true. Rather science shows interlocking models connected in weird and wonderful ways. The reduction rules between theories are enormously difficult to find and invariably include all sorts of assumptions not tied to the reduced theory itself. The classic example is the reduction of the gas laws to statistical mechanics. The assumption of equiprobability in regions is just silly as an assumption about real gases, but the assumption permits inferences to be drawn that explain the behavior of gases in a deeply mathematical way, and in a way that gets connected to the developing atomic theory at the time, much to the advantage of theoretical understanding and practical application.

What are the lessons for the theory of truth? We need to get rid of the univocal image of truth – that is truth within a model, and replace it with the flexibility that modalities both require and support, that is truth across models. We need the metatheoretic subtlety to give mathematical content to likelihoods and plausibilities, a theory of the logic of argument must address the range of moves that ordinary discourse permits as we qualify and modify in light of countervailing considerations. These can not be squeezed into the Procrustean Bed of all or nothing construals of logical reasoning. Formal logic has been captured by Tarski

semantics. It offers a clear analogue to the notion of correspondence, but at an enormous price. The power of Tarski semantics – the yield being completeness, that is all formally valid proofs yield logical true conditionals – requires that the models be extensional, that is, all function symbols in the formal language are definable in terms of regular sets, that is sets closed under the standard operations of set theory, and definable completely in terms of their extensions.

The problem, of course, is that the overwhelming majority of both ordinary and theoretic terms have no obvious extensional definition, and the most interesting functional concepts are intentional (causation, in all of its varieties). The clue is the formal solution to modalities (necessity, possibility, and variants such as physical possibility): that is relationships among worlds as in Kripke semantics. This moves the focus from truth within models, extensionally defined – to relationships among selected worlds. Such relationships may vary widely, each one specific to a relationship, as in the analysis of physical causality in terms of a function that maps onto physically possible worlds (worlds consistent with relevant aspects of physical theory). Little can be said about the general restrictions on mappings across worlds, for inter-world relationships, if we take the intuition behind the account of physical causality, are broadly empirico-historical. That is, what makes a world physically possible is relative to that laws of physics interpreted as restrictions on functions across worlds.

The lack of a logical decision procedure – a consequence of the inter-model relations being empirical in the world-historical sense, need not make us despair as to a solution to the problem of truth in principle. For although essential details of the model require an empirico-historical investigation of concepts in use — the functional relations that are concretized in warrants that support entailments and the procedures that determine the relevance of claims and counter-claims, that is, the structure of logical possibilities, can be furnished a priori.

A solution in principle becomes possible when we look beyond truth in models to truth across models. Within models something very much like the standard interpretation holds, for it enables us to refute our models as we find disconfirming instances. (I say very much like because I don't want to rule out holding out, even within a model, against disconfirmation. But the clear case of classic contradiction is within models: think of why all men are mortal). But across models we need something very different indeed.

As mentioned, the account I offer has an affinity with Kripke's solution to the problems of modalities. We look to functional relations across models, and the history of relations over time and in relation to their logical surround. What I will

try to do is induce you to imagine a mental model. For those interested I have some copies of a precise mathematical description. Bereft of the mathematics a mental image must suffice.

Think, if you will, of physical science as some beautiful array of tubing of different thickness and different color - the color infusing the tube - arranged vertically before you. And see them with vessels at the joins of tubes, gradually changing color. Each individual vessel, can you imagine them, changes colors as the colors from the various tubes from which it feeds alter the composition of the color in the vessel. The 'vessel' is a complex composite function of the tubes to and from which it draws. What is this strange image I ask you to envision?

Truly, the vessels are models drawn from our scientific concepts, the most general models at the top; at the bottom models of data: observations, if you will. Although the models are connected they are individuable. The richest space of vessels - many vessels, much changes in color, myriad connections - is in the middle of the array. I think here of systems of chemical formula; the aggregate laws of medium level physics (rigid body dynamics, perhaps); models of DNA; computer models of weather systems and other complex phenomena - nodes in the array to which and from which connections are made. Color fields are systems of principles, laws, generalizations, and other regularities, connected by inference - functions that map models onto models. But that is to introduce the mathematics. An easier understanding is that the connecting tubes are the conduits of evidence. Confirmation from below, systematic support from above, although that is a misleading simplification since higher level theories generate new empirical support for theories they explain (reduce). The 'colors' change with the results of inquiry as the relationship between the various models becomes clearer, as the evidence from reducing theories and empirical confirmation alter the evidentiary weight flowing to and through the various theoretic nodes.

Truth becomes a property of the field. A few suggestions. First, the crucial empirical dimension, for this is science after all. There is a set of privileged models: empirical models of the data. What makes science empirical is a constraint that all models have connections with empirical models. Second, for models at any level short of the highest there may be found higher level models. So for first level models of the data, these data are joined through a more theoretical model. Theoretic models take their epistemic force first from the empirical models that they join, and then, and more importantly, from the additional empirical models that result from the theoretic joining in excess of the

initial empirical base of the models joined.

Truthlikeness is defined in terms of considerations such as: The increase or decrease in the complexity of particular models over time. The depth with which any model is supported by other models (the height on the vertical of any set of nodes (vessels) connected by tubes) at a time, and as a function of time. The breadth, the horizontal width which a supporting model is represented in the field of lower level – more empirical – models at a time, and as a function of time. The persistence of a set across the array. In terms of the visual image: vessels whose color tends to diffuse across the system.

Gradient of color, literally in a physical or computer model of the array, is a metric across the field. Analogically, gradient of color stands for the changing weights assigned to models as they interact. The metric correlates with evidence of varying degrees of robustness flowing from different sources. Truthlikeness in complex ways becomes a function of the structure itself.

Pretty dense, but turn the image to the example. The Periodic Table, up pretty high and to the center connects with the vast domain of chemistry – physical and organic, which in association with roughly parallel theoretic clusters, mechanics – statics and dynamics, electro-magnetic wave theory – explains just about everything we do and can do in the physical world in the last century, and has increased in its explanatory power as individual theories are expanded and refined, and inter-theoretic connections made. There is logic there, dare we deny it? Students of each field learn translation procedures to and from observable phenomena – to and from related theories. The connections are often the result of higher order theories. Above the Periodic Table: particle physics, quantum theory, quantum electro-dynamics, general relativity. These are the massive contributions of 20th century physics. Do we deny that there is logic there?

By the way, there is no requirement for the the highest order models be univocal (that is the lesson of indeterminacy). Nor that all model chains (paths up the vertical) go particularly high. But since higher order theories deepen the support, we like connections and go as high as we can: the tip of the Einstein cone – TOES (theories of everything).

There is a logic, but it is not the all or nothing logic of Aristotle and mathematicians. An argument is not as weak as its weakest link, nor are really weak links much trouble at all. (Think of all of the relatively unsupported empirical phenomena that are part of science without having any clearly seen connections to theories. Nobody changes organic chemistry when the latest results on cholesterol in the diet are reported).

Each member of the array supports the others, but they hang separately. That is, particular evidentiary moves affect each model differently. In the immediate neighborhood (that is actually a technical expression, but think of the vessel image again and picture tubes that connect directly to a vessel), inquiry affects models in the most intimate way – a near relative of standard logic probably works fine here. But there are relations with other theories, consequences for related theories. How does change percolate through the system? These are questions that the shift from a mathematical to a scientific paradigm of truth affords.

There are at least two uninteresting sorts of truths: statements of the cat on the mat variety and logical truths. Everything else relies heavily on movements across inference sets. Sentences ranging from ‘the light is red’ to ‘John has pneumonia,’ in their standard occurrences, are warranted as true (or likely, or plausible, etc) because countless other statements are true (or likely or plausible, etc.). To verify each of these, or any other interesting expression, is to move across a wide range of other statements connected by underlying empirical and analytical theories (systems of meaning, generalizations etc). All of these have deep connections with observable fact, but more importantly are connected by plausible models of underlying and related mechanisms. These include all sort of functional connections that enable us to infer from evidence to conclusion, and to question, in light of apparent inconsistencies connected to indefinitely elaborate and elaboratable networks of claims and generalizations of many sorts. For most estimations of the truth of a claim offer a rough index of our evaluation of the context that stands as evidence for it. Under challenge, that body of evidence can be expanded almost indefinitely, all of this still governed by the available meaning postulates and inference tickets cited, assumed, or added as inquiry and argumentation proceed. And without a logic adequate to the understanding the give and take of counter-example and claim, argument and argumentation fall asunder.

My claim, for now three presentations at Amsterdam, is that real argument will be better understood if the best arguments was seen as the prototype – what I call argumentation in regularized discourse communities. What I have tried to show here is that looking at the these also yields a model theoretic understructure for truth in logic.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Emergent vs. Dogmatic Argumentation; Towards A Theory Of The Argumentative Process



From the mid-70s onwards, in line with the “pragmaticization” of research into argumentation, scholars have felt an increasing need to turn their attention to the argumentative process. Simplifying a bit, it may be said that they worked with Toulmin’s layout, or with the topical tradition into which Perelman &

Olbrechts-Tyteca had put new life; but they began to be interested in how arguers actually sorted out what was claim and data and how they hung together by an inference warrant, or how exactly a topical inference was based on reality or actually reorganized the structure of reality.

In a text as early as Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss’s introduction to logic *En del elementære logiske emner* – English version *Communication and Argument* -, first published in Norwegian in 1941, a point is made in favor of taking into account, not only the argumentative product, i.e., the “completed” layout or topical inference, but also the process of “completing” it. For Næss has it that the bulk of an argumentative encounter is not about argumentative support proper, but about being clear what an utterer meant when he used a certain expression. Næss introduces the four procedures of ‘specification,’ ‘precization,’ ‘generalization,’ and ‘deprecization’ by which arguers can be clearer about what exactly they want an expression to say.

Few approaches to argumentation have taken up this process-orientedness of Næss’s account, among them Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst’s *Pragma-Dialectics*. Their meanwhile well-known and influential approach assumes

that ideally a resolution-oriented discussion goes through four stages in each of which only certain resolution-furthering moves can be allowed. But furthermore, at every stage the discussants may perform speech acts specifying or precisizing what they mean to say. However, these usage declaratives continue to be defined in the perspective of an argumentation that is successfully conducted to its fourth and concluding stage. That is to say, the argumentative process continues to be connected very closely to the product, i.e., the “completed” argumentation having successfully supported a standpoint which had been contested.

But, as van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992 : chap. 1) themselves acknowledge, the connection of the process and the product of arguing in colloquial speech is not as systematic as the earlier version of their theory (1984) might suggest. What *prima facie* would seem to be irrelevant sidesteps or childish bickering may be revealed to have a determining influence on the outcome of the discussion (see Jacobs & Jackson 1992). A discussion about one contested standpoint may become more and more complex because clarification is needed as to some of the elements adduced in support of this standpoint (see Snoeck Henkemans 1992). That is to say, while the product of arguing is perhaps best analyzed as an inference complex that dialectically renders plausible a conclusion with the help of plausible premises, the communicative process of arguing deserves more attention as a particular kind of conversation and, therefore, is best analyzed, as are other kinds of conversation, as a step-by-step process extending in time and not necessarily being organized by a dialectical macrostructure.

This is possible with a joint dialectical and communicational reconstruction, prefigured by Normative Pragmatics as proposed by van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson, & Jacobs (1993). In this framework, I shall give a different and more “communicational” interpretation to Næss’s four procedures. Thus, I will be able to reconstruct the argumentative process as a kind of communication organized, on the one hand, by a global dialectical goal and, on the other, step by step by local discursive moves. With Næss’s procedures of clarification in mind, I shall develop a tool for reconstruction starting from a model offered by Richard Hirsch in a different context. With this tool, it will be possible to show that the process of arguing is not always about the justification or refutation of a definable proposition on the background of presuppositions which are shared in principle, but very often about trying to match these presuppositions, these individual backgrounds, as best the arguers can, in order to overcome a problematic situation. In a sense, then, through the argumentative enterprise something

individual becomes “inter-individual” or “intersubjective.” I shall show in this paper that this “intersubjectification” may work easily, may require considerable communicative co-operation, or may fail utterly – and this reflects whether or not at the outset the presuppositions of the arguers resembled each other closely. For obviously, an argumentation is more likely to succeed if the respective arguers’ unconstested starting points are quite similar and more likely to fail if they do not find enough common ground to start from (see, as to this, Willard’s (1983; 1989) theory of argumentative fields).

1. Discourse operations and their linguistic reflexes

Taking seriously Næss’s and van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson, & Jacobs’s point that arguing has a justification-shaped dimension and a clarification-shaped dimension and implementing this point in a step-by-step analysis of the argumentative process requires that the reconstruction tool I will propose account indifferently for every step as a justifying step or as a clarifying step within an argumentative macro-structure. To do this, I shall elaborate on Richard Hirsch’s concept of ‘discourse operations’ (1989 : chap. 4). Hirsch conceives of arguing as an interactive problem solving activity carried out by collaborating interactors. When interactors feel that the information about a given subject which they have at their disposal is problematic, they start generating new information to handle the problem. Thus, the information state given at the outset is modified, and by evaluating all newly generated information as to whether it helps reach a less problematic information state, the arguers alter the general picture step by step and interactively in such a way as to arrive at an information state which is considered unproblematic. The interactive generation and immediate evaluation of information is called by Hirsch a ‘discourse operation,’ which has, accordingly, two phases and can be accounted for in terms of how an utterance reacts as an evaluation to a newly generated information state (1989 : 38-40). It may create a contrast or a complication, which conforms to doubting that the newly generated information state is promising as to arriving at an unproblematic picture (this would be the traditional opponent casting doubt on a proposition). It may consist of logic-like operations such as conjunction or conclusion; and it may be represented by semantic operations which help find a more adequate interpretation of information, such as precization or specification (this would be Næss’s clarifying procedures as part of the arguing) (1989 : 59-74).

All of these discourse operations, serving the purpose of processing information

states in such a way as to come closer to an unproblematic state, have paradigm reflexes on the surface of a text; e.g., the connectors but for a contrast, therefore for a conclusion, or and for a conjunction, etc. And although I am not very at ease with Hirsch's information theoretical background, which suggests that communication would rely on adequate and rather unproblematic mental representations of reality, I shall elaborate his concept of discourse operations which is worth closer examination. For it is likely to render what Normative Pragmatics assumes the process of arguing to be: the arguers' co-operative step-by-step effort to sort out how they might overcome a communication problem (in the first place, a conflict of opinion). It is therefore necessary to give Hirsch's concept a more "communicational" shape; and I shall, consequently, start from the assumption that discourse operations, whose surface reflexes are connectors like but or and, do not link information states but utterances. That is to say that by choosing a certain connector an interactor links his contribution in a specific - contrasting, complicating, etc. - way, to the communication as it has developed to the point where he chooses this connector.

Fig. 1 shows the last two sentences of the preceding paragraph as they are built up segment by segment with the help of connectors representing discourse operations which I felt were appropriate to develop my point about a "more communicational version" of Hirsch's model being necessary for my purposes.

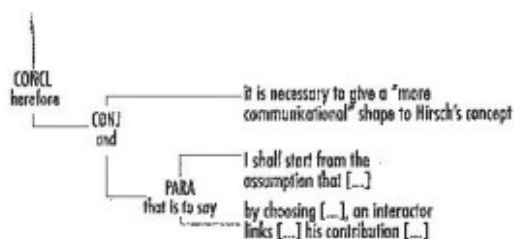


Figure 1 Discourse operations rendering the process of arguing

Figure 1 Discourse operations rendering the process of arguing

The proposed way of putting the concept of discourse operations might be called a "pragmaticization" of Jean-Claude Anscombre and Oswald Ducrot's (1983; see Ducrot 1993, Anscombre, Ducrot, García Negroni, Palma, & Carel 1995 and the thematic issue *Journal of Pragmatics* 24 (1995)) structuralist Theory of argumentation in the langue. According to this theory, because of lexical and

semantic properties of entities of the language system, Saussurean langue, sentences carry with them 'implicit conclusions' and hence have an 'argumentative orientation.' For instance,**[i]** a sentence like, 'The movie is poorly directed,' is more likely to argue for an implicit conclusion, 'It is poorly acted,' than for its opposite, 'It is very well acted.' Hence, the former conclusion has the same argumentative orientation as the sentence, and the latter has an opposite argumentative orientation. This is illustrated by the fact that, 'The movie is poorly directed and poorly acted,' sounds o.k. (same orientation), and that, 'The movie is poorly directed and well acted,' sounds somewhat odd (opposite orientation), whereas, 'The movie is poorly directed but well acted,' sounds o.k. The connector and, then, reflects the identical, the connector but the opposite, argumentative orientation of two connected sentences.

This is in line with my point that the discourse operation reflected on the surface by and creates a conjunction, and that that reflected by but creates a contrast. However, while Anscombre & Ducrot assume that this takes place at the level of the langue, the language system, and that the parole, the enactment of the language system, is sort of accessory, I shall argue that communication is more dynamical. When the addressee of an utterance connects to this utterance his own, following contribution by means of a connector that reflects a conjunctive, complicative, etc., operation, then this would in fact seem to suggest that the proposition conveyed by an utterance authorizes only certain pragmatically meaningful argumentative continuations – namely, the implicit conclusions it carries with it –, but others not. But it would seem, rather, that this is not in the first place a matter of langue but that it is up to the addressee/ respondent to choose one out of several possible meaningful continuations. Whether the continuation the addressee has chosen is in fact an appropriate one may be subject to closer scrutiny.**[ii]** For another interactor may go on with a contrastive or complicative discourse operation; and this complication, in turn, may involve precizing or usage declaring operations on lower hierarchical levels.**[iii]** Let us see how this works with a few examples.

2. Intersubjectification working without serious problems

I have said that by the discourse operations which interactors create by reacting in a specific way upon other interactors' preceding contributions, something individual becomes intersubjective. This intersubjectification may work easily, as I will show now to illustrate how the concept of discourse operations "processing

communication problems towards a solution” can account for the global dialectical and local step-by-step structure of argumentative encounters. The analysis to follow is displayed by Fig. 2.

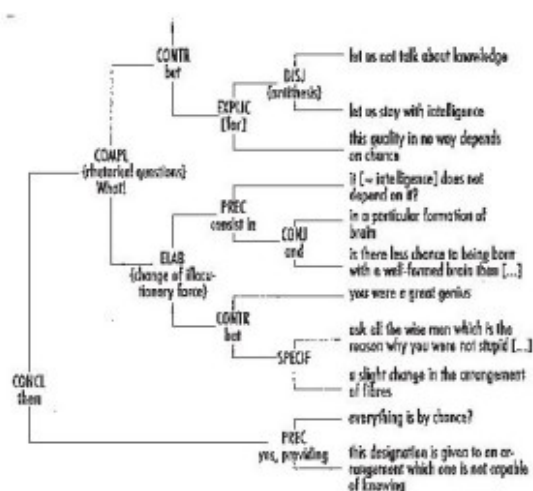


Figure 2 Discourse operations in Fontenelle's *Dialogues de Mort*

Figure 2 Discourse operations in Fontenelle's *Dialogues de Mort*

Situation: In the French Enlightenment philosopher Fontenelle's *New Dialogues of the Dead* (1686), Erasmus of Rotterdam reproaches Charles V. of Spain with the aristocratic privileges this latter would have, as son of a king, by mere chance without deserving them. Charles opposes to this that Erasmus must not appeal to his knowledge either; for this he has got from the wise men who preceded him, and learning everything that these knew, would not, says Charles, be more difficult than keeping the fortune an aristocrat inherits from his ancestors. To which Erasmus replies.

Erasmus: But let us not talk about knowledge, let us stay with intelligence; this quality in no way depends on chance.**[iv]**

Erasmus connects his utterance to what precedes as a contrast (but) designed to inhibit Charles's equivalence of acquiring knowledge and keeping fortune. The contrast is, to look closer, a disjunction (let us not – let us) with its explication (for, which is unexpressed but can easily be reconstructed).

Charles: It does not depend on it? What! Doesn't intelligence consist in a particular formation of the brain, and is there less chance in having been born

with a well-formed brain than in having been born the son of a king? You were a great genius, but ask all the wise men the reason why you were not stupid and imbecilic: almost nothing at all, a slight change in the arrangement of fibers.[v]

By connecting rhetorical questions (recognizable above all by the negations) to the preceding utterance, Charles creates, on the dialectical level, a complication which, if successful, inhibits Erasmus's contrast and hence strengthens his own equivalence 'acquiring = keeping.' This complication, in turn, conjoins (and) a precization of what intelligence is (consist in) and the claim that a well-formed brain comes about as much by chance as an aristocratic birth. The complication proper relies on a contrast (but) which elaborates on what has just been said.

Erasmus continues with a question: 'Tout est donc hasard? //Everything, then, is by chance?' That is, he fills in the 'yes' Charles's rhetorical questions suggest, and by a conclusive discourse operation (then) he creates a slot in which Charles can fill in the henceforth intersubjective conclusion to be drawn from what precedes: 'Oui, pourvu qu'on donne ce nom à un ordre que l'on ne connoît point. // Yes, providing this designation is given to an arrangement one is not capable of knowing.' (French spelling normalized; my translation.)

The fact that Erasmus does not go on doubting or discussing but creates a slot for Charles's conclusion reflects that the intersubjectification of Charles's point of view has succeeded without major problems. Although Erasmus seems to learn something that fundamentally reorganizes his presuppositions about being proud of privileges, material or intellectual, once he has learned it, the agreement is unproblematic; the problem has been resolved.

3. Elaborate repair needed to process disagreement

It might have been that Erasmus had not created a slot for an intersubjectification of Charles's position. He might have asked for further clarification about how the brain is formed, how intelligence depends on a particular formation of the brain, etc. In that case, intersubjectification might have been possible as well, but it would have required much more collaborative effort.

For reasons of space, I cannot fully discuss here an instance of arguing in which the position held by one arguer at the outset or a position emerging during the arguing becomes intersubjective because of elaborate interactive examination of the acceptability of the position. Let me just point to some characteristics of such instances of arguing by illustrating rather than analyzing a portion of the Nuclear Dialogues in which David Weinberger offers a critique of the Reagan

administration's policy of deterrence in 1980s. One dialogue is between two philosophers one of which, Emma, wears a pin reading 'Ban the bomb.' The other, Jennie, considers the slogan to be childish and simplistic, and disagrees that wearing it does any good opposing nuclear weapons.

Upon closer examination they discover that Emma is not even against all potential instances of use of nuclear weapons, which is why they shift to another, albeit related, topic, namely, what exactly Emma means when she says that she is against nukes. It turns out that Emma is against the policy of deploying nukes in Europe and threatening to use them. But this position, in turn, requires further examination; for now Emma's "refined" position has it that, even though one should avoid using nuclear weapons as far as possible, there might be instances of legitimate use. This, however, is the position the "atomic hawks" have, which is why Emma and Jennie feel the need to turn to question where the differences are between the supporters of the policy of deterrence and their own position, which is that they are against this policy. It is only now, after one more topic shift, that they come to the position emerging from their discussion that 'being against' for them means in the first place that they are against producing and deploying more and more nukes although the number of nukes existing is largely sufficient to deter military action by anybody in their right mind. That is to say that in fact Jennie and Emma intersubjectify a position at the end of their discussion, but that without considerable topic shifts, precizations, specifications, etc. – in a word: without considerable interactive argumentative co-operation the intersubjectification probably would have been impossible.

To a certain extent, this discussion has the same characteristics as the one analyzed in the preceding section. However, here between the emergence and the succeeding intersubjectification of the relevant position, considerable topic shifts occur, and the collaborative effort will finally lead the discussants to intersubjectify a position which neither of them held at the beginning of the discussion. In Erasmus and Charles's discussion the intersubjectification follows immediately the emergence of the position stemming from Charles's precization of what intelligence is. In Emma and Jennie's discussion, on the other hand, precizations and complications "lead the discussion astray." That is, they cause considerable topic shifts, so that at the end the interactors are no longer really having the same discussion they had at the beginning. The preliminary steps, then, are in a sense "dialectically worthless" because they are not immediately connected to the position emerging from the discussion and finally being agreed upon. Nonetheless, they may not be eliminated from the discussion if it is

analyzed in a communicational perspective. For it is obvious that without these preliminaries that gave rise to the precizations and complications leading to topic shifts, the discussants would never have gone on to that part of their discussion in which intersubjectification finally was successful and, accordingly, the problem was resolved.

4. Intersubjectification fails

The most important advantage of the processual reconstruction of arguing with the help of the step-by-step model I am proposing is that it can account not only for arguing that reaches its goal, i.e., arguing in which in the end the intersubjectification of a certain standpoint with respect to a contested position is possible. It can also account for arguing that does not reach this goal, i.e., arguing in which in the end no intersubjectification occurs. This is necessary to be able to model the argumentative process as an element of its own, quite independent of the outcome this process may have.

In Louis Armand baron of Lahontan's *Conversations of a Native and the Baron of Lahontan*, published in 1703, the author offers the Europeans a picture of a North American Native people whose chief, Adario, has been to France and tells Lahontan throughout the conversations about his people's views on morals, politics, and ethics and about what the differences are of these views as compared to the European views.

Adario has just pointed to a gap that can be noticed between the religious imperatives Europeans use to preach and their own behavior which does more often than not deviate considerably from these imperatives. Lahontan concedes to what Adario has said:

I am unable to deny the contradiction you have noticed. But one has to take into account that humans sometimes commit sins despite the guidance of their conscience, and that there are learned people who lead a bad life. This may happen because of lack of attention or the power of their passions, because they have devoted themselves to worldly advantage: man, corrupted as he is, is driven towards evil in so many places and by an inclination so strong that, unless there is an absolute necessity, it is hard for him not to give in.

Lahontan tries to inhibit the destructive power Adario's point would have for his attempts to bring him to a conversion to Christianity (see Fig. 3). After having acknowledged the inconsistency to which Adario has alluded, he goes on with a contrastive discourse operation (but) in which an explication is given (this may

happen because of) for the apparent contradiction. Adario's answer to this is a radical complication, which, in turn, inhibits Lahontan's contrast, thereby giving his previous point all its destructive power:

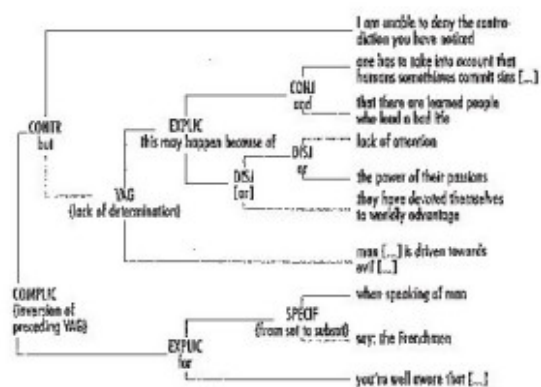


Figure 3 Discourse operations in Lahontan's *Suite au voyage de l'Amérique*

Figure 3 Discourse operations in Lahontan's *Suite au voyage de l'Amérique*

When speaking of man, say: the Frenchmen; for you're well aware of the fact that these passions, this striving for advantage and this corruption you are talking about, are unheard of amongst our people.**[vi]**

By specifying that about which they should be talking and by explicating this specification, Adario claims that Lahontan is right perhaps as far as Europeans are concerned. But since he takes what Lahontan says to be pointless as to the present discussion, he is not prepared to process any of Lahontan's utterances. Therefore the intersubjectification of a standpoint with respect to a position, proposed by Lahontan through the discourse operations he has performed, is not possible. Accordingly, Lahontan's attempt to bring Adario to a conversion will fail, and the discussion will not lead to any dialectical conflict resolution worthy of the name.

5. Conclusions to be drawn

The step-by-step analysis I have proposed for the process of arguing has yielded above all the following result: Categories and concepts of analysis which are applicable to the product of arguing, such as inferential connections or accepting or denying the justifiability of a position, are hardly adequate to an analysis of the process of arguing. For this process operates with more flexible communicative

maneuvers. I have accounted for these maneuvers, on the basis of a reinterpretation of Richard Hirsch's model, as discourse operations, i.e, a specific argumentative processing of a communication problem realized by the interactors through, e.g., connectors or entire phrases used to link their own utterance continuing the communication to the preceding communication in a specific way intended for collaborative problem solving.

The concept of discourse operations has the advantage that it can account for at least two kinds of arguing. Until now I have drawn a distinction roughly between arguing that succeeds and arguing that doesn't. It is more adequate, however, to speak of arguing in which positions that were not shared at first become intersubjective, and of arguing in which nothing becomes intersubjective. For if Charles V. succeeds in countering argumentatively Erasmus's accusation, this is because something completely new emerges from the discussion for Erasmus: people are intelligent or not by (physiological) chance. On the basis of this newly emerged position, having become intersubjective, an argumentative agreement is possible. But it might well have been that this new position would have remained as controversial as its predecessor was, and then argumentative agreement would have been impossible. This kind of emergent arguing is therefore no warranty for an agreement being possible.

In the same way, if Adario and Lahontan do not agree on the merits of Christianity, this is because the position Lahontan proposes does not actually become intersubjective. For Adario's and Lahontan's presuppositions, the backgrounds that underly their communication are too different. Whereas Erasmus and Charles can match their communicative backgrounds to a certain extent to make agreement possible, this does not work for Lahontan and Adario. So it is not the absence of something emerging from the discussion for at least one of the participants that impedes agreement; it is, rather, that nothing emerges and that at the same time the backgrounds would have to be matched to a certain extent - which, in turn, is impossible as long as nothing new emerges. For if the communicative backgrounds of the arguers coincide sufficiently, then agreements are very possible without there emerging anything new from the discussion. This is the case, for instance, in forensic argumentation, proceeding from communicative backgrounds which are largely homologous for all the arguers.

The major conclusion to be drawn from my paper is the following: The analysis of the process of arguing is faced with different kinds of arguing which do not

represent discriminate types of a strict classification but, rather, a continuum extending between two extreme cases. In one extreme case of arguing nothing at all becomes intersubjective and a position is justified or refuted on the basis of communicative backgrounds essentially identical for all the arguers. These backgrounds, then, in a sense acquire the status of an uncontested dogma. Therefore, I term this extreme case of arguing 'dogmatic.' Its characteristics are that rather few topic shifts occur and that the bulk of the discourse operations used are complications/contrasts and explications - which represent the "classical" product analysis categories of casting doubt on a position and justifying the doubted position.

The other extreme case is what I term 'emergent arguing,' for in this type of arguing arguers make a co-operative and collaborative problem-solving effort to match their communicative backgrounds. Because of this, something new emerges from the discussion, which is usually plain because topic shifts occur, because, while arguing, arguers notice that they have to submit a certain point to closer scrutiny, etc. Consequently, in emergent arguing discourse operations like precization, specification, exemplification, and conclusion are more frequent than in dogmatic arguing.

Most of the actual arguing in colloquial speech is somewhere in between the extreme cases, and hence this continuous scale from dogmatic to emergent arguing provides only for a possibility to classify a given piece of discourse as more clearly a form of emergent or of dogmatic arguing. Still, neither of the extremities of the scale guarantees that one or the other of them makes arguing more likely to succeed. Neither of them is "better" than the other. While scientific arguing usually aims at "intersubjectifying" positions and therefore is more emergent, forensic arguing aims at winning a case on the uncontested basis of the body of legislation and therefore is more dogmatic. Neither of them, however, is better than the other; for they obviously have different goals. Hence, as long as non-argumentative and extra-communicative features do not influence on the arguing to such an extent as to make it a pseudo-argumentation, the analysis of the ongoing argumentative process with the tool I have proposed allows for an account of how much the arguers' communicative backgrounds coincided, or of how prepared they were to start from a shared point of view. If dogmatic arguing succeeds, two interpretations are possible: Either there were no noteworthy differences between the arguers' respective communicative backgrounds, or those who accept an argumentative justification of a position accept at the same time all the presuppositions on which this rests. If emergent arguing succeeds,

then the arguers felt that there were noteworthy differences between their respective communicative backgrounds, but they were prepared to examine more closely the point(s) at issue and to give up or modify part of their own communicative background in order to be able to arrive at a shared view of the position discussed.

NOTES

i. Example taken from Anscombe & Ducrot (1989 : 73), which is one of their rare English papers. (It is, in fact, a translation of Anscombe & Ducrot 1986). Rühl (1997b) gives a brief overview over the concept of implicit conclusions. Other sources in English as to their theory are the presentation in *Fundamentals* (1996 : chap. 11) and Snoeck Henkemans's (1995) critique of their analysis of but as an argumentative connector.

ii. This is in line with Jackson & Jacobs's (1980; 1982) point that 'conversational argument' comes into being because an addressee has not performed the conventionally expected second pair part of an adjacency pair, thereby creating a communication problem needing repair. The advantage of speaking of an addressee's choosing one out of a variety of possible meaningful continuations is that no 'structural preference for agreement' (1980 : 261-262) of adjacency pairs has to be assumed a priori, which is in a way an idealization making the analysis depart from a strict descriptive account of the interaction.

iii. I have given a detailed account as well as definitions of discourse operations elsewhere (Rühl 1997a : 213-215).

iv. ERAS[ME]. Mais ne parlons point de la science, tenons-nous-en à l'esprit ; ce bien-là ne dépend aucunement du hasard. (p. 109) - French spelling normalized. My translation.

v. CHAR[LES]. Il n'en dépend point ? Quoi! l'esprit ne consiste-t-il pas dans une certaine conformation du cerveau, et le hasard est-il moindre, de naître avec un cerveau bien disposé, que de naître d'un père qui soit roi ? Vous étiez un grand génie : mais demandez à tous les philosophes à quoi il tenait que vous ne fussiez stupide et hébété; presque à rien, à une petite disposition de fibres (p. 109-110) - French spelling normalized. My translation.

vi. I have proposed such an analysis elsewhere (Rühl 1997a : 247-270). The example discussed there is a portion of the dialogue *De grammatico*, composed by Anselm of Canterbury around A.D. 1080 to deal with one of the favorite research topics of scholastic logic and semantics, namely, the logical status of the so-called paronyma, that is, simplifying considerably, of expressions which are adjectives

but can be used as substantives, such as, e.g., grammaticus. Anselm's actual problem, however, is not the morphological problem of derivation but the ontological implications this has in the perspective of the philosophy of early Scholasticism. For if there are expressions which can be adjectives and substantives as well, this would mean, in this perspective, that there are things which can be at the same time accidental (Aristotelian 'kategoroúmena') and substantial (Aristotelian 'hypokeímena'), with which scholastic metaphysics is not very at ease. For more details about the problem, see the commented editions of *De grammatico* provided by Henry (1964) and Galonnier (1986).

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Encompassing And Enacting Dialectic: Kenneth Burke’s Theory Of Dramatism



The work of American self-described “wordman”, Kenneth Burke, is having tremendous impact on rhetorical and literary theory and criticism, speech communication, sociology, and many other academic areas, including in some small ways argumentation. Despite this recent attention, particularly in the work of Arnie Madsen (1989,

1991, 1993) and James Klumpp (1993) as well as the recent special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* on "Dramatism and Argumentation" (1993) and occasional argument criticisms which invoke Burkean perspectives, Burke's work still remains relatively unknown to many argumentation scholars, and potential contributions of Burkean theory to argumentation studies remain to be developed fully. Moreover, as Madsen (1993) observed, "the works of Kenneth Burke have gone relatively unnoticed in the field of argumentation theory" (164). And although it is certainly true that "Burke offers no systematic and complete theory of argument" (Parson, 1993, 145), it is also nonetheless equally the case that Burke's work on human symbol systems and motives, summarized as his theory of "dramatism," encompasses the traditional domains of rhetoric, poetic, and dialectic, thereby at least by most traditional accounts encompassing as well argumentation (See van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Kruiger), subsuming, re-defining, and re-positioning "argument" within the orientation of "dramatism." The current study attempts to "locate" argumentation within Burke's theoretical edifice, dramatism, and, more generally, to examine how "dramatism" transforms traditional approaches to "rationality." As "rationality" is transformed, so too, necessarily, is argumentation. The specific objectives of this paper are per force more restricted. I will sketch, generally and broadly, dramatism's *encompassing* argument move, with its attendant transformations of "rationality." Second, and a bit more specifically, I will offer a description of Burke's theory of dialectics, before concluding with some remarks suggesting how, via the agency of Burke's "psychologized" rhetoric of identification, dialectic becomes enacted as what Burke calls the "great *drama* of *human* relations" (1955, 263).

I

Burke's "Dramatism" is set forth broadly in his informal *Motivorum Trilogy: A Grammar of Motives* (1945), which treats generally of dialectics and transformational processes, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), which treats of rhetoric as "consubstantial" with "identification," and *A Symbolic of Motives* (unpublished), which treats of poetics and ethics variously (depending upon which design for the unfinished project is featured) from within the orientation of "dramatism." A related manuscript, *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered* (unpublished), is a relatively complete treatment of precisely what the title promises; it may be a re-titled version of what began as *A Symbolic*.**[i]** Burke's proposed "trilogy" of "a grammar," which centered generally and paradoxically on dialectics, "a rhetoric," and "a symbolic," which subsumed both poetics and

ethics, parallels in many ways classical formulations including the *trivium*,^[ii] but Burke's interests, lying at the intersection of language, psychology, and circumstance, focus concern on human motives rather than upon probable truth, "right" action, or divine telos. As such, "'finding' a theory of argument, or positions that inform argument theory," in Burke's writings, Parson suggests, "will be an inferential process" (146; see also Madsen, 1993, 165). But given the sweeping nature of the *Motivorum* project, the process is not one of merely extending the domain of "dramatism," a theory derived most explicitly from literary studies, to the domain of "argumentation," for "dramatism" in subsuming and re-defining "dialectic" and "rhetoric" has already positioned itself atop much of the traditional "argument" domain. And in so-doing, it transformed the nature and function of argumentation itself. As Klumpp (1993) puts it, a "rapprochement" between mainstream argumentation studies and Burkean studies takes one more "toward adapting argumentation rather than dramatism" (149). One important reason for this is that frequently argumentation studies appears as a Phoenix arisen amid the detritus of formal logics, remaining under the sign of "Reason" and genuflecting instinctively toward Reason's traditional consort, Truth. Burke's orientation explicitly re-defines "rationality" and de-privileges, indeed de-stabilizes, truth. For a "rapprochement," to borrow Klumpp's terminology, to occur, "argumentation" needs to be approached from within the orientations of dramatism; that is, perhaps the most productive point of entry into a "conversation" between dramatism and argumentation is not "Where does dramatism 'fit' in argumentation?" but rather "Where does argumentation 'fit' in dramatism?"

Burke offers a new contextualization of *rationality* in the nexus of mind, body, language, and circumstance, all infused with the spiritual goads of perfectionism, in the betweenness of action/motion: he calls this nexus "motive" and insists that its structure and functioning can be "read" in the text or verbal encompassments of a situation. These motives are visible in the "ratios" which best encompass the discourse, and the "ratios" - to be discussed more fully below - are products of dramaturgical analysis. Burke's "dramatism" is an account of human "motives" and, ultimately, human attitudes and actions. It professes to encompass vast chunks of the classical domains of dialectic, rhetoric, ethics, and poetics, as well as much of more contemporary psychology, sociology, and philosophy. While not discounting the biological, psychological, or material, dramatism privileges the linguistic in its account of motives; certainly, for Burke, *motives* per se are

linguistic: they are to be located in the accounts people give of why they did what they did (1945, x). In other words, Burke, the word-man, begins always with “logos,” the word. In “Curriculum Criticum,” an appendix to the second edition (1953) of *Counter-Statement* (1931), Burke writes of his proposed trilogy: “The whole project aims to round out an analysis of language in keeping with the author’s favorite notion that, man being the specifically language-using animal, an approach to human motivation should be made through the analysis of language” (218-19). “Dramatism” is an explanatory and critical theory which works through language to better understand human motives; in its sweeping embrace of rhetoric, dialectic, poetics, and ethics dramatism also includes in its embrace the traditional domain of argumentation.

Argumentation’s break from logical formalism has moved the field toward Burke’s orientation. As Klumpp notes (1993), “Through Wallace, and Toulmin, and Perelman, and Fisher, and Scott, and others, we have treatments of argument that seek to return to the root of ‘logic’ in ‘logos’, in the linguistic power of humans. The resources of dramatism with its commitment to a dialectical working of text and context, permanence and change, identity and identification, and dozens of other tensions resolved in linguistic acts may point argumentation more clearly to the constructive appeal of argument” (162). Yet this return to “the root of ‘logic’ in ‘logos’” has not meant a purging of formal logic; indeed, “argumentation” may be seen as an encompassment of formal logics, and as an encompassment it both *retains* (or preserves) and *reduces* logic. Logic is now a part of the whole, no longer a metonym standing in place of a larger dynamic. Logic is never repudiated: it is retained, yet transformed. Just as the nascent field of argumentation has moved to encompass formal logic, so too does Burke’s Dramatism move to encompass argumentation itself.

From within a dramatistic perspective, the association between rationality and probability is, well, problematic: probability begs the questions, probable relative to what? That progressive linkage between the probable, the rational, and, often at least implicitly, the true, viewed from the dramatistic frame, is necessarily only a partial explanation, and hence a reductive one. A more comprehensive perspective would from the Burkean framework be the more “rational” (that with the maximum self-consciousness); that is, rather than emphasizing the *probable*, with its implicit this rather than that, either/or orientation, Burke emphasizes *situational encompassment*, “testing” the adequacy of a explanation relative to both the social and the material recalcitrances it encounters: progressive

encompassment, rather than precise differentiation, becomes the desired end, the telos of the rational from within the dramatistic frame (See 1940, 138-167). That is, there is a situational encompassment via a perspective; the “rationality” of the perspective is evaluated relative to the adequacy of the orientation to the structure, including exigencies, of the rhetorical situation (See Burke, 1973).

From the Burkean orientation, a productive approach to “argument” is not simply how it functions in the constructions of formal appeals but rather how it operates from within a given motive structure. That is, questions of “validity” must be framed within the *Weltanschauung* of the audience; only then can how such appeals operate be seen in the full conspectus of their function. To appropriate Burke’s admonition in “The Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle’” (1940, 191ff), it is not sufficient to dismiss an argument as being ‘unscientific’ or lacking formal validity when that argument is holding popular sway. Along these lines, Burke writes somewhat sarcastically in 1940, “We thus need not despair of human rationality, even in eruptive days like ours. I am sure that even the most arbitrary of Nazis can be shown to possess it; for no matter how inadequate his chart of meaning may be, as developed under the privations of the quietus and oversimplifying dialectical pressure, he at least *wants* it to tell him accurately *what is going on* in his world and in the world at large” (114). From the perspective of dramatism, it would appear that argumentation’s central concern with reason-giving or justificatory behavior is retained, yet the “rationality” of the reasons/justifications is not separate from the motivational *Weltanschauung* from which it emanated. That is, motives are “rational” relative to their own structural/functional design and adequacy to the situations they encounter rather than to any a priori or non-contextualized form. Form, for Burke, is in the psychology of the audience (1931, 30-31); definitionally, “form” as such cannot exist apart from “situation” and “audience.” Through this process, the “tests” of “rationality” are radically transformed. For instance, “that which is ‘rational’ is that which satisfies or would satisfy an aroused appetite, remembering always that in Burke’s interpretation ‘logical’ structures are one of the forms of appetite and desire. It is precisely here that we have the ‘psychologizing’ of rationality, for the operative ‘logics’ in his system of rationality are the logics of desire, of the appetites” (Williams, 1990, 185). The “rationality” of desire is not to be confused with inchoate yearnings or impulsive actions: “That which is rational within a given order of desires may be seen in contrast to that which is incongruous with that order. That is, rationality is, above all else, an ordered structure of relationships; to ‘be rational’ is to

operate within the structure or order of relationships apropos to one's time and situation" (Williams, 1990, 185). It is also, as Madsen emphasizes, to operate within the constraints of a particular terministic orientation (1989, 11; see also Jasinski).

Burke tends to equate "rationality" with but an aspect of human's symbol-using capabilities, and then he views rationality as the human genius for tracking-down the implications of our creations, linguistic and otherwise, for "perfecting" and "purifying" our categories, our dialectical desire for not just difference but opposition. In "Variations on 'Providence'" (1981), Burke writes, "The Logological concept of our species as the 'symbol-using animal' is not identical with the concept, *homo sapiens*, the 'rational' animal - for whereas we are the "symbol-using animal" all the time, we are *nonrational* and even irrational *some* of the time. Somewhat along Freudian lines I take it that the very process of learning language long before we have reached the so-called 'age of reason' leaves upon us the mark of its necessarily immature beginnings; and only some of these can be called 'childlike' in the idyllic sense of the term".**[iii]** And overly diligent pursuit of the rational proper, as with any such purification, may bring about its obverse, and it certainly brings about something different. From Burke's dramatistic perspective, "rationality's" penultimate perfection is ultimately a transformation into something new, different, other. From a more well rounded account of human motives, such genius, as Burke is fond of citing Santyana as saying, is almost always a catastrophe, culminating in scapegoating, wars, and ecological destruction, for instances. Burke continues, "But implicit in its [language's] very nature there is the principle of completion, or perfection, or carrying ideas to the end of the line, as with thoughts on first and last things - all told, goads toward the tracking down of implications. And 'rationality' is in its way the very 'perfection' of such language-infused possibilities. And what more 'rational' in that respect than our perfecting of *instruments* designed to help assist us in the tracking-down-of-implications, the rational genius of technology thus being in effect a vocational impulsiveness, as though in answer to a call?" (182-83). Burke's alignment of traditional rationality and technological prowess, each containing its own genius for catastrophe, offers fruitful parallels to Habermas's critique of technical rationality, parallels which must wait another day for further examination. Burke's alternative in "maximum self-consciousness," however, may diverge significantly from Habermas's "life world." What is needed instead of more "rationality" is what Burke calls "maximum self-consciousness": an awareness of the very framing and structure of our own motives (and hence of

alternative motive structures), a state of mind in which we use language rather than letting language use of, in which we think through the categories of language rather than letting the categories of language do our thinking for us.[iv] In expounding upon the educational and political value of dramatism, Burke maintains that dramatism “contends that by a methodic study of symbolic action men have their best chance of seeing beyond this clutter, into the ironic nature of the human species” (1955, 269-70).

That which is most “rational” within a dramatistic orientation (if not within others) is that which opens-up the linguistic possibilities, that which interferes with perfection and forestalls genius’s fulfillment in catastrophe, that which moves us toward “maximum self-consciousness.” The objective of such dramatically “rational” argument is not its fulfillment as truth, or victor over dialectical opposition – “the stylistic form of a lawyer’s plea” – , but rather as full an understanding as possible of what Burke at times calls a “calculus” of human motives: “An ideal philosophy, from this point of view, would seek to satisfy the requirements of a perfect dictionary. It would be a calculus for charting the nature of events and for clarifying all important relationships.” Or, in other Burkean language, it encompasses the situation. Burke continues, “...the only ‘proof’ of a philosophy, considered as a calculus, resides in showing, by concrete application, the scope, complexity, and accuracy of its coordinates for charting the nature of events.” “What, in fact, is ‘rationality’ but the desire for an *accurate chart for naming what is going on?*” (1940, 113-14). In dramatistic rationality, of course, accuracy is encompassment, not precise differentiation; it is a “heaping up,” not a purification (1940, 143-49). For Burke, dramatism’s reflexive analytic methodologies – e.g., so-called pentadic analysis – force us toward preservation of the dialectic, toward a disavowal of the absolutism of relativism and an acceptance of the encompassing nature of paradox and irony (1945, 503-517). Burke’s encompassing, or transcending, move culminates in dialectic, which is also where it started.

II

Traditional approaches to dialectics constructed dialectics as a method toward discovery of the True or probably true; it was a method of resolution toward a category of the true. Burke’s approach stands the traditional orientation on its ear: for Burke, categories of the true or apparently true (e.g., the terms or categories of the pentad) become “resolved” into unnamable dialectic constructs, into “ratios” which define motive (e.g., a “scene/act” ratio). The dialectic is not

resolved; instead, it is the resolution: human thought – symbolic action – is always dialectical. From this framework, “reason” must be understood not as a product of the dialectic (as a dialectically produced “sign” of the true) but rather as perpetually intrinsic to the dialectic, as itself always dialectical (1945). Again, in a Burkean orientation, a “ratio” (an explicitly dialectical construct) is a “reason” or, once ‘psychologized,’ a “motive.” As Klumpp notes (1993), “the etymological root of ‘ratios’ and ‘reason’ are the same” (162) (sic). They share an “alchemic” core: what can be “thrown up” as a “reason” at one moment may appear distinctly as a “motive” at the next (see Burke, 1945, x). There is, of course, a close and necessarily relationship between the motive structures (ratios) and dialectics: Motives are dialectical. “The elements of the pentad constitute human motives only when they interact, which is to say only when they found dialectical relations with each other: a scene/act ratio, for instance, is neither scene nor act but rather the betweenness of scene and act which allows for transformation, for symbolic action, for motives” (Williams, 1992, 3). Given this, it is instructive to flesh-out Burke’s approach to dialectics before suggesting how “drama” may be seen as the “psychologized” enactment of dialectics via the agency of rhetorical identifications.

Perhaps the most complete treatment of Burke’s dialectic qua dialectic is in the report of a seminar on “Kenneth Burke as Dialectician,” from the 1993 Triennial Conference of the Kenneth Burke Society (Williams, et.al.). The report offers “nine over-lapping assertions concerning Kenneth Burke as dialectician” (17) which, in summation, offer a brief summary of Burke’s orientation:

1. “Burke’s dialectic is, among other things, *linguistic* in character” (17). The ineradicable negative lurking within any linguistic demarcation of difference renders dialectic and meaning virtually co-terminus: for Burke, essence or substance is always paradoxically dialectic (1945, 21-35). As the Seminar report continues, “From the dialectical structure of language emerge characteristic features of linguistic processes, e.g. merger and division (identification and difference), transformation, polarization, hierarchy, transcendence, etc.” (17). Various “incarnations” of this “dialectical spirit” may be seen in various forms of social enactments.

2. “Burke’s dialectic allows humans to draw distinctions – but not to reify categories” (17). By being ineradicable, the negative always provides the resources to de-construct any hermetically sealed and protected linguistic construct.

3. "Dialectic can be converted to drama via psychological identification with linguistic distinctions" (17). I will elaborate upon this assertion in my conclusion.
4. "Burke's dialectic is not one of oppositions but rather of *betweenness*. Burke's dialectic does not operate in the realm of either/ or but rather the both/and; the dialectic is in the 'margin of overlap' between the two. The betweenness of the dialectic facilitates transformations of one term into another; it does not promote oppositions or polarization. Dialectic 'dances' in the betweenness of two terms or concepts. In this sense, the 'attitude' or 'spirit' of Burke's dialectic is ironic, not contradictory or antagonistic: Burke's dialectic is the 'essence' of the comic perspective" (17-18).
5. "Burke's dialectic neither contains nor aspires toward a determined *telos*; rather, the *telos* of Burke's dialectic is undetermined and open-ended" (18).
6. "Burke's dialectic resides 'in the slash' between the terms under consideration, and dialectical freedom is enhanced as the slash is 'widened.' The metaphor 'in the slash' derives from Burke's discussion of motives as ratios between terms of the pentad (hexad). Thus, in a 'scene/act' ratio, the motive is in the 'betweenness' of scene and act, which is to say 'in the slash'" (18).
7. "Burke's dialectic inaugurates/preserves symbolic action" (18). Burke insists that there is a hard and fast distinction between motion and action, such that action is a unique species of motion characterized in large part by choice, which is to say in large measure this multidimensional structure is the work of logology – or words about [symbolic, dialectical, inhabited] words" (20).
8. "Burke is a dialectician who uses dialectic in a 'strong' sense." That is, he uses "dialectic" not as a general metaphor but rather "as a *generating principle*" for much of his thinking (20). Dialectic is at the "center" of Burke's *Motivorum* project: the very "substance" of motives is dialectical. As Burke puts it in *A Grammar*, "Whereas there is an implicit irony in the other notions of substance, with the dialectic substance the irony is explicit. For it derives its character from the systematic contemplation of the antinomies attendant upon the fact that we necessarily define a thing in terms of something else. 'Dialectic substance' would thus be the over-all category of dramatism, which treats of human motives in terms of verbal action" (1945, 33).

Perhaps one of the most cogent descriptions of Burke as a dialectician is that offered by his life-long friend and confidant, Malcolm Cowley, in Cowley's review (1950) of *A Rhetoric of Motives*: Burke "is a dialectician who is always trying to reconcile opposites by finding that they have a common source. Give him two

apparently hostile terms like poetry and propaganda, art and economics, speech and action, and immediately he looks beneath them for the common ground on which they stand. Where the Marxian dialectic moves forward in time from the conflict of Thesis and antithesis to their subsequent resolution or synthesis – and always emphasizes the conflict – the Burkean dialectic moves backwards from conflicting effects to harmonious causes. It is a dialectic of reconciliation or peace-making and not of war. At the same time it gives a backward or spiral movement to his current of thought, so that sometimes the beginning of a book is its logical ending and we have to read the last chapter before fully understanding the first” (250).

III

Burke’s theory of “dramatism” psychologizes his theory of dialectics through the agency of “identification,” which in turn is Burke’s encompassing term for “rhetoric.” For Aristotle, rhetoric aims at persuasion, tempered by the ethics of rationality and, ultimately, truth; in its ideal form, rhetoric reasons through contingencies toward the probable. For Burke, rhetoric names the psychological/linguistic process by which “identification” occurs. Identification is the dramatistic counter-part of the dialectical and transformational processes of merger and division: identification with differences carved-out dialectically animates agonistically as “drama.” Through drama, both “knowledge” and “identity” are constructed. “Identification” names a psychological process whereby a person interprets/constructs his/her symbolic world through certain constructs instead of others. By inhabiting certain constructs, a sense of identity is created: identification is constitutive of identity. “Rhetoric,” for Burke, is the process of identification (and alienation and re-identification, or re-birth). Identification, or rhetoric, is the internalization or inhabitation and enactment of the dialectical processes of merger and division. “Dramatism” is the theory of these enactments: drama, from the Burkean orientation, is literally the enactment of dialectically constructed agons of difference.

In Burke’s interpretation, dialectic demarcates differences, which refine into the *agon* of oppositions. Human agents inhabit the symbolic world through the process of identification with various and diverse dialectical distinctions. Such inhabitation, such psychological linkages, brings the dialectic to life: it quite literally *enacts* the *agon* of difference. The “lived” dialectic is thus literally drama; and since most vocabularies are lived, dialectic and drama are frequently virtually synonymous. But since the possibilities for linguistic transformations, which is to

say dialectic, are not all “lived” or enacted, drama becomes a subset of dialectic (Williams, 1992, 9-10). Burke writes, “Though we have often used ‘dialectic’ and ‘dramatistic’ as synonymous, dialectic in the general sense is a word of broader scope, since it includes all idioms that are non-dramatistic” (1945, 402). But when the dialectic is “lived,” when it is psychologized through the agency of identification, it is transformed into drama. Literally (Williams, 1992, 10). And it is here that the dialectic is encompassed and transformed in its enactment as drama.

Burke’s theoretical framework re-situates argumentation within his ‘psychologized’ dialectic, his dramatism. Burke’s theory of dramatism is, in his often invoked phrase, “well-rounded” in its account of human motives. Weaving together strands from dialectic, rhetoric, poetics, and ethics, Burke’s “dramatism” is framed within a general commitment to individualism (and its attendant longing for communalism; working in close conjunction with the related pairs: solipsism/communication, division/merger, etc.), pragmatism (with nagging idealizing undercurrents), and “Agro-Bohemianism,” Burke’s personal mode of adjustment to the material and social exigencies of life. Life occurs through a series of moralized symbolic choices, constrained and impinged upon by social and material conditions, and educated by the recalcitrances of the non-symbolic world as well as by other agents, agencies, scenes, purposes, acts, and attitudes in the symbolic world too. In the classical formulation, these “sites” of these choices could be understood as giving rise to recognizable discourse forms, e.g., poetics, rhetoric, etc., as well as recurrent symbolic genre, e.g., tragedy or deliberative rhetoric, and ultimately modes of appeal within the generic orientations, e.g., personification or such elements as the modes of artistic proof, ethos, pathos, and logos. Dramatism would analyze classical appeals such as a logos appeal not simply as a form of rational argument but rather as a form of rational argument within a broader realm of symbolic action, which must be understood as transforming the “site” of argument proper. In the dramatistic perspective, “ratios” are “consubstantial” with “motives,” In the traditional view, “reason” leads to “rational action” and perhaps even to “truth.” In the dramatistic view, “reason,” “rationality,” “truth,” etc., are all forms of symbolic action, not privileged above the functionings of language but rather as recurring forms of symbolic action themselves. Argument, for Burke, is not a linguistic process which leads toward an extra- or trans-linguistic truth but rather a dialectical process which yields greater understanding and appreciation of the resources and power

of our symbol systems themselves. Burke's encompassment and psychologized enactment of dialectics in his theory of dramatism offers a potentially productive re-situating of argumentation theory in what some fear may be the twilight of the Age of Reason.

NOTES

i. The unfinished drafts of both *A Symbolic of Motives* and *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered* are products of the 1950s, and for the most part the early 1950s. Portions of *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered* were published as journal articles in the 1950s; additional sections of both manuscripts will soon be published. See the forthcoming book, *Unending Conversations: Essays by and about Kenneth Burke*, Ed. Greig Henderson and David Cratis Williams, which includes several unpublished sections of both *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered* and *A Symbolic of Motives*, as well as essays about these manuscripts.

ii. Burke's points of departure are frequently at least implicitly Aristotelian, as with the *Motivorum* project, and sometimes explicitly so, as with *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered*. But the reading should be Aristotle from a Burkean orientation, not Burke in Aristotle's terms. Burke 'came to' Aristotle, at least as a serious subject of study, relatively late in his theory-building process; references to Aristotle become frequent initially in the early 1950s (See Henderson). From the 'Dramatistic' perspective, Aristotelian categories are simply subsumed – retained and reduced – within a broader and more descriptively accurate viewpoint.

iii. Perhaps because of its comfortable accommodation of the nonrational and irrational as well as the rational, Burke tends to hold poetic and literary models as more representative of human action than logical models. In charting one's way through such a life, Burke's holds forth the aesthetic as the best adapted metaphor for encompassing the situation: literature – not argument – is equipment for living. But this is not an either/or proposition for Burke: argument is subsumed within the broader anecdote.

iv. Burke is often fond of citing Coleridge from *Biographia Literaria* to the effect that our linguistic categories, once 'naturalized', become self-evident 'common-sense': "the language itself does as it were for us" (Stauffer, 158).

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Presumptive Reasoning And The Pragmatics Of Assent: The Case Of Argument Ad Ignorantiam



1. Three Theses

This paper focusses on three traditional distinctions commonly made by argumentation theorists. The distinctions generally correlate with one another and work together in picturing argumentation and framing puzzles about it. Not everyone holds all or any of them - maybe

not even most. But the distinctions are invoked and alluded to often enough that we think it useful to challenge them directly.

First, there is a distinction to be drawn between justifying the truth or falsity of a proposition or claim and justifying acceptance or rejection of a proposition or

claim. The truth or falsity of a proposition is a matter of independent reality. Acceptance or rejection of a proposition is a voluntary decision. Rational justification of acceptance or rejection is a matter of choice, a weighing of costs and benefits. Rational justification of truth or falsity is a matter of evidence, a balancing of facts. Justifying truth or falsity is a matter of proof; justifying acceptance or rejection is a matter of persuasion.

Second, a distinction should be maintained between arguments over propositions of fact and arguments about propositions of policy. It is a distinction closely related to the first in its rationale. It relies on such matters as the difference between description and evaluation, “is” and “ought”, reasons and motivations, epistemology and politics, epistemic reason and practical reason.

Third, a distinction should be maintained between demonstrative proof and plausible demonstration. The former kinds of arguments are associated with strong conclusions involving direct evidence, certainty, necessity, infallibility and the like. The latter kinds of arguments deal with a balance of considerations, presumptions, probabilities, and tentative conclusions.

One can, of course, maintain all these distinctions as conceptual distinctions, which is to say that these distinctions mean different things, they have different implications, and they participate in different systems of concepts and puzzles. But presumably these distinctions are more than just conceptual. Presumably they point to real differences in the way in which argumentation is conducted in different domains and help to explain real differences in our sense of the quality of those arguments.

Traditionally, at least, scientific research has been held up as a paragon of demonstrative proof concerning the truth and falsity of propositions of fact. Its procedures of inference are highly formalized through statistical analysis. Its research questions are answered on the basis of quantifiable facts that are scrupulously guarded from questions of value. Its empirical claims seem to be as directly demonstrated and as certain as one can get. If these distinctions hold up anywhere, they should hold up here. In fact, there are important ways in which these distinctions blur when we examine the logic of the statistical analysis upon which modern scientific research depends.

2. Statistical Reasoning as Plausible Reasoning

The core of statistical analysis in empirical research is the logic of hypothesis testing. Factual propositions that are derived from theory and predict empirical

differences (research hypotheses) are tested against observed differences. The test occurs by setting the research hypothesis against a competing, default hypothesis – typically the null hypothesis that there are no real differences. Now, it isn't news to anyone that the test of whether the observed differences best match the research or the null hypothesis is a matter of probabilistic inference. But it is worth noting that the logic of hypothesis testing is also a logic of presumptive reasoning. In fact, the statistical inference amounts to *argumentum ad ignorantiam* (cf. Walton, 1996a).

Setting very high the level of proof required to establish the research hypothesis creates a heavy presumption in favor of the null hypothesis. In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, normal researchers assume their data shows that no actual effects or differences are present (or, that only trivial effects or differences exist). This is what tests of statistical significance amount to (even when taken together with tests of statistical power). As Cohen (1988: 1-2) puts it: When the behavioral scientist has occasion to don the mantle of the applied statistician, the probability is high that it will be for the purpose of testing one or more null hypotheses, i.e., “the hypothesis that the phenomenon to be demonstrated is in fact absent [Fisher, 1949, p.13].” Not that he hopes to “prove” this hypothesis. On the contrary, he typically hopes to “reject” this hypothesis and thus “prove” that the phenomenon in question is in fact present. Let us acknowledge at the outset the necessarily probabilistic character of statistical inference, and dispense with the mocking quotation marks about words like *reject* and *prove*. This may be done by requiring that an investigator set certain appropriate probability standards for research results which provide a basis for rejection of the null hypothesis and hence for proof of the existence of the phenomenon under test. Results from a random sample drawn from a population will only approximate the characteristics of the population. Therefore, even if the null hypothesis is, in fact, true, a given sample result is not expected to mirror this fact exactly. Before sample data are gathered, therefore, the investigator selects some prudently small value α (say .01 or .05), so that he *may* eventually be able to say about his sample data, “If the null hypothesis is true, the probability of the obtained sample result is no more than α ,” i.e. a statistically significant result. If he can make this statement, since α is small, he said to have rejected the null hypothesis “with an α significance criterion” or “at the α significance level.” If, on the other hand, he finds the probability to be greater than α , he cannot make the above statement and he has failed to reject the null hypothesis, or, equivalently finds it “tenable,” or “accepts” it, all at the α significance level.

The presumption is that unless the variability between observed groups is sizably greater than the variability within the groups, the observed differences should be assumed to be reflections of random error in sampling and measurement rather than reflections of real differences between populations sampled.

That the logic of statistical inference is a logic of plausible reasoning based on presumption is something that scientists and statisticians implicitly know – though commonly they explicitly disavow such knowledge. The conventional circumlocution used when a significance test fails to support the research hypothesis is that the researcher “fails to reject the null hypothesis.” This way of talking parallels the argumentation theorist’s common explanation for why ad ignorantiam appeals are fallacious: One cannot conclude that a proposition is true simply because one has failed to show that the proposition is false, or vice versa. One can only conclude that no conclusion can be drawn. One doesn’t know the status of the proposition one way or the other. For example, Jaccard (1983: 129) reminds us:

When an experimenter obtains a result that is consistent with the null hypothesis (when it falls between the range of -1.96 and +1.96 instead of outside of it) technically, he or she does not accept the null hypotheses as being true. Rather he or she fails to reject the null hypothesis. In principle, we can never accept the null hypothesis as being true via our statistical methods; we can only reject it as being untenable.

Similarly, Williams (1992: 79), who talks about “accepting” as well as “rejecting” the null hypothesis, nevertheless warns us:

If a study results in failure to reject a null hypothesis, the researcher has not really “proved” a null hypothesis, but has failed to find support for the research hypothesis. It is not unusual to find studies with negative outcomes where the research has placed a great deal of stock in “acceptance” of null hypotheses. Such interpretations, strictly speaking, are in error because the logic of a research design incorporates the testing of some alternative (research hypothesis) against the status quo (null hypothesis). Although failure to find support for the alternative does leave one with the status quo, it does not rule out other possible alternatives. Put into practical terms, be skeptical of interpretations of unrejected null hypotheses.

Phrases like “technically” and “strictly speaking” are the sorts of euphemisms methodologists use when theory crashes into common sense but don’t want to

have to admit they are sunk. (Keppel, 1991, uses the euphemistic halfway phrase, “retain the null hypothesis.”) And, of course, the reason such theoretical qualifications are set out in the first place is because normal researchers openly disregard them in practice.

It seems then, that the advocate of the traditional distinction between demonstrative proof and plausible argument faces a dilemma. Like so many statistical textbook authors, the advocate can conclude that normal scientific research is widely based on fallacious reasoning and needs to be corrected. Or, the advocate can conclude that well done quantitative empirical research in science really is based on a presumptive form of reasoning. Either way, demonstrative proof seems to be missing from the picture.

We think the reason it is missing is because it is not needed to redeem the rationality of scientific inference, if it ever is needed or ever exists at all. As commonsense reasoners, scientific researchers know that arguments from ignorance are legitimate forms of plausible reasoning when one has a good reason for setting a presumption in the first place. Quantitative analysis in scientific research is plausible reasoning. It is *formally rigorous* plausible reasoning, but it is a kind of plausible reasoning nevertheless: A kind in which presumptions are established as the levels of proof (in the form of probability assessments) required to accept research hypotheses.

3. Statistical Propositions as Propositions of Policy

The level of proof required to demonstrate the research hypothesis is commonly a matter of convention. Alpha levels in significance testing are ordinarily set at .05. There can be good reason for setting this level of proof that goes beyond a purely arbitrary decision. The nature of this broader rationale once again proves instructive. For the rationale is one in which *argumentum ad consequentiam* plays the decisive role. And this suggests to us that another distinction carries little weight: the distinction between propositions of fact and propositions of policy. Argumentation theorists have long recognized that while *ad consequentiam* reasoning is an illegitimate proof of a proposition of fact, it can provide compelling support for a proposition of policy (Walton, 1996b). In general, this is because the former would involve an illicit shift from a question of what ‘ought’ to be, or one of value, to a question of what ‘is,’ or one of fact. And this is said to be an intrinsic difference between propositions of policy and propositions of fact. Yet this does not appear to be a scrupulously guarded distinction in the logic of hypothesis testing.

Go back to the question of setting the level of statistical significance in hypothesis testing. Textbook authors commonly explain that the level of proof necessary to accept and reject the null and research hypotheses is dependent on both the *risk* of inaccuracy and the *cost* of inaccuracy. In statistical jargon, this process is labeled as committing Type I and Type II errors. Type I error is committed when one rejects the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is in fact 'true'. Type II error takes place when one accepts (fails to reject) the null hypothesis when the null hypothesis is in fact 'false'. Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991: 41) colorfully describe these two errors as inferential mistakes involving "gullibility" (Type I error) while Type II error involves being "blind to a relationship."

These errors are inversely related: when the likelihood of committing Type I error is decreased the likelihood of Type II error is increased. The probability of committing either type of error is determined by setting an alpha level required to accept a hypothesis. A higher than usual alpha level (say, $p = .10$) increases the likelihood of committing Type I error while a lower than usual alpha level (say, $p = .01$) increases the possibility of committing Type II error.

When explaining the rationale for this deciding the alpha level, statistical theorists almost uniformly turn to a utility model of decision-making, calling on researchers to balance risks and costs of the two types of errors. Summers, Peters and Armstrong explain that the goal of researchers is in deciding which error to make, and "it would make sense to choose limits that balance expected costs of Type I and Type II errors. (1981: 248)" Likewise, Mood and Graybill (1963: 279) explain, "to arrive at a reasonable value for alpha requires an experimenter to weigh the consequences of making a Type I and Type II error." Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991: 455) suggest that the balancing is in effect a practical judgment of consequences: If an investigator has decided to set alpha (α) at .05 and is conducting a test of significance with power = .40, beta (β) will be 1-.40, or .60. Then the ratio of β / α will be $.60/.05 = 12$ implying a conception of Type I errors (α) as 12 times more serious than Type II errors (β).

The consequentiality of factual decision-making, however, is most apparent when statistics textbooks create a practical context. Heiman (1992: 292-293) explains the reasoning with the following concrete illustration:

We typically set alpha at .05 because .05 is an acceptably low probability of making a Type I error. This may not sound like a big deal. But the next time you fly in an airplane, consider the possibility that the designer's belief that the wings will stay on may actually be a Type I error. A 5% chance is scary enough - we certainly do not want more than a 5% chance that the wings will fall off.

Sometimes we want to reduce the probability of making a Type I error even further, and then we usually set alpha at .01. For example, we might have set alpha at .01 if our smart pill [a hypothetical intelligence-inducing pill] had some dangerous side-effects. We would be concerned about subjecting the public to these side-effects, especially if the pill does not work. Intuitively, it takes even more to convince us that the pill works, and thus there is a lower probability that we will make an error.

Similarly, Hays (1994: 284) explains: Within contexts such as the test of a new medication in which Type I error is abhorrent, setting a extremely small is manifestly appropriate. Here, considerations of Type II error are actually secondary. In some instances in a social science as well, Type I error clearly is to be avoided, and from the outset the experimenter wants to be sure that this kind of error is very improbable.

Jaccard (1983: 131) also illustrates the reasoning in terms of the widely used medical scenario:

The tradition of adopting a conservative alpha level in social science research evolved from experimental settings where a given kind of error was very important and had to be avoided. An example of such an experimental setting is that of testing a new drug for medical purposes, with the aim of ensuring that the drug is safe for the normal adult population. In this case, deciding that a drug is safe when, in fact, it tends to produce adverse reactions in a large proportion of adults is an error that is certainly to be avoided. Under these circumstances a small alpha level is selected so as to *avoid making the costly error*. With a conservative alpha level, the medical research takes little risk of concluding that the drug is safe when actually it is not. Thus, the practice of setting conservative alpha levels evolved from situations where one kind of error was extremely important and had to be avoided if possible.

Keppel (1991: 56), on the other hand, talks about what is important simply in terms of the more general intellectual and academic costs and benefits of the decision:

Every researcher must strike a balance between the two types of error. If it is important to discover new facts, then we may be willing to accept more Type I errors and thus *increase* the rejection region. On the other hand, if it is important not to clog up the literature with false facts, which is one way to view Type I errors, then we may be willing to accept more Type II errors and *decrease* the

rejection region.

All these authors and many others discuss the decision-making process in terms of consequences, costs, importance, seriousness, or severity of error. In other words, research conclusions are inextricably bound up in *ad consequentiam* reasoning. In fact, the seeming objectivity of the “.05” level of significance testing is a reflection of just the opposite – an arbitrary judgment based on lack of sufficient information:

The inverse relationship of the risks of the two types of error makes it necessary to strike a reasonable balance. . . . But conventions are useful only when there is no other reasonable guide. . . . In much research, of course, there is no clear basis for deciding whether a Type I or Type II error would be more costly, and so the investigator makes use of the conventional level of determining statistical significance. (Sellitz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1959: 418).

When making a decision regarding making type I or type II errors, the loss function associated with the two errors must be known before a rational choice concerning alpha can be made. However, experimenters in the behavioral sciences are generally unable to specify the losses associated with the two errors of inference. *The use of the .05 or .01 level of significance in hypothesis testing is a convention.* (Kirk, 1968: 2, sec. 1.5).

Pretty clearly then, the rationale for statistical significance testing relies heavily on argumentum ad consequentiam. It seems then, that the advocate of the traditional distinction between propositions of policy and propositions of fact faces a dilemma. Unless this distinction is a chimera, either the advocate must conclude that statistical argument is grounded in a real howler (illicitly converting ‘ought’ to ‘is’), or the advocate can conclude that scientific reasoning is not really factual reasoning at all. Neither option seems to be attractive to those who would maintain the empirical utility of distinguishing propositions of fact and policy.

4. The Pragmatics of Decision-Making

We think both dilemmas above are a reflection of still a deeper breakdown in distinctions: that between justifying the truth and falsity of propositions and justifying the rationality of their acceptance or rejection. We will not bother to rehearse the argument that statistical decision-making is concerned primarily with the latter and only indirectly with the former. The briefest review of the language quoted above should be convincing enough. Quantitative empirical

research in science does not justify the truth or falsity of empirical propositions per se; rather it justifies the rationality of accepting or rejecting such propositions. Scientific theory and empirical knowledge is a matter of *deciding* what to *treat* as true or false. All of the language of statistical inference works at that level. It is a meta-level. It should not be surprising then, that ad consequentiam reasoning – matters of utility and usefulness rather than truth – should rest at the heart of empirical knowledge and reasoning. And it should not be surprising either that statistical inference and scientific reasoning is plausible reasoning based on practical presumptions. But if that is what we find in this domain of knowledge, where exactly would we find anything else?

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