

ISSA Proceedings 1998 - Root Metaphors And Critical Inquiry Into Social Controversies: Redeeming Stephen Pepper In And For The Study Of Argument



Human communication is an unfinished social and cultural project undertaken anew by each generation. Yet the constellation of controversy on both large and small scales may be discovered when competing understandings of communication come at odds within and across fora.

Whatever the particular or local stakes of a controversy, the understandings which ground arguments advancing a particular cause or point of view put at risk by opening up to interest and inspection the modes of communication and styles of thinking which are imbricated in the discussion. This essay examines four root metaphors which ground versions of communication in certain values: mechanism, formism, contextualism, and organicism.

Critical inquiry into controversy takes upon itself the responsibility of engagement, that is of reading what the debate has to say about reason and communication as social practices. Reading a controversy requires a descriptive phase where the world is explicated in its coherence and incoherence, agreements and disagreements, shared assumptions and contested differences by advocates. The reading is an examination of how disagreement and communication rendered possible by the discourses.

One approach taken in recent studies of argument has been to develop the notion of "argument communities," with overlapping, multiple contextualization of communication conventions, genres and rules. This notion appears to offer a situated view of argument practices compatible with the controversial. But however helpful such work can be in disclosing diversity and combating hidden analytical prejudices, it does not go far enough to assess what is at stake in the communicative engagement. What does the text put at risk?

Critical intervention into controversies is necessary because categories among

reason and communication are themselves put at risk through practice. Root metaphors can open the arc of controversy by offering grounds for the critique of practice inconsistent with the metaphor. Controversies exhibit opposition as a kind of drawing from or occupation of root metaphors. Indeed, the purification of root metaphors, or reduction of argument to a single ground, can itself become an object of controversy. Root metaphors as places for a dynamic of controversy account for institutional arguments insofar as a root metaphor offers a line of argument that can integrate the practices of an institution while leaving open ever greater spaces for opposition. The drawing from alternative groundings gives to controversy its unstable alliances of motives and its combination of "fruitful ambiguity" where people support the same thing but for different reasons. Finally, communication itself is grounded in world hypotheses that employ root metaphors as ways of making acts of discourse for self and others.

The emphasis in this essay upon the relationship between root metaphors and communicative practice differentiates our approach sharply from previous appropriations of Pepper's categories within schemes of interpretation that make the metaphors incommensurable, and thus incapable of intellectual intercourse. White, in particular reduces Pepper's root metaphors from cultural resources to particular forms or notions of historical consciousness that are assumed by, and characterize, the philosophical thinking of particular historians (13). They become tools to classify historiographic specimens

according to their qualities as cognitively responsible discourses. What is at stake for the study of argument practices in the dispute between Pepper's and White's appropriations of root metaphors is the very flexibility of those practices as conceived by the positioning of the metaphors within their theories. White's reduction of the metaphors to mere perspectives of individual historians assumed without further argument makes the metaphors incommensurable in practice. It assumes that the root metaphor explanations in historical narratives can be communicated with no risks of failure. The contextualizing discussions in Pepper's book about the root metaphors opens space for an alternative interpretation of them as sites of production whose ability to shape practice are always in jeopardy because of the interplay of dependence and autonomy in particular institutional disputes.

Root metaphor method explained

To put the method in its most simple form, the root metaphor assumes a connection between a way of talking about the world, a basic metaphor (or master

analogy) and cognitive structures which assist human beings in making informed choices about prudent conduct. Such root metaphors not only inform ordinary discourse but also impart vitality to more refined systems of thought or world hypotheses. How are the most common, half-formed, utterances connected with the most refined, highly structured, enlightened discourses? Moreover, how does one account for what should be said in theory but actually gets said in practice? To explain the answers the method must be explicated in a bit more detail.

In evaluating any particular communication, we may take an extreme attitude, saying that it has no meaning at all, on the one hand, or saying that its meaning is perfectly comprehended, on the other. In the former case, we take the attitude of the skeptic, doubting the meaningfulness of the message. In the extreme case, a skeptic might say communication is not possible. All communication is unreliable, garbled, fickle, untruthful, and so on. But this universal negative assertion against all communication would have to have been communicated, at least to the skeptic herself who wishes to believe nothing. So the skeptic holds all communication in suspension, each message equally good, valid, meaningful, and sensible. Unable to choose what to attend to or how to differentially respond, the skeptic is left to babbling or silence.

The dogmatist maintains that all communication can be understood according to principles which he (and the privileged followers) have special access. Any communication which fits these principles can be understood with certainty. Any part of a communication which does not fit the principles is mere noise. Any elements of a communication which do not conform with the dogmatically asserted elements is an accident or distortion of some kind. Taken to its extreme form, communication is an

epiphenomenon needed only because people have yet to comprehend the truth of the dogmatist's principles.

Whereas the position of the skeptic defeats itself on its face, the position of the dogmatist is unacceptable, too, but for a different reason. To establish his point, the dogmatist must present a communication process that is self-evident, universally accepted, and unchangeable. Yet until humanity exhausts its future no guarantee can be offered that systems will stay the same. Even logic seems not universal because its basic law of identity is not self-evident to everyone. Moreover, science seems to be a communication system which selects its data in a special structure that does not exhaust the powers of human discovery.

Communication occurs on a middle ground. Skeptical doubt is important because

to communicate we have to test the assertions of others and have our own commitment tested as well. Moreover, it may be the case that some kinds of communication are more suited to the situation than others, or that the one employed is distorted. So doubt is necessary – up to but not including absolute doubt. So, too, is the use of authority. Without mutual recognition of authority it would not be possible to build communication systems which comprise specialized fields like law, literature, and science or social customs like manners, life rituals, and oratorical traditions.

Communication constitutes a sense of complex agreements that permit mutual participation and recognition. Without this authority, language itself would be completely chaotic, rather than enticingly opaque. Utter reliance on authority, of course, vitiates communication by privileging a closed system, one not open to mortals (except, of course, the dogmatist).

The middle ground of communication is comprised of the relationships between ordinary discourse grounded in common sense and refined discourse grounded in specialized fields or forms of life. Common sense is comprised of the ordinary materials and processes of discussion: facts, rules, and values which reflect life experience and folk wisdoms. Communication channels grounded in common sense are developed in personal conversation and in dealing with people as part of a social structure. Like common sense, the channels appear to be solid. I can understand them, and they me. Any problem can be repaired within the communication structure: “I didn’t hear you. Let me talk louder. You lied to me. I won’t do it again. You promised. No I said I might. Well, it sounded like a promise to me.” The principles of repair help the communication system along rather than create a hopeless mess, just as common sense feels it can work itself out of any situation. Ordinary communication channels, too, have a tendency to hold alternatives as either extensions or distortions of the norm. So, for example, television is not viewed as different in kind than people talking. What “intellectuals” say is either reducible to common sense or is just plain silly. Finally, ordinary communication channels are in theory open to anyone but in practice closed to those who vitiate the norms. Like common sense, ordinary communication may be given over to parochialism, provincialism, and restricted interpretation. But what is returned is a certain sense of security or certainty in use. Or is it?

It is well known that however reliable common sense may appear to be at a point

in time, that on reflective thought it is not complete. Common sense seems limited, because it leads to inconsistencies, ambiguities, doubts, and disparities. Just so, ordinary communication channels do not provide sufficient scope or depth for activities that need to be completed through specialization. Sometimes such communication refinements can take the form of manners, permitting such sophisticated speech acts as veiled threats or concealed dislikes. At other times, such specialized activity is subjected to a particular field – its terminology, rule, formats, forums, and tradition. Such specialization can, though it need not, incapacitate an individual from common sense communication. However, the field may make communication more precise, coherent, reliable, complex, as it standardizes the forms and channels of discourse.

As much as a field might try to perfect communication, such a complete rendering is not possible as long as a wide variety of communication values are possible and conflict with one another. Rhetorical analysis studies the way communication values trade off against one another to form specialized communities of discourse, to change them, or to use values to redirect personal and public activity. Well known tradeoffs include saying what is ethical versus that which is effective, flattering an audience versus saying the unpleasant truth, intending to accomplish an end versus adapting to a situation, paying attention to what is openly professed versus privately held, creating inflexible and enduring channels of communication versus creating a domain for change and legitimate expansion or contraction of meanings, equating the real with those parts of messages that can be propositionalized versus assuming the real is just beyond categorical statement, imparting credibility to the standard product of a communication process versus seeking the unique, achieving breadth of coverage in ideas versus architecting depth of commitment, requiring communicators to be authentic versus permitting them to be playful, assuming the sounded to be the message versus paying attention to the unspoken. All communication is constructed out of problems such as these, and the more elaborate a system the more finely balanced will be the tradeoffs. Rhetorical analysis uncovers choices intrinsic to a single discourse or discourse system. Discourse may either be a discussion of the theory of communication or the theory implied by any communication. An implied theory is discovered by asking the question: What does communication look like in order for this particular communication to be comprehended or acted upon (or what is excluded or why)?

Just as the individual refines her understanding of communication, so too society provides fields to refine communication systems pertaining to human forms of life.

But refined systems are not bounded by common sense. Their definition of terms, rules, forums, and formats may be shaped so as to guarantee certain communication values important to specialized functioning. Fields may be stable or unstable, as communication values are altered to redefine the field. Competition between fields may be subjected to common sense and common channels absent any other common ground. And practitioners may engage in hypostatizations, granting to field grounded activity a common-sense like aspect. What may be embedded in the communication situation is a tension between the alternative grounding of communication practices. On the one side of the ledger, we need common understanding of activity to assure that we can communicate with anyone should the need arise, and as long as we resist perfect segregation by class, age, interest, and belief structure some general rules, language, and habits of communication will be needed. On the other, the very commonality of communication, with its intuited, flexible, changing structures and its habitual uses, seems to afford opportunities for and stand over against specialization, with its promises of precision, reliability, depth, and connection with the traditions surrounding the practices of a form of life. Given temporal, social, and intellectual demands on discourse, one should not expect a perfect, harmonious balance among competing grounds. Given the fertility of human communication systems, it should be expected that the construction, assembly, valuation, and change of grounds for communication ceaselessly take place.

While the root metaphor system acknowledges a plurality of communication systems, it does not fall into the trap of vicious relativism that reduces each practice to the perspective of a person who thinks about communication but can find no grounds supporting participation in a reciprocal, social process. Rather, the root metaphor system suggests basic ways of seeing, feeling about, forming, or processing the world which provide connectives that vitalize communication systems, and suggests a method for appraising the merits of each system emerging from a root metaphor in terms of what it offers and neglects, what it permits us to speak about and where it mandates a margin for silence.

A root metaphor is a shaping analogy. Communication emerges not from brute instrumentality, with a bare depiction of need and object, but from comparison – a grasp of likeness among things, events, and acts imparting general notions of priority, ways to draw attention, and forms of rudimentary communication. Two root metaphors which invite attention but do not create completed means of communicative resolution are animism and mysticism.

Animism emerges from the feeling that there is something more to each particular than meets the eye; the world is alive with possibility as each place is a habitation for the spirit. The problem with animism is that it cannot go beyond the particular to suggest a way of cognitively assimilating the principles informing the dispersion of the animate. One moves from life to life, helped by magic but haunted by demons.

Mysticism emerges from the feeling that there is a unity to all particulars, or rather that all is really a manifestation of one. Seeing one, particularity of principle and conduct is submerged in the hidden but revealed all-embracing, cosmologically unbounded spirit. The problem with mysticism is that it cannot suggest cognitive modes for differentiating among particulars, such as the accuracy of knowledge in the specific case. Seeing the world as self-contained unified whole lends a certain amount of security in

belief even as it makes for a brittle system, unable to respond to the problems raised by other root metaphors.

Cultural resources make available four root metaphors, each of which has informed and continues to inform certain discourse communities and communication practices. Pepper suggests (with a neatness that is somewhat suspicious, and perhaps belied by his later efforts at another metaphor, selectivism) that the four adequate root metaphors are so in number because each represents an defensible tradeoff between scope and precision, analysis and synthesis. Whether these are all of the root metaphors or whether these combine according to yet another principle of construction are questions which need not detain us at this point. Rather let us examine each in turn and suggest relevant implications for communication and reason in argument.

Mechanism.

Pepper identifies mechanism with theories of materialism. The mechanistic root metaphor stems from the intuition that the world and all its activities operate like a machine. In such a world, what is really real is that which is present to the senses and responds to law-like regularity deduced from a reading of the forces of nature. Mechanism suggests that the only reliable means of knowledge is that which can be derived from observation and experimentation and exhorts the knower to strive mightily to suspend belief in favor of strict observation, reporting, and hypothesis.

Note that the assumption of the metaphor is that language is not an essential constituent of human culture, or to be precise, language is merely a

representation that stands for reality and often between precise, reliable, unbiased, and demonstrable data and danda. Language prejudices people and reflects a slipshod way of thinking about the world that can only be ended if a more refined symbol system is developed to handle concepts which predict the necessary methods of controlling material conditions. Note, too, that the use of language may constitute the controlling conditions of society. Hence the mechanist would place a high evaluation on how language influences reality rather than what is said or its asserted content.

When mechanistic outlooks shape perspectives on and performances of argument, they can become controversial. Criticisms have been lodged against Whately's view that "The finding of suitable arguments to prove a given point, and the skilful arrangement of them, may be considered as the immediate and proper province of Rhetoric, and of that alone (39)." The shotgun marriage of Aristotle's Rhetoric and nineteenth century views of faculty psychology produced a notion of how arguments are machined into speeches.

Training regimes for written and oral argument production in American classrooms during the early twentieth century were spawned from this notion. The speaker uses arguments which are found in available materials which work according to the laws of persuasion on the mental conditions of the audience. Rhetorical analysis assists the reconstruction of these means of production, from invention, to arrangement, to stylizing, memorization, and delivery. What is the effect? Note that the communication values assumed in this model suggest that all good communication is intentional, influences multitudes, is a product of training in technique, is historically well received, and so on.

Controversies ensue when certain kinds of argumentative performances seem to be systematically undervalued in social institutions influenced by mechanistic conceptions of practice. As Palczewski notes, "feminists contend that argument as a process has been steeped in adversarial assumptions and gendered expectations" (164). Her survey reveals a hostility to mechanism when its emphasis upon influence and persuasion comes at the expense of other values, such as authenticity and coherence. The mechanistic model has difficulty making room for "ineffective forms of support," such as the sharing of personal experience, that might be good nevertheless in the sense of exhibiting an essential insight into the human condition (162). Moreover, the model cannot account precisely for the effects of an argument because other elements influence

the receptivity, attention, and long-term allegiances of an audience. Palczewski reviews feminist work that interrogates standards of objectivity and credibility as grounded in “metaphors based on masculine experience” that are inappropriate for audiences that may bring different experiences, beliefs, values, and reasoning styles to a site of argument (165-66). These critiques seem to proceed from root metaphors, as we shall discover, more characteristic of immanent formism or organicism, and stimulate further controversy among feminist scholars.

Formism.

Pepper identifies formism with theories of discourse that recognize pattern or similarity as the grounds for acting in and understanding the world. Whereas materialism and mechanism emphasize the fact and controlling law as the really real of the world, formism begins with pattern as the really real and views the particular as accidental or incidental to the grand scheme. Whereas mechanism is integrative insofar as it draws all facts together in a theory of causal relationship between law and phenomena, formism is dispersive insofar as it finds in any particular and unlimited number of forms which it may stand as the exemplar of.

Formism is a particularly productive view of communication, for each encounter is suggestive of principles which help shape another. To this world language is always underdetermined, that is, any person is free to see in communication an invitation to participate in a form as yet undefined by the world. In contrast, mechanism is overdetermined, because any communication has one and only one appropriate set of functions which can be known to a limited degree through precise reconstruction. Mechanism permits us to fashion a communication system that is a durable, reliable, certified workaday tool. Formism permits us to engage in a communication of depth, unity, beauty, and elegance. Standardization, control (in the sense of easy reproduction), causal intent – all are values of a mechanistic system and *bete noires* to a formal communication system.

Formism gives rise to a dual view of communication. Immanent formism suggests that patterns emerge from the similarity of argument structures. Rather than account for the particulars of given transactions like a mechanist might to gain data supporting the laws, the formist might look at the similarities characteristic of many arguments across time. Toulmin's theories of argument (1958; 1979) and argument fields (1972) participate in immanent formism. Toulmin examines specimens and processes of argument across a wide range of specialized communities, including law, science, art, politics, and business, as well as in everyday interaction.

He discovers that arguments in these spheres have enough of a family resemblance to form a model of argument structure that has field invariant elements: claims, grounds, warrants, backings, qualifiers, rebuttals, and reservations. Further, these elements provide support in ordinary forms of life for alternatives to strict standards of logical proof on issues engaged by practical reason.

Controversies arise when the application of the immanent forms to argument pedagogy appears to mask the materiality of power and knowledge in communicative relations. Proceeding from an position that draws upon mechanistic conceptions of influence for its possibility, Schroeder's critique looks to influence behind argument:

A person who can argue coherently and cogently commands a considerable amount of authority in our culture, and such a person is considered to be educated, to have power, and to be capable of taking his or her requisite place in society. The fact that these powerful implications may not be as obvious makes the skills of effective persuasion, and their relationship to knowledge and power, more important (95).

For a number of reasons, Toulmin's description of argument forms is said to be ill-equipped to deal with the material realities of practice. First, his field-invariant elements of argument are imprecise in ways that suggest that their selection constitutes an insidious exercise of subjectivity. For example, Toulmin identifies backing as a necessary element, but assumes, rather than considering, social legitimation of the backing (see also Goodnight 1993). This threatens to drag the entire model into a relativistic morass. Toulmin also ignores the rhetorical elements of the argumentative situation, the affective and stylistic considerations. These exclusions are the key to opening up the "wider context in which the actual negotiations of power transpire (Schroeder 103). Second, Toulmin's model has trouble accounting for the exploitation of its elements in actual argumentative practice over time. In Toulmin's model, changing the argument field (relevant sources of warrants and backing) changes the data available to support the claim. Rather than reconsidering their arguments in light of new data, students of Toulmin are encouraged to change their ascribed field and ignore evidence that might disconfirm their arguments. Schroeder claims that the experience of composition teachers with the essays of prejudiced students confirms this practice (101-102). Third, his description hypostasizes certain elements as

communicatively significant categories. These categories carry no communicative weight. They provide no basis for evaluation of the arguments presented. The consensus of logicians is that Toulmin's categories add nothing to what the concepts and forms of formal logic already accomplish. They believe that Toulmin has ignored work that logicians have done in the area of warrants and backing and they dismiss his narrow view of the scope of arguments to which formal logic can speak. Toulmin's text gives us new words for validity that are vague, obscure and confusing (Schroeder 100). These are problems of precision that Pepper believes are endemic to world hypotheses grounded in immanent formism.

Transcendent formism represents the other face of formal analysis. Studying argument fields in search of immanent structures is an avenue to investigate the habits of practitioners. The search for norms of superior argument finds patterns transcending mere notions of practice in hidden but puissant development of form. Whether "good reasons" are grounded in some grand entelechial pattern of human re-cognition and linguistic enactment or in half-forgotten origins of self and society, these recurrent designs make manifest human life and meaningful human communication. While the "source" of a conflict may not intend mythic enactment, still the plot plays out in ways grasped by those whose eyes are fixed on the more enduring qualities of discourse.

Brockriede's perspective of arguers as lovers, as well as Fisher's logic of good reasons (1978) and his narrative paradigm of argument (1984, 1987), mingle with the root metaphor of transcendent formism. Brockriede grounds communicative norms in an essential association of attitudes, intents, and consequences with three quintessentially human acts: rape, seduction, and love. He argues, for example, that rape entails an attitude of seeing a human being as an object or inferior, an intent to manipulate or violate the other, and a consequence of harm (2-3). Fisher grounds his communicative norms in a definition of human essence stressing valued values: "Humans as rhetorical beings are as much valuing as they are reasoning animals" (1987, 105). Good reasons are good because they are inextricably bound to a value, to a conception of the good. Fisher's position frees argument from specific structures or situations of influence; argument can be found in nondiscursive modes of communication such as drama or film. The connection to value generates standards of argument evaluation such as fact, relevance, consistency, coherence, and transcendent issue (1987, 110).

Unsurprisingly, controversy ensues when essences are suspected of hiding critical biases and exclusions. Like its immanent counterpart this transcendent version of

form suffers from restrictions of precision. Transcendent views of human communication seem the products of subjective pronouncement, a fitting of the facts together to retell the same stories rather than an attention to the unique qualities of communication. Just as mechanistic theories have difficulty in accounting for nonstandardized products, except as accident or breakdown, so formistic theories have difficulty in accounting for the precise version of enactment and the unique, unrepeatable events that comprise a particular communication.

Blythin reviews Brockriede's definitions and observes that terms such as manipulation, charm, or tricks are ambiguous in ordinary usage, and that differentiating love from rape or seduction according to intent is very difficult because there are no clear descriptive verbs for love (179). Rowland analyzes three argumentative works within Fisher's narrative paradigm and notes numerous difficulties in attempting to apply standards of narrative fidelity and probability to the unique characteristics of these texts (49-51). Transcendent values cannot admit of more precision than the form permits.

Contextualism.

Whereas mechanism examines any situation to determine the particular manifestation of prior laws, contextualism emphasizes the determining qualities of context in defining any given situation. Whereas formism examines the controlling element of pattern in universalizing human experience or at least generalizing the nature of artisanship from artifacts of a culture, contextualism emphasizes the human tendency to enact a form and negate it simultaneously, to solve one problem and create another, to affirm a meaning with one breath and take it away with another. The worlds of mechanism and formism are secured by appeal to prior laws or forms. Contextualism finds communication self-constituting because it continually confronts people with the necessity of addressing audiences created in and through symbolic activity.

Theories of communication grounded in contextualism are more or less subversive. Subversion is rendered possible because the first principle of this paradigm is that communication itself is a process of emphasis and deemphasis, of selection and deflection, of positioning oneself to uphold order and shifting support in case the need arises. There is nothing beyond the process of communication that stands as a court of appeal. So one may either affirm the symbolic order, playing out the roles that are requested with appropriate dignity, or find less reverent expressions of incongruities that somehow are more

comportable to the context at hand.

Farrell's theories of social knowledge (1976, 1978, 1993) and his discussion of rhetorical constituents of argumentative form (1977) illustrate the operation of a contextual root metaphor. Rhetorical argument presupposes a context in which audiences share knowledge of "conceptions of symbolic relationships among problems, persons, interests, and actions," implying preferable ways of choosing among possible actions. This consensus is attributed to audiences through the decision to participate in argumentation. But this knowledge only actualizes itself "through the decision and action of an audience" (1976, 4), and depends upon intersubjective relationships among arguers and audiences.

This situationally-grounded knowledge opens the concept of validity beyond correspondence between words and things or verified predictions that previous audiences would choose to believe an argument. Social knowledge must be developed within particular sites of choice and avoidance. According to Farrell, nonetheless, rhetorical validity has certain qualities to be located in "the complicity of an audience in argumentative development, the probable relationship between rhetorical argument and judgment, and the normative force of knowledge presumed and created by rhetorical argument" (1977, 142). The arguer may need to generate the materials that make such a consciousness possible for a particular audience (1977, 145).

Contextualism finds its limits at the margins. Controversy arises at the point where contextualist views of communication attempt to articulate differences that separate contexts. It may be the case that scientific research will discover that alleged differences in communicative practices are illusionary and misguided. Carleton criticizes Farrell for constructing differences between social and technical knowledge when, by Carleton's lights, rhetoric is central in all processes of coming-to-know (317). Nor can we be sure that Farrell's effort to preserve the possibility of judgment in rhetorical art can survive advances in the technological capabilities of mass mediated message reproduction. It may be the case that materialist systems of communication produce messages that destroy contextual interpretation, empty content, and keep social groups attentive through prepackaged diversions. The individualized mode of variable response is precisely what is compelled. The modern communication industry has long abandoned standards of common sense, morality, and reasonableness in producing its stimuli. What makes this indictment important is that such powerful, systemic cooption of the production of communication strikes where the model is weakest,

the selection and evaluation of material. In the contextual world, no discourse is really more important than another. All go into the hopper of communication. Without the power to discriminate between authentic, truthful, or valid communication practices and their opposites, contextualism reduces itself to just another perspective by its own principles. What it gains in breadth, in showing the communicative aspects of human activity, it seems to lose in depth or durability as a position of critique.

Organicism.

Organicism is like contextualism in that it posits no reality outside that which is unfolding in human activity. Unlike contextualism, it does not emphasize knowledge, indeterminate change, attenuated incongruities, or subversive interpretation of discourse. Rather, it seeks integration of all communication practices into a single congruent totality. Whereas contextualism multiplies conflicting motives and satisfactions, organicism seeks to realize in the motion of the dynamic a moment of convergence where contradictions are unified into a realized whole. In contextualism, society and individuals alter communication patterns much like a ship tacks, going this way and then that, upholding social order, then inveighing against it when the occasion arises. In organicism, communication is more like the recognition of an epiphanic moment where the tendency of what appeared to be contradictory processes or messages converge into a unity which illuminates the horizon of human meaning.

Organicism shares some fundamental assumptions with transcendent formism. Both disparage "common sense" and elevate the "hidden unities" which characterize the communication system or artifact. Both see a unity between discourse and a principle of expression, of shaping discourse into patterns. However, whereas formism permits interpretation of the world and its particular exchanges in a variety of ways, organicism demands apprehension of a single, unified, purposeful whole. Of course, such a demand for authentic discourse is antithetical to contextualism. Contextualism democratizes the groundings of discourse by not privileging any basic element (who, what, when, where, or why), organicism seeks to disclose the controlling element in all communication.

Johnstone's vision of argument as a defining feature of the human condition illustrates how the organicist metaphor organizes appearances and makes distinctions. Argument creates the self, which distinguishes argument from nonargument: "Immediate experience makes no claims and raises no questions. It is only when action and belief become subject to argument that an opacity is

introduced into experience – the opacity which is the self. There is no self for immediate experience. There is a self only when there is risk” (6).

Nonargumentative forms of control, including the use of rhetoric, do not treat the other as a person; this distinguishes rhetoric from argumentation (6,7). Philosophical argumentation is an archetype for argument practice, as it deals with issues of knowledge and morality, recognizes the existence of counterarguments and the necessity of taking the risk of responding to them (8,9). Finally, all valid philosophical arguments are necessarily *ad hominem*, or based upon an incompatibility (tautology, obscurity, ambiguity, or inconsistency) of a statement with the intentions or motives of the person who issues it, and therefore can be distinguished for purposes of assessing truth value from the requirements of formally valid propositions (see Pieretti, 134-38).

Organistic theories of human communication are most compatible with phenomenology. In the movement of experience from the ordinary lifeworld to that of refined theoretical explanation to reflective cognition of the relation of practice and theory, the unity of discourse is discovered. This unity is disclosed even when the barriers between such worlds suggest irreconcilable, incommensurable, and permanently secured distinctions.

But the unity is purchased at the expense of excluding behaviors that do not fit within the necessary qualities of the self, and opposition to these restrictions of scope inherent within organistic description fuels controversy. Brutian complains that Johnstone excludes important considerations, such as factual support and the law of noncontradiction, from argumentative validity because he is too eager to separate philosophy from science and politics. This encourages irresponsible communicative practices in these other spheres of activity (84-87). Perelman disagrees with the limitation of philosophical refutation to *ad hominem* approaches and the exclusion of rhetoric. “We believe in the possibility of external criticism, with reference to generally admitted theses, which are explicitly or implicitly in opposition to those of the philosopher (136).”

Perelman prefers a theory of argumentation that relies upon a transcendental formistic notion of universal audience and finds a place for argument that increases adherence to certain theses. In particular, his approach allows for argumentation in all phases of scientific endeavor outside of measurement and simple observation (137).

Conclusion

Root metaphors provide orientations that help us see unity and difference in our

thinking about argument. Although Pepper talks about the metaphors in terms of tradeoffs among epistemological links between theory and practice, the metaphors also point more broadly to the very practices and repair of communication in which our arguments are invented and interpreted. That these models have some power is testified to their use in otherwise quasi-autonomous and specialized fields of reasoning. That the models cross disciplinary boundaries and specialized fields is rendered evident from parallel development and interfield borrowing. No matter how powerful the metaphor, however, it should be noted contra White that the metaphors offer less a form of consciousness than a place for argument. This paper has found within the purview of each metaphor a field of controversy, and it is with the study of these fields that we learn the limits and capacities of our own makings of communication.

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