ISSA Proceedings 2010 – Keynote Address: Rhetorical Argument

At this conference four years ago, one of my European colleagues began a conversation with the question: What is your project? My response – "rhetorical argument" – drew a confused stare and an "Oh!" As I pondered this moment, the texture of modern argumentation studies came to the fore. We are a coalition of approaches and projects, gazing somewhat at the same human phenomenon, but from different perspectives and with different sensitivities. In this coalition, there are groups that we recognize and generally understand regardless of our own interests. There is the pragma-dialectical approach most vibrantly practiced under the influence of those here at the University of Amsterdam. There are the informal logicians spawned principally from philosophy departments in North America. There are the studies of conversational argument applying qualitative and quantitative social scientific methods to understand day-to-day interpersonal argument. These are three easily identifiable groups.

But those whose work is closest to mine are not so easily captured in a single thought or with a single name. There are those of us who study the history of the theory of argumentation from the classical period to the present. There are those who examine arguments in their historical context, tracing their power to direct social order in particular ways. There are those who are concerned with the place of argument in political processes, the challenges of the moment in the texture of democratic life, and the improvement of argument's contributions to the public sphere. In fact, these diverse concerns were arguably the founding agenda of modern argumentation studies. Yet, those pursuing them today often seem to us – at least to my interlocutor at the last conference in Amsterdam – as more intellectual waifs than children of a common and seminal argumentation study. So, my purpose today is to focus, to explain, and to encourage: to provide an account of that parentage; to locate the origins of the commonality in this work; to trace its development to the present day; and to bring its blurry lines into sharper focus; to consider the questions and approaches of rhetorical argument. To accomplish this purpose, I will offer a history, a characterization, and finally a

distillation.

1. Rhetoric and Argument

We begin with a history of the relationship between rhetoric and argument. Of course, rhetoric has a long and storied tradition in Western culture. That history traces from humble beginnings in the Greek classical era, through a lofty status as one of the seven liberal arts in the medieval university, and back into relative obscurity. But argument has not always been a part of that history. For a millennium and a half after its classical heights rhetorical theory emphasized elements other than argument. Then, in the 17th century, the influential Port Royalists formally separated argument from rhetoric, placing the former into the domain of logic. As the enlightenment proceeded that division held. Thus, our story is not of the long history of argument in rhetoric, but of the recent recovery of rhetorical argument. That history must be traced in two phases, pivoting in the 1960s around evolving definitions of rhetoric. In that evolution, rhetorical argument participated in the great intellectual movements of the 20th century.

By the 1960s, a well rounded study of rhetorical argument had emerged built within the context of neo-Aristotelianism. There were two forces shaping this study. The cultural force shared the movement within American education away from a notion of education as a refining and polishing of human character toward a more practical endeavor. This force had begun in the 19th century in the United States with the industrial revolution and the Morrill Act, which placed the federal government into the business of encouraging education in technology and agriculture. When the political organization of the American university into departmental divisions picked up steam near the turn of the 20th century, a revolt began within English departments – the home of language study – championing the practical uses of language over the normative study of literatures. In this move, Aristotle's *Rhetorica* (322 b.c.e.) was broadly rediscovered and gave force to the practical study of argument. This was a particularly astute choice in the environment of the day. Spotlighting Aristotle reached across the divide in pedagogy to the proponents of classical education, and identified rhetoric with the Greek Revival and its celebration of democracy.

Rhetoric is, Aristotle (322 b.c.e) proffered, "the faculty of discerning in every case the available means of persuasion" (1355b). By the early 20th century,

departments of English in the United States were beginning to spawn departments of speech or oratory composed of these practicality rebels, and built around practical uses of language. David Zarefsky (1995), in his keynote at this conference in 1994, traced the contribution of this developing discipline to argumentation study. As the 20th century proceeded, scholars concerned with the practical – both those remaining in English departments and those joining the new departments – developed an interest in rhetoric and Aristotle's definitions took the lead.

By 1925, William Utterback (1925) noted that all roads to understanding rhetoric led back to Aristotle. He praised Aristotle not only for his fit to the practical demands of the culture – "The function of rhetoric is to provide the speaker with the tools of his trade" (p. 221) – but also because his method was adaptable to 20th century intellectual change. The social sciences were developing at the time, based in admiration for the scientific advances of the early industrial age, and seeking to bring what Stephen Pepper (1942) called a "mechanistic" understanding of human behavior to the practical questions of human activity. Replacing the normative and formal concerns of the earlier age, the mechanistic was marked by analytic methods, that is, the tendency to proceed by dividing things into their parts, exploring each of those parts, and constructing a theory of the relationship among the parts. In addition, this intellectual move focused on the importance of causal chains, particularly those that related to effectiveness.

Utterback (1925) praised Aristotle's rhetoric for providing a vocabulary to study rhetoric in this fashion. In his account, dichotomies and category systems helped to sort elements of rhetoric. And one of these elements that could be studied was, of course, argument. Argument was conceptualized as that component of the "means of persuasion" denoted as *logos*. Arguments in turn could be broken into their parts: premises and conclusions. A particularly important dichotomy in this study was that between conviction and persuasion, with argument relating to the former and emotion to the latter. Arguments were understood in terms of their potential effectiveness in practical settings. Rhetorical argument, Utterback noted, was marked by a near-universal model for practical discourse: speakers, seeking to accomplish persuasive purposes, analyzed subjects and audiences. Based on this intellectual understanding, speakers called upon systems of argument to formulate practical messages seeking to convince others of the truth or goodness of their position. Thus, a facility for argument was located in mental,

perhaps even cognitive, processing, with the test of that processing resting in the power of the arguments to effect the convictions and behaviors of others.

Of course, Aristotle's *Organon* identified three modes of argument – scientific demonstration, dialectic, and rhetorical argument. But his laying out of the differences among these modes was imprecise enough that the place of the enthymeme – the rhetorical syllogism – and the rhetorical topoi became a convenient inquiry to mature neo-Aristotelian argument. By the 1950s and 1960s, much inquiry was focusing on the meaning of these terms in Aristotle. Because the central thrust of this work was practical, the exploration of argument extended beyond the theory of argument formation to also consider argument as situated in history. Guided by Herbert Wichelns' "The Literary Criticism of Oratory" (1925), scholars of rhetorical argument studied the great arguments of history and how their use by great men effected the course of history.

By the 1960s a substantial volume of scholarship had accumulated around neo-Aristotelian argument. Wiley (1956), Bitzer (1959), Mudd (1959), Walwick (1960), Fisher (1964), Aly (1965), and Chronkite (1966) had built on the seminal work of James McBurney (1936) to explore the enthymene. Characteristic patterns of proof – neo-Aristotelian versions of Aristotle's topics – had been developed and described. Standard histories of influential speakers and writers had been written with attention to their important and powerful arguments, most notably in the three volume set on *The History and Criticism of American Public Address* edited by Brigance (1943) and Hochmuth (1955). In addition to these intellectual moves, well developed pedagogical systems for teaching neo-Aristotelian argument had developed in departments of English and speech in American universities, particularly in the land grant universities established by the Morrill Act as homes for practical education.

2. A Second Tradition
But there is a critical point of change in our historical narrative. Near mid-century, the dominance of the mechanistic perspective on human behavior began to tease out lively alternatives. By the 1970s the so-called "linguistic turn" had reoriented the study of human activity. The linguistic turn emphasized the centrality of language in understanding and action, thus placing language acts at the center of inquiry. Quite literally, the linguistic construal of context became the central process in which humans related themselves to the world around them. The resulting spread of what Pepper (1942) called "contextualism" through

intellectual circles from philosophy through social science and into the humanities turned the attention of those studying the powers of language from mechanical effectiveness to organizing perception and action. Cultures were shaped in the performance of language. Patterns of power were instantiated through the perceptual and volitional possibilities of language forms.

A broad range of intellectual disciplines now turned to understand the powers of language. Certainly Wittgenstein's ideas about language were key to the linguistic turn, but so also were those in the movements known as structuralism and post-structuralism. The interaction between European and American interest in rhetoric became a fruitful and complex dialogue of influences. Even the term "rhetoric," still more likely to be embraced as a key term in North America than in Europe, became current on the continent after Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958) subtitled their 1958 book *A New Rhetoric*.**[i]**

As the linguistic turn energized rhetorical studies, definitions of rhetoric began to change. The powers of rhetoric were drawn more broadly in a definition that defined rhetorical study as concerned with "the relationship between language and social order." Language under mechanistic ways of thinking was referential: words were assumed to re-present some aspect of non-linguistic reality, and the manipulations of language were judged by their correspondence to manipulations of this non-linguistic world. But after the linguistic turn, contextualist ways of thinking viewed the possibilities and powers of language as shaping human interaction with the world. As opposed to the analytic inquiry of mechanism, the synthetic inquiry of contextualism sought to understand how language's power to construct context through the assertiveness of text enacted environment into human consciousness and action.**[ii]**

From the perspective of this broadened view of rhetoric, the inventional process merged many forces drawn from biography and society into a socially meaningful discursive action. Human symbolic exchange replaced the mental processes of strategic design at the center of rhetoric. To this exchange, each participant brought a biography of particular and shared interests and capabilities. The exchange filtered and shaped these into a socially coordinated texture of understanding and action. Argument performed negotiation within this exchange, adapting understanding to circumstances, and participants to understandings, that together guided action (Bryant, 1953).

Obviously, such a move dramatically altered the place of rhetorical argument. The sociolinguistic power of argumentative form to influence ongoing human activity was unmistakable. To be sure, these strands in rhetorical argument predated the linguistic turn by decades. As early as 1917, Mary Yost (1917) had authored "Argument from the Point-of-view of Sociology" in which she argued, "Argument as we read and hear it and use it every day is directly and fundamentally communication between members of a social group, a *society* in the sociological meaning of the term" (113). In the old dichotomous thinking of the time, Yost was rejecting argument's association with analytic logic in favor of a practical effectiveness. Yet, the emphasis on the social group as a context for argumentative power was to become a key to understanding the linguistic turn. In 1947, Ernest J. Wrage's (1947) "Public Address: A Study in Social and Intellectual History" had emphasized that the power of argument to evolve ideas was a vital creative force driving historical change. By 1963, Karl R. Wallace's (1963) "The Substance of Rhetoric: Good Reasons" had fixed the motivational qualities of rhetoric in their sociolinguistic force rather than their referential power. During the same time period, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958/1969) had grounded a rhetoric – still mechanical and concerned with effectiveness in many ways – in social contexts. And Stephen Toulmin had written *The Place of Reason in Ethics* (1950) and *The Uses of Argument* (1958) which together made the case for grounding the motivational powers of human language in cultural contexts. This developing European thought had infiltrated American thinking on rhetorical argument by the 1960s. By the time Robert L. Scott (1967) declared rhetoric to be a "way of knowing" in 1967, the linguistic turn was well established in rhetorical argument.

Thus, the two great intellectual movements of the 20th century – mechanism and contextualism – had spawned two understandings of rhetoric. These two interpretations were not inconsistent, but related from the more narrowly defined neo-Aristotelianism with its analytic patterns and practical concern for effectiveness, to the more general definition of the linguistic turn, highlighting the synthetic power of rhetoric to transform human experience into social activity.

3. Today's Study of Rhetorical Argument
Now, let me turn from this narrative history of the perspective of rhetorical argument to characterize the disparate research I pointed to earlier – seemingly unfocused forays by theorists, historians and critics associated with the rhetorical

tradition. If I have achieved my purpose to this point, my account of the evolution of rhetorical study with the shifting intellectual forces of the 20th century will indicate the generative coherence of research in rhetorical argument. So, a survey of research tracing to the influences of the tradition is in order.

Many studies today are motivated by a belief that the neo-Aristotelian project remains incomplete: we are learning ever more about the pragmatic effort to invent arguments that will effectively influence others. Indeed, our interest in a historical and useful understanding of Aristotle's thinking on argument remains alive. Particularly active in the last few years, especially among European classicists, is work to better understand the topics as an approach to rhetorical argument. Interest in reinvigorating Aristotle's distinction between demonstration, dialectic, and rhetorical argument remains an active pursuit. But our efforts to develop ways of thinking through the strategic, pragmatic problem of invention has extended attention beyond Aristotle to theorists from our own time. David Frank's recent conference on the work of Chaïm Perelman and the Ontario Societies' conference on the work of Stephen Toulmin (Hitchcock, 2005; Hitchcock & Verheij, 2006) deepened our appreciation of the potential of those 20th century theorists. No doubt Toulmin's recent death will spur retrospectives that will add to our facility with his working logic.

Our theoretical work has not, however, only attempted to round out the theory of the giants of the neo-Aristotelian project. Pursuit of a better understanding of pragmatic argument has extended to new theoretical work. Most noteworthy among these new approaches is the effort to account for the pragmatic power of visual argument. I would also be remiss if I were not to acknowledge the active project of incorporating the work of informal logicians, the findings of experimental scholars, and the implications of the pragma-dialectical approach of the Amsterdam school into the advice we provide to arguers inventing discourse. The neo-Aristotelian's vision of effective arguers achieving their defined purposes by formulating arguments after a structured analysis of subject matter and audience remains a primary concern of rhetorical argument.

The pragmatic power of argument has always animated the work of historians who have featured its contribution in biographies of leaders and accounts of political change. Today, our historians continue to document the pragmatic power of effective argument in these contexts. US presidents have been a favorite, a

focus no doubt stimulated by general academic interest in the rhetorical presidency during the late 20th century. But recent work has extended the focus of leadership beyond the obvious target of the head of state, and beyond the American head of state. I would point particularly, for example, to Kelly Carr's (2010) recent study of Justice Lewis Powell's invention of diversity as a legal value in the Bakke decision of the United States Supreme Court. Other studies have extended to strategies employed by corporate businesses in encountering the challenges of business life. James Wynn's (2009) recent study of Darwin's use of inductive argument illustrates the line of work in scientific argument. This research has established a firm record of the importance of rhetoric in historical development in many venues of life. In the process it has also enriched the theoretical understanding of how arguers go about achieving pragmatic goals.

But as the definition of rhetoric broadened with the linguistic turn the late 20th century, historians of argument have also altered their project. Taking the view of Ernest Wrage (1947), these scholars have moved beyond the documentation of effectiveness to document the cultural evolution of argumentative forms. I believe one of the most underappreciated but important documents in rhetorical studies in the 20th century was *The Prospect of Rhetoric*, the report of the 1970 National Developmental Conference on Rhetoric. The report of the Committee on Invention took a notably Wragean perspective calling for understanding "the processes of change and habituation which constitute" life, and finding the key to that understanding in "a generative theory of rhetoric" (Bitzer & Black, 1971, p. 230). The most noteworthy early work in this line of inquiry may have been John Angus Campbell's (1970) essay on Darwin's development of the evolutionary argumentative form. Campbell traced how Darwin synthesized strains of old form into a new way to structure scientific and popular thought. The argumentative form that Darwin loosed on the world – an evolution driven by natural variety and mechanisms of selection – has carried beyond biology into multiple aspects of life. For example, I call upon the form quite literally in my recent work on argumentative ecology (Klumpp, 2009). Campbell's interest in science as a domain of argumentative power was a focus of Toulmin's later work (1972) and the POROI group (Project on the Rhetoric of Inquiry) centered at the University of Iowa whose work has been prominent at our conferences.

But the influence of the Wragean notion that the ideas that drive history are a

product of culturally authorized argumentative form has animated our historians of argument beyond the sciences. Robert Ivie's interest in the motivations for war led him to track the characteristic arguments with which American presidents call for war. More broadly his book *Dissent from War* (2007) critiques the argumentative form that justifies war. Another important cluster of work in this tradition has studied the development of nationalistic and democratic form in Central and Eastern Europe since the revolutions of 1988-90.

The detailed catalogs of arguments by the great arguers of the past that characterized the neo-Aristotelian studies in *The History and Criticism of American Public Address* (Brigance, 1943; Hochmuth, 1955) helped to establish an historical record of success and leadership, and suggested to theorists the patterns of invention that characterized consequential argument. Historical work within the newer definitions of rhetoric has emphasized a kind of social history in contrast to the "great man" history of the neo-Aristotelians. Their histories of the evolution and power of justification complexes project the central role that their perspective gives to argumentative forms in defining cultures. The evolutionary dynamic at the heart of this approach to rhetorical argument places this study near the center of modern intellectual history.

Another characteristic focus of scholarship in rhetorical argument through the neo-Aristotelian era and since is the importance of the public sphere. Christian Kock (2009) recently argued that the essential characteristic of rhetorical argument is its domain: "issues of choice in the civic sphere" (77). He traced this influence through classical rhetorical theory and down into contemporary times. Kock's emphasis on the venue of argument owes much to the neo-Aristotelian impulse. Indeed, as I have argued, one of the reasons that Aristotle was the favored figure in early work in rhetorical argument was his connection to Greek democracy in the *polis*, or as Kock calls it "the civic sphere."

But the most energetic work in the public sphere followed the linguistic turn. Focusing on the public sphere as a context that placed demands on argument posed different trajectories of inquiry. When the contextualist view on politics began to ask about the quality of participation in democratic social order, rhetorical argument began a necessary exploration of the place and form of argument in the democratic context. Indeed, beside Perelman and Toulmin, the third great European intellectual who has most influenced the study of rhetorical argument is Jürgen Habermas. Habermas began his work as a historian and critic

in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962/1989) and *The Legitimation Crisis* (1973/1975). His history illustrated the usefulness of a new contextualist vocabulary to characterize communication in democracies. But the theory that animated his history turned from more generally rhetorical to explicitly argumentative in his *Theory of Communicative Action* (1981/1984, 1987). That work also turned from an historical project to a normative one. In rhetorical argument, Tom Goodnight's (1982) adaptation of Habermas differentiated the personal, technical, and public spheres of argument. This separation became germinal, perhaps because it posed most forcefully the tension between a pragmatic and the more general definitions of rhetoric that were marking the emergence of newer rhetorical concerns. His distinction charted the need to make that transition to normative study of the public sphere.

Habermas' public sphere also became important because criticisms of his work were extremely fruitful in turning normative ideas about the public sphere into critical treatments of argumentative practice within the contemporary world. By the time the influence of Habermas' public sphere had worked its way through rhetorical argument, a vast literature sought to understand modern public argument as a social practice. Theoretically, there has been much development, most thoroughly in Gerald Hauser's (1999) *Vernacular Voices*, and most recently in Robert Asen's (2004) search for "a discourse theory of citizenship."

Critical work since Habermas has been decidedly normative, suggesting that contemporary argumentative praxis comes up short when evaluated against democratic theory (Tannen, 1998). Concern for the breadth of meaningful participation in argument has been primary. But in addition, particular characteristics of modern argumentative form – highlighted by Goodnight's (1982) focus on the public sphere and Walter Fisher's (1987a, 1987b) idea of narrative rationality – have spawned considerable critical normative work seeking to improve democratic practice.

The linguistic turn dictated, however, that not all critical work in the public sphere would be normative. One of the accomplishments of the linguistic turn was to transform criticism from an objective, distanced, normative evaluation of rhetoric into an active force in socio-political dialogue. Students of rhetorical argument have responded by overtly offering critique to correct or improve argument within the public sphere. The United States government's adventure in

Iraq in the early 21ˢᵗ century presented an obvious argumentative morass that reopened many of the questions about deliberative argument and war-making in modern democratic states. For example, my 2005 keynote at the Alta Conference (2006) drew on the Iraq experience to critique the failure to attend to questions of veracity within argumentation theory.

The theoretical, historical, and critical work with the democratic public sphere carried the initial interest of the neo-Aristotelians – citizens governing through argument – into contemporary interest in the power of argumentative form to embody democratic participation. Because argumentative form was viewed as structuring democratic praxis beyond pragmatic decision, the scope of criticism expanded with the definition of rhetoric: who argues, the structural limits on the power of their argument, the appropriate subjects of democratic argument, the quality of argument performed in the argumentative structure, all moved into the purview of rhetorical argument.

This expansive view of the public sphere hints at the final type of study that has become a part of contemporary inquiry in rhetorical argument. Contemporary rhetorical theory's view that argumentative forms provide a structure of justification for social practice has turned critics to consider that productive power. Absorbing the sensitivities of cultural studies, justificatory implication has become a way to assess the qualities of the argumentative relationships reproduced through performance of argumentative form. Thus, the power of justification highlighted by this expansive view of the public sphere becomes diffused throughout social arrangements in the culture. Michel Foucault's studies of the praxis of discourse formation, particularly *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1977)*, Birth of the Clinic* (1963/1973)*,* and *History of Sexuality,* (1976/1978) has influenced this work. Raymie McKerrow's (1993) focus on cultural approaches in the 1993 Alta conference he directed has facilitated the development of this line of research. Ron Greene's (for example, 2002, 2003) recent work illustrates this interest. It is the justificatory power of argumentative form, founded in revisionary precepts of contemporary contextualist rhetorical theory that have turned students of rhetorical argument toward these diverse interests.

4. The Commitments of Rhetorical Argument
I hope this very brief survey of the variety of studies that compose rhetorical

argument has succeeded in seating that variety in the evolving perspective on rhetoric as the intellectual movements of the 20th century unfolded. But beyond the characterization of these relationships I promised a distillation of the common intellectual commitments, born of that history, that unite this work from the Neo-Aristotelians to the postmoderns. I believe the commitments can be distilled to three. First, rhetorical argument recognizes that arguments are *per-formed in language*. In saying this, we are emphasizing that the power of argument lies not in the correspondence of word-maps with underlying non-linguistic reality, but in deploying the resources of language to negotiate human influence on the environment. This commitment highlights that argument calls upon the resources of language to invent culturally adapted forms through which it transforms human experience into intellectual and volitional influence. Arguments transform experience into a constructed, meaningful context, and in that ordering of experience humans take their place as players in shaping environment. It is in this way that argument is a source of human power. Thus, this commitment originates the study of rhetorical argument in the potentialities and performance of language.

The second commitment follows: argument inherently *engages the social*. Humans do things with other humans in a complex dance of reasons and justifications that shape the world and their relationships with others. The social context manifests many dimensions – the cultural, political, historical, even rhetorical tradition – but whatever the highlighted social context, the tradition of rhetorical argument depicts argument grounded in an awareness of, and ultimately achieving, social connectivity. Argument is performed within this connectivity. Thus, the power exercised in argument is at once instrumental and social, one and inseparable. Through argument humans array the power of their language to accomplish their interaction with their environments, material and social.

The third commitment structures our inquiry: rhetorical argument is an *observable* and *consequential* activity. We can see it, read it, hear it. Rhetorical argument is neither a mere window into the mind nor the soul. It is manifest in human activity. Humans use argument to form the texture of human interaction with each other and with the world around them. The capacity for language entails the unique human capacity to relate to others and to nature through complex argument. Understanding this capacity conceptually and pragmatically

requires theoretical, historical, and critical insight. Those working in rhetorical argument do that work.

These commitments orient the way. There is an empiricism of experience as the starting point, with sensitivities to the resources of language and their powers to manifest reasons and justifications in social praxis. The neo-Aristotelians champion the arguer and his or her power to wield influence through this complex. Those influenced by the linguistic turn see the power as more diffuse in cultural processes and social activity. But all focus our study on human use of language to shape activity within society through the power of reason and justification. We believe that taken together the diverse studies in which we engage as we study argument in this way will provide us a well rounded understanding of a fundamental human activity.

*5. Rhetorical Argument in the Context of Argumentation Studie*s
One of my students at Maryland with whom I shared my project for this keynote responded: "Oh, you are doing identity work." Well, perhaps. For certain, I hope to provide a more vivid recognition of "rhetorical argument" and to encourage others to acknowledge the importance of rhetorical argument in argumentation studies. But my purpose is more than just acknowledgment.

All of us working in argumentation studies today are blessed with a structure of reporting our research that provides a vital circulatory system. We have two wonderful journals that anchor our work, *Argumentation and Advocacy,* and *Argumentation.* Other journals supplement these two including *Controversia, Informal Logic,* and several forensics journals in the United States. This list could be far longer. We have multiple conferences that regularly bring us together for interaction including this conference, the Alta conference, the Wake Forest conference, the OSSA conference, the Tokyo conference. I have no doubt left out some that I should have recognized. We have a well established book series in Europe, although we still lack one in North America. The volume of work we have produced in these outlets has encouraged our experimentation with the limits of our study. Indeed, it makes singling out authors a chancy practice in a presentation like this.

It is the vitality of argumentation study that we should all take great pride in. And an important part of that vitality is how we reach across our identities to encounter each other's work. When van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2000) reach out

to incorporate rhetorical issues in their pragma-dialectical project, when Christopher Tindale (1999) reaches out to center his work on rhetorical concerns, when Dale Hample frames precepts of rhetorical theory into experimental hypotheses to refine our understanding of argumentative processes, it testifies to the vitality of our research venues.

And I believe that truly valuing each other's interests entails a fulsome appreciation for the depth of intellectual heritage that establishes identity. So, that has been my purpose today: to trace that intellectual heritage of rhetorical argument. I have sought to identify the common origins and interests of those who work in rhetorical argument; to trace the diachronic track that evolved rhetorical argument through the 20th and into our own century; to see the linkages of the key intellectual movements of the 20th century to that work and how today those movements provide ample roots to turn the diversity of our work from cacophony to symphony. And, yes, were I to repeat that conversation at this conference about what my project is, I would hope that I have created the tapestry from which my interlocutor and I would find that my response "rhetorical argument" would fruitfully carry us into a conversation for a luncheon rather than for pastry and tea.

Christopher Tindale has it about right. To make a society, people argue. They give reasons; they attempt to set each other right. They urge particular interpretations; they attempt to motivate each other to act. As they do this, cultures acquire their character, for good or ill. They progress in dealing with the circumstances of their shared lives, or they fail. They make choices that evolve their day-to-day activities, and create their histories. The relationship between humans as creators and users of symbols and the social practices that define their political, social, and cultural activities captures our gaze. Whether framed as the pragmatic skills of arguers seeking influence or the justificatory power of culturally constructed and reproduced argumentative forms, whether pursued theoretically, historically, or critically, these interests have carved rhetorical argument into the texture of our research in productive and lasting ways.

NOTES
[i] Tellingly when the English translation by Wilkinson and Weaver was published in 1969 it reversed the title and subtitle acknowledging the greater currency of rhetoric in North America.

[ii] Although the linguistic turn was a very broadly based movement, many rhetoricians taking the turn in North America were heavily influenced by Kenneth Burke. Yet, Burke's relationship to argumentation theory has not been an obvious one. In introducing a special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* entitled "Dramatism and Argumentation," guest editor Donn W. Parson (1993) observed, "'Finding' a theory of argument, or positions that inform argument theory, [in Burke's work] will be an inferential process, and the work may be that of a detective" (146). That special issue explored the relationship between Burke and argumentation theory in some depth, highlighting the relationships of language and social order. In doing so, it may provide an interesting case study on how the evolution of rhetorical theory alters the study of argument after the linguistic turn.

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