

# ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Do Advertisers Argue In Their Campains?



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

But if one asks whether they are valide, this question turns back to the theory of argumentative valitiy one is using. In pragmatic theories of argumentation, sales arguments can be reconstructed as argumentative moves with at least some charity by means of adding premises, reformulating theses and giving usage declarations. Arguments put forward as speech acts do also deserve some charity. But the question is in general: Are we right in reconstructing sales arguments as related to validity?

Before returning to this question I want to sketch out the positions of a virtual theorist and an advertiser who is willing to use argumentative rules. It is a narrative fiction about possible interactions of positions. The concept of position will then link up to a validity-related 'dynamic' approach to Argumentation Theory. The central issue of this paper will be a case-based discussion of the validity of sales arguments as analogies. Before I will mention briefly how sales arguments are missing the requirements of some other approaches to Argumentation Theory.

## *1. The positions of the advertiser and the argumentation-scholar*

Do Advertisers Argue in their Campains?

It depends. This is the answer of a scholar. It depends on the concept of argumentation which is preferred and on the corresponding analysis of advertising.

Of course. This is the answer of an advertiser. Argumentation is one of the strongest instruments to force rational addressees to accept an opinion and to act accordingly.

Each position includes aspects of the other: From the scholar's vievpoint the

advertiser will be successful in applying a practical theory of argumentation that stresses the rational aspect of Argumentation. Argumentation is perceived as a rule-guided practice.**[i]**

From the advertiser's perspective the scholar's efforts maybe regarded as support in advance of the advertiser. The scholar seems to be engaged in strenthening the rational believes of the adreesees so that they will understand themselves more and more as being committed to accept any thesis that can be arrived at by correctly applying the scholar's rational rules of argumentation.

This position may be regarded as a rethorical or even sophisticated**[ii]** standpoint that describes rationality as a means of persuasion.**[iii]** It is an "enlightend" position as far as it delegates any ethical questions to the Individual. Relativistic consequenses seem to be inevitable.

Nevertheless it provides the impression of usefulness towards the scholar who is not reflecting the values his work may be serving. The outcomes of his work are designed as unbiased scientific results.

Both viewpoints are strengthening each other, the one in applying the other's results, the other in being esteemed by the first. None of them is independent. None is disinterested.

## *2. Relativism and Positivism of Positions*

Both positions are roughly scetched out, so that nobody is forced to identify himself with any of them. But nevertheless everybody is free to take up the position he wants.

What is of interest in this place is the concept of position which belongs to comprehensive concept of argumentation. Therefore we can take this reflexion as a starting point for further considerations. 'Position' means the circumstance, that an opinion is always stated somewhere and very often powered in favour or against something.

That means, that a position is situated in a virtual area of tension. Where do positions get their power from? Many strong positions are composed of arguments. At least there is only one demand to a position: It must hold. Good arguments do. Their steps are constructive in a way that each is posed on it's precedessor. Gaps and circles must be evaded.

This is not a mere methaphor. It is the easiest way to demonstrate how argumentative positions are 'positive'. Every position depends on being *posed* and internally being built up by someone. It needs a platform it can stand on. And it needs an architecture. Every demonstration, that it has no reliable 'static' creates

an objection. The 'bricks', argumentative positions are built of, are oral platforms. Their 'way of speaking' is reliable. Objects can be identified, predications and intentions can be understood and propositions can be checked. To use another metaphor: The ways towards their positive theses can be followed up, if the construction is methodologically consistent. **[iv]** To demonstrate the reliability the addressee must be willing to go this way towards the theses. Literally spoken this means that without ongoing dialogic inquiry the positions cannot be held, because the only way to find out the reliability of a manner ('way') of speaking is the addressee's critique.

Therefore argumentative positions are relative. They are relative to objections, to disputes and to the lives they are embedded in. **[v]** They are also relative to concurring positions.

### 3. Case one

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

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

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

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

Every matter of fertility is lovely. Planting (and buying) bulbs is a matter of fertility. Therefore planting bulbs is lovely. The conclusion is true if the premises are true. Obviously it is a syllogism, but it can't serve as a good argumentation because of the weakness of at least one premise. It is a structure of belief. The whole structure can be the result of an argumentative process as well as the outcome of an aesthetic perception of advertisements. Surprisingly it has a logical structure **[vi]** although it cannot be justified: Sentences like 'every matter of

fertility is lovely' can be shown to be wrong by numerous ugly counterexamples, nearly everybody will agree to. Of course argumentation is not impossible in this case. The problem is with the pros: There is seemingly no way of approving a general premise that attributes 'loveliness' to a set of objects, situations or even people. Seemingly it is a matter of taste.

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

Argumentation (1) has to meet the requirement of directing to truth. It ends up with truth. Its paradigm is proof: deriving truth from premisses to conclusions using valid logical structures and meaningful expressions, some kind of logical syntax and semantics. Theses, that are worth to be argued, must be formulated in clearly defined terms. Otherwise "... one must remain silent." (Wittgenstein 1988: 85)

From this view, discussing the question whether something is lovely or not - or even causing pain - is not a way of talking about the world. It is a more or less civilised way of replacing expressive shouts and gestures. (cf: Wittgenstein 1984) Ethics and Aesthetics remain inexpressible.

Argumentation (2) is a social practice, guided by the ideal of providing the participants with reliable orientations. Orientations are complex schemes of conduct. They are containing situation schemes, action schemes, ends and means-end structures. Feelings, sensations and impressions are part of situation schemes. Situations are 'by definition' not exactly definable. Each one is an original. Therefore situation schemes are focussing on some relevant aspects of them. This way they become manageable. The more distance that can be established, the more individual differences can be ignored. Following this tendency (Wohlrapp 1990), the ability of controlling situations increases and validity of orientations can be established.

From this point of view, discussions about taste are not to be excluded from Argumentation. What kind of taste will be agreeable, and which one will be found idiosyncratic is a decision that depends on the corresponding argumentation. The decision on what can be attributed to be 'lovely' e.g. would be embedded into a range of paradigmatic cases (Govier 1985: 55ff) instead of stipulating a generalisation.

While Argumentation (1) postulates definite meanings and extensions of the used expressions, Argumentation (2) includes the development of concepts as well as dynamic moves of the whole structure: A starting-thesis T1 will be attacked by objections stating contradictions or gaps in the supposed chain of reasoning. In consequence the proponent of T1 has at least 3 options: He can

1. add some reasons, explicitising more backgrounds,
2. make some semantic shifts, that are also affecting the theses, so that he reaches T1'
3. or make the shift explicit ending up with the follower-thesis T2

Again this is a very rough sketch of theoretical approaches towards non-theoretical argumentation. But I think the problem of aesthetical and practical reasoning is well-known. It is recognized in many other approaches:

Discourse Theory e.g. has developed different kinds of claims to validity: Truth, rightness, adequacy of evaluative standards and veracity. Each of them is related to a selfstanding realm of discourse marked as: theoretical, ethical or aesthetical. (Habermas 1981: 65ff) In this context Discourse Theory has realized the pragmatic turn: The paradigm of argumentative validity in Discourse Theory isn't any more a theoretical model of structure but a practical normative ideal taken from forensic debate.

The pragmadialectic approach also realizes this kantian primate of practise. It's rule guided code of conduct (Eemeren, Grootendorst 1984: 151ff) delegates different claims to different argumentative stages. Explication of terminological usages e.g. has it's place in the preparatory stage.

I don't want to mention these approaches here. As far as I can see they don't give enough attention to the peculiar argumentation related character of aesthetics as they appear especially in advertisings. Nevertheless they give an answer to whether ads are argumentative or not. To be acknowledged as argumentations fitting into one of these approaches advertisements are missing several necessary conditions:

From the viewpoint of Discourse Theory one will find a lack of equality in the participant's chances. Pragmadialecticians will find a lack of intersubjectivity and sincerity. And they also won't be prepared to reconstruct advertisements as sequences of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. Even a dispute in a tv spot won't be acknowledged being more but a fictional argumentation consisting of fictitious speech acts.

Other approaches to Argumentation Theory don't see the case much better. Wohlrapp's dynamic and reflexive approach (Wohlrapp 1995) e.g. doesn't provide the analyst with normative tools. The analyst's evaluation is at the same time to be regarded as a move of a participant. It is situated inside of a complex transsubjective activity called 'argumentative tendency'. Therein argumentation tends to evaluate itself. The tendency depends on the participants growing ability of 'distanciating' personally hold opinions and to transform them into 'theses' that are relative to given reasons.

In opposition to this, advertisements, placed in public media, are tending in the opposite direction: Reasons are put forward, objections sometimes mentioned, but the moves are always directed towards individual feelings, and personally held opinions of the form: For me as an individual it is worth to prefer A in case of B. Such opinions are to be distinguished from argumentative theses. They are not at anybody's disposal. They are seldom explicitly expressed, and they are - ideally - beyond question because they are designed as implantes to the addressee's selfunderstanding and orientation system.

So advertisements are not argumentative? Here I can't state a conclusion like this, because this would presuppose a justification from an external standpoint which has no place in this approach. As we can describe a tendency as a more or less dense sequence of moves, motivated by different or even opposing forces, we can speak now of a 'discursive' and an 'antidiscursive tendency'.

Indeed this description does not leave advertisement as a disinterested object which does not effect argumentative validity. But I don't think, that this is the place to start a normative oriented criticism of antidiscursive activities. Before taking a closer look to the example I only want to mention here that there are two opposed possible operations in the tendency: Wohlrapp's 'distanciation' is paired by an opposite move I will call: 'approximation'.

#### *4. A dynamic approach to the argumentative force of advertisements*

Analogies in general are not well reputed as arguments relating to validity. As Mengel shows they nevertheless are doing their job in cases of insufficient theoretical bases. (Mengel 1995: 191) As already mentioned theses are validated by forwarding reasons against objections. Their ability to support a thesis in question depends on their supposed theoretical basis. An insufficient basis can be (re)constructed methodically step by step. But this may be a long and sometimes impassable way, e.g. in questions of taste.

In this case analogies can be useful. They can generate new viewpoints establishing new and surprising similarities between cases of different fields. Although they are not controllable like methodical procedures, they can be reconstructed by explicitising an underlying abstraction that makes their viewpoint plausible. For this purpose Mengel introduces the concept of an abstractor. The abstractor's function is to designate an equivalence between the cases of the analogy. But the equivalence is not expressible before the analogy has created the new shared viewpoint. There cannot be a term before because there is no theoretical basis until this moment. Only the analogy itself is bridging the gap.

With this analytical tool I will return to the initial example:

The virtual abstractor may be the following: 'equally sacrifice/benefit related'. The relation between pregnancy's hardships and the luck of having children is the same as the relation of the costs of buying and planting bulbs in expectation of getting beautiful flowers. After establishing this analogy in advance of the discursive tendency one may discuss the relation in detail: Isn't the sacrifice/benefit relation in the case of planting bulbs more advantageous? Are we right to compare the fertility of our own families with the fertility of some other species, however beautiful? Aren't we confusing symbolic reality with social reality? Aren't flowers only substitutes?

In this direction one may proceed in developing absurd theories e.g. of how to evaluate aesthetic epiphenomena of fertility. The discursive tendency is leading and the motivation of buying bulbs is diminished.

The advertisement is aiming at the other extreme: For the sake of commercial advantages the analogy is not worked out. The sacrifice/benefit relation remains unspoken. Instead the advertising strategy tries to transfer the strong emotional associations of human reproduction into the contexts of buying behaviour. Instead of 'distancing' motivations to create discursive values, the motivations are 'approximated' for effecting an inclination to buy. As stated in the beginning this shopping motivation may also be caused by argumentative means. The form is the following:

P1: You have the problem N.

P2: Everybody who has the problem N, will get the best solution of N in respect of price and performance by taking the Q we are offering.

C: Therefore you are best advised to buy our Q.

If the members of the target group T(N) believe that P2 is true, this is a very strong sales argument. P2 expresses the so called unique selling proposition (USP) which is one of the essentials of every marketing plan and a central issue of advertising campaigns. Nevertheless in many cases the product benefit is not that clear. In this case the problems of customers and USPs have to be designed by the advertisers. Analogies are helpful in this situation.

The equivalence that is used by Mengel as an abstractor for analysing common viewpoints in regard of analysing seemingly different cases is not restricted to the analytical usage. It can also be used as a creative tool in finding analogies. An essential role plays the sacrifice/benefit equivalence:

In contradiction to other analogies this abstractor isn't that artificial. It has a very common synonym: It is called 'value'. The value transfer from paradigmatic cases with intensive sacrifice/benefit relation to others with less sacrifice/benefit relation but commercial interest is a central means of advertisements.

Mengel mentions the surprising effect as a central feature of analogies. Cases, where equal properties are listed and inductive inferences are drawn from the paradigmatic case to the case in question are fallacious and do not fulfil the peculiar task of analogies: improving insufficient theoretical bases. This kind of analogies are typically used in advertisements. The abstractor 'value' does not establish new viewpoints. The same commercial viewpoints are always iterated and the impression of originality is not due to innovation but to the enigmatic structure of many ads. Value transfer, openly handled, can easily be criticised and would be too obvious to be fascinating. Nevertheless advertisements are cultivating the 'field' of values, so that one can make up her decisions in respect of what is hold to be valuable. And value related argumentations can take it up.

### *5. Case two*

The second example seems to form an objection against the analysis of advertising analogies as being plainly value related. Obviously it is also surprising:

The american sports wear brand IN EXCESS portays victims of violence with a bloody nose or a shiner next to a neatly drapped trikot in the same color. (Lürzer's Archive '98, III 162) The copy is: "color coordinate."

At first glance a new and surprising viewpoint is offered to the reader. The abstractor of the analogy may be reconstructed as "has the same color". The reader is invited to look at violations by leaving out the common contexts of harm,



fear and humiliation. The relevant aspect is 'color'. But the relation of phoros and theme of the analogy is inverted. The property of the product serves as phoros. Paradigmatic is the color of the tricot. The case of violence, which represents the theme is seen from the aspect of the phoros. Violence is reduced to color.

In effect attention to the Brand is certain. But is attention enough for a product to become a seller? The suggested abstraction is obviously inhuman and cynical. The image of the brand is in danger to get damaged like the images of the victims. Therefore the reader is invoked to try another interpretation.

Supposed that the IN EXCESS campaign is designed to increase the sales of the tricots, it is useful to present them as valueable as possible. The sacrifice/benefit relation can lead the interpretation to other paradigmatic valuable cases. Sportswear as IN EXCESS is adressed to people with certain values: They want to exceed their limits. Enormous sacrifices are tolerated in prospect of becoming the best in contest. Especially in team sports there are high risks of being injured. They are tolerated in favour of the team. The color of the trikots is a symbol of the team. The trikots are uniforms that fit into the world of team sports. The ultimate motivation of the members of the team is transferred to the customer, who can buy a symbol. This way they are becoming members of a community that shares certain values. The sacrifices, in this case the expenses are justified by the benefit: being a member of a highly motivated team.

Apparently the two cases are not so far from each other. And the usage of the abstractor does not produce a surprising new viewpoint. The interrelation of the violations and the colored sport dress is much too conventional to be able to serve as an analogy. It isn't more but a common metaphor.

## *6. Conclusion*

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

## NOTES

- i.** The epistemological theory of Cristoph Lumer is a good example of such a perspective.
- ii.** Can't Sophists be understood as early advertisers?
- iii.** The pragmadialectical position sometimes looks like.
- iv.** Logical consistency is not presupposed in this place. Methodological consistency is a practical ideal guiding practical activities toward practical ends. Nevertheless the reflection on methodological consistency can be used to reconstruct the meaning of logical consistency. Cf. 'Konstruktive Logik, Praxis und Wissenschaftstheorie' and many other publications of the 'Erlangen School'.
- v.** Can't they also be relative towards the concepts of rationality?
- vi.** There may be psychological reasons to prefer a logical structured self. Always being prepared to give reasons for motivations, feelings etc. seems to be advantageous.

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# ISSA Proceedings 1998 - The Narrative As An Argument Component



## *Narrativity*

A narrative is an account typically consisting of a temporal sequence of events that is focused upon characters, their actions, and the outcomes of such actions. In recent decades the narrative has been the object of much analysis, study, and debate. Psychological research on narratives has involved the study of story grammars, syntactic-like structures that describe the generic elements of narratives (e.g., Stein & Glenn, 1979). Other psychological research of narratives has included the study of causal structure (e.g., Trabasso, van den Broek, & Suh, 1989), and inference generation (e.g., Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994). Narratives also have received considerable attention in relation to their role and importance in the study of history (e.g., White, 1987).

Narratives have also been examined with respect to the purposes they serve. According to Foucault (1969, 1972), narrative is used by those in power as a means of maintaining power while the alternative narratives of those out of power are suppressed by those in power. Narrative is also used to delineate official and unofficial history (Wertsch & Rozin, 1998). In the Soviet Union the official history was a Marxian account of the 1917 Revolution and post-Revolution period. Unofficial history, however, embraced a narrative that was historically Russian, extending farther into the past than the 1917 Revolution. Similarly, Epstein (1996) has shown that European American eleventh graders provide a narrative of U.S. history that follows the traditional colonization, French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, Civil War, and into the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries format, while Afro-American students provide a narrative emphasizing racial inequality. Narratives held thus relate to belief and experience, and indeed, the historian Mink (1987) has indicated that narratives provide information about the past, and the background of the narrator needs to be taken into account to understand the narrative. Narratives also have been viewed as deceptive, as White (1987) has stated, “narrative discourse .... endows events with illusory

coherence” (p. ix). In any event, the narrative is used to provide continuity to a series of linear events and is the subject of this paper, a topic, incidentally, which is not new.

### *Narrative and Argument*

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

Let us assume that we maintain some claim such as “Capital punishment should be abolished” but to support this claim we do not provide the a supportive reason in the usual sense but we provide the statement “Because of the following story,” and then proceed to tell a narrative which has the point of showing that capital punishment be abolished. In this case the support is a narrative. This use of narrative, incidentally, is quite close to what Deanna Kuhn (1991) described in her book on argumentation as pseudo-evidence.

Let us now imagine that we are in a courtroom and a prosecuting attorney makes the statement “This person, the defendant, is guilty,” and then supports this claim by providing a narrative describing what happened leading to the crime, the defendant’s presumed role in it, and how and why the defendant committed the crime.

A narrative supporting the attorney’s claim of the defendant’s guilt such as that just described is likely to have two components. One is the so-called “facts” of the case. This category consists of the statements of witnesses and exhibits of the case, which essentially constitute a list of information. The second component is the narrative, the story or account that the prosecuting attorney weaves and develops that has the goal of supporting the claim of the defendant’s guilt. The two components then are the “facts” of the case and the narrative, which integrates the “facts” into a story. The use of the narrative to support a claim and the two-component distinction just made leads to the possibility that the narrative

can play a role in the judgment of the jury. It may be that a good narrative, with the “facts” included, will be more likely to produce a “guilty” judgment than a poor narrative, even with the same “facts” included.

A question then raised by this analysis is how may narrative quality be defined? Fortunately, Leinhardt, Stainton, Virji, and Odoroff (1994) asked a number of historians to indicate what they thought to be the qualities of a good narrative. Five attributes were noted, namely, coherence, causality, chronology, completion, and colligation or, more or less, contextualization. Coherence refers to the narrative having a coherent whole. Causation to the narrative’s need to show causal relations. Chronology is that the events of the narrative follow in a chronological order. Completion refers to whether the historians used all available information, and colligation to the narrative occurring in the appropriate historical context. Pennington and Hastie (1993), in their work on jury decision making, also considered narrativity, and emphasized the importance of coherence, coverage (similar to completeness), uniqueness (the most appropriate narrative), and (being psychologists) they included the goodness-of-fit of the narrative.

The rationale of the study was as follows. The first hypothesis was that if a hypothetical prosecuting attorney states the defendant is guilty and provides a narrative in support of this claim, ratings of the quality of the narrative are a function of the extent to which the narrative maintains the criteria of good narrativity. If, for example, a narrative is made less coherent, the quality of the narrative will be rated lower than the original narrative, before it was made less coherent. The second hypothesis is that if a narrative is degraded, the ratings of the defendant’s guilt are lower than guilty ratings provided for the original narrative. In other words, with a narrative having less coherence than the standard, both ratings of narrative quality and ratings of guilt would be lower than found for the standard narrative. The reason guilty ratings are likely to be lower is that a poor narrative presumably acts to hurt the prosecuting attorney’s case. In the experiment conducted there were four narrative conditions. One was a standard narrative. One contained the identical sentences as the standard narrative but the sentence order was changed. This version maintained local coherence. This was called the coherence/chronology condition because it decreased the narrative’s coherence and the chronological order. A third condition, the causal condition, decreased the causality stated in the standard

condition. The fourth condition, the completion condition, deleted some of the information in the standard narrative but did not delete any of the “facts.” It should be especially noted that in all four conditions the “facts” of the case were included, thus making the design one of holding the “facts” constant and varying the narrative, modifying the standard narrative in three conditions to lower its quality according to the previously mentioned criteria.

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

The baseline or standard condition for one of the texts, “The Car Accident” follows. Participants were told that they were to consider the text to be the prosecuting attorney’s summary statement.

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

Matthew Moran claimed that his fingerprints were on the bat because he had used it earlier in the day to play baseball, but playing baseball could not have

placed the victim's blood and hair on the bat. The evidence indicates that Matthew Moran's bat must have been used to hit Roger Wilson, and since there were no fingerprints on the bat besides those of Matthew Moran, he must have been the person who hit Roger Wilson with that bat. Matthew Moran, who had the motive, the means, and the opportunity, is guilty of killing Roger Wilson.

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

- He quickly got out of his car to check on her and found that she was not seriously injured. -> He quickly stepped out to check on his car and found that it was not damaged.
- Despite this fact, a number of neighborhood.... -> A number of neighborhood....
- This evidence indicated that Matthew Moran's bat ... -> Matthew Moran's bat....
- Matthew Moran's bat must have been the bat used to hit Roger Wilson... -> Matthew Moran's bat must have come into contact in some way with Roger Wilson....
- Matthew's were the only fingerprints found on the bat... -> Matthew's were the only fingerprints found on the bat, indicating that he had touched it and, that no one else could have touched it, unless they were wearing gloves...
- ... had used it earlier in the day to play baseball, but playing baseball could not have placed the victim's blood and hair on the bat -> ... had used it earlier in the day to play baseball.
- bat must have been used... must have been the person... -> bat was probably used... he was probably the person...

In the incomplete condition, the following deletions were made:

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

The order of sentences in the coherence/chronology condition, of the sentence in

the standard narrative, were: 7, second half of 17, 4, 3, 1, 5, 11, 13, 15, 14, first half of 17, 9, 10, 12, 16, 8, 6, 18, 19.

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

The results indicated that the mean guilty rating (1=definitely not guilty, 10=definitely guilty) was 7.5, 7.5, and 7.4 for three of the texts. The fourth text, however, provided both a considerably different mean of guilt ratings and a quite different distribution of ratings. Only the three consistent texts were therefore used in the analyses. The mean guilty rating for the baseline condition was 8.0 and for the completeness condition was 7.9. However, for the causation condition the mean guilty rating was 7.0 and for the coherence/chronology condition was 6.9, the latter two means being statistically significantly lower from the first two. The confidence rating means were 8.0, 7.4, 7.6, and 7.8 for the four respective conditions, as listed in the order of the preceding sentence. The only significant difference was that the baseline condition yielded more confidence than the causation condition.

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

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



consideration of the narrative.

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

Possibly the most interesting result involves the causation condition. Why does making some statements probabilistic, statements that do not involve the critical events, produce lower narrativity and guilt ratings? One possible explanation is that the probabilistic wording generalizes to the entire paragraph, giving the participant a sense of relative uncertainty for all paragraph events.

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

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

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

proposed strength of the argument is diminished.

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



## 1. Introduction

For the analysis of corporate culture, researchers are in a habit to interview managers and employees, trying to find out how they experience, and relate to their work, and working conditions. Generally, researchers also use questionnaires in order to describe the organisation's culture. These questionnaires are partly based on the results of the interviews. In order to find out as much as possible about the employees' and managers' views, researchers do not take a simple 'yes', 'no', or 'sometimes' for an answer. They want to know what underlies opinions, and are in need of explanations, because culture usually is not self-evident. Thus they keep on asking questions like 'Why is that?', 'How come?', or 'Can you give me an example?'. More often than not, interviewees are likely to explain their opinions, and to give *arguments* that *support their points of view*. Practical guides help researchers to prepare and conduct these kind of interviews.

What happens next? The researcher tries to assess the organisation's culture using concepts like 'formal versus informal hierarchy', 'pragmatic versus normative view of the work tasks', and interpreting the actual replies by using a scale model of sorts, that makes it possible to evaluate the answers, and to compare groups of employees with respect to the concepts used. The question is, however, *how* do researchers interpret the answers, e.g. the arguments that support the evaluations put forward by the interviewees? Are they able to make a connection between the culture they try to describe and the evaluations and arguments put forward? One should expect the researcher's interpretations to be presented in an explicit manner that allows others to find out how the researcher arrives at conclusions about the corporate's culture. Unfortunately, such an underlying rationale is most of the time completely lacking most of the time.

In order to bridge the gap between the data and their interpretation, I develop a comprehensive model for the interpretation of the interview responses. Starting with evaluations (concerning work, working conditions, hierarchy, etcetera), I

analyse the arguments interviewees put forward to support evaluations. I develop a taxonomy of arguments, based on the modal perspective of evaluative utterances. Finally, I try to relate this taxonomy of arguments to concepts of the organisational culture.

## 2. Organisational culture and evaluations

Researchers investigating the culture of an organisation, must have some idea about the concept of a corporate culture. It is hard to find a description of 'corporate culture' that is widely accepted by researchers, but usually the definitions contain elements like 'behavioural regularities', 'commonly defined problems', and 'collective understandings' (Schein 1986: 6; Frost 1985: 38). In the course of their investigation, researchers try to connect what they observe - the employees' behaviour - with what the employees think - the employees' cognitions. This connection is related to the theory of organisational culture that is used for the description, it describes and explains the relation and the organisational artefacts and the underlying cognitions (Schein (1986), Robberts and O'Reilly (1974), Sanders and Neuijen (1989) and Reezigt (1996)). For instance, who is communicating to whom and why to that employee, what is the frequency of their communication and why, how do they think they are able to influence the organisation's policy the way they prefer, are seen as indicators of one of the most important aspects of a corporate culture, 'group relations' and 'group membership'.

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

To find out how we can make a reconstruction of answers in order to describe the

corporate culture, we will have to take a closer look at value judgements. Bax (1985) developed a model for the analysis of value judgements. In short, this model relates what is evaluated (the *evaluatum*), the expression of a value judgement (the *evaluation*) and the underlying norm (the *evaluation standard*). A value judgement can be seen as the result of the following mental tasks (Bax en Vuijk 1995: 61):

- the speaker must determine the point of view from which he considers a given or chosen evaluatum;
- he must select a proper evaluation standard (a norm or a rule);
- he must relate the qualities of the evaluatum to that standard.

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

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

The outcome of the calculation is not 'good', but '*quite good*'. Although it is difficult to give a precise interpretation of such expressions, it is clear that the boss is, in the eyes of the employee, not yet fully efficient in the way he communicates, but he is getting there. For this calculation, the employee may use a scale model of sorts: 'If a boss (or: if someone) is direct in his communication

strategies toward his subordinates, then the relation with that boss (with that person) is good'. The calculation goes something like this: 'Most of the time my boss uses direct communication strategies, so my relation with him is quite good'. If we have interviews with more subordinates of this specific manager, all sharing this employee's point of view and specific standard, we can assume a 'collective understanding': the employees use the same perspective on the way this division is managed, share the same efficiency standard, or the 'pragmatic' standard, or they share 'work-related relations' (Sanders and Neuijen (1989)). So they define (hierarchical) relations firstly as more or less efficient ways to achieve organisational goals, and not (primarily) in terms of 'human-relations', in terms of 'warmth', 'loveliness' and 'understanding'.

So, a closer analysis of what employees and managers evaluate, and, especially, of the *evaluation* standards they use, makes the relation between what people say in interview sessions, and the underlying rationale, more explicit. Nevertheless, it still is difficult to find out what evaluation standard is used, and it is also difficult to relate these standards with concepts of culture. In the next section I will focus on the analysis of argumentation, which may help to find the appropriate evaluation standards.

### 3. *Evaluation standards and warrants*

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

It is easy to see that the analysis of evaluations can benefit from a Toulmin (1958) analysis of argumentation: a *claim* (the evaluation he presents) is backed by *premises* (the facts chosen by the interviewee to support his claim), and the *warrant* (the evaluation standard he uses), an abstract rule that provides justifications which legitimate the inference of a claim from a premise (e.g. 'if..then..'). So an argumentation analysis of the boss-subordinate relationship fragment shows that the *claim* that the relation is 'quite good' is backed by the

*premise* (because) 'he communicates in a very direct way' to his subordinates'. The rule that legitimates the premise-claim inference will be the *warrant* 'If a boss (or: someone) is direct in his communication strategies toward his subordinates (other persons), then the relation with that boss (that person) is good'.

The speaker has several possibilities to be more or less explicit about his evaluation process or argumentation. As I have said before, this explicitness is related to the situation in which the interaction takes place: the survey or research interview. The interviewee is asked to back up his claim or evaluation by the researcher, and, considering the aim of the interview, it is very likely that he will do so. It is possible that he states one or more premises, that he can use qualifiers to strengthen his commitment to the claim, that he may back the warrant by credentials or backing, that he will allow for acceptances and rebuttals. All these well known elements of Toulmin's model of argumentation can be used by the researcher to identify the position of the speaker towards the evaluation in a rather sophisticated way, and so, eventually, to specify the speaker's position towards the artefact the researcher likes to investigate. But, as claimed before, these elements seem to specify the speaker's position furthermore, a specification that is primarily based on the appropriate identification of the warrant. To identify the warrant seems to me the first and most important step to identify the organisational culture. The use of qualifiers, rebuttals, etcetera, are to be seen as part of a process of refinement: they help the researcher to conclude that this group of employees is to be characterised as *more or less* 'pragmatic' than the other group. So, first I will discuss the warrant identification: what type of warrants are of interest when we are looking for the company's culture?

#### *4. Warrants and organisational culture*

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

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

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

Three basic moral standards are distinguished (Velasquez 1982: 9):

- Principles of *utility*, which evaluate behaviour in terms of the net (social) benefits they produce;
- Principles of *rights*, which evaluate behaviour in terms of the protection they provide for the interest and freedom of individuals;
- Principles of *justice*, which evaluate behaviour in terms of how equitably they distribute benefits and burdens among members of a group.

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

### Utility

When the moral principles of *utility* are used, behaviour is evaluated in terms of the net benefits it produces: these benefits should outweigh the costs. I will not go into detail about 'traditional' utilitarianism which does not, and utilitarianism which does, include 'social benefits and costs' (see Velasquez 1986: 45-49 and 239-241), but simply state that not all costs and benefits can be restricted to economic values (like money) and that other factors, that can not be measured easily, should nevertheless be taken into account.



The principles of utility are often assumed the best way to evaluate *business decisions* (46). People seem to expect that almost every decision in a company is based on utilitarian evaluations: the benefits should be maximised, the costs should be minimised. The concept of business, of the organisation, seems closely related to the usage of utilitarian principles.

Organisational culture theories often use characteristics like 'goal related', 'work or job oriented', 'professional', the use of 'pragmatic views', 'discipline first', etcetera, to express the utilitarian way of evaluating actions as the dominant view in an organisation.

The following example may illustrate the use of utilitarian warrants. A production manager is asked about the meetings he attends.

Q: "Are the meetings in this organisation useful, what are you doing during this meetings, what are you talking about with your subordinates?"

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

The evaluation 'the meetings are useful' is backed by the arguments that the manager and his subordinates 'talk about problems, work related items' 'find solutions to problems' and that 'everyone deals with problems the same way'. The warrant 'if a meeting is about finding solutions to problems then a meeting is useful' can be seen as a utilitarian warrant, because using a meeting just for 'finding solutions to a problem' is a way of maximising the benefit (the solution) at minimum costs (not spending time on the social aspects of a meeting).

Of course, it is also important to note that the evaluation is 'useful', and not 'not useful', or 'very useful', or 'useless' (which may be very likely alternatives). In my opinion, for the analysis of the organisational culture, the main point is that the evaluation is based on an utilitarian standard, that a utilitarian warrant is 'used' to justify the claim.

## Rights

When moral principles of *rights* are used, people evaluate behaviour in terms of the protection they provide for the interest and freedom of individuals: people have rights that should not be violated, no matter the costs that are to be made - in that way, rights 'overrule' utilitarian principles. Velasques, who dedicates an

important part of his book to this part of moral reasoning, mentions the following important rights of employees: the right to privacy (1986: 321), the right to freedom of conscience and whistleblowing (324), the right to participate (326) and the right to due process (325). In general, when people use arguments that can be translated to warrants like 'I act like this, because I feel I have the right to do so' principles of rights are used.

The following examples may illustrate the use of rights warrants. A surgeon is asked about group relations and group identity.

Q: "Do you consider yourself primarily to be part of the management team of this hospital or to be part of team of the consulting physicians?"

A: "Nowadays I must see myself primarily as one of the executives, as part of the management team indeed, mainly because of the way I see my duties as a manager, because I think that I have to devote myself a hundred percent to the management part of my job".

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

A production manager is asked about the dependency relations between his tasks and the tasks of his boss.

Q: "About your tasks as a production manager: are you able to perform those tasks independently?"

A: "O yes, yes I really am, in this area of the factory one is expected to do all sorts of things independently, one has to arrange one's affairs oneself, and it suits me quite well: I hate having a boss looking over my shoulder constantly - he occasionally does, but not in an annoying way."

The production manager more or less says he acts independently because he has the right to do so, he has the right to arrange his affairs himself, and his boss is not in a position to violate that right. 'If one is able to arrange one's affairs oneself, then one is able to perform one's task (really) independently' can be seen

as the use of a rights warrant, because the manager protects his way of acting during his work from the influence of his boss: he does not have the moral right to look over his shoulder and say what he is doing right or wrong.

## Justice

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

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

A production employee is asked about the discussions during the meetings he and his colleagues attend.

Q: Someone said to me not every team's shift ends exactly at 11 PM? Is that true?

A: That is true, we all finish work at 10.45. We used to finish at 11, but one team one time left at 10.45. They didn't clean the place, they went to the showers and left, leaving the mess to the next shift. They didn't want to do all the cleaning work for them, so they protested. But no one did anything, so they didn't want to do the cleaning either. Now nobody does anymore, of course, I don't do things for them anymore.

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

## 5. Conclusion

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

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# ISSA Proceedings 1998 - The Identity Crisis Of Informal Logic



Informal logic is an area of serious scholarly study that has achieved a somewhat grudging acceptance in philosophy only recently, and is still not seen as a leading subject of research. It is not clear exactly where it belongs in the curriculum, or even whether it really is a kind of logic, in the same sense as formal logic. It could fit in better as a branch of philosophy of language or epistemology, in some ways, because it is addressed to studying argumentation in natural language texts of discourse, and it typically has the task of dealing with inconclusive arguments based on opinions that are subject to doubts. Nearly all philosophy departments teach informal logic, under some heading, at the introductory level, and these classes are often the biggest in the department. But offer courses in it beyond the introductory level.

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

Perhaps for these reasons, there is considerable ambivalence and uncertainty,

even within the exponents of informal logic themselves, on how the subject should be titled and defined, on how it ought to be presented, and where it should fit into the philosophy curriculum.

### *1. The Identity Crisis*

The twelve selected papers from the *Third International Symposium on Informal Logic* held at the University of Windsor in 1989, published in Johnson and Blair (1994), pose some interesting, and so far unanswered, questions about the status of informal logic as a discipline. What exactly is informal logic? What are its central methods and fundamental assumptions? How is it different from formal logic, critical thinking and argumentation theory? Does it have place in the logic curriculum, and what exactly is that place? The last question is a puzzle, because although informal logic is widely taught at the introductory level, and there is a growing scholarly literature, there is no graduate level instruction in it - or very little, compared to other fields in philosophy. Johnson and Blair (1994, p. 3) write that they know of only one philosophy doctoral program where it is possible to take courses in informal logic or argumentation, while in contrast, it is widely possible to take graduate courses in argumentation in speech communication departments. Another problem is that the widely used introductory textbooks do not seem to be based on, or even very often to acknowledge, the scholarly literature in informal logic, to the degree that you think would be normal and healthy in a field.

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

been advocated in computer science as the right label for this new discipline (Gabbay and Ohlbach, 1996), but this term is already well known to philosophers as referring to Aristotelian phronesis, or goal-directed, knowledge based reasoning by and agent, that culminates in an action. So even the name of the field, or the term used to stand for it, is a problem.

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

## *2. Contextual Method of Informal Logic*

How informal logic (or whatever we call it) needs to be seen is as a method of evaluating arguments (and other moves made in argumentation) that is practical, or pragmatic in nature, in that the purpose is to evaluate not just the reasoning in the argument - the set of premises and conclusions, and the links of inference within these sets) - but how that reasoning was used in a given case for some communicative purpose, in a given text of discourse. So conceived, informal logic is not only pragmatic in nature, but also dialectical - it views an argument as a verbal exchange between two speech partners, in which they are reasoning together, or at least trying to reason together. In so doing, they are taking part in a conventional type of talk exchange (conversation, to use the term of Grice, 1975), in which they are supposed to follow the collaborative conventions appropriate for the type of conversation they are supposedly taking part in. So when informal logic is used to analyze or evaluate an argument used in a given case, what is the target of the exercise is to judge how that argument was used in some context of conversation to make some point, as far as can be judged from the given information on what the purpose of the speech exchange was supposed to be. Thus what is important is not just the truth-values of the propositions, but how the moves made go in a certain direction, and are relevant, to contribute to some conversational goal. Studies of the informal fallacies have show that, in fact,

the fallacies are best modelled as failures to help move such a conversation forward, or even moves made to deceptively trick a speech partner into accepting something he shouldn't, moves that tend to interfere with the goals of the conversation being fulfilled.

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

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

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

### *3. Formalization and Informal Logic*



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

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

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

#### *4. Argumentation Theory*

But is ‘argumentation’, or ‘argumentation theory’ really the right expression to stand for the new field? These terms have been developed within the field of

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

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

Johnson and Blair (1994, p. 15) express the relationship by saying, "informal logic may be seen as a branch of argumentation theory". But this way of expressing it seems to me not quite right. Argumentation theory is a theory, and what it is usually taken to be is the pragma-dialectical theory of the Amsterdam School, represented by (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1984). But the exact relationship

between this theory and the theory of formal dialectic, exemplified in the systems of dialogue logic developed by (Hamblin, 1970 ; 1971), (Rescher, 1977), (Mackenzie, 1981 ; 1990), (Barth and Krabbe, 1982), (Hintikka, 1992), and (Walton and Krabbe, 1995), has not yet been clarified. The system of rules for the critical discussion proposed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984 ; 1987 ; 1992) was not expressed in a formalized way. Just how it is to be formalized, or whether it can be formalized, or whether it has some formal basis as a system of dialogue in the logical sense, are questions that have not yet been answered.

It seems then the exact place of what is called informal logic in all this developing framework to be used for argument evaluation is far from settled. As Johnson and Blair themselves put it (1994, p. 4), informal logic, at the moment, is a research program that lacks a “paradigm for focus”. It is an area of research and techniques and interests that is fairly well defined as an ongoing activity that several groups of researchers with overlapping interests are taking part in. And it seems to be generally accepted by most in these groups (though by some more than others) that the Hamblin-style system of formal dialogues represents the underlying structure or set of structures that provide the underpinnings of the methods that are currently in use (along with the technique of argument diagramming that is being developed). But here we are on the verge of a more general kind of field called “dialectic” by Hamblin.

### *5. Ancient Roots of Dialectic*

One way to get a different slant on informal logic is to look at the history of the subject. It may seem to many that it just appeared in the 1970's, out of a perceived pedagogical need, so to speak. But it does have history - a curious one, described in relation to fallacies in Hamblin (1970), and further in (Walton and Brinton, 1997). The roots of the subject go back to the sophists, but the first one who presented the subject in a systematic way was Aristotle. Essentially, what happened is that Aristotle founded the field of “analytics”, or what we now call logic, as having two subfields - the formal logic, which was, for Aristotle, the theory of syllogisms, and the field of “dialectic”, or practical logic, the methods of which were outlined in the *Topics*, and its last chapter, *On Sophistical Refutations*. For Aristotle, dialectic was the study of arguments used in controversies, based on premises that were widely accepted opinions (endoxa). The purpose of dialectic (although this is quite controversial) seemed to be to raise critical questions about commonly used arguments on matters of controversy of the day, and to judge the strengths and weaknesses of the

arguments on both sides of a dispute. This kind of technique was familiar to the Greeks, as indicated in the Platonic dialogues, for example. But it fell into disuse. What happened was that the syllogistic logic was so popular, even dominant, in the history of logic right up until the twentieth century, that the idea of dialectic was lost (or placed well back on the sidelines, and not taken seriously as a scholarly subject for research or further development). Logic became equated with formal logic.

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

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

### *6. Applied Epistemology*

At present, however, it is unlikely that graduate or advanced level philosophy courses in "dialectic" will be offered. But there is another possibility. Informal logic could be offered at an advanced level under the present heading of epistemology. Something like this possibility is suggested by Mark Weinstein's

paper in the volume, 'Informal Logic and Applied Epistemology' (Johnson and Blair, 1994). Weinstein (1994, p. 143) sees the reconfiguration of informal logic as a field through its integration with applied epistemology as a way of broadening the role of critical thinking so that the analysis of arguments used in scientific inquiry is also seen as an important part of the undertaking. One thing that could happen, on this new way of viewing critical thinking, is that the techniques now studied under the heading of informal logic could be taught in an epistemology course under the heading of "applied epistemology".

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

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

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

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

Critical thinking seems to have a lot of the same content as informal logic. In fact, it is not easy to distinguish between the two subjects. Critical thinking seems to be the educational wing of informal logic. It is a subject that is especially featured in education schools, and in technical colleges or two-year colleges where the teaching of practical skills is the emphasis. However, because of the growing popularity in universities of marketable skills, and the need for improving writing and literacy skills, critical thinking has been rapidly growing in acceptance as an area that will get big enrollments, and that is regarded with approval by administrators. Critical thinking is so marketable in fact, that introductory informal logic texts now almost all use the phrase in their titles. It has become the key word to signal recognition of this general field we have been calling informal logic or argumentation.

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

## 7. *Resolving the Identity Crisis*

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

So the identity crisis is not merely terminological in nature, or a question of what the subject, or subjects at issue ought to be called. It is a deeper one of informal logic being seen as “Mickey Mouse” by the conservative guardians of formal logic, and of any kind of logic as being viewed with suspicion by postmodernists. We seem to be stuck in a rut where acceptance of this field as a serious area of study by many who are the opinion leaders in philosophy is grudging at best. But the immediate future doesn't look hopeful either, as the postmodernist way of thinking would appear to be opposed to any kind of logic, and especially to an informal logic that might actually have some bite in criticizing obscure thinking, or errors of argumentation.

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# 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 Musee des Monuments Francis. *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 Ecole 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 Musee 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 Musee 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 Musee 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 of 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 and 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 problematques, 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 *touren*. Such people used to advocate a new way of *touren* (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 “*touren*” textbooks suggests that, *not* just the new *term* “*dibeito*”, but the emphasis on the difference between “*dibeito*” and “*touren*” should be considered as a recent phenomenon.

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

“ ‘*Tougi*’ 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 “touron”. 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 “taiheiyou senso” [War in the Pacific] or “ni-chuu 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 “debeito” 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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