

ISSA Proceedings 2010 - Interpretation And Evaluation Of Satirical Arguments



Satire and argument are a dangerous mix. What makes satire pleasurable is often how it differs from more rational argument. Satirical texts exaggerate and distort for comic effect resulting in sometimes little more than an ad hominem attack. Satire asks us to laugh first and think second. Further, some critics warn, satire can backfire if presented to audiences who are unable to recognize the author's "real" message. These concerns about satirical arguments arise, in part, due to the prevalence of satire in U.S. political discourse. Programs such as the *Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and the *Colbert Report* employ irony, sarcasm, parody, and satire while serving as a major source of information for many people in the U.S (Baym, 2005; Boler, 2006; Hariman, 2007; Reinsheld, 2006). Some programs best categorized as entertainment offer political arguments in the form of satire, such as Comedy Central's persistently popular and controversial *South Park*.

These concerns about satire come largely from studies of satirical texts rather than audiences who view satirical texts (Gring-Pemble and Watson, 2003; Kaufer, 1977; Olson and Olson, 2004; Tindale and Gough, 1987; Wilder, 2005; Wright, 2001). Yet we know that the construction of meaning comes not from a text alone, but from an interaction between an audience and a text (Hall 1980, 1993; Jensen, 1990; Lewis, 1991). Our research approaches the matter of satirical arguments by starting with audiences interpretations instead of textual features. We wish to build a model of satirical arguments unrestrained by the vocabulary and focus of textual research. In this essay, we present preliminary findings from a study of audience interpretations of arguments and an example from a recent study (Johnson, del Rio, and Kemmitt 2010) of audience evaluations of arguments. Our findings suggest that 1) audiences can interpret serious arguments as satire if the arguments are bad enough, 2) under certain conditions, satire can be missed by audience members, 3) a failed satire does not necessarily "backfire," and 4) satirical arguments may be polysemic, but like other polysemic texts, they produce a fixed number of interpretations and evaluations.

1. *What is a satirical argument?*

The traditional approach defines satire as those texts with multiple, contradictory meanings. This approaches to satire sometimes incorporate the author's intentions into the definition, but some (particularly in literary studies) consider any example of polysemy as a type of satire. A satirical text be polysemic, resulting in what Ceccarelli (1998) identified as resistive reading, a type of polysemy in which different audiences focus on different aspect of the text, resulting in different, perhaps contradictory interpretations and evaluations. Satire has the potential for this type of polysemy because it offers at least two potential readings (serious and satirical).

Paying attention to author's intentions is not popular among critics these days, but author's intentions are still important to audiences. If a speaker or author makes a purposefully bad argument meant to illustrate the folly of someone or something, but that argument is interpreted by audiences in a serious way, then is the argument satirical or serious? What about an argument that just happens to be so bad that audiences believe it must be a joke? To the audience, they are experiencing a satirical text regardless of the author's intentions. Our approach was to employ a variety of texts that we felt *might be taken* as satire by audiences. Some of the texts we chose were identified by authors and critics as satire (such as the Half-Hour News Hour on Fox television or the film *Starship Troopers*), but others were ambiguous (such as the music video *Gonzaga Love*) or were not intended by the author as satire (such as the religious video "Banana").

2. *Interpretations of satirical arguments*

The first study, conducted in 2007, employed 11 videos taken from film, television, and the internet. Each video was less than 2 minutes long and participants viewed the videos with few clues as to its origin. While this may seem an artificial way to encounter a text, it actually replicates aspects of the modern viewing environment characterized by fragmentation and decontextualization. Further, we wanted to explore what types of readings would be produced when audiences missed the satire, so we created conditions to facilitate that. Thus, we make no claims about the likelihood of a particular satirical text being misread. We only note that under the conditions we used, it happened frequently.

We recruited 26 participants from 3 different colleges to view and respond to the videos. We did not want to draw attention to any particular aspect of the text, such as its genre, medium, or message, so we simply asked respondents to

“describe what they just saw as though describing it to a friend who hadn’t seen it.” This allowed us to see what the participants considered to be the relevant elements of the texts.

Our analysis of the interviews employed a bottom-up, qualitative method to identify the various interpretations of each individual text. Both authors interpreted the interviews separately, grouping together similar audience interpretations of each text into our basic categories. We then merged our analysis, resolving any discrepancies through discussion and modification of categories.

Participants’ responses did not fit neatly into discrete categories. Some answered by identifying what they considered to be the source of the video (i.e. “it was from YouTube”), some described the action of the video (“it showed people talking”), and others talked about what they felt the producers were trying to convey (“it was selling something”). Some participants gave multiple, sometimes contradictory interpretations of a single text. Thus, our categories of interpretation were not discrete or mutually exclusive.

All of the texts we used resulted in multiple readings that were either *shared readings* (expressed by at least two people) or *idiosyncratic readings* (expressed by only one person). Our most “open” text was a video featuring the song “California Love” with different lyrics performed by white college students. This text produced nine shared readings and five idiosyncratic readings. However, most of the texts resulted in three or four shared readings and one or two idiosyncratic readings.

For this essay, we will focus on one example from the study. Participants’ reaction to the video we titled “Banana” illustrates how one argument can produce a range of interpretations, some predictable and some not. The video opens with two men seated on stools in front of a nature backdrop. One of the men holds a banana and, in an Australian accent, states:

Behold the atheist’s nightmare. Now if you study a well made banana, you’ll find on the far side there are three ridges, on the close side, two ridges. If you get your hand ready to grip a banana, you’ll find on the far side there are three grooves, on the close side, two grooves.

The speaker then makes a circle with his thumb and forefinger and inserts the

banana into that circle. He continues:

The banana and the hand are perfectly made one for the other. You'll find the maker of the banana, all mighty God, has made it with a non-slip surface. It has outward indicators of inward contents: green too early, yellow just right, black too late. Now if you go to the top of the banana, you'll find wrapper, which is biodegradable, has perforations. Notice how gracefully it sits over the human hand. As the soda can makers have placed a tab at the top, so God has placed a tab at the top. When you pull the tab, the contents don't squirt in your face.

By this time, the speaker has peeled the banana and he holds it up next to his face. The man next to him smiles as the man continues his argument:

Notice it has a point at the top for ease of entry. It's just the right shape for the human mouth. It's chewy, easy to digest. And it's even curved toward the face to make the whole process so much easier. Seriously, Kirk, the whole of creation testifies to the genius of God's creative beauty.

As he states "ease of entry" and "curved toward the face" he makes a circle with his mouth to show how the banana would fit perfectly inside.

From the 26 participants who viewed this clip, we identified three shared readings, three idiosyncratic readings, and three "non-readings" in which the participant stated they couldn't understand the text enough to say anything about it.

The first and most common reading was that the video was religious in nature. 15 participants described the video as "a religious video," "religious program," or "infomercial promoting the existence of God." In fact, this is correct. We found the video on YouTube, where it had been excerpted from a DVD series titled *The Way of the Master* featuring Australian preacher Ray Comfort and 1980s sitcom star and outspoken Christian activist Kirk Cameron.

The second most common reading, appearing four times, was that the video was a "joke" or "parody" from a comedy show, such as *Saturday Night Live* or *MadTV*. Here is an example:

Well, the guy next to him was laughing, so it obviously would not be a Christian channel because it was kind of mocking how people believe everything was created by God. I am really not sure. Maybe something like *MadTV* or some kind of program that likes to make parodies about issues and politics.

These four participants found evidence for this reading in a number of places. One thought it was a joke because no one would seriously speak about a banana in that much detail. The mismatch of topic and tone was evidence to another participant: "It was a satirical clip because the guy had a serious topic then kind of satirizing it and made it laughable with the banana." Finally, two participants mentioned that the speaker's accent was evidence of humorous intent, because, as one participant stated, "I think people our age kind of accept the Australian accent as some kind of comedy tone."

The final shared reading, expressed by three participants, was that the video was a commercial, infomercial, or documentary promoting bananas. This participant found the style of the program matched that of an infomercial:

At first I thought it was pay programming when you watch it and they are trying to sell you something. Well, he is trying to sell us to something and that is just, I guess, bananas are great and you should have them.

None of the participants expressing this interpretation appeared confident in their answer. While the style and tone seemed commercial, the product, a banana, is not typically advertised or promoted in any way. Despite this disconnect, three participants felt this was the most plausible interpretation, with one stating "I don't think it could be anything else."

We also found three idiosyncratic readings. One participant interpreted the video as part of a game show where contestants are asked to improvise humorous comments around objects they are given, in this case, the banana. Another participant labeled it "women's programming." Finally, one participant thought that it was the first part of a debate and that the second man in the video was about to offer a rebuttal.

Finally, we found some "non-readings" that shed light on the process of argument reception. One participant had limited English language comprehension and couldn't understand enough of the text to offer a coherent interpretation beyond "it was about a banana." One participant asked that the clip be stopped midway through, stating that the video was "ridiculous" and that he had nothing else to say about it. But our most intriguing non-reading came from a participant who had the most knowledge about the text. Here is her interpretation:

Participant: A really weird video. I like the guy's accent, because that's always pleasant to listen to. But then I believe he started with a banana saying that this is

an atheist's nightmare, he starts to describe a banana. Kirk Cameron was in it, and even though he didn't say anything, we all know he was a Christian. So, um, it was Kirk Cameron, I don't know what they were doing because it was this totally sexual thing with the banana and you know, the way your hand gripped it. Were they going for a sex scene? But then Kirk Cameron was in it, and I was like "where did that come from?" I don't know where they were going with it or what they were talking about. It gripped in your hand perfectly!

Interviewer: So could you take a guess what kind of video or whatever you think that is?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: No guess at all?

Participant: No, because it talks about atheists and Kirk Cameron is a Christian, and talking about a banana and gripping. I don't know.

This participant recognized Kirk Cameron and knew that he was an outspoken Christian. She also interpreted parts of the video as sexual in nature. Because she recognized Kirk Cameron, and knew that he was a Christian, her interpretation could have been that it was a religious program of some kind. But when she also found sexual content in the text, this contradicted the religious interpretation, resulting in confusion and an inability to speak about the meaning of the text. The contrast between the religious message and humorous/sexual means of conveying the message led four viewers to conclude that it was a joke and not a serious religious argument. But for this participant, the result was confusion.

The "Banana" video produced a high number of readings, but every video argument used in this study produced multiple interpretations. Separating the shared readings from idiosyncratic readings is an important step towards sorting out the mess that polysemy makes of understanding arguments. Idiosyncratic interpretations are evidence that it is often audiences, not arguments or their authors, who control the process of making meaning. But beyond that observation, these readings cannot tell us much. Shared readings point to a more stable and potentially predictable process of meaning making. Researchers should be able to identify, either through audience research or thoughtful textual analysis, the potential interpretations of an argument.

3. Evaluations of satirical arguments

In the first study discussed here, we examined only how audiences interpreted arguments. In a second study (Johnson, del Rio, and Kemmitt, 2010), we examined

how audiences evaluated satirical arguments. We located short, satirical arguments from films (*Safe*, *Starship Troopers*, and *Bob Roberts*) and a television program (Fox's short-lived comedy show *Half-Hour News Hour*). These arguments were chosen because they were labeled by writers, producers, and reviewers as satirical. Also, we selected examples that we believed conveyed a clear argument that an audience member could potentially take away. Our purpose was to examine the extent to which audiences might interpret the arguments in non-satirical ways. Thus, we removed the arguments from their context and gave the audience few clues for decoding the text. We then were able to examine how audiences evaluated arguments when they took them at face value.

Our method resulted in many instances of missed satire. Some participants saw images from the science fiction film *Starship Troopers* as real recruitment ads for the U.S. military. Participants saw the fictional debate between Senatorial candidates in *Bob Roberts* as the words of real politicians. However, just as in the previous study, these texts produced a limited range of readings.

The main finding of this second study is that missing the satire does not necessarily mean missing the message intended by the author. This can be illustrated by audience evaluations of the *Half-Hour News Hour*. We showed participants a segment of the program designed to resemble a commercial for the American Civil Liberties Union. In the clip, a white man in a suit walks down a sidewalk towards the camera while delivering these lines:

There was a time in America when white supremacists and other hate groups had to operate in the shadows, afraid to walk the streets in the daylight, afraid to show their faces. But in 1977, a group of neo-Nazis sued for their right to march through Skokie, Illinois, a town where thousands of Holocaust survivors lived. People like me helped those neo-Nazis take their case all the way to the United States Supreme court. And guess what? They won. We won. I'm the ACLU.

After viewing the video, each participant answered the same question used in the first study, "Please describe what you just saw as though describing it to a friend who hadn't seen in." Participants then answered questions about their evaluation of the message, such as "What do you think the producers were trying to say?" and "What do you think about what the producers were trying to say?"

Of the nine participants who viewed this clip, eight thought it was produced by the ACLU to promote their organization. None of the eight, however, found the

argument compelling, as illustrated in these responses:

I think they could have done something better. I didn't really like it. . . I think they need more evidence to support them.

I think it was largely based on feelings in that video because they were showing pictures of stuff that a lot of people may be offended by or even proud of depending on where you side.

I don't think it should be allowed because if every person is made equal, I just definitely don't agree with that the producers are trying to put out there.

I don't believe in the thing the producers are trying to support.

While these participants may not have recognized the satire, they still engaged critically with the text. They were not impressed by the fact that the ACLU defended neo-Nazis and spoke out against what they perceived to be the author's message. The producers' intended message - the ACLU defends extremists - is still conveyed even to audiences who "missed the joke." In fact, a non-satirical reading includes a second argument that a satirical interpretation would not, that the ACLU is foolish enough to think their defense of neo-Nazis would impress people.

4. Implications for the study of argument

Our work suggests that theories of reception have much to offer the study of argument. Toulmin, Perelman, and others urged scholars of argument to look at real-world, ordinary arguments rather than theorize about the properties of imagined arguments or abstract arguments. Similarly, scholars of argument can learn much from real-world, ordinary interpretations of arguments. Before an audience member can evaluate or accept an argument, he or she must interpret the argument.

We believe that dealing with the implications of polysemic arguments is not a particularly daunting task. While our research, along with the research of many others, demonstrates that texts hold multiple meanings for audiences, this research also suggests that some texts produce only a few, fairly predictable readings. As our understanding of audiences develops, researchers can better predict potential readings from textual features, thus bringing the real and the imagined audiences closer together.

Previous studies of textual openness have identified features that supposedly “open” a text to multiple meanings. Chief among these is satire. The logic is that satire operates by presenting two contradictory meanings at the same time (serious and satirical), thus revealing the possibility of multiple interpretations to audiences and empowering them to create their own interpretations (Fiske, 1986, 1987). Our research, in contrast, suggests that an ironic or parody text may have more than one possible reading, but that shared readings are few and often predictable. This suggests that such texts do not necessarily differ from other polysemic texts where multiple meanings are possible but limited (Ceccarelli, 1998).

In contrast, we found non-ironic texts which produced greater numbers shared and idiosyncratic readings. The “Banana” video, which produced six distinct readings, was not intended by the producers as satire, irony, or parody. Audiences could potentially have a similar reaction to other arguments. When audiences perceive an argument to be ridiculous (by whatever standard they employ), they could potentially classify that argument as part of a satire, parody, or other ironic text. The second study discussed here suggests that when audiences classify an argument as part of a satire, they may then refrain from evaluation of the argument. Participants described what they perceived to be satirical arguments as “just for fun” or “just entertainment” and offered little commentary on the substance of the argument.

When audiences encounter arguments in the real world, the circumstances do not always favor the arguer. The audience can be distracted or bored. The audience may not encounter the arguments as part of a larger case being made, experiencing only fragments as they flip through the channels, view online videos and advertisements, or selectively remember ideas days later. Complex and nuanced arguments fair poorly in such an environment. But despite the distraction and fragmentation, audiences still assemble good reasons for their beliefs and actions and researchers can begin to understand that process.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 - Wittgenstein's Influence On Hamblin's Concept Of 'Dialectical'



1. Introduction [i]

While working on the question of what influence Wittgenstein had on the development of informal logic, I faced the question of whether Wittgenstein had any influence on Hamblin. I checked the references to Wittgenstein in *Fallacies*, and found that there were four, two to the *Tractatus* and two to works of the later Wittgenstein, one identified by Hamblin as the *Preliminary Studies*, known to us as the *Blue Book* and the *Brown Book*, the other to the *Philosophical Investigations*. I was particularly struck by the reference on p. 285:

If we want to lay bare the foundations of Dialectic, we should give the dialectical rules themselves a chance to determine what is a statement, what is a question. This general idea is familiar enough from Wittgenstein.

The footnote states that “The best examples of dialectical analysis are in the ‘Brown Book’: Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the ‘Philosophical Investigations.’*”

This text strongly supports the idea that Hamblin was influenced by his reading of Wittgenstein. That came as something of a surprise to me, and I found myself puzzling over the above reference to ‘examples of dialectical analysis.’ I also found myself puzzling over Hamblin’s notion of ‘dialectical’, for it seemed to me that the use of ‘dialectical’ here was quite different from the way it had been used in Chapter 7.[ii] I hope to out these puzzles to rest in this paper.

In the sections that follow, I proceed to examine Hamblin’s use of the term ‘dialectical’ in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 of *Fallacies*. [iii] In each case, I start by setting up the context in which his use of the term arises. I then state what I take to be the meaning of ‘dialectical’ in that context. I then take up any issues that

occurred to me about that use. In Section 5, I gather together the assorted meanings together and ask: What is the relationship among them? Can we fashion a coherent account of Hamblin's use of 'dialectical' in these three chapters? Then, in Section 6, I discuss, rather more briefly, the matter of Wittgenstein's influence on Hamblin. Section 7 is my conclusion.

2. The meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 7

The context. Chapter 7 is about the concept of argument. Hamblin starts by making some comments about the concept of argument that seem primarily directed at logicians. At p.232, Hamblin sets aside the question of what an argument is, and instead pursues the questions of how we evaluate argument: by what criteria, he asks, should we evaluate an argument? He begins by examining alethic criteria - criteria based on truth - the sort of criteria that occur in Formal Logic. He argues that they will not work and then turns to a discussion of epistemic criteria - criteria based on knowledge - with which he also finds problems. That is the context in which we first encounter 'dialectical' in Chapter 7.

The meaning. The term 'dialectical' is introduced in Chapter 7 on page 241, at a point where Hamblin has already discussed both alethic and epistemic criteria. The ramp into the passage is found at the bottom of page 240 where he says: In practice, we often proceed on less than knowledge. Namely on more or less strong belief or acceptance. An argument that proceeds from *accepted* premises on the basis of an *accepted* inference process may or may not be a good one in the full alethic sense but is certainly a good one in some other sense which is much more germane to the practical application of logical principles. (240-41)

Hamblin provides a name for this other sense of goodness that an argument may have - he calls it 'dialectical'. Why? The answer occurs on page 241, where Hamblin deals with an objection he anticipates will be raised by "puristic logicians" who will accuse him of selling out, of lowering his sights by being satisfied with arguments that persuade as distinct from arguments which are valid (but may not persuade). In response, Hamblin says that we must distinguish different purposes an argument may have. One of these is to convince[iv]; here Hamblin's point is that we have to get the person whom we want to convince to accept the premises; otherwise even if the argument is valid, we will not succeed. So we must aim at securing acceptance of the premises if we seek to convince. Logicians can hardly complain that an argument is not an argument because it

proceeds *ex concessio* (meaning, by gaining acceptance of the other) or that such arguments have no rational criteria of worth. We are, he says, in fact talking about the class of arguments Aristotle called “dialectical” (241) which he glosses as “that class of argument that work on the basis of acceptance.” Hamblin admits that the dialectical merits of an argument may differ from its merits judged alethically, “but we would still do well to set down a set of criteria for them”(241). Hamblin calls these dialectical criteria; they are based on acceptance rather than truth or knowledge. [v]

Issues. There are at least two questions concerning his use of ‘dialectical’. First, exactly what is meant by acceptance? And how does it relate to belief, acceptability etc. This issue has been much discussed by others and myself, and I do not propose to take it up here.

A second issue is its relationship to the Aristotelian account. One standard account of Aristotle’s concept of ‘dialectical’ as it applies to reasoning/argument is that it is the kind of reasoning that proceeds on the basis of premises that are widely believed (generally accepted) or endorsed by the learned (*Topics*, 100a 30, b 21). If Hamblin now uses that term to refer to a premise that is accepted by one’s interlocutor [which may be neither widely believed, nor endorsed by the learned], it does seem like at least a significant extension, if not an outright change, from its Aristotelian meaning. And Hamblin seems to be taking just such a path, for he states. “Aristotle is not satisfied to leave it at this, but his actual definition of dialectical arguments is less than satisfactory” (60). And now he quotes the above definition from *Topics* and writes: “This marks them off from didactic arguments, and, as defined above, contentious arguments but does not give any clue to their supposed exceptional merit” (60). Now Hamblin says: “In fact, Aristotle is in transition from a pure Platonic view to a more measured one that treats Dialectic as mere technique unessential to the pursuit of truth” (60). It seems fairly clear that Hamblin’s view of Dialectic is closer to Plato’s view (as understood by Hamblin) than to Aristotle’s (as understood by Hamblin); thus his apparent departure from the strict Aristotelian sense seems intentional.

In Chapter 7, then, the term ‘dialectical’ refers to a type of criterion for the evaluation of argument, which Hamblin distinguishes from alethic criteria (based on truth) or epistemic criteria (based on knowledge). There are four criteria in his set of dialectical criteria, the first of which is: “(D1) The premises must be accepted.” The other criteria all invoke this notion of acceptance.

3. The meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 8

The story about 'dialectical' in Chapter 8 is relatively straightforward.

The context: In Chapter 8, Hamblin seeks to develop what he calls "a dialectical system" which, he says is "no more nor less than a regulated dialogue or family of dialogues. We suppose that we have a number of participants - in the simplest case just two - to debate, discussion or conversation and that they speak in turn in accordance with a set of rules or conventions"(255). In Hamblin's view, Formal Dialectic is the study of such systems, the pursuit of which he now briefly justifies:

There is a case to be argued, even in modern times, on behalf of studies like Dialectic and Rhetoric against a Logic which is pursued in disregard of the context of its use. Logic is an abstraction of features of flesh and blood reasoning; and it is entirely natural that a formal theory of fallacies should be seen as simply abstracting features of fallacies (69)

The meaning: In Chapter 8, then, 'dialectical' is used chiefly as the adjectival form of the term 'dialectic' where here 'Dialectic' refers to Hamblin's system of Formal Dialectic. Thus here it means: 'pertaining to a system of Formal Dialectic.'

Issues: First, one wonders why Hamblin here chose 'dialectical' and rather than 'dialogical'. Dialogue logics had been in existence for some time when he wrote *Fallacies*.^[vi] I believe there is a good answer to this question that will emerge later. Second, what is the relationship between the meaning of 'dialectical' here and its meaning in Chapter 7? Clearly here it has a different sense than had in the previous chapter where it referred to a type of criterion for evaluating arguments. I return to this question in Section 5, turning next to the meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 9.

4. The meaning of 'dialectical' in Chapter 9

The context: Having set forth his system of Formal Dialectic in Chapter 8, Hamblin turns in Chapter 9 to the issue of the authority for these dialectical rules that he has been discussing in Chapter 8. He begins: "Where do dialectical rules derive their authority, and who enforces them?" He writes:

If we want to lay bare the foundations of Dialectic, we should give the dialectical rules themselves a chance to determine what is a statement, what is a question and so on. This general idea is familiar enough from Wittgenstein [the footnote refers to *Preliminary Studies...*] I do not think, however, that it has ever been worked out in any detail. The programme is too large a one to be undertaken but

certain features of it are of fundamental importance for us. (p. 285)

Just what is meant here by 'the programme' is not clear, but I will later refer to the views of two scholars (David Hitchcock and J.D. Mackenzie) who have offered their views about it.

In any event, the context here is that of providing justification for the rules of the system of Formal Dialectic. That justification will be dialectical.

The meaning: The meaning of the term 'dialectical' in this context is made clear when Hamblin goes on to say: "The thesis that I shall adopt is that all properties of linguistic entities are dialectical in the sense of being determinable from the broad pattern of their use" (285). Here we have the basis for Hamblin's understanding of 'dialectical' in Chapter 9. He takes 'dialectical' to mean the broad pattern of use of linguistic entities which, he holds, is to be appealed to determine their properties.

Issues: What are we to make of this text? Here is how J.D. Mackenzie (a student of Hamblin's) construes it:

I would approach the passage on p. 285 of *Fallacies* in this way. As logicians, we have an understanding of terms like "statement" built up from familiarity with axiomatic and natural deduction systems, and we use that understanding in describing dialogue. But strictly speaking, we should study dialogue on its own terms, and only later come to that very specialist sort of dialogue in which axiomatic systems are developed. And we should develop an understanding of the word "statement" from dialogue, and then modify its meaning for use in axiomatic systems, rather than the other way round. [Private correspondence with the author, used with permission.]

According to Mackenzie, Hamblin is arguing against the view that there is a pre-established meaning of what a statement is:

Wittgenstein (in the *Brown Book*) was also interested in dealing with dialogue by beginning with what people say (how expressions are used), rather than by beginning with some pre-established semantics (their "meaning"). In Formal Dialectic, we will study dialogue and how expressions are used, and from that we will develop an account of 'statement.' [Private correspondence with the author, used with permission.]

This exposition seems to me to be accurate. Hamblin wants us to generate our idea of what a statement is by looking at how that expression is used, and says

that to do this is to proceed in a dialectical way. Confirming texts appear later on in the chapter:

Both accounts (Quine, and Grice and Strawson) are 'dialectical', in that they refer their respective explications of analyticity or incorrigibility to patterns of verbal behavior. (290)

Meanings of words are...always relative to a language-user or a group G of language users. ... There is a reverse side to this doctrine...: Since the language behavior of some person or group may be unsystematic or incoherent, it is not necessarily the case that questions of meaning are resolvable... It is only in so far as regular pattern of use can be determined that it is possible to make suitable judgements about meaning. (291)

By 'dialectical' in this chapter, then, Hamblin means a way of proceeding to assign meaning to fundamental terms in the system of Formal Dialectic. This is to be done by examining how they are used, "the broad pattern of their use." This is the connection with Wittgenstein. **[vii]**

5. Summary and Synthesis: Hamblin's conception of 'dialectical'

Let me summarize the findings thus far. In Chapter 7, the term 'dialectical' refers to a type of criterion for the evaluation of argument. It is a criterion of premise adequacy based on acceptance rather than knowledge (epistemic) or truth (alethic). In Chapter 8, the term 'dialectical' has a different meaning. It is now used as the adjectival form of 'Dialectic' by which Hamblin means "the study of regulated dialogue or family of dialogue." In Chapter 9, the term is assigned yet another meaning. The term is here used to denote a method by which the rules for Formal Dialectic are to be justified. These rules are said to be determinable by the broad pattern of their use, and here Hamblin has invoked what he takes to be Wittgenstein's views. So 'dialectical' as it is used in Chapter 9 refers us to neither acceptance, nor to a study called Dialectic, but rather to a method or procedure for adopting rules that govern meaning of terms that are found in Formal Dialectic - that basis being the broad pattern of use.

There appears to be a marked difference between these three meanings. Is Hamblin equivocating? Or, is there an acceptable account that brings them into some proper relationship?

I believe there is a way in which these disparate uses can be brought together

and unified. The key is to focus on Hamblin's concept of Dialectic. When we understand exactly what he has in mind by Dialectic and how he understands the project he calls Formal Dialectic, we will clearly understand 'dialectical' as it is used in Chapter 8. From there it is easy enough to explain 'dialectical' as used in Chapter 9. That leaves 'dialectical' as used in Chapter 7, but I think that it can readily be seen to be a part of this family.

I noted above that Hamblin's concept of Dialectic appears to be closer to Plato's concept than to Aristotle's (or, I should say, closer to how Hamblin understands Plato's and Aristotle's concepts). I believe we should view Hamblin as attempting to revive Dialectic, as an inquiry distinct from Logic (he is well aware of the conflation that took place [viii]) and indeed as more important than Formal Logic for the study of argument. We have already met that concept in Chapter 8 where Dialectic is conceived of as the study of regulated dialogue, or family of dialogues. So Hamblin's concept of dialectical is dialogical. Yet he does not go the route of Dialogue Logic. Why not? It may have something to do with how Hamblin thinks of Formal Logic. He writes:

There is a case to be argued even in modern times on behalf of studies like Dialectic and Rhetoric against a Logic which is pursued in disregard of the context of its use. Logic is an abstraction of features of flesh and blood reasoning; and it is entirely natural that a formal theory of fallacies should be seen as simply abstracting features of fallacies. (69)

Hamblin wants his study to be a study of argument as situated, as engaged in by participants in the practice, thereby avoiding the on-looker status, the "God's-eye view of things" (242) that he associates with Formal Logic. This may be the opportune moment to point out that Hamblin is not opposed to Formal Logic, but is opposed to the view that it should be employed as the exclusive tool in analyzing and evaluating arguments. Indeed, one of his aims in *Fallacies* is to show that something like what he calls Formal Dialectic is a much better tool for handling the fallacies.

Now in Chapter 9: If we ask how the rules for Formal Dialectic are to be justified, the only answer can be that these rules are to be justified by reference to the practices of those engaged in the dialogue, and that refers us inevitably to the use made by the interlocutors: the broad pattern of use referred to above.

That leaves the use in Chapter 7 where it refers to a type of criterion for premise

adequacy. For Hamblin, that criterion is “acceptance by the party the argument is aimed at”(242). When we understand that the context Hamblin has imagined is two people engaged in a dialogue, then what determines whether a statement is functioning properly is whether it is accepted by the other party, accepted by one’s interlocutor. Thus it makes sense to see acceptance as a ‘dialectical’ (in the broad sense) criterion for the evaluation of argument.

My conclusion is that Hamblin is neither inconsistent nor equivocating in the way he makes of use ‘dialectical’ in these chapters. There is a coherent relationship among the different meanings.

6. Wittgenstein’s Influence on Hamblin

While Hamblin thought of himself as Wittgensteinian (there is both internal and external evidence for this), the two explicit references to the views of the later Wittgenstein in *Fallacies* that I have discussed provide some basis for thinking that he may have been overestimating that influence. For it seems that in one case (p. 242, referring to what has come to be known as the “pain and private language argument”), he seems to me to have misread Wittgenstein. He writes: In the limiting case in which one person constructs an argument for his own edification - though we might follow Wittgenstein in finding something peculiar about this case - his own acceptance of premises and inference is all that can matter *to him*.

In the footnote, Hamblin refers to the “well-known private language argument in *Philosophical Investigations*, #258, which can be adapted here.” Since Hamblin wrote, the so-called “private language argument” has been much discussed. #258 is one of the elements of that argument but that argument itself is generally thought to commence at #243 continuing on up to #321. [Kripke (1982) thinks it starts earlier, at #198.] The following points occur to me. First, #258 is not about argument at all. It is about whether or not a person can keep track of a supposedly private sensation, ‘S’. The drift of this thought experiment is to allow the reasoner to discover the enormous problems associated with this task. The inference that Wittgenstein himself draws is that there can be no criterion of correctness here. Second, I do not see anything in the #258, or in the so-called private-language argument, or in his general position that would rule out for Wittgenstein that a person might construct an argument for his own edification, in order to see where a certain line of thinking leads - which could take place in any number of language-games: speculating, for example.

In the other case (the passage on p. 285 connecting 'dialectical' with the Wittgensteinian idea of meaning as use), Hamblin has taken Wittgenstein in a direction he might not have followed. I think that when we look to the issues Hamblin is addressing and how he is addressing them and ask: Is Hamblin operating here in a Wittgensteinian manner? It is far from clear that he is. Indeed Hamblin here offers a positive doctrine or theory (Formal Dialectic), whereas Wittgenstein seems not to be engaged in any such effort and indeed is often seen as encouraging us to avoid such efforts in philosophy. However, the most important glaring indicator is that Wittgenstein called his type of investigation "a grammatical one" (PI, #90), whereas Hamblin thinks of the work as dialectical. There is a significant difference between Wittgenstein's concept of *grammatical* and Hamblin's conception of *dialectical*, but that is a subject for another occasion.

In no way are these comments meant to detract from Hamblin's ideas which have been so enormously important in the development of Informal Logic and Argumentation Theory. It is just to say that his own understanding of what Wittgenstein meant may not have been altogether warranted.

7. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to set forth as clearly as I can Hamblin's conception of "dialectical" particularly as it occurs in Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of *Fallacies*. I think I have been able to provide an account of its meaning in those three chapters and a way of understanding them as flowing from a coherent conception of Dialectic which, I believe, lies at the very core of what he is up to in *Fallacies*. Hamblin thought that at least one of these uses (that in Chapter 9) was inspired by the sort of analysis Wittgenstein engaged in in the *Brown Book*, though I have expressed doubts about whether that is so.

NOTES

[i] Thanks are due to David Hitchcock who provided the impetus and important comments; and to Jim Mackenzie for his helpful comments. Thanks as well my colleagues Tony Blair, Hans V. Hansen, Christopher Tindale, and Douglas Walton at CRRAR, and to Rongdong Jin for his comment and criticisms of earlier versions. I am especially grateful to Tony Blair for his painstaking and helpful comments on several drafts. I am grateful as well to two referees for ISSA who provided constructive suggestions.

[ii] For my discussion of this chapter, see my (2000), pp. 182-189.

[iii] For my take on the complex story surrounding the term 'dialectical', see my

OSSA 2009 paper: "Revisiting the Logical/Dialectical/Rhetorical Triumvirate."

[iv] Hamblin seems to use 'convince' and 'persuade' interchangeably.

[v] On p. 245, Hamblin sets forth five criteria (D1-D5) he calls "dialectical, ones formulated without the use of the words 'true' and 'valid.'" The literature has tended to focus on D1: "The premises must be accepted."

[vi] See *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory*, Chapter 9, 246-274 for a history.

[vii] David Hitchcock has offered the following account of what Hamblin was up to: "The idea that all properties of linguistic entities are determinable from the broad pattern of their use (Hamblin, bottom of p. 285) is clearly Wittgensteinian, but with a dialectical/dialogical twist. It is not a matter of depth grammar, but of defining what it is to be a statement, to be a question, to have the same meaning at one occurrence as at another, and so forth, in terms of how words and strings of words are used in dialogues, in particular, what are the standard (expected, required) sequences of locutions in a conversation. It's a radical agenda, not yet fully appreciated. It is comparable in its reformism to the attempt of Sellars and Brandom to replace representational semantics with inferential semantics. Hamblin wants to replace both of them with dialogical semantics." Hitchcock suggests that the thesis above is the cornerstone of what he calls Hamblin's dialogical semantics. That seems to me a credible interpretation of the passage that would explain the programme to which Hamblin made reference, though clearly a departure from what Wittgenstein himself did. [Private correspondence, used with permission.]

[viii] On p. 92, Hamblin notes that 'dialectic' has come to mean 'logic'; it has dropped its old meaning and simply become the standard word for 'logic' 'It seems clear that he does not approve of this development.

7 If one were inclined to press the case for Hamblin as Wittgensteinian, one could say that the term 'dialectical' is a family-resemblance concept. See *PI* (# 67).

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 - Fudging Speech Acts In Political Argumentation



A *topos* in Danish public debate is former Prime Minister Jens Otto Krag's notorious remark: "You hold a position until you take another!" [i] Krag said this in 1966 when he formed the Social-Democratic Government, supported by the left wing party SF - the 'Red Cabinet' - in spite of his former statements that he would never do so (Wikipedia, retrieved June 22, 2010). Krag's one-liner is frequently alluded to when politicians go back on their words and make a decision that is considered a breach of promise, in particular when, after the election, they break an election pledge.

The case that I present in this paper concerns such an election pledge and its aftermath. It is known as 'the Five Thousand Cheap Flats' and is a case that has caused intense public debate in Denmark. The case relates to the prominent Danish politician Ritt Bjerregaard of the party The Social Democrats. In her election campaign to become Lord Mayor of Copenhagen she made it a top issue

to provide housing that ordinary citizens could afford. She was elected and took office as Lord Mayor for the period 2006-2009, but the great construction plan failed.

I approach this case as an example of *unfair* political argumentation, **[ii]** one that belongs to a general kind of improper argumentative conduct, namely that of 'fudging speech acts'. By this expression I refer to violations of fair argumentation in which arguers communicate manipulatively with regard to the speech acts they perform: they deny the act they are performing or have performed, they pretend not to perform the speech act that they actually are performing, or they say that they are performing another speech act than the one they are engaged in. We encounter the fudging of speech acts when for instance arguers say that they are not making a *threat* while doing it, or when politicians avow that they only want to *inform* the citizens when actually trying to *persuade* or *convince*. Likewise, politicians and other public debaters tend to make *apologies* without really doing it - or to do it for other purposes than they pretend. **[iii]** As these examples indicate, I propose the 'fudging of speech acts' as a general term for a pattern of political debate conduct that involves various illocutionary and perlocutionary types of speech acts, in which the arguers relay their speech act to the audience in a way that is misleading in the situation. The word 'fudge' seems appropriate for characterizing such discursive behavior because it may refer to more or less conscious and deceptive violations. The elasticity of the word allows the critic to evaluate the fudging of speech acts *by degrees* in the specific situation on a scale from minor offenses, e.g., involuntary blunders and instances of less importance in the context (more in the nature of 'fiddling'), to major ones, e.g., those that are consciously abusive and toxic to the notion of legitimate and fair deliberative rhetoric. The following case study illustrates the kind of analyses and discussions I suggest for further investigations into the fudging of speech acts.

The case at hand relates to the illocutionary speech act of *promising*, the standard example in speech act theory (Austin 1975, Searle 1969). As a result of the future oriented discourse characteristic of the deliberative genre, promises play an important role in political rhetoric addressed to the public. Especially during election campaigns, *advocating* main party issues for future politics easily turns into politicians actually performing the act of *promising* to implement a certain policy or to make sure that it shall not be carried out. In Denmark, this is a tendency that has increased along with the development of 'contract politics' launched in Denmark by the former Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen. (The

expression 'contract politics' refers to a set list of governmental issues that the politicians promise to enforce and uphold unconditionally until the next election.) When an election promise subsequently is broken, citizens usually feel deceived and, in retrospect, perceive the broken promise as a trick used to secure power by any means.

However, there are cases in which it is acceptable - even reasonable - not to keep a promise. This is the dual point of the topos introduced by Krag. On the one hand, his remark expresses the cynical pragmatism of political compromise, but on the other hand - or on second thoughts - it voices the absurdity of not allowing politicians the right to change their minds, either because of a change of circumstances or through the force of the better argument.

In my discussion of the case of the inexpensive flats, I contemplate the issue of public political promises from the rhetorical critic's point of view. I focus on two texts and apply notions from speech act theory in order to specify how Ritt Bjerregaard fudged her speech acts.**[iv]** I first present some background information and next take a closer look at the two texts.

1. The communicative situations

Ritt Bjerregaard, born 1941, a teacher by profession, has been an influential Danish Social Democrat over the years. She was a member of the Danish Parliament for most of the period from 1971 till 2005. She has served several times as minister (for Education, Social Affairs, and Food, Agriculture and Fisheries). In between she was European Commissioner for the Environment, EU.

Throughout her political career, Ritt Bjerregaard has been involved in a number of controversies that have made spectacular top stories in the media. However, she has shown a remarkable capability of political survival in spite of the setbacks within the party and in the eyes of the public. Her ability to set the agenda for the issues she raises is outstanding. She has a reputation of arrogance, extravagance, exclusive taste, and coldness. She is admired for her courage, and criticized as well for her frankness, sometimes speaking her mind and raising issues to the inconvenience of the top leaders in her own party. She does not take orders in a crisis from her superiors, but has been accused of a dictatorial attitude to staff and colleagues. She has an image of a dedicated feminist with guts. She is considered intelligent, competent and knowledgeable about her issues, but in certain respects lacking in judgment. When she retired as Lord Mayor, comments

were that she had excelled in positioning herself at the center of Danish politics rather than achieving political results (Davidsen-Nielsen 2009b; Wikipedia, retrieved May 27, 2010).

In her election campaign in 2005 to become Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, Ritt Bjerregaard presented her plan to secure housing in the city at a rent that people with ordinary incomes, such as teachers, nurses, policemen and young families, could afford. She did it under the slogan: 'Five thousand flats for five thousand DKR in five years', i.e., a monthly rent of approximately 670 Euro or 800 USD (exchange rates June 2010). I use the translation 'flats' for the less specific Danish word ('boliger'); alternatives would be 'dwellings', 'homes' or 'tenements'. Prices on the housing market were going up and up at that time, before the later financial crisis set in.

The election to the City Council was a victory for the Social Democrats, and Ritt Bjerregaard took office January 2006 as Lord Mayor of the City of Copenhagen with as much as 60,000 personal votes. The general opinion was that her plan for the cheap flats was the main reason.

Everyone agreed that there was a housing problem. In Bitzer's terms, it presented an obvious *exigence* of pressing urgency to most Copenhageners, including those who did not themselves face the problem directly, but worried about the consequences for the city. We may also maintain that the plan was considered *fitting response* by large parts of the *audience* acting as *mediators of change*, in particular those who allegedly voted for her because of the cheap flats. The crux of the rhetorical situation of course rests with the *constraints* (Bitzer 1968). Predictably, Ritt Bjerregaard's opponents in the election campaign disputed the *feasibility* of the project.

After the election, the implementation of what everyone had taken to be an election pledge was followed closely in the media. It soon became apparent that the construction plan was dragging on. The debate surfaced intensively towards the summer 2007, after the project had met various hindrances, especially the refusal from the right wing Government to let the city sell municipal plots below market price for the purpose. At that time, 12 of the inexpensive homes had been built. Ritt Bjerregaard decided to explain her difficulties in a newspaper interview (Weiss 2007). She now claimed that she had never made the promise expressed in the slogan, and that she had only put forward what she would work towards if

elected.

The denial instigated a stormy debate in the Danish media, conducted by citizens who felt deceived, gloating politicians of opposing parties, other social democrats and mayors who in interviews distanced themselves in diplomatic terms from the act of issuing hasty election promises and afterwards denying them, and a few supporters on the retreat.

After the summer 2007 it became more and more evident that the whole scheme would hardly ever be realized. In December 2008, still only 12 flats built, Ritt Bjerregaard admitted that the price could not be kept at 5,000 DKR (Nielsen & Knudsen 2008). In 2009, before the next election campaign, she proclaimed her resignation at the end of her term. She gave the administrative structure of the City Council as her main reason for not seeking reelection. The case of the cheap flats had nothing to do with her decision, she said. According to an opinion poll in the election campaign, 38 per cent of Copenhageners found that she had done “well or very well” as Lord Mayor, whereas 39 per cent answered that she had managed the job “poorly or very poorly” (Davidsen-Nielsen 2009a).

2. The promise before the election

The question now is whether Ritt Bjerregaard made a promise in the first place? My answer is a definite Yes. To substantiate this, I refer to an election manifesto by Ritt Bjerregaard (2005) in a newspaper, see excerpts from text 1 in (1) below. Ritt Bjerregaard presented her housing plan in many other contexts, expressing herself in like ways. If Ritt Bjerregaard did issue a promise once during the election campaign, the other texts in which she said words to the same effect are in principle irrelevant.

(1) TEXT 1: Excerpts from election manifesto by Ritt Bjerregaard in the newspaper *Information*, October 27, 2005:

Copenhagen Must not Become a Ghetto for the Affluent

It is possible, *as I have promised*, to build 5,000 flats for 5,000 DKR a month within five years

[....]

Therefore *I have committed myself to building 5,000 flats for 5,000 DKR a month within five years*. But since *I first proposed* this, politicians representing the Liberals and SF (!) have raced to be the first to shoot down my *proposal*. [...] *I*

simply do not accept the claim that it is not possible to lower the construction costs in Copenhagen.

[...]

Because of the large-scale advantages [...] *I am dead certain that it is feasible.*

[...]

The proposal for 5,000 flats for 5,000 DKR is of course a departure from received opinion in the construction industry and the housing policy apparatus in Copenhagen. And this is why the proposal meets opposition. But *of course it is feasible*, and of course the flats will be lovely. I would not be surprised if, once the election campaign is over, quite a lot of those politicians who now find fault with the idea, will take part in implementing it.

In my translation of the text I have emphasized the words in italics that most clearly are indicators of the speech acts she performs. [v] As it appears, Ritt Bjerregaard uses the word *promise* herself. As communicators rarely do, she does not use the performative formula "I hereby promise you ...", but the sentence *as I have promised* leaves no doubt that she is issuing a promise. She even uses the phrase that *she has committed herself* to the building of the flats etc. She next uses the weaker *propose* and *proposal*, but in the context it does not neutralize the promise: she first proposed the idea and then turned it into a promise. Her next words are equally insistent on the feasibility of the propositional content of her promise, note *simply*, *dead certain*, and *of course*.

3. The denial after the election

One year and a half after taking office, Ritt Bjerregaard decided to make her revision of the construction plan public, some said in order to have the foreseeable negative reactions over and done with in good time before the next election (Qvortrup 2007). She did it in an interview in July 2007 under the headline *I Never Promised 5,000 Cheap Flats in Five Years*, see text 2 in (2) below. Much of the interview deals with her explanations of legislative and political obstacles that have exceeded her expectations, including the strategy of shifting the blame to the government and other opponents.

(2) TEXT 2: Excerpts from interview with Ritt Bjerregaard in the newspaper *Berlingske Tidende*, July 10, 2007:

I Never Promised 5,000 Cheap Flats in Five Years

[...]

It is possible to build 5000 cheap flats - but not within five years.

[...]

That said, *I never promised that the cheap flats would be completed in five years.* It is one of my leading principles not to engage in contract politics, since I find it an unhealthy way of conducting politics in a democracy. In the election campaign *I merely stated what I would work towards* if I were to become Lord Mayor or my party were to gain sufficient influence.

Interviewer: [...] Did you not make sure that the project was feasible before presenting it to the electors?

Yes, *I did - and I maintain that it is still possible - although not in five years.* I can only say that every single time we meet with obstacles and need help, no help is available. [...] I am fully aware that, to some degree, the next election campaign will involve personal attacks against me on account of the cheap flats, but I can only say that we are in the middle of a long and tough pull, *and surely the flats will materialize - I promise.*

[...]

Ritt Bjerregaard attempts to make her denial appear as a modification of the election pledge, relating only to the time span. She maintains that building the flats *is possible*, but admits that it cannot be accomplished in five years; it may take up to ten years. The effort to restrict the promise is pronounced in the utterance *I never promised that the cheap flats would be completed in five years.* Out of context this might indicate that it would be taking the promise too literally to expect all flats to be ready after five years. But when she continues to say that she does not engage in “contract politics” and that she *merely stated what she would work towards*, she rules out this interpretation. The implication is that she denies the entire promise, not just one part of it, namely the five years. All the same, and quite absurdly, she repeats her promise below: the cheap flats shall be built - *I promise!* Note that on this occasion the price is not mentioned.

The argumentation presents a curious example of fudging speech acts. She seems to suggest that the locution of an utterance articulated as a promise in the context of elections campaigns does not count as a true promise! Such a distinction, however, is indeed odd; every normal communicator would respond that a promise is a promise. As demonstrated, she did make a promise in text 1, and her denying it now is a downright lie.

4. Evaluation

To further explore the fairness problem, I now turn to the *felicity conditions*. Cases of broken election pledges are typically related to the *sincerity condition* on the allegation that the politician made the promise deceptively in order to secure votes. In my reading, Ritt Bjerregaard cannot be accused of initially making a promise that she did not honestly wish to keep. A more likely interpretation is that she made a hasty promise, i.e., a promise she had not made sure she could fulfill. As the later events demonstrated, she had not done her homework properly and therefore could not keep the promise afterwards. This way of fudging the speech act relates to the *preparatory conditions*, as the question is whether Ritt Bjerregaard was in a position to authorize the promise. What makes the promise 'unhappy' in this respect, however, is not whether she is the right person or the circumstances are appropriate (Austin's rule A.2, 1975, p. 15). According to Austin, breaches of this kind make the speech act 'void', i.e., the promise would be a 'misfire', not executed correctly to take effect (Austin 1975, pp. 16-17, 25ff). This does not apply here. As candidate in the election campaign, Ritt Bjerregaard was entitled to make election pledges. Thus, the main problem in her argumentation in text 1 is the certainty with which she asserts that the propositional content of her promise is feasible. The illegitimacy thus does not concern the sincerity of her intentions, but the expertise that she is feigning. This is unfair argumentation because the arguer exploits the asymmetric relation between herself and the audience. In the situation, people would naturally expect her to have considered the legislative, technical, and political difficulties thoroughly before totally dismissing them. Applying the fairness standard as an evaluation by degrees, one may perhaps argue that Ritt Bjerregaard's insisting on the feasibility of the project on lose grounds does not constitute a grave violation, as she probably thought that the difficulties could be overcome. Even so, I find that the critic must maintain that in the situation she ought at least to have acknowledged their existence. And had she done this, she would have argued more fairly.

The denial of the promise in text 2 poses the real major fairness problem. Denying the fact that during the election campaign she made the promise to build the 5,000 flats for 5,000 DKR within five years is a lie and thus an 'abusive' speech act - a direct contradiction to the promise that she in her own word had *committed* herself to fulfill, not just work for.

The whole case may be seen as an illustration of a politician caught in the trap of her own catchy slogan, the numbers of 5,000 flats for 5,000 kr. in five years forming such a fine figure of speech! This suggestion underscores the danger of seeking persuasive victory in the short run by means that undermine *ethos* in the long run.

We may recapitulate that the promise was unwise, and that Ritt Bjerregaard should not have made it the way she did. But to deny the promise seems such a tremendous rhetorical blunder, that it is hard to understand why she did it? The answer could be that the alternative was to admit *incompetence* to some degree. She might have done this, saying something like: I regret that it is not possible for me to keep my promise. In hindsight, I should not have made the promise. I honestly thought the plan was feasible, but the fact that it is not is due to all the difficulties I could not predict and the many obstructions others have made.

Regardless, Ritt Bjerregaard's *ethos* was bound to suffer harm, and had she followed this line of defense, her *ethos* would have been lowered in the *competence* dimension (McCroskey 1997). But the damage to her trustworthiness and *honesty* in the character dimension must be considered much worse because of her glaringly false denial of the promise. In view of her general *ethos*, to admit that she had been wrong might even have made her appear more human than the public tends to regard her.

In conclusion, let me add that communicators have always committed violations of the kind exemplified in the case. I do, however, suspect that the tendency to fudge speech acts is increasing in contemporary political discourse. Whether or not this is the case, I suggest rhetoricians and argumentation theorists pay special attention to the problem. The argumentative conduct of fudging speech acts flouts the norms of legitimate deliberative rhetoric in ways that are highly counterproductive to the formation of informed public debate. It adds fuel to the general distrust of politicians, confirming citizens of the futility of engaging in public deliberation.

NOTES

[i] In Danish: 'Man har et standpunkt til man tager et nyt'.

[ii] For a presentation in English of the standard of fairness, see Jørgensen 2007, p. 170ff.

[iii] For a Danish example in which the former Prime Minister Anders Fogh

Rasmussen was accused of issuing an official apology for his own political purposes, see Villadsen 2008.

[iv] Both texts are used as exercises in our Danish textbook on argumentation (Jørgensen & Onsberg 2008).

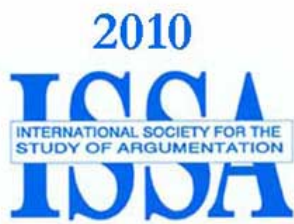
[v] I have tried to keep my translations of text 1 and 2 by Ritt Bjerregaard as close as possible - *verbum verbo* - to the Danish expressions, especially in those passages that are in italics.

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1. Introduction

This paper offers an alternative historical account of debate practices in Japan during the Meiji and Taisho eras (1868-1926). Most previous studies on the modern history of debate in Japan have focused on Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901) or political advocacy by voluntary associations (*minken kessha*) in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (1871-1890). Contrary to the prevailing view that debate had largely dissipated by 1890 due to the Meiji government's strict regulations and crackdowns, we demonstrate that debate continued to be an important activity of youth clubs across the nation. Emerging around the late 1880s, youth clubs regularly held intra-group debates on various topics in order to advance knowledge in academic and practical matters.

This paper also questions the popular belief that debate was primarily a means of fighting for democracy and people's rights in early modern Japan. On the contrary, debate in youth clubs was instrumental in preparing the members to be respectable citizens who would contribute to their communities and country. Not surprisingly, the central government and local authorities encouraged debating in youth clubs, along with participating in athletic meets, playing football and music, and practicing *karate* and *judo*. At the same time, youths were strongly discouraged from becoming "too ambitious orators" who would dare to meddle in political affairs. The youth in farming villages, for instance, were dissuaded from debating political topics on the grounds that they were neither fitting nor well suited to their social status. We conclude by suggesting that far from suppressing debates altogether, political authorities tolerated, and even promoted, certain

forms of debate they deemed fit for producing active yet subservient citizens.

2. Literature Review

Historical studies on debate theory and practice in early modern Japan are few and far between and have mostly focused on two themes. First, many of the previous studies are concerned with Yukichi Fukuzawa and his associates at the Keio Gijuku (now Keio University) (e.g. Matsuzawa, 1991; Murakami, 1993; Hirai, 1996; Matsuzaki, 2005). Fukuzawa was one of the most influential intellectuals and eminent educators of his time and played an important role in the modernization of Japan in the late 19th century.

Recognizing, above all, the value of public discourse and deliberation in modern society, he “undoubtedly was a pioneer in systematically introducing and popularizing the persuasive and argumentative art of public speechmaking to Meiji Japan” (Kim, 2008, p. 229). Fukuzawa authored several treatises on Western-style rhetoric and took the initiative to found the Mita Oratorical Society (*Mita Enzetsu Kai*) and the Kojunsha Club in which the members learned and practiced speech making, debating, and holding conferences. He went so far as to invest a large portion of his personal fortune in building the Mita Speech Hall (*Mita Enzetsukan*) in 1875. For this reason, Fukuzawa has drawn so much scholarly attention that he is often credited as “a promulgator of Western rhetoric” (Okabe, 1973, p. 186), “the ancestor of public speaking” (*enzetsu no soshisha*), and “the father of Western speech and debate in Japan” (Okabe, 2002, p. 281).

Most other studies in this area explore the roles speech and debate played in the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (Ohata, 2002; Arai, 2004; Inada, 2009). The Freedom and People’s Rights Movement refers to a wide range of activities that lasted roughly between 1871 and 1890 (Kim, 2008, p. 3). Among others, People’s Rights activists advocated such political changes as the establishment of a national assembly, the installation of a more representative system of government, and the reduction of the land tax (*chiso keigen*). To achieve these goals, people from different strata of society, including ex-samurai (*shizoku*), urban intellectuals, local notables, and wealthy farmers (*gono*), formed voluntary associations called *kessha* and conducted speeches and debates as a regular part of their activities.

It is clear that the existing research on debate in modern Japan has been heavily

concentrated on the mid-1870s and late 1880s, the period Tomasi (2004) calls “the golden age of oratory” (pp. 45-64). Consequently, it is commonly believed that debate and speech were introduced to Japan by Fukuzawa and his colleagues at the beginning of the Meiji era, reached their heyday in the rise of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement, and began to lose their popularity around 1890. Underlying this account is the view that despite relentless efforts made by Fukuzawa’s group, as well as fierce political struggles for freedom of speech by People’s Rights activists, debate failed to take root in modern Japan.

However, this historical narrative is problematic on three counts. First, it has reinforced the assumption that the tradition of debate did not exist in Japan prior to the Meiji period (Tomasi, 2004). As several studies have already been conducted to dispel this myth (Branham, 1994; Okabe, 2002; Tomasi, 2004), this paper does not delve into this point. Second, it has been taken for granted that the practice of debate had largely dissipated by 1890 due to strengthened government regulations, the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution (1889), and the opening of the national Diet (1890). For instance, Okabe (2002) contends that “the popularity of Western speech and debate declined all of a sudden at the turn of the century” (p. 288). In his view (which is widely held among historians and communication scholars alike), the decline in the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement coincided with, if not caused, the decline in speech and debate. Last but not least, the rise and fall of debate have been attributed to Fukuzawa and a handful of other intellectuals in the dominant historical account.

Let us address this last point first. There is no doubt that Fukuzawa was among the most important figures in the history of debate in Japan. At the same time, we should resist the tendency to elevate him to “founding father” status in the absence of historical evidence. For instance, contrary to popular belief, no documents show that Fukuzawa translated the English word “debate” as *toron*. Although Fukuzawa himself reminisced about having translated debate as *toron* in *Kaigiben (How to Hold a Meeting)*, circa 1884, the term is nowhere used in the book (Matsuzawa, 1991, p. 479). We surmise that the term might have been used earlier by Sadamasu Oshima in *Kaigi Bempo* (1884), supposedly a Japanese rendering of Luther Cushing’s *Rules of Proceeding and Debate in Legislative Assemblies* (also known as *Cushing’s Manual*).

Moreover, Fukuzawa held a rather restrictive, even reductive view of debate. That is, unlike People’s Rights activists who conceived debate as a tool for spreading

their political views to the masses, he regarded it as a means of exchanging ideas and cultivating knowledge among educated citizens. After all, the Mita Oratorical Society and the Kojunsha club were both academic associations *cum* social clubs rather than political organizations. Indeed, Fukuzawa maintained a critical distance from the Freedom and People's Rights Movement and even denigrated many leaders of the Movement as irresponsible radicals. This indicates that by the late 1870s speech and debate became more ubiquitous and was attended by more "ordinary" people than he had expected (Kim, 2008, p. 235). It also means that by restricting the role of debate and speech to a method of learning among "men of substance," Fukuzawa failed to appreciate their potential as "the catalysts for the people to assemble, organize, and transform themselves into the politically conscious 'public'" (Kim, 2008, p. 253). His contribution to popularizing debate in Japan must be re-assessed in this larger historical context.

Second, mainstream scholarship on the Liberation and People's Rights Movements focuses its analysis on speech meetings (*enzetsukai*) or speech and debate meetings (*enzetsu toron kai*) and assigns only a secondary role to debate. For instance, Kinichi Matsuzaki (2005), former deputy director of the Fukuzawa Memorial Center for Modern Japanese Studies, views debate as nothing more than another form of speech (p. 58). Likewise, communication scholar Mitsuhiro Hashimoto makes little to no mention of debate in his study of public communication during the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (Hashimoto, 2000; Hashimoto, 2008). Yet it should be noted that debate and speech performed different functions in the nascent stage of many *kessha* groups. As Tokujiro Obata, one of Fukuzawa's longtime associates, recalled, the Mita Oratorical Society originally started as an informal gathering modeled after a European debating society (Matsuzaki, 1991, p. 78). Accordingly, the members initially spent the most time on debate activities. As the Society began to expand its membership and make its activities open to the public, it gradually shifted its focus from debate to speech. It stopped holding a debate session altogether shortly after the opening of the Mita Speech Hall and literally became an oratorical society. As with the Mita Oratorical Society, many *kessha* associations were originally founded as study and debate groups. As Murakami (1993) observes, the rise of the Freedom and People's Rights Movements spurred Fukuzawa and many People's Rights activists to take speech more seriously than debate (p. 158). Although intra-group *academic* debates played an important role in cultivating knowledge and forging group solidarity among the *kessha* members,

they have been neglected in the existing literature on the Movement.

In addition, Kim points out the class-bound, elitist nature of mainstream scholarship on the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. That is, the vast majority of the present studies have been concerned with prominent figures – such as Emori Ueki and Chomin Nakae – and metropolitan intellectual associations. Accordingly, speech and debate meetings organized by local notables in the countryside have received little attention with the exception of a few *minshushi* (the People's History) historians, notably Daikichi Irokawa's group (see, for example, Irokawa, Ei, and Arai, 1970). This is regrettable because “local lecture meetings [*enztezukai*] turned more and more fiercely anti-government in rhetoric, surpassing those of the metropolitan intellectuals” (Kim, 2008, p. 241).

The existing research on the Freedom and People's Rights Movement also largely ignores female orators and women's public speaking societies despite the fact that the Movement led to a rapid increase in speech, if not debate, meetings by women (Tomasi, 2004, p. 55). Several speech textbooks for women such as *Speech Instructions for Women (Fujin Enzetsu Shinan)* (1888) were published around this time. More importantly, such renowned female orators as Toshiko Kishida embarked on a national speech tour, delivering political speeches at local meetings throughout the country, which in turn inspired many women to organize public speaking societies (Tomasi, 2004, p. 55). Many of them held speech and debate meetings; at least one of them, the Okayama-based *Joko gakusha*, incorporated debate into its curriculum (Tomasi, 2004, p. 56). Yet few, if any, studies have examined speech and debate activities by women and their significance and implications for the Liberation and People's Rights movement.

Largely owing to the aforementioned reasons, it is now taken for granted that debate had virtually died away by 1890. However, while it is true that the number of political speech and debate meetings (*seidan enzetsu toron kai*) had sharply dropped after the Public Assembly Ordinance (*Shukai Jorei*) was strengthened by an amendment in 1882, it does not follow that all forms of debate and speech had ceased to be practiced. Lack of research into debate occurring between the mid-Meiji and Taisho eras should not lead to the conclusion that there was a decline in the debate tradition during this period. The next section will demonstrate that debate continued to be practiced across the nation after the opening of the national Diet.

3. Analysis

3.1 *Drastic Increase of Youth Clubs in Early Modern Japan*

Partly as a replacement/reorganization of the older youth associations such as *wakarenchu* and *wakamonogumi*, youth clubs started to emerge in the Meiji 10s (1877-1886) in farming villages across the nation (Monbusho, 1972, p. 417). With their goals to “acquire knowledge, improve moral order and reform agricultural affairs,” the clubs evolved to be active enough to draw the attention of the government (Monbusho, 1972, p. 417). The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) provided the momentum for the government to officially start to encourage the clubs and their activities, because the government saw that the clubs were useful to increase home front support for the war (Monbusho, 1972, p. 417; Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 90).

The governmental support resulted in a drastic increase in the number of youth clubs nationwide. In Meiji 29 (1896), Yamamoto conducted what is presumably the first national survey of youth clubs and recorded that 699 clubs had become active by the same year (Kumagaya, 1942/1989, pp. 83-84). After the Russo-Japanese War, the number of youth clubs drastically increased; there were 5,920 in Taisho 4 (1915) (Murakami & Sakata, 1981, p. 327), 9,965 in Taisho 9 (1920), 11,476 in Taisho 14 (1925) and 13,688 in Showa 5 (1930) (Murakami & Sakata, 1981, p. 329). About ten thousand new youth clubs were established in the fourteen years from Meiji 40 (1907) to Taisho 10 (1921), constituting 75 percent of the entire number of youth clubs recorded until Showa 5 (1930) (Murakami & Sakata, 1981, p. 329).

3.2 *Governmental Support for Youth Clubs*

The drastic increase in the number of youth clubs during this time was triggered by the increased governmental support after the Russo-Japanese War. The government’s first official recognition of the youth clubs was seen in a note issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Meiji 38 (1905) (cited in Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 197) followed by another note from the Ministry of Education three months later (cited in Kumagaya, 1942/1989, pp. 197-198). Oikawa (2001) argues that due to these notes youth clubs that were forming as voluntary activities in local regions were integrated into national politics (p. 25).

The government expected the youth clubs to be instrumental in preparing their members to be respectable citizens who would contribute to their communities and country. Some salient motives of the government are clearly revealed in the

governmental order regarding youth clubs co-issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Education in Taisho 4 (1915). The order starts with a claim that “one of the most exigent tasks under the current domestic and international situation” is “to direct the youth clubs to develop themselves completely.” In response to this exigency, the order demands that the youths “improve themselves” to be “healthy and good citizens” by upholding “loyalty and moral character,” “developing physical strength,” and “growing intelligence suitable for pragmatic need,” so that they can “help the nation to advance” (cited in Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 199).

The government believed that youth clubs would offer some distinctive education that the regular schooling system could not match. The term *shuyo* or “improve oneself” used in the order is an important concept in characterizing the youth clubs. Practicing *shuyo* made youth clubs places to improve oneself by learning from others. Makiyama (1918), a high official in the Ministry of Education, clarifies in his publication that *shuyo* is “self-disciplinary” (p. 80). Also, Yamamoto (1918) notes that unlike school, youth clubs have no teacher, which is why group unity and autonomous control are important issues (pp. 111-112). A Ministry of Home Affairs official, Itsuki (1916) also emphasizes autonomous self-development within youth clubs when he states that “for the youth club to grow, self improvement within the group is desired, as well as external stimulus” (qtd. in Inenaga, 2005, p. 164). This kind of autonomous learning was highly valued as Tago (1918), an official from the Ministry of Home Affairs, states that the education “developed through friendly competition” is “civil training” and “can not be achieved in school” (p. 49).

Another important term worth scrutinizing in this governmental order is “intelligence.” The order supports the growth of intelligence of young people. However, the intelligence the order upholds is only for the purpose of “pragmatic need.” Endorsement of such intelligence needed in agriculture, or in other occupations, is consistently found in other documents.

3.3 Debate Practiced in Youth Clubs

Under governmental guidance, many youth clubs adopted debate as one of their regular activities along with other popular activities such as participating in athletic meets, playing football and music, and practicing *karate* and *judo* (Maeshiro, 1993; Iwata, 1996; Ishise, 2008). These activities were often stipulated in the bylaws of youth clubs as something the clubs should regularly do. For

example, in 1907 a youth club in Nagano Prefecture put speech, conversation, debate and cross-examination regarding education, knowledge and health on top of its list of activities, which included athletic meets, travel, excursions and climbing (Hirayama, 1988, p. 137). Similarly, a governmental report in 1912 shows that a youth club in Gifu Prefecture had a bylaw stipulating that "...[we] hold monthly regular meetings to pursue knowledge and martial arts, to do physical exercise and games, to invite some distinguished people to give speeches or to debate among the members" (cited in Kamiya, 1986, p. 519).

As the government encouraged the youth clubs, several books on how to run the clubs were published at the end of the Meiji era (e.g. Yamamoto, 1909; Okazaki, 1910; Kawasaki, 1910). One of them written by Okazaki (1910) has a list of some 50 recommended activities for youth clubs. Okazaki (1910) notes that the most suitable activities may be different for each youth club, hence each club should carefully choose ones from the list of all activities (p. 200). Okazaki claims that he listed "all activities," so we could probably presume that those activities were generally accepted or at least considered to be typical in those days. Debate is listed under the category of "compensatory education" "independent from the schooling system" (Okazaki, 1910, p. 200).

Another book published by a government-affiliated publisher in 1918 included a collection of reports from selected youth clubs from all over Japan. These reports describe how each youth club selects and practices its activities based on its socio-cultural background. One report from a youth club in Ishikawa Prefecture demonstrates why debate is adopted and practiced in this fishery village. Jinbo, the head of the youth club, describes this in the report:

...the main industry of our village is fishing. However we frequently experience rather prolonged periods of poor catch, so the village head and others have encouraged us to have a side job. Now 30-40 percent of the people are engaging in sericulture and increasing their income. That is why, even though it is a small village...with a population of 1,600... our village governance was credited as exemplary by the Minister of Home Affairs in Meiji 42. Therefore, in our youth club we do not bother to encourage early rising or helping with housework at all. We only encourage cultivating the sense of unity, the custom of reading, the service for society and the interest in hobbies such as the pursuit of knowledge.... The activities in our youth club are evening-study, lecture and debate for the purpose of enhancing public awareness, and reading in our youth club library

which now stores 450 books and attracts 40 to 50 members a day during the periods of poor catch. (cited in Seinendan Chuobu, 1918, p. 362)

According to Jinbo's description of the club, the young people in this village were already diligent and hardworking enough, so they did not need to be told to get up early or to help their family. Therefore in this village the youth club put a higher emphasis on pursuing knowledge. One of the ways to achieve knowledge is through debate. However this pursuit of knowledge is not considered to be a scholarly or intellectual pursuit, rather it is a pursuit of knowledge as hobby or enjoyment.

3.4 Propositions Debated in Youth Clubs

Here we would like to examine debate propositions that were actually used in youth clubs and attempt to see what kind of arguments were exchanged and also how those arguments helped educate the club members to be respectable citizens who could contribute to their communities and country. The topics we have discovered are wide-ranging. Some of the topics are closely related to daily life and some of them concern national policy. First, in Fukushima Prefecture, the following topic was debated in Meiji 35 (1902): "Which are more beneficial, cattle or horses?" (Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 67). This topic should have been best suited to the beginner of debate in a farming village, for it bears upon their economic life. In the same youth club in Fukushima, a proposition on a national policy was debated in Meiji 34 (1901): "Which of the following should Japan promote, industry or commerce?" (Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 67). As it is stated, the topic concerns national policy. However, it should not have been considered too political, because debating for either side on this topic means to seek the best path to strengthen the nation. That was exactly what the government wanted youth club members to ponder so that they would be active in helping the nation to advance.

Another youth club in Kyoto Prefecture also left their debate propositions on record. One of the topics debated in Taisho 1 (1912) is very specific to agriculture: "What would be the benefit of an inflated price of rice?" (Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 67). This topic again is undoubtedly relevant to the lives of the youth club members in the village. Also, in the same youth club, topics regarding "the youth" were debated. That is, these topics asked debaters to find "ideal youths." For example, they debated the following proposition: "Which is more appropriate for physical education for the youth, swordsmanship or sumo-

wrestling?” (Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 67). A topic like this would have reinforced the idea of “self-discipline” among the members because the topic forced the debaters to seek a better way to run their youth club. Also, at the same time, it made them visualize the ideal youth that they should become. Another proposition debated in the same year states: “The youth should practice riding a bicycle” (Kumagaya, 1942/1989, p. 67). On first glance, riding a bicycle seems harmless, however, to the youth in those days the topic was controversial because bicycle riding was considered to have a significant negative effect on the youth. According to Iwata (1996), some of the young men in those days had a very active nightlife, visiting girls in neighboring villages (p. 131). Some of them, Iwata (1996) describes, “expanded their field of activities by riding bicycles, but their tires were occasionally deflated by somebody who envied them” (p. 132). Since there were concerns about affronts to sexual morality, and ways to reduce the problem were called for in those days (Nakajima, 1918, p. 223; Iwata, 1996, p. 87), debating the problems associated with riding bicycles was probably intended to help form such morality among the participants.

3.5 Form and Procedure of Debate in Youth Clubs

In his first book, Takinosuke Yamamoto, who has been considered to be the founder of youth clubs in Japan (Kimura, 1998, p. 146), proposes a procedure for making debate fit into the series of activities in a youth club. Yamamoto (1896) notes:

...[We should] review current affairs based on newspapers and magazines.... [Next, we should] put together a miscellany of members’ writing and circularize it in the club so that we can compete with each other in writing. [Next, we should] elaborate on thoughts and bring in two or three issues to every meeting and debate on them. [Next, we should] divide the members into two and sumo-wrestle [or compete] our encyclopedic knowledge by way of questioning... (pp. 53-54)

Yamamoto’s proposal is somewhat similar to our current procedure of debate; starting with research and strategy followed by debate and cross-examination. His proposal may not be the best evidence to demonstrate how debate was actually conducted in youth clubs, however, given his leadership and attempts to vitalize youth clubs in Japan, we argue that his idea was probably reflected in the actual practice of debate in the youth clubs.

Another book gives us a clue to understanding how young people argued in the early 20th century. In his “speech training” book, Yokoyama (1901) listed things

to keep in mind in making arguments. In debate, Yokoyama points out, you should “listen to opponent’s arguments with special attention” so that you can “prepare your refutations” and “argue fully” to the end (p. 84). Ad hominem is forbidden as Yokoyama (1901) clearly expresses his view by suggesting that debaters must not retaliate, even against “insulting remarks” from the opponents, by giving back similar or even worse remarks. He also points out that debaters must not see their opponents as “pathologic” (p. 85). Arguments should be “based upon their reasons” not upon “arguer’s social standing” (Yokoyama, 1901, p. 85). Yokoyama supports arguments based on reason and discourages any attacks on opponents’ character, which is more or less in accordance with today’s debate pedagogy. However, the last part of Yokoyama’s list does an about-face from his endorsement for active engagement in argumentation. He states that “you must always remember that compliance with public opinion is the obligation of the Japanese people” (Yokoyama, 1901, pp. 85-86). Here Yokoyama argues that people should argue fully to the end, however they should stop arguing once public opinion is set.

3.6 More Written Accounts of the Youth Clubs Debates

We have found two more written accounts of debate in youth clubs in early modern Japan. Kumagaya (1929/1984), who was another important contributor to the development of youth clubs, wrote an anecdote of his workshop camp with leaders from youth clubs in Tokyo, in which one of the leaders proposed to debate about “defending one’s chastity” (p. 17). A youth named “T” started the debate with the following argument:

I argue that women must defend their chastity, but men do not have to. The fact that the nation is allowing state-regulated prostitution is the basis for my claim. A friend of mine who is a sailor on a vessel on a foreign route told me that since there are so many private brothels in foreign countries, men’s chastity is not well defended. Moreover, let me ask you this. How many of us are still defending chastity? Isn’t it easy for us to figure out the answer to this question, given the current situation in our society? Gentlemen, I believe that women must defend their chastity but men don’t have to. What do you say?” (Kumagaya, 1929/1984, p. 18)

Since this argument was advanced with “full confidence,” Kumagaya (1929/1984) explains, it overwhelmed the opponent’s arguments (p.18). Even though the opponents responded with arguments such as “equality between the sexes,”

“morality” and “monogamy,” it turned out in the end that the participants were closer to unanimous agreement with the denial of the necessity of men’s chastity (p.18). Kumagaya (1929/1984) laments that this passionate “argument based only on fervor” prevailed in the debate and explains that the youth who are not familiar with logic are easily bewildered and unable to find a fallacy in rather weak arguments (p.18).

Kumagaya (1929/1984) was then asked by the youth club members to give some comments on the debate. In his comments, he admonishes the youths for presenting extremely “unfair” views on the topic and calls their argument an “egotistical tyranny by males” (p. 18). Kumagaya (1929/1984) moves on to argue that “the fact that only women are compelled to chastity under the status quo” does not mean that it is “the norm of our life” (p. 18). In this new era, Kumayaga (1929/1984) continues, “our ideal will never endorse unfair attitudes” (p. 18). Kumagaya (1929/1984) then closes his comment with the following call:

Gentlemen, we, who are the creators of an upcoming new era, must never corrupt ourselves under the status quo. Let us be ashamed of being conservatives devoid of soul-searching. With our fresh eyes, let us seek for the truth and work on to complete our duty as the creators of a new era. (p. 19)

After listening to Kumagaya’s comments, the youth members fully understood what he meant so “their faces looked so bright” (Kumagaya, 1929/1984, p. 19). In the end, Kumagaya (1929/1984) praises their debate because they debated very seriously on the topic, which could be considered to be obscene or could easily allow the members to make obscene remarks if it were debated fifteen years ago (p. 19).

We have shown that Kumagaya endorsed active argumentation in youth club debate. However there were also attempts to set some limitations on how argumentative the youths could be. For example, Amano (1913) recognizes the value of debating in youth clubs as “it raises their spirits,” however he discouraged the youth from becoming “ambitious orators” who would dare to meddle in political affairs (p. 163). As he notes, there are some people who are debating on national policies these days, however they should know that it is better to “choose familiar topics that are more suitable for people in farming villages” (p. 163). Amano (1913) also advises not to debate too frequently, because “arguing like fire on grease paper is not something youths in farming village should be proud of,” or because people would criticize the youths for

becoming a “real stickler for logic” (p. 163).

From the reading of records and written accounts on debate in the youth clubs, we can discern certain forms of debate that the government deemed fit for producing active yet subservient citizens. Active debating was generally encouraged in youth clubs, however, there certainly were voices against the youth becoming too political, too argumentative, or too logical.

3.7 Dissent from the Depoliticization of Debates

Even so, not all youth clubs practiced their debate as the government wished. In his paper, Matsuzaki (2002) introduces an episode from a youth club in the Meiji 20s (1887-1896), which describes that the club hanged out their paper lanterns from windows when they had speech or debate, so that they could, even provocatively, draw the attention of outsiders including the police. Matsuzaki (2002) argues that this rather inflammatory act that “creates a tense atmosphere” was the representation of the youths’ consciousness that “practicing speech and/or debate” were the moments to “face the government” (pp. 39-40). Also, in the late Meiji, newspapers started to run articles that gave a spur and encouragement to the youths. For example, in Meiji 44 (1911), Toyokichi Hasegawa editorialized that unlike in the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement when “the pursuit of sound argument was encouraged,” these days “the government intervenes in the youth clubs everywhere and encourages their blind deference to the government” (Suehiro, 1994, np). As such, we would argue that some youth clubs must have debated more politically than others. At the very least, the arguments to oppose the government’s depoliticization of debate were allowed to appear in the public discourse in those days.

3.8 Other Forms of Debate outside the Youth Clubs

In the days when debate was promoted as an activity for youth clubs across the country, there were still other debates conducted in different forms with different purposes. Debaters in youth clubs were advised not to become too political, however some other groups seemed to debate enthusiastically with clear political agendas. One particular example we should discuss here is the debate by a labor union that took place on July 8, 1919. The debates here were undoubtedly more politically oriented, as we can see by looking at some of the topics debated on that day:

(1) Should labor movements be limited within the field of economy or extended to the field of politics? (2) Should labor insurance be issued by the labor union or by

the government? (3) Should the labor hours be eight? (4) Should Japan make Labor Union Laws?... (Kono, 1919, np)

Over these propositions, as newspaper articles report, active debates were conducted (Sau, 1919; Teikoku, 1919). The excitement and enthusiasm of the participants were represented in the chair's opening address: "The convention we have today is by no means a moot diet [or mock parliament]. The debate we have today is not an imitation of the Imperial Diet. On the contrary, our national diet could imitate this debate we will have today" (Teikoku, 1919, np).

Another example we would like to discuss is the debate at a convention of youth clubs in Kanagawa Prefecture. The convention took place in 1922 and 200 representatives from local youth clubs in Kanagawa Prefecture were assembled (Takemoto, 1926, p. 21). Ishikawa youth club from Yokohama proposed a topic that stated, "the house tax should be imposed on public buildings" (Takemoto, 1926, p. 21). The debate was "heated with arguments and questions" and finally it reached a decision that "public buildings should be exempted from the house tax" (Takemoto, 1926, p. 21). After the debate, the chair declared that the decision would be forwarded for "negotiations with the revenue department" (Takemoto, 1926, p. 21). With the limited evidence we have at this moment, we cannot conclude this debate was a kind of moot diet or a substantial part of political decision-making. However, in either case, active arguments were exchanged on a policy-making topic that could be considered too political for typical youth clubs.

4. Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that debate was actively practiced in Japan even after 1890 - the year that debate had largely dissipated according to the prevailing historical accounts that we have examined. The political motive to strengthen the country after the Russo-Japanese War gave a good reason to the government to support youth clubs in order to produce "healthy and good citizens" who would contribute to the community and the country. Our analysis of historical documents demonstrated that at least some of the youth clubs actively and regularly practiced debate and, generally, political topics were avoided in order to conform to governmental guidance. Policy topics, if they were used in a youth club, were written in such a way that arguing for either side in the debate would still allow the debaters to support the prevailing government policy. The topic analyzed earlier regarding the choice between either "industry" or "commerce" for national policy is a good example of this.

Also, our analysis revealed that a monolithic view of debate in the era should be abandoned as we have laid out some evidence to show that different organizations practiced different forms of debate and utilized different kinds of topics. In addition, two prominent leaders of youth clubs in the era, Kumagaya and Amano, had clearly different positions regarding how an ideal debate should be done. Kumagaya advocated that debaters should take nothing for granted and seek for the truth, whereas Amano discouraged the youths from becoming real sticklers for logic. As more historical documents become available in digital archives, such as the Japanese National Diet Library Digital Archive, we should make steady efforts to conduct more specific research on each form of debate practice in different socio-political situations, rather than having a univocal and overly linear view of debate in our historical context.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 - When Figurative Analogies Fail: Fallacious Uses Of Arguments From Analogy



1. Introduction

In this paper, I would like to deal with potentially fallacious uses of figurative analogies. The latter can be briefly defined as follows: Figurative analogies (also called “a priori analogies”, cf. Govier 1987, p. 58 or “different-domain analogies”, cf. Juthe 2005, p. 5, Doury 2009, p. 144) are arguments where similarities between entities belonging to entirely different spheres of reality are invoked. Some scholars dismiss such analogies as rationally insufficient means of argumentation. For example, eminent philosophers such J. St. Mill (cf. e.g. Mill 2005, p. 520f.; on Mill’s view of analogy cf. Woods 2004, p. 254) stressed the fact that arguments from analogy are based on a weak notion of similarity and often rely on false analogies. More recently, Lumer (1990, p. 288) criticized that arguments from analogy were given a place as a rational means of argumentation by Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1983); And Lumer even generally classified arguments from analogy as fallacies (cf. Lumer 2000, p. 414).

However, figurative analogies were considered not only as an ubiquitous, but also as a rational, albeit weak and often defeasible means of argumentation by other authors in many recent studies (cf. Kienpointner 1992, p. 392; Mengel 1995, p. 13; Woods 2004, p. 253; Juthe 2005, p. 15; Garssen 2007, p. 437; Langsdorf 2007, p. 853; Walton et al. 2008, p. 44). It is this perspective that I wish to take up and also consider to be the most plausible and fruitful one. The question, then, is not so much *whether* figurative analogies are fallacious. Rather, we have to ask *which* figurative analogies are fallacious, and in *which* contexts, and according to *which* parameters.

Starting from standard treatments of analogical arguments such as Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1983, p. 502ff.), but also taking into account recent treatments of figurative analogies within Pragma-Dialectics (cf. Garssen 2007), I would like to provide a systematic description of fallacious uses of arguments from figurative analogy. In order to do this, I will use a corpus of about 100 authentic examples, mostly taken from political discourse in Austrian newspapers and parliamentary debates, occasionally also from reports, interviews and advertising texts in Austrian media.

2. On the Structure of Figurative Analogies

In order to evaluate arguments from figurative analogy, we have to reconstruct their argumentative structure and to ask a series of critical questions. In the following, I take up suggestions made by Perelman/Olbrechts-Tyteca (1983), Coenen (2002) and Walton et al. (2008) for an explicit reconstruction of the structures underlying arguments from figurative analogy. This reconstruction can be supported by the presence of indicators of analogical argumentation, most of which also indicate arguments from direct comparison (cf. the following English, French and German indicators such as *to be (just) as/like, to be the same as, to be similar to, can be compared to, as if, as though; être (exactement) comme, être comparable avec, c'est comme si (on disait); (genau) so zu sein wie, vergleichbar zu sein mit, Das wäre wie/als ob*; cf. also Snoeck Henkemans 2003, p. 970ff., van Eemeren et al. 2007, p. 141ff. and Doury 2009, p. 148ff.).

Although Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca have not provided us with an explicit argument scheme underlying all arguments from figurative analogy, they plausibly follow Aristotle in analysing the basic structure of analogies. This basic structure is an essential part of arguments from figurative analogy, which occurs as a propositional element of the premises and conclusions of such arguments, namely, as the proposition “ $C : D = A : B$ ” stating the relevant similarity between the figuratively analogical entities. Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca reconstruct the basic relation between these entities, which belong to clearly differing domains of reality, as this proportion “ $C : D = A : B$ ”, much in the same way as Aristotle explained metaphor as an analogy between two pairs of concepts (e.g. “high age : life = evening : day”; cf. Aristotle poet. 1457b; rhet. 1410b; Coenen 2002, p. 109).

Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1983, p. 501) call the better known (often concrete) terms C and D the “phoros” (“phore”) of an analogy, and the less well known (often abstract) terms A and B the “theme” (“thème”) of an analogy. They

call an analogy adequate when the phoros is able to focus attention on those properties of the theme which are considered to be of prime importance. As to the problem of the evaluation of arguments from figurative analogy, Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca consider them an unstable means of argumentation (1983, p. 527), which has to be critically tested later on.

Variations of the basic structure "C : D = A : B" can be analogies with only three terms, for example, "B : A = C : B". Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1983, p. 505) give the illustrative example of Heraclitus' saying "In the sight of the divinity, man is as puerile as a child is in the sight of a man", that is, "Man : divinity" = child : man" Analogies can be simpler (cf. above) or more complex than the prototypical four-term structure. More complex structures are analogies which involve a six-term structure "C : D : E = R : S. T" (cf. Coenen 2002, p. 195): "Marriage : spouse1 : spouse2 = prison : prison officer : prisoner".

Valuable as it is as a first approximation, the analysis provided by Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca only allows a partial reconstruction of the structure of arguments from figurative analogies. Walton et al. are an important step forward in this respect, as they explicitly reconstruct all premises and the conclusion of arguments from figurative analogy (but cf. already Coenen 2002, p. 170, Woods 2004, p. 257f., Juthe 2005, p. 11ff. for comparable attempts). Moreover, they reconstruct analogical arguments involving facts as well as analogical arguments concerning values and norms. That is, Walton et al. (2008, p. 58, p. 62, p. 74) provide explicit reconstructions of descriptive and normative versions of schemes underlying arguments from figurative analogy, as well as a list of critical questions.

As to the plausibility vs. fallaciousness of arguments from figurative analogy, Walton et al. (2008, p. 61) insist that "argument from analogy is best seen as a defeasible argumentation scheme that is inherently weak and subject to failure, but that can still be reasonable if used properly to support a conclusion". What does "be reasonable if used properly" mean? Walton et al. (2008, p. 83) explain that in spite of their inherent weaknesses, arguments from analogy can shift the burden of proof, if they are used together with other types of argument, such as arguments from expert opinion or appeals to witness testimony.

Below, I formulate slightly modified versions of these argument schemes: Unlike Walton et al. (2008), I use strictly parallel formulations for the descriptive and

normative versions of the schemes. Furthermore, I formally distinguish the propositions “A” and “A’ ” in order to make clear that in the case of figurative analogies, proposition A and proposition A’ (and, likewise, action A and action A’) are only “figuratively” equivalent, as they belong to different domains of reality. Walton et al. (2008, p. 43ff.), however, use the term “analogy” indiscriminately both for “same domain” analogies and for figurative analogies.

Finally, I had to reformulate the original version of critical question 3 (“CQ3: Are there important differences (dissimilarities) between C1 and C2?”; cf. Walton et al. 2008, p. 62), because in the case of figurative analogies it is unavoidable that there exist important differences between Case 1 and Case 2 (cf. Juthe 2005, p. 5). The problem for the critical evaluation is whether these important differences are so overwhelming that the argument becomes fallacious (“Generally” in the Major Premise is not to be understood in the sense of a universal statement, cf. Govier 1987, p. 59f., Kienpointner 1992, p. 385, Juthe 2005. p. 16ff. and below, section 2):

Argument from figurative analogy, descriptive version:

Major Premise: Generally, case C1 is similar to C2 and C1 and C2 belong to (totally) different domains of reality.

Relevant Similarity Premise: The similarity between C1 and C2 observed so far is relevant.

Minor Premise: Proposition A is true (false) in case C1.

Conclusion: Proposition A’ is true (false) in case C2.

Argument from figurative analogy, normative version:

Major Premise: Generally, case C1 is similar to C2 and C1 and C2 belong to (totally) different domains of reality.

Relevant Similarity Premise: The similarity between C1 and C2 observed so far is relevant.

Minor Premise: To do A is right (wrong) in case C1.

Conclusion: To do A’ is right (wrong) in case C2.

Critical Questions for Arguments from Figurative Analogy

CQ1: Is A true (false)/Is it right (wrong) to do A in C1?

CQ2: Are C1 and C2 similar, in the respects cited?

CQ3: Are the important (that is, the most relevant) differences (dissimilarities) between C1 and C2 too overwhelming to allow a conclusion which crosses the

different domains of reality to which C1 and C2 belong?

CQ4: Is there some other case C3 that is similar to C1 except that A' is false (true)/to do A' is wrong (right) in C3?

3. Criteria for the Evaluation of Arguments from Figurative Analogy

The following five pragmatic parameters (which are to be applied by relying on information about the verbal and situational context of the arguments from figurative analogy) allow a relatively clear distinction between plausible, albeit defeasible arguments from figurative analogy on the one hand, and fallacious arguments from figurative analogy on the other:

Parameter 1 concerns the balance between “distance” and “closeness” of the differing domains of reality. If the analogically related terms are too distant from each other, that is, if they belong to domains which have some shared similarities, but lack relevant similarities, we compare “apples with oranges” and commit the fallacy of false analogy (cf. Juthe 2005, p. 14); if the analogically related terms are too close to each other, we pretend to make a figurative analogy, but rather make a straightforward comparison, a mistake nicely illustrated by Woods (2004) with the example “Verdi is the Puccini of music”, which incorrectly applies the structure “X is the Y of Z” to a straightforward comparison, unlike the figurative analogy “Amsterdam is the Venice of northern Europe”, where the structure “X is the Y of Z” is used appropriately.

Of course, this does not mean that the resulting straightforward comparison is necessarily fallacious in itself. However, whenever a speaker tries to formulate a figurative analogy, but in fact makes a straightforward comparison, he or she fails in applying the respective argumentation schemes appropriately. Such a misapplication of a certain type of argument scheme or an inappropriate mixing of argument schemes could be called a fallacy in the broader sense of being an illegitimate move within a critical discussion aimed at the rational resolution of a conflict of opinions (cf. van Eemeren et al. 1996, p. 299; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 172).

Parameter 2 concerns the burden of proof assigned to arguments from figurative analogy. If these arguments are used as independent means of argumentation, they carry a greater part of the burden of proof and hence are more vulnerable to criticism; if, however, they are used as additional elements of proof (or only as presentational device; cf. Garssen 2007), supporting other arguments brought forward to prove or make plausible a controversial standpoint, they carry a

smaller part of the burden of proof or are only intended to shift the burden of proof together with these other arguments. Their use as independent means of argumentation does not necessarily make figurative analogies fallacious, but it becomes more difficult for them to shift the burden of proof without additional arguments brought forward to support the respective controversial standpoint.

Parameter 3 deals with the use of figurative analogies as pro or contra arguments. If arguments from figurative analogy are used as means of argumentation which cast doubt on the opponent's standpoint, they have a less ambitious goal than arguments intended to be a full proof of the own standpoint or a refutation or "reductio ad absurdum" of the opponent's standpoint (on the dialectical orientation of figurative analogies cf. Doury 2009, p. 147). That is, sometimes figurative analogies are only intended as an objection to the argumentation of the opponent rather than as an argument for the opposite standpoint of the opponent.

Parameter 4 concerns the "didactic" value of figurative analogies. If arguments from figurative analogy are used to provide a simplified access to highly complex controversial issues, their argumentative value cannot simply be dismissed because they are a too simple means of argumentation.

Parameter 5 has to do with the "seriousness" of analogical arguments. If arguments from figurative analogy are intended as a humorous or satirical means of argumentation which tend to entertain or "let off steam" rather than to argue seriously, they have to be judged differently than arguments which are intended to be fully serious means of argumentation. This does not mean that humorous or satirical figurative analogies can never be judged as fallacious arguments. In fact, they could be considered fallacies according to the standards of a critical discussion within the Pragma-Dialectical framework. However, they could be justifiable as weak, but not necessarily fallacious arguments within other, more emotional types of argumentative dialogue, such as a quarrel (an eristic type of dialogue, cf. Walton 1992: 22).

Together with the critical questions listed above, some of these parameters will now be used to analyse a few test cases in some detail. These 6 case studies range from clearly fallacious uses of arguments from figurative analogy to clearly plausible uses, with cases of problematic, but not clearly fallacious instances in between.

4. Case Studies

The first case concerns a figurative analogy brought forward by Fiona Griffini-Grasser, a fashion designer and heiress of the Swarovski group, an Austrian crystal manufacturing enterprise. As a jet set lady, Griffini-Grasser has a record of making notorious public statements. In January 2010, in defence of her participation in the victory celebrations of skiing stars during the downhill races in Kitzbühel, Austria, two weeks after the catastrophic earthquake in Haiti (January 12, 2010) which killed approximately 230.000 people, Griffini-Grasser used the following argument from figurative analogy to justify her participation:

(1) *Unsere Schifahrer riskieren auch ihr Leben. Das ist genauso wie in Haiti. Warum soll man sie nicht feiern?*

("Our skiers risk their lives, too. That's just like in Haiti. Why shouldn't we celebrate them?")

(Kleine Zeitung, 23.1.2010, <http://www.kleinezeitung.at/sport/schi/schialpin>; seen last time on May 9, 2010)

The figurative analogy invoked by Griffini-Grasser can be reconstructed as follows: "Professional skiers (= C) : their great personal risk at downhill races (= D) = inhabitants of Haiti (= A) : their great personal risk due to the earthquake of January 12, 2010".

Major Premise: Generally, running the deadly risk of living in an earthquake zone such as Haiti (= C1) is essentially similar to running the deadly risk of participating in downhill races as a professional skier (= C2) and C1 and C2 belong to (totally) different domains of reality.

Relevant Similarity Premise: The similarity between C1 and C2 observed so far, namely to run a deadly risk, is relevant.

Minor Premise: "Living in an earthquake zone such as Haiti is running a deadly risk" is true in case C1.

Conclusion: "Participating in a downhill race as a professional skier is a deadly risk" is true in case C2 in exactly the same way.

Checking this argument with the help of the critical questions listed above, I would like to make the following remarks: There is no doubt that it is true that the inhabitants of Haiti took a great risk in Haiti during the earthquake, as the enormous numbers of dead victims have shown (cf. CQ1, concerning the Minor Premise: Is A true (false) in C1?). As to the second critical question (CQ2: Are C1

and C2 similar, in the respects cited?), one could say that although professional skiers, skiing downhill races, the inhabitants of Haiti and the dangers of earthquakes belong to clearly different domains of reality, there are not only differences, but also some similarities. As such similarities, one might adduce the following ones: 1. Both downhill races and earthquakes pose a threat to the life of the persons who are regularly doing downhill races or persons who live in areas with a risk of dangerous earthquakes; 2. Both professional skiers and inhabitants of threatened areas are pursuing their potentially dangerous way of life intentionally (and as professional skiers could choose another job, Haitians could move away from Haiti, at least in principle, cf. below).

Of course, there are also differences, for example: You are paid for being a professional skier, but you are not paid for living in an area where dangerous earthquakes can occur; winning downhill races can bring you both economic success and social prestige, while living in areas threatened by earthquakes cannot bring you wealth or prestige just because you live there.

The third critical question (CQ3: Are the important (that is, the most relevant) differences (dissimilarities) between C1 and C2 too overwhelming to allow for a conclusion which crosses the different domains of reality to which C1 and C2 belong?) tries to check whether the similarities are relevant and important enough to counter these differences (cf. Juthe 2005, p. 14). While Griffini-Grasser's argument survives the first and the second critical question relatively well, the third critical question has to be answered affirmatively, in a way which clearly demonstrates the fallacious character of her argument: The similarities between professional skiers and the inhabitants of Haiti are not relevant, whereas the differences clearly are: Downhill racers risk their lives for considerable amounts of money and out of ambition, whereas the inhabitants of Haiti earn nothing for their risk, nor are they ambitious just because they stay in Haiti.

Moreover, most of the Haitians are much too poor to be able to move elsewhere, anyway: Haiti was already the poorest country in Latin America before the earthquake, with extremely high rates of unemployment, illiteracy and starvation (cf. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti>; seen last time May 9, 2010). So Griffini-Grasser cannot plausibly justify her participation in the celebrations of professional skiers with the alleged "equivalence" of their endangerment of life with the victims of the Haiti catastrophe. Not only qualitatively, but also quantitatively, the 230.000 dead victims of the earthquake cannot be reasonably

compared with the dead victims of accidents as a result of downhill races (probably not more than a few dozen in the last 50 years).

As to the parameters outlined in section 2, the distance between the domains of life of professional skiers and of (mostly poor) Haitians is too great to allow a plausible comparison of their risks (so Griffini-Grasser is comparing “apples and oranges”). Furthermore, she is not relying on other types of arguments which would reduce the burden of proof for her analogy. Moreover, there are no verbal indications that Griffini-Grasser did not mean her argument seriously. Finally, there are no downtoners like “in a way”, “somehow” or “almost”, which would make her analogical comparison less vulnerable to criticism. On the contrary, she said that professional skiers risk their lives “just like” (using the German indicator *genauso wie*) the inhabitants of Haiti. This, then, is a clear example of a fallacious use of an argument from figurative analogy.

Other arguments from figurative analogy are less clear-cut cases of fallacies and have some degree of plausibility, but are formulated in such an exaggerated way that they cannot claim to be acceptable in this formulation. Georg Schärmer, head of the Tyrolean section of “Caritas”, the charity organization of the Austrian Catholic church, is quoted by the ORF, the Austrian public television network, as harshly criticising the Austrian school system. This system allocates children at the age of 10 into two types of high schools: “Gymnasium” (10-18 years, the basis for college and university education) and “Hauptschule” (10-14 years, the basis for an apprenticeship, or, alternatively, for moving on to a “Gymnasium” or other types of advanced secondary schools, with an option of a following tertiary education). Schärmer is quoted calling this division “a system of apartheid” (*ein Apartheidssystem*), which divides up young children far too early and separates society into different layers:

(2) *Heute gebe es ein Apartheidssystem. Kinder würden heute viel zu früh auseinanderdividiert in Leistungsgruppen oder in Hauptschule bzw. Gymnasium. “Wenn wir Kinder schon so früh auseinanderdividieren, dividiere man eine Gesellschaft auseinander.”*

(“Today we have a system of Apartheid. Children are being separated much too early into different performance groups or into “Hauptschule” or “Gymnasium”. “If we divide children so early, we are dividing also society”; <http://tirol.orf.at/stories/401294/>; seen last time on 19 June 2010)

This assumption of an analogy between the Austrian school system and former

South African apartheid was subsequently criticized by Thomas Plankensteiner, a Tyrolean school inspector, who calls it an example of “Geschmacklosigkeit” (“bad taste”) to compare the Austrian school system with a political system where citizens were deprived of their rights and persecuted because of the colour of their skin (in an article in the Tyrolean newspaper *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, November 12, 2009, p. 28). And indeed, it has to be conceded to Plankensteiner that the figurative analogy “the black majority and other “coloured” people in the South African apartheid system (= C) : the ruling white minority in South Africa during the time of apartheid (= D) = the allocation of the lower classes in the Austrian school system” (= A) : the allocation of the upper class in the Austrian school system” (= D)” is hardly tenable.

Schärmer has a point when he insists on the fact that the Austrian school system still tends to support existing social structures and hierarchies, but it cannot be denied that nowadays many children who go to “Hauptschule” later on move to the upper section of “Gymnasium” or other advanced secondary schools (according to Plankensteiner (*ibid.*), 70% of the pupils who pass the final exam of highschoools at the age of 18 in Tyrol come from “Hauptschulen”). More important than this, he cannot plausibly try to relate the controversial and much debated issue of the best way to organize the Austrian national school system with the South African apartheid system of the years 1948-1994. Schärmer’s analogical comparison of the Austrian school system with an authoritarian, racist and exploitative society such as in South Africa during this period, where black and other “coloured” people were deprived of their citizen rights, is simply unacceptable. There is no relevant similarity which would be important enough to justify this analogical comparison. Therefore, Schärmer’s analogy fails to comply with CQ3. While his other critical arguments, involving the negative effects of an early division of school children, would certainly deserve further consideration, their plausibility is weakened by his argument from figurative analogy.

Even more problematic is the following case. Although the presumption of innocence is to be respected for any person facing ongoing law suits, there are justified doubts about the acceptability of attempts by Silvio Berlusconi, Italy’s Prime minister, to use his political power to modify Italian laws in order not to be found guilty in law suits concerning bribery and tax fraud. According to Berlusconi, the law suits against him are the attempts of subversive judges and state attorneys to overturn the government and to ruin his political career. Be

that as it may, the following argument is formulated in such a clearly exaggerated way that it cannot successfully pass the examination with critical questions on arguments from figurative analogy (cf. especially CQ2 on similarities, CQ3 on relevant differences between the analogically related entities):

(3) *Berlusconi: "I miei processi? I legali mi sconsigliano di presentarmi, troverei un plotone d'esecuzione".*

("Berlusconi: "My law suits? My lawyers discourage me from presenting myself, I would face an execution squad"; la Repubblica online, 20.1.2010; <http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2010/01/20/news/aula-processo-2016916/>; seen last time May 9, 2010)

[Already last year, Berlusconi was quoted in the Austrian newspaper Salzburger Nachrichten, November 28/29, 2009, p. 4 as follows: ""Die Gerichte, die über mich urteilen, sind Hinrichtungskommandos, denen das Handwerk gelegt werden muss", erklärte der Premier"; "The courts which judge me are execution squads which have to be stopped, declared the Prime Minister"]

Berlusconi claims that "A person to be executed (= C) : the execution squad (= D) = Silvio Berlusconi (=A) : Italian courts (= B)". Differently from further examples from political discourse which I will present below, this argument is not intended as a humorous or satirical attack, or at least there are no clear verbal indicators of irony or of a satirical hyperbole. So there are no mitigating factors, apart from the fact that Berlusconi does bring forward other arguments for his position, which are, however, weakened rather than supported by this implausible exaggeration.

The following examples are taken from parliamentary discourse. They contain arguments from figurative analogy which are part of heckling shouts on members of parliament. As far as their evaluation is concerned, they pose problems differing from those which have appeared in the other examples discussed so far. That is, on the one hand, they are clearly fallacious uses of the argument from figurative analogy because they evidently compare "apples with oranges", and they are at the same time abusive attacks *ad hominem*; on the other hand, they clearly cannot be analysed according to standards of a critical discussion (cf. van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, pp. 123ff.), because they are a constitutive part of heckling in parliamentary discourse, that is, a quarrel, a dialogue type where very often standards for the rational solution of a conflict of opinion are suspended in order to "let off steam" and/or to make fun of the political opponent, frequently by

using aggressive satirical formulations. This is clearly not rational and cooperative, but different from the other examples of problematic arguments from figurative analogy discussed so far, these instances of heckling are not intended to be taken seriously. Therefore, the classification of fallacious arguments from figurative analogy must assign them a specific place.

Here are two examples, in which the political opponent - in these cases the Austrian Social Democrats (= SPÖ) - is compared to a mentally handicapped person, a (small) child, and a little side car, respectively, whereas the Austrian Conservatives (= ÖVP), who are currently working together with the Social Democrats in a government coalition, are portrayed as their trustee, their legal guardian, or as a car which has a little side car, respectively. Of course, it can hardly be justified that political parties of about equal strength as far as parliament members and percentage of voters are concerned, such as the SPÖ and the ÖVP (with the SPÖ at the moment being even slightly stronger and providing the prime minister), can be equated with asymmetric role distributions such as “parent/legal guardian : children” or “trustee : mentally challenged people”, where the ÖVP is made the superior partner. So again, the relevant similarities are lacking (cf. CQ3).

These heckling attacks often are aggressive reactions (interrupting shouts) to speeches presented by Social Democrats or by Conservatives. They are very often brought forward by members of the BZÖ, an Austrian right-wing conservative party, which was the result of internal conflicts and a following split within the Austrian right-wing Freedom Party (= FPÖ). These BZÖ members accuse the ruling government of trying to cover up several alleged political scandals, with the ÖVP acting as the leading partner and the SPÖ as the passive follower of the ÖVP. All three figurative analogies (e.g. “A trustee (= C) : a mentally challenged child (= D) = ÖVP (= A) : SPÖ (= B)”) mentioned above are (repeatedly) formulated in example (5):

(4) Nat.Abg. G. Grosz (a member of the BZÖ): *Die ÖVP ist eigentlich der Sachwalter der SPÖ!*

(“Member of Parliament G. Grosz: The ÖVP actually is the trustee of the SPÖ!”; Protocol of the 50th Session of the National Assembly (“Nationalrat”), November 12, 2009, p. 299)

(5) Nat.Abg. J. Bucher (another member of the BZÖ): *Lieber Herr Kollege Cap, heute haben wir es schon gehört, Sie sind das Beiwagerl der ÖVP, die ÖVP ist der*

Erziehungsberechtigte der SPÖ. Meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren, die ÖVP ist mittlerweile der Sachwalter der SPÖ! (Beifall beim BZÖ und bei Abgeordneten der FPÖ)

(“Member of Parliament J. Bucher: Dear colleague, Mr. Cap, today we have already heard that you are the tiny side car of the ÖVP, the ÖVP is the legal guardian of the SPÖ: My dear ladies and gentlemen, in the meantime the ÖVP has become the trustee of the SPÖ! (Applause from the BZÖ and some Members of Parliament of the FPÖ, the Austrian right-wing Freedom party)”; Protocol of the 50th Session of the National Assembly (“Nationalrat”), November 12, 2009, p. 305)

The cases I have analysed so far rather suggest that arguments from figurative analogy are indeed inevitably fallacious or at least in danger of becoming fallacies. However, the following example shows that this is not always the case. In fact, this example is a rather clear case of a plausible application of arguments from figurative analogy.

It is taken from a guest commentary in the Austrian newspaper “Der Standard”, written by Dr. Franz Fischler, Conservative politician and former Austrian Minister of Agriculture, also former EU Commissioner of Agriculture:

(6) Franz Fischler: [...] *Es wäre geradezu verantwortungslos, den Fehler, dass man bei der letzten Steuerreform einer Steuerstrukturdebatte aus dem Weg gegangen ist, zu wiederholen. Noch dazu, wo eine bessere Annäherung an die von uns selbst gewählten Kiotoziele [sic!] auch beträchtliche Einsparungen bringen würden.*

Es ist eine Illusion zu glauben, dass wir beim Energieverbrauch weitermachen können wie bisher. Eine Ausrichtung unseres Steuersystems auf soziale und Klimaziele ist daher schon längst fällig. Nicht Ökosteuern sind „ein Schuss ins eigene Knie“, wie es derzeit von manchen Titelseiten prangt, sondern nichts zu tun und die Dinge laufen zu lassen wie bisher wäre ein „Schuss ins Knie“, nämlich ins Knie unserer Kinder und Enkelkinder.

(Franz Fischler: [...]) It would really be irresponsible to repeat the mistake of evading a debate about the structure of taxes as was done during the last tax reform. And that in spite of the fact that a better approximation towards the Kyoto goals chosen by ourselves could also lead to considerable spending reductions.

It is an illusion to believe that we can continue our energy consumption as we have until now. An orientation of our tax system towards social and climate goals,

therefore, is long overdue. Not ecotaxes are like “shooting ourselves in the foot”, as you can read on many front pages today. But to do nothing and carry as we have before would be to “shoot ourselves in the foot” - in the feet of our children and grandchildren”; Der Standard, March 27/28, 2010, p. 12)

In this passage, Fischler puts forward several arguments in favour of ecotaxes. These arguments are “pragmatic arguments” (cf. Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1983, p. 358; Schellens 1985, p. 153ff.; Kienpointner 1992, p. 340f.), which argue for or against the performance of certain acts with their assumed positive or negative effects. More particularly, according to Fischer, ecotaxes would have positive effects on the global climate and on the reduction of the budget deficit, whereas going on with the status quo would have a negative impact on the climate. Only after these pragmatic arguments does Fischler use an argument from figurative analogy, which is actually a counter argument against another figurative analogy, as he quotes, “the Austrian economy (= C) : the introduction of ecotaxes (= D) = a person (= A) : shooting oneself in the foot (= B)”. Fischler’s counter analogy claims that “the Austrian economy (= C): continuing without the introduction of ecotaxes (= D) = a person (= A) : shooting in the feet of his/her children and grandchildren (= B)”.

The structure of Fischler’s argument can be reconstructed as follows:

Major Premise: Generally, to shoot in the feet of one’s children or grandchildren (= C1) is similar to performing acts which have very dangerous effects on one’s planet’s climate (= C2) and C1 and C2 belong to (totally) different domains of reality.

Relevant Similarity Premise: The similarity, namely, to do considerable harm, between C1 and C2 observed so far is relevant.

Minor Premise: “To shoot in the feet of one’s children or grandchildren is wrong” in case C1.

Conclusion: “To go on with the status quo as far as the tax system is concerned (with all the resulting bad effects on the climate)” is wrong in case C2.

I would now like to turn to the evaluation of Fischler’s argument from figurative analogy. There is no doubt that “shooting in the feet of one’s (grand-)children” is wrong (cf. CQ1). There are also similarities between C1 and C2, namely, doing considerable harm to somebody/something. Furthermore, this harm is both avoidable and the result of irresponsible, unacceptable acts both in C1 and C2 (cf. CQ2).

As to the decisive question whether this similarity is a relevant/important one, the following remarks seem to be justified: As the overwhelming majority of climatologists predict catastrophic consequences of the ongoing climate change, Fischler's analogy is far from being exaggerated. One could even claim that it is an understatement and that doing nothing against climate change would rather be like "shooting in the head of one's children and grandchildren". So his analogy is not exaggerated and makes important and relevant similarities between different kinds of harm explicit, namely, the analogy between "harming oneself or one's children and grandchildren severely" and "harming the planet's climate severely".

The figurative analogy also has didactic merits, as it is far easier to understand that hurting one's (grand)children seriously is a most irresponsible and unacceptable kind of action than understanding how the current economic and ecological policies negatively affect the earth's climate: a complex of causes and effects which is far more complex and not easy to understand and evaluate for lay persons. Moreover, Fischler uses the figurative analogy only as a supportive additional argument for his pragmatic arguments, not as the only one or the most central and fundamental one. Finally, Fischler's figurative analogy is also used as a counter argument against the dubious assumption that ecotaxes would have very negative effects ("to shoot oneself in the foot"). Even if Fischler's argument from figurative analogy is not accepted as a full refutation of the status quo of tax policies and a definitive proof of his own standpoint, it has at least enough plausibility to cast doubt on the status quo as far as ecotaxes are concerned. So, all in all, this is a case of a plausible argument from analogy.

5. Conclusion

Arguments from figurative analogy have been reconstructed with the help of a slightly revised version of the descriptive and normative argument schemes and the list of critical questions established by Walton et al. (2008). The most important critical question is the following one (= CQ3): "Are the important (that is, the most relevant) differences (dissimilarities) between C1 and C2 too overwhelming to allow a conclusion which crosses the different domains of reality to which C1 and C2 belong?" In addition, a few pragmatic parameters for the evaluation of arguments from figurative analogy are useful for clarifying the argumentative value of these arguments (e.g. their use as independent arguments or as additional, supportive arguments; their status as pro or contra arguments;

their seriousness etc.).

The 6 case studies analysed above have shown that many instances of the argument from figurative analogy are fallacious or that they are at least highly problematic types of argument. Nevertheless, there are also plausible uses of this type of argument. Therefore, a general negative evaluation of arguments from figurative analogy as fallacies is out of place. Such a generally negative attitude towards these arguments cannot explain the substantial differences as to their degree of plausibility which manifests itself if authentic examples from everyday argumentation are taken into consideration. The case studies have also shown that arguments from figurative analogy can be seen as specific cases of “strategic maneuvering” (cf. van Eemeren 2008; van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004) which can be a legitimate means of argumentation in some cases, but can also “derail” in other situations. So I fully agree with the following remark by Juthe (2005, p. 4): “As with all the other types of arguments, there are good and bad arguments by analogy”.

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ISSA Proceedings 2010 - Analysis Of Fallacies in Croatian Parliamentary Debate



1. Introduction

1.1 Political structure in Croatia

Political system in Croatia is multi-party parliamentary republic. The State Authority is divided into the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Authority. The Legislative Authority is Croatian Parliament that may have a minimum of 100 and a maximum of 160 members, who are elected directly by secret ballot based on universal suffrage for a term of four years. 6th assembly of the Croatian Parliament was constituted on 11 January 2008 following the parliamentary elections held on 25 November 2007 in 12 electoral districts. 153 representatives were elected. Currently the Croatian Parliament has 153 members. They are in session twice a year: the first session runs between 15 January and 15 July, while the second session runs from 15 September to 15 December. The Croatian Parliament can also hold extraordinary sessions at the request of the Croatian President, the Government or a majority of parliamentary deputies. Extraordinary sessions may be convened by the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament after obtaining the prior opinion of the clubs of parliamentary parties. Executive powers are exercised by the Croatian Government that consists of the Prime Minister, one or more Deputy Prime Ministers and ministers. The organization, mode of operation and decision-making of the Government are regulated by law and the rules of procedure. Currently, the head of the Government is Jadranka Kosor and the Government is formed by HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) in coalition with HSS (Croatian Peasant Party) and SDSS (Independent Democratic Serbian Party). Political life in Croatia includes political parties as well. From the beginning, i.e. from the first free, multiparty democratic elections in 1990, the number of parties is constantly changing. Šiber (2001:103) says that that kind of numerical instability, as well as parties with vague political profiles, are typical for countries in transition. He continues that political parties in stable democracies have tradition and clear and stable programs, while countries in transition are still trying to form their party system because political parties

merge, fraction, appear and disappear. Čular (2001:89) points out that Croatian party system consists of 7 larger parties: HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union), SDP (Social Democratic Party), HNS (Croatian Peoples Party), HSLS (Croatian Social Liberal Party), HSS (Croatian Peasant Party), IDS (Istrian Democratic Assembly) and HSP (Croatian Party of the Right). In January 2008 there were 11 parties: above-mentioned plus HDSSB (Croatian Democratic Alliance of Slavonia and Baranja), HSU (Croatian Party of Pensioners), SDSS (Independent Democratic Serbian Party) and SDA (Party of Democratic Action of Croatia).

1.2. Left-wing and right-wing parties in Croatia

According to the *Lexicon of basic political terms* the dominant feature of left-wing parties is liberalism. Prpić (1994:223) defines it as a political philosophy that takes freedom to be the main criterion for the evaluation of social institutions. Key terms of liberalism are freedom, individualism, equality, social justice and democracy. On the other hand, dominant feature of the Right is conservatism which is considered to have great influence on the development of modern states. It implies the respect for authority while the key terms are law, legality, sovereignty, nationalism and union. According to the research conducted by Banković-Mandić (2007:5-6), the identity of the Right is seen through a great amount of pathos, moralizing and emotions thus reflecting law, sovereignty and nationalism. The identity of the Left is connected with reasoning, situation analysis, rationality, lack of emotions, social justice and equality. Political parties in Croatia use their programs to declare their affiliation to the Right or Left option, or to the Centre. But the research by Banković-Mandić (2007:5-6), based on the usage of rhetorical figures, as well as the public opinion survey, have shown that many parties have problems with their profile - they classify themselves one way and the public perceives them differently. There is also a discrepancy between the wing the party belongs to (and public identity) and political statements members of particular party give. For example, HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) emphasizes their vicinity to the Centre, but the public sees them as the Right. IDS (Istrian Democratic Assembly) declare that they are left-wing party, but the public perceives them as right-wing. Interesting results appear concerning HSP (Croatian Party of the Right) which classify themselves as right-wing party (even ultra right-wing 10 years ago) while on the basis of the statements from their members they are considered to be the Centre, even slightly left-wing. Left-wing parties in Croatia are thought to be SDP (Social Democratic Party) and HNS (Croatian Peoples Party). Struggle for the equality of

all citizens and abolition of impregnability as left-wing trademarks, have been assigned to HNS. HSLŠ and HSS have been recognized as the Centre just as they classify themselves. Škarić (2009:15-16) used to talk about left-wing parties and their ideology and rhetoric as well as how people perceive that ideology in Croatia. "Left-wing ideology is much safer because those who represent it have taken position of those whose ideology does not need explanations. Those who are left-wing are therefore a priori right, at the same time they are more ethical, and they are in position to criticize without having fear for their own position. On the other hand, those who are in the Centre and on the Right are in the position that constantly makes them feel guilty about their ideology."

2. Theoretical Background

Fallacies in argumentation have been in the spotlight for many years and analyzed by many argumentation theorists. Therefore, many definitions and different classification of fallacies have been made, but all of them agree that fallacies are mistakes in reasoning. Hamblin says: "As almost every account from Aristotle onwards tells you, a fallacious argument is the one that seems to be valid but is not so." (1970:12). The first classification of fallacies was given by Aristotle who made difference between *fallaciae dictionis* (refutations that depend on language) and *fallaciae extra dictionem* (refutations that do not depend on language). After Aristotle there were many classifications of fallacies, but for the purpose of this research, Tindale's classification has been used. It includes a great number of fallacies and covers most of the fallacies used in political discourse as well as in everyday argumentation. Tindale says: "A fallacy is a particular kind of egregious error, one that seriously undermines the power of reason in an argument by diverting it or screening it in some way." (2007:1). In Tindale's classification there are: fallacies of diversion, fallacies of structure, problems with language, ad hominem arguments, other "ad" arguments, the ad verecundiam and misuse of experts, sampling, correlation and cause and analogical reasoning. The other author who was also of great importance for our research is Weston. He simply states that "fallacies are mistakes, errors in arguments" (1992:52) and that some are more common than the others. The two most common fallacies by Weston are: generalizing from incomplete information and overlooking alternatives. We included them in our analysis.

3. Purpose and Hypothesis

The research has several closely connected purposes. Firstly, the aim is to find

out how often do Croatian politicians in Croatian Parliament make fallacies. Their argumentation is of main interest, as well as their tendency to use “false arguments”. Secondly, the aim is to see whether the politicians are going to differ in the usage of fallacies according to the party they belong to as well as according to their position in the Parliament. Previous research (Kišiček, 2008:189-203) analyzed fallacies in argumentation according to the gender of the politician (regardless of the party he or she belongs to). The paper has shown that there are fallacies that are more typical for male as those that are more typical for female speakers (e.g. argumentum ad verecundiam was used more by male speakers and argumentum ad misericordiam was used more by female speakers). However, most of the fallacies were used equally by both male and female (argumentum ad populum, generalizing from incomplete information, false cause, overlooking alternatives, red herring, etc.). The purpose of this research is to find out differences on the basis of political affiliation.

Starting hypothesis was based on the main characteristics of the Left and the Right. Taking into account that left-wing parties are in favor of equality of all people and equal rights, it was expected to see them using more argumentum ad populum, ad misericordiam and overlooking alternatives. On the other hand, right-wing parties that represent respect for authority, national awareness and moral are expected to use more argumentum ad baculum, ad hominem, ad verecundiam and generalizing from incomplete information.

However, it is believed that the great number of fallacies will be equally used by all parties and the type and frequency will depend on the topic of discussion. For example, if the topic is the prevention of juvenile violence or violence against women, ad misericordiam is likely to be used, if the topic is house building, there will be false analogy, red herring, false cause and if the topic is the modification of the Constitution, non sequitur, ad baculum and ad hominem will probably appear.

4. Materials and Methods

For the purpose of the research 20 sessions of the Parliament (from 23 September 2009 to 20 May 2010) have been analyzed. Duration of the session depends on the agenda and the topic discussed. However, on average they last for two hours.

In order to see whether the type and number of fallacies in argumentation is influenced by the topic of discussion, different topics have been taken; from Act

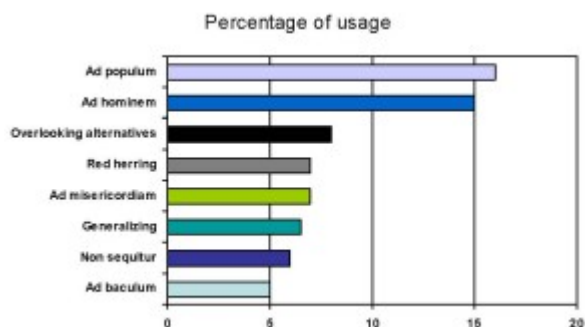
on Golf Courses and Juvenile Violence Act to constitutional changes that are most interesting to the media. As one session (the discussion on one topic) lasts two hours in average, altogether about 40 hours of material have been analyzed. The procedure was made easier by the fact that all sessions from the past few years are available for viewing at the official internet site of Croatian Parliament (<http://itv.sabor.hr/video/>).

The list of the fallacies obtained from the analyzed sessions includes the following information: name of the fallacy, name of the person who used it, date and time, and the topic of discussion. In determining whether the mistake in reasoning really happened, the context of the fallacy was taken into consideration. The material gathered is analyzed in order to find out which fallacy is used most often in the Parliament as well as in order to see which party is most prone to the usage of fallacies. However, the main goal of our research is to find which “side” i.e. which ideology (right of left) makes more fallacies and are there differences in the types of fallacies they make. Therefore, we were not interested in particular speakers and their duration and frequency of speaking, but in the duration and frequency of member of particular party. Finally, what was important for the analysis was that both “sides” (left and right) participated in analyzed parliamentary debate for the same amount of time.

For this purpose, Tindale’s (2007) classification of fallacies has been used as well as Weston`s division on “two great fallacies” (1992:52-53).

5. Results and Discussion

The analysis of fallacies in Croatian Parliamentary debate includes 404 fallacies which are listed according to the frequency of their usage.



Most often used fallacy is argumentum ad populum – a fallacious argument that

concludes a proposition to be true because many or all people believe it. This fallacy is often accompanied by words like: "Everybody knows that.", "It is common sense." and similar. Argumentum ad populum was equally used by all politicians regardless of their political position. However, IDS representatives with 43% have the greatest percentage of usage among Parliament Members. They are followed by HDZ with 25% and SDP and HNS, both with 13%.

Another fallacy on the top of the list is argumentum ad hominem. However, that fallacy is not used by all Members of Parliament and all political parties equally. It can be found in the speeches given by the members of HDZ in much higher percentage - 66%. Other parties use it occasionally, SDP - 20%, HNS -7%, HSS - 7%. This kind of ad hominem distribution confirms the starting hypothesis that right-wing parties will use Argumentum ad hominem more often. It is important to note that the party that uses ad hominem most often is the party in power. When being criticized for their way of governing, it was more or less expected from the party in power, in lack of arguments, to reach for this kind of fallacy in order to attack and discredit the opposition.

The third fallacy according to the percentage is considered to be one of the two greatest fallacies by Weston (1992:53). The usage of overlooking alternatives also confirmed our hypothesis. It was mostly used by the parties in opposition, by left-wing representatives who form their claims proposing only one possibility that would bring social justice, fairness and equality. The fallacy of overlooking alternatives is distributed in the following way: 43% SDP, 38% IDS, 16% HNS and only 3% HDZ.

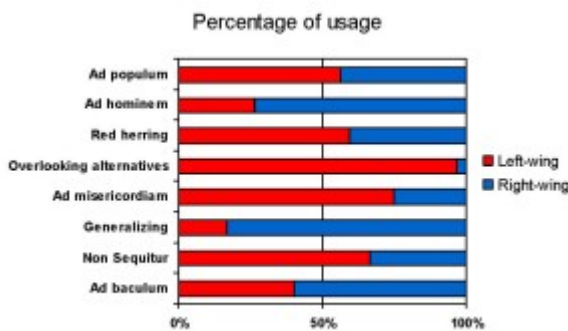
Right next to the fallacy of overlooking alternatives in the percentage of usage is red herring known also as diverting attention. This fallacy includes the introduction of a new equally interesting topic in order to temporarily or permanently conceal the lack of arguments on the topic discussed. It can be found in speeches of all parties, i.e. IDS - 47%, HDZ - 25%, SDP - 14%, HNS - 14%.

Another fallacy that was not evenly distributed among left-wing and right-wing parties is argumentum ad misericordiam or the appeal to pity. Our hypothesis that it would be used more by left-wing parties has been confirmed: SDP - 50%, IDS-20%, HDZ - 17 %, independent representatives - 13%.

On the other hand, fallacy that was used more by right-wing parties is

generalizing from incomplete information. Faced with a lot of criticism, the party in power gives incomplete information and makes general conclusions in order to justify their actions. Therefore, the percentage of usage of this fallacy by HDZ is 66%, by SDP 17% and by independent representatives 17% as well.

There are other fallacies that are constantly used in Croatian Parliamentary Debate by both the Right and the Left, although not so often: non sequitur, ad baculum, concession, false analogy, false cause, qualification, peticio principii, slippery slope, equivocation, straw man, argumentum ad verecundiam.



No.	Fallacy	Example
1	argumentum ad populum	<p><i>“As you already know, a lot of families have small flats and now children have been born. What they need are larger flats.” - M. Matanović-Dropulić, HDZ (Right-wing)</i></p> <p><i>“It is perfectly clear that this law goes in favor of construction mafia.”</i></p> <p><i>- G. Beus-Richenberg, HNS (Left-wing)</i></p>

2	argumentum ad hominem	<p><i>“When mister Kajin takes the golf club, I assure you that he will be Tiger Woods in every sense.” (in a debate on golf courses) - B. Rončević, HDZ (Right-wing)</i></p> <p><i>“When she was talking about those writings, one immediately came to my mind: Cook woman, talk less, so your meal won’t be mess.”</i></p> <p><i>- J. Rošin, HDZ (Right-wing)</i></p>
3	overlooking alternatives	<p><i>As there are no signs of banks paying attention to the real situation, the Government must react with this law.” (in a debate on the Special Interest Tax Law)</i></p> <p><i>- D. Zgrebec, SDP (Left-wing)</i></p> <p><i>“The only reasonable solution that goes in favor of Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens is to vote in Croatia.”</i></p> <p><i>- Z. Milanović, SDP (Left-wing)</i></p>

4	red herring	<p><i>“Nobody should talk in favor of soft drugs.” (in a debate on school violence)- K. Markovinović, HDZ (Right-wing)</i></p> <p><i>“The church is important. It is a good thing that Bozanić said that all violence should be reported, including that of the priest. I know that we are not Ireland...” (in a debate on school violence)</i></p> <p><i>- D. Kajin, IDS (Left-wing)</i></p>
5	argumentum ad misericordiam	<p><i>“Even today I remember how I bid farewell to all those boys and girls. Then I used to cry just like today (crying). You should take care of them, minister, take care that they have all they need. They represent Croatia for years. You are held responsible for their lives.” - Ž. Antunović, SDP (Left-wing)</i></p> <p><i>“Is that the destiny of our people, to be housemaids and porters to the rich?”</i></p> <p><i>- I. Antičević-Marinović, SDP (Left-wing)</i></p>
6	generalization from incomplete information	<p><i>“Minister of health has introduced a large number of innovations.” (in a debate on the quality of work of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare)- A. Hebrang. HDZ (Right-wing)</i></p>

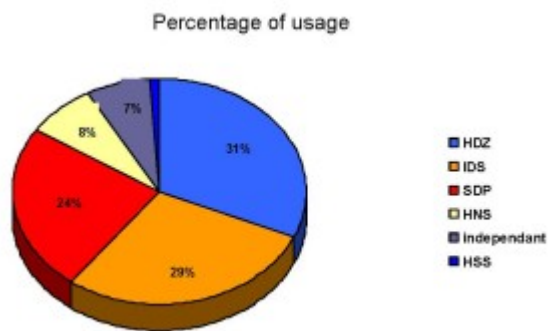
7	non sequitur	<i>“Please, do not mess with the number of commercial courts because the one in Pazin is most efficient.”- D. Kajin, IDS (Left-wing)</i>
8	argumentum ad baculum	<i>“You are going to vote in favor of this Act, but beware in two or three year’s time when it becomes the subject of inquiries. Those who were laughing are no longer in the Parliament; we all know where they are.”- D. Lesar, independent representative</i>
9	false analogy	<i>“This Act will improve Croatian tourism. Just like tennis was trendy 30 years ago, the same way golf will be the centre of tourism one day.”- B. Rončević, HDZ (Right-wing)</i>
10	false cause	<i>“The act of buying flats would decrease the number of illegal flat leasing.”- B. Kunst, HDZ (Right-wing)</i>
11	qualification	<i>“We are sending more soldiers to the lost mission in Afghanistan.”- D. Kajin, IDS (Left-wing)</i>
12	peticio principii	<i>“All I ask is for things to be sorted out in a transparent way and was not the case for the past 20 years because everything was settled behind closed doors.” - Z. Milanović, SDP (Left-wing)</i>

13	slippery slope	<i>"We should take them back from Afghanistan because it will come our turn, so our boys will get killed." - D. Kajin, IDS (Left-wing)</i>
14	equivocation	<i>"We are for compromise, but compromise is not when you want everything yours to be 100% approved. I agree we have to find key points, but through compromise, not dictate." - Vladimir Šeks, HDZ (Right-wing)</i>
15	straw man	<i>"It is not true that Croatia has to fulfill every condition so that it can be praised for its cooperation." - D. Lesar, independent representative</i>
16	argumentum ad verecundiam	<i>"Oscar Wilde said that golf was a bad way to interrupt a good conversation." - I. Antičević-Marinović, SDP (Left-wing)</i>

Table 1

List of fallacies according to the percentage of usage

When analyzing fallacies according to the parties speakers belong to, most fallacies were made by HDZ - 31 %. Right behind in the number of fallacies are IDS representatives, particularly one representative Damir Kajin, with 29 %. 24 % of all fallacies belong to SDP, 8 % to HNS, 7 % to independent representative Dragutin Lesar and 1 % to HSS.



Overall analysis shows that left-wing parties, which are in opposition to the party in power, make more fallacies than right-wing parties. However, Parliamentary debates very often take form in which the opposition is in fact the Affirmative trying to change the existing state and therefore they make more confrontation, more criticism and more fallacies. The party in power, even when proposing an act, has parliament majority so they take the position of “the defense” as they argue in favor of their ideas.

6. Conclusion

Concerning the given analysis, one can conclude that Parliamentary debates are full of fallacies in argumentation. Every politician included in the analysis had made a fallacious argument during the session. However, not all politicians provide the same amount of fallacies in argumentation. Although, on the basis of Škarić’s (2009:15-16) conclusion, one would expect less fallacies from the Left because they are *a priori* in the position of representing ethical goals that do not need explanations, the analysis has shown the opposite. The reason for such results is their current role of opposition in the Parliament, meaning that they criticize more often; they contradict the Parliament majority more often and therefore make more fallacies in argumentation. This does not mean that they are less logical or that right-wing party in Croatian Parliament has better argumentation, it just goes to show that left-wing Members of Parliament make a stand more often.

The analysis has shown that there are certain fallacies that are more characteristic for particular parties. For example, argumentum ad hominem is definitely the fallacy typical for HDZ - right-wing party that is currently in power, while the fallacy of overlooking alternatives is typical for left-wing parties in opposition. Most often used fallacy is argumentum ad populum that is equally characteristic for all political parties.

Further research might include the analysis of Parliamentary Debate from 2000 to 2004 when the circumstances concerning the party in power and the opposition were reversed; when left-wing parties were in power. It would be interesting to see whether fallacies were used differently back then, i.e. whether the argumentation (and fallacies in argumentation) depends on political ideology or political position.

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