

ISSA Proceedings 2014 - Theory Of Argumentation: The Argumentological Twist Is Necessary

Abstract: Today we need some kind of background knowledge of argumentation theory. It is the philosophy of argumentation, or argumentology. Argumentology studies ontological, epistemological etc. fundamentals of argumentation. Argumentological ontology answers the following question: “Does a Homo arguer really exist as a theoretical problem?” Argumentological epistemology deals with the problem of cognitive backgrounds of theory and practice of argumentation. Argumentological methodology comprises logical, rhetorical, and dialectical approaches to argumentation.

Keywords: argumentology, dialectic, epistemology, Homo arguer, logic, ontology, rhetoric of argumentation.

1. Introduction

Nowadays theory of argumentation (TA) is the field of research and study with vague basic principles and intellectual tools of the domain conceptualization. There are a lot of definitions of the term ‘argumentation’ (‘argument’). Indeed, according to Ch. Perelman “for argumentation to exist, an effective community of minds must be realized at a given moment” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 14). On the contrary, L. Groake stresses that “photographs, drawings, cartoons, logos, symbols, film footage, dramatic performances, etc. may all function as elements of visual arguments. One can find examples of visual arguments which are expressed in entirely visual ways, but most combine visual and verbal cues”. (Groake, 2007, p. 535). F. van Eemeren, R. Grootendorst and T. Kruiger define argumentation as “social, intellectual, verbal activity serving to justify or refute an opinion, consisting of a constellation of statements and directed towards obtaining the approbation of an audience” (van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Kruiger, 1987, p. 7). In this case one may consider the following problems: Is argumentation rational or not only rational entertainment? Is argumentation a verbal or not only verbal construction? Is argumentation a set of words or both a

set of words and a variety of images? What is more we can add that some other problems exist. What is an argument (ation) layout? What is the aim and the peculiarities of argumentation? All these questions are usually problematic in almost all contemporary theories of argumentation and their academic presentations. So what should we do in this case? We think in order to answer the questions correctly; we need some kind of background knowledge of argumentation or the philosophy of argumentation that is called argumentology.

2. *Argumentology and TA*

In 1993 I used the term '*argumentology*' in my second Ph.D. dissertation: *Theory-historical backgrounds of argumentology* (defended at Saint-Petersburg State University, Russia) (Tchouechov, 1993). I had an idea that argumentology is the philosophy of theory and practice of argumentation. It is not a scientific theory or empirical model of argumentation.

Argumentology studies backgrounds or ultimate presuppositions of theory and practice of argumentation. Being philosophical enterprise argumentology is based on three intellectual pillars. The first one is ordinary experience of argumentation. The second one is scientific experience, or theory of argumentation and the third one is philosophical experience or the history of Western and Orient philosophy of argumentation (Tchouechov, 2003, pp. 34-77).

If we construct argumentology on the basis of ordinary experience, or common sense we should take into account that there are at least four hints about the perspectives of scientific experience, or argumentation theory. From ordinary and etymological point of view we should take into consideration that the English word 'argumentation' derives from Latin '*argumentum*' as well as from Old French '*argument*' and it has four basic Latin meanings:

1. evidence;
 2. ground;
 3. support;
 4. proof (logical argument)
- (Merriam-Webster's, 2014).

It is interesting to stress that the Russian word 'argumentation' derives from Latin '*argumentum*' as well as Polish 'argument' and it has four basic Latin meanings:

1. persuasion;
2. demonstration (proof);
3. confirmation (substantiation, support);
4. cause (causality) (Dal, 1955, p. 21). It is reasonable to distinguish among ordinary meanings of the word 'argumentation' in various languages.

For example, F. van Eemeren distinguishes three types of differences between the ordinary meaning of the English word 'argumentation' and its counterparts in the Dutch language. The first difference is that in English the process side of argumentation is predominant while the product side remains more passive, uncovered. At the same time in the Dutch language there is a kind of balance between above mentioned sides in ordinary usage. The second difference is that in English the ordinary meaning of the word 'argumentation' is connected to a non-deliberate, skirmishing approach to dispute resolution, whereas non-English ordinary meanings of the word 'argumentation' are immediately associated with reasonableness. The third difference is that in the Dutch language the meaning of the word 'argumentation' deals only with constellation of reasons put forward in defense of a standpoint. While in the case of English the ordinary meaning of the word 'argumentation' covers both a standpoint and arguments advanced (van Eemeren, 2010, 308 pp.). It is clear that such meanings as evidence, ground, support, proof, a logical argument, reasoning, opinion constitute demonstrative, confirmative, explanative etc. approaches to theory of argumentation. At the same time a critical approach is formed by such meanings as 'to argue', 'accusation', and 'charge'. As compared to Russian etymological perspective the English one holds more critical character.

One may discuss which (English, Russian or Dutch) etymological meaning of the word 'argumentation' is better to provide TA machinery. I would like to point out the up-to-date F. van Eemeren's remark on the question. He writes:

it is clear that *conceptually* the lexical meaning of the non-English counterparts of the English word 'argumentation' constitutes a *better basis for a theoretical definition* (all italicized by me.- V.Tch.) of the technical term argumentation than the meaning of the ordinary English word '*argumentation*' (if it is even an ordinary word) (van Eemeren, 2010, 308 p.).

From Russian etymological perspective there are at least *four* approaches to theorizing about the ultimate foundations of argumentation.

Firstly, the approach which deals with persuasion or *persuasive* approach.

Secondly, there is one that is concerned about demonstration or *demonstrative* approach.

Thirdly, there is an approach which covers confirmation or *confirmative* approach.

Fourthly, there is one which is associated with explanation or *explanatory* approach.

Consequently, ordinary experience supposes that there are four ways (directions) of the approaches transformation into theories of argumentation. The demonstrative approach to studying of ultimate foundations of argumentation has been often associated with logic (formal logic); the persuasive one - with rhetoric; the confirmative one - with dialectic. As far as the explanatory approach is concerned, it originally deals with the lost Aristotle's *Methodic* and nowadays this approach is frequently associated by non-philosophers with cognitive science, whereas in argumentological perspective it should be connected to epistemology.

Recently the features of theoretical approaches to argumentation and relations between its inseparable levels have been considered by such scholars as J. Wenzel, A. Blair, R. Johnson, F. van Eemeren, D. Walton, C. Tindale and others. It should be mentioned that studying argumentation requires *a clear demarcation between* its levels and non-discrimination of all approaches. The non-discrimination means that an argumentation theorist shouldn't consider his favorite approach to be discriminatory to other inferior or subordinate levels. Consequently, theoretical and practical realization of these approaches must be based on a clear difference between *logic* and *rhetoric*, *rhetoric* and *dialectic*, *dialectic* and *epistemology* of argumentation and their multi- and interdisciplinary connection.

One of the consequences of clearness violation is the emergence of various and today not yet well studied *argumentological dilemmas*. For example: the dilemma of persuasive demonstrativeness (in accordance with which persuasiveness is a criterion for demonstrativeness) and demonstrative persuasiveness (according to this dilemma, for example, logic is persuasive itself, that is it is something like rigorous, ironclad logic). The dilemma of confirmative explanativeness (according to it a standpoint is supported but this support is not an obvious one) and explanative confirmativeness should also be pointed out. Therefore, one may consider that there are four theoretical perspectives for the argumentological

twist in TA: logical; rhetorical; dialectical, and epistemological.

The possibility of existence of at least four relatively independent approaches to theorizing about argumentation focuses on the problem of their *general justification* or, philosophically speaking, ontology of theory and practice of argumentation. But what is ontology of argumentation? This question is relatively new in contemporary theory and philosophy of argumentation. To answer the question, one may suppose that this ontology should be connected to anthropological turn in ontology that was proposed by M. Heidegger and J. - P. Sartre in the first half of the XX-th century (Heidegger, 1996; Sartre, 1984).

However, general and particular peculiarities of ontology of argumentation should be more reasonably connected with the concept of *Homo arguer*. Moreover, we can make much clearer the *ontological minimum* of argumentation, according to which (as H. Johnstone Jr. indirectly mentioned) man is a “persuading and persuaded animal” (Johnstone Jr., 1965, pp.41-46), or speaking in other words, who has no ability to argue is not yet man in the real sense of the word, or is not a *Homo arguer*. Following the American philosopher H. W. Johnstone Jr. discourse about persuading and persuaded animal, we may also say that ontology of argumentation should be the ontology of *Homo arguer*. The status of *Homo arguer* as a concept in contemporary theory of argumentation as well as in ontology of argumentation can hardly be overestimated.

It is ontology of argumentation that defines perspectives of its epistemology, dialectic, rhetoric, and logic. *Homo arguer* is a person who would argue and has knowledge of logical laws and their rhetorical imitation as well as dialectical rules of argumentation and so would rebut logical, rhetorical, dialectical, and epistemological fallacies that contest basic ontological principle of argumentation.

Ontological minimum of argumentation is realized in *logical maximum* of argumentation. This maximum is concretized in three fundamental principles of formal logic: the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, the law of excluded middle. As it was shown by G. Leibniz,

our reasoning is grounded upon two great principles, that of contradiction, in virtue of which we judge false that which involves a contradiction, and true that which is opposed or contradictory to the false; (Theod. 44, 169.)...and that of sufficient reason, in virtue of which we hold that there can be no fact real or

existing, no statement true, unless there be a sufficient reason, why it should be so and not otherwise, although these reasons usually cannot be known by us. (Theod. 44, 196.) (Leibniz, 2014).

It seems to me that the principle of sufficient reason is a kind of 'bridge' from logic to rhetoric and may be even dialectic of argumentation.

Logical maximum of argumentation represented in three basic logical laws is imitated and extended in its rhetorical minimum. One may suppose that rhetorical minimum of argumentation is founded on the rule of justice. According to Ch. Perelman, this rule "requires giving identical treatment to beings or situations of the same kind" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 218).

On the contrary, rhetorical maximum of argumentation consists of schemes of argumentation which were clearly elucidated by Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca in *The new rhetoric*. Ch. Perelman has also shown that logic of argumentation

is identified, both by Schopenhauer and by J. S. Mill, with the rules applied in the conduct of the one's own thought" and "this individualistic outlook has done much to discredit, not only rhetoric, but, in general, any theory of argumentation (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 41).

In this perspective, logic of argumentation is self-evident and its audience is universal audience. On the contrary, rhetoric of argumentation is evident to other people, or directed to a concrete audience in Ch. Perelman's sense of this word. Therefore, there is logic of argumentation and its rhetorical *imitation* (Tchouechov, 2008, pp. 37-41).

The concept of '*imitation*', or speaking in retro manner, *mimesis* (Auerbauch, 1953) plays a crucial methodological role in elucidations of inner connections not only between logic and rhetoric, but between other levels of argumentation theory building. For example, Ch. Perelman correctly distinguishes logical and rhetorical, or quasi-logical arguments (imitating the law of identity and the law of non-contradiction) and argumentative relations based on the structure of reality and only establishing the structure of reality (imitating the principle of sufficient reason) etc. (Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, pp. 193-260; 350-410).

As it was suggested above, Ch. Perelman himself considered that the bridge from

logic to rhetoric of argumentation is connected with the rule of justice. The inner connection between the Perelman's rule of justice and the Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason needs, of course, more special attention. One may consider these principles are both or separately the bridges between not only logic and rhetoric, but also logic, rhetoric, and dialectic of argumentation. However in the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation the bridge between rhetoric and dialectic of argumentation is based on the concept of *strategic maneuvering*.

It is known that pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation has five constituents: philosophical, theoretical, analytical, empirical, and practical (van Eemeren, 2004, p. 38-39). The philosophical estate is based on the critical-rationalistic view of reasonableness, which in its part stems from the ideas of Karl Popper (van Eemeren, 2004, p. 17). The other element of the pragma-dialectical philosophical ground of theory of argumentation is utilitarianism. But due to the high influence of the Popperian concept of falsification the main utilitarian principle is changed and understood as minimization of disagreement (not as maximization of agreement) (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 34).

At the end of the 20th century two Dutch scholars F. van Eemeren and P. Houtlosser proposed the concept of strategic maneuvering and at the beginning of the 21th century they conjoined dialectical and rhetorical dimensions of argumentation with the help of Aristotelian principle ἀντίστροφος (usually translated as: 'a mirror image', 'a counterpart', 'a correlative', 'a coordinate', 'a transformation' which is reciprocal and reversible, 'a subordination', 'a mutual dependence', etc.). Indeed, in "*Rhetoric*" Aristotle denoted the type of relationship between rhetoric and dialectic using the word 'ἀντίστροφος'. It is interesting to note that in the latest English edition of "*Rhetoric*" the word 'ἀντίστροφος' is not translated and is given in transcription: "rhetoric is an antistrophos to dialectic" (Aristotle, 2007, p.30). It is important to admit that in the Russian edition of this book the word 'ἀντίστροφος' is translated as correspondence: "*rhetoric is a correspondence of dialectic*" (Aristotle, 2000, p. 5).

The Dutch theorists offer the concept of strategic maneuvering as the continuation of the ancient rhetorical and dialectical tradition (van Eemeren, 2013, p. 49-70). One may insist on the fact that the strategic maneuvering is a bridge from rhetoric to dialectic of argumentation. But what does it mean? According to F. van Eemeren, the integration of dialectical and rhetorical approaches should be *functional* (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 90).

The other three inseparable aspects of strategic maneuvering are: *topical potential* (selecting among possible topoi in the discussion), *audience demand* (adapting to audience's commitment store) and *presentational devices* (selecting the communicative means that can increase an adherence to argumentative moves). Of course, all of them correspond to classical areas of rhetoric: the study of invention, the study of audience adaptation and the study of elocution and pronunciation (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 95).

Argumentation also refers to different conventionalized communicative practices. They are institutionalized in the sense that the constituents of these practices are organized in order to reach the institutional aim. The other aspect of the institutionalization of argumentation is the implementation of the genres of communicative activity. They are adjudication, deliberation, mediation, negotiation, consultation, disputation, promotion, communion, and others (van Eemeren, 2010, p. 139). The unity of institutional and organizational aspects of argumentation one can simply call *organizational and verbal* (OV) rules of argumentation.

It is necessary to stress that the strategic maneuvering as well as the principle of sufficient reason and the rule of justice don't give us insight into the philosophy of rhetoric and dialectic of argumentation.

However, using the philosophy of *imitation*, one may suppose that the rhetorical maximum of argumentation is imitated and extended in its dialectical minimum and vice versa (Tchouechov, 2008, pp.37-49).

The dialectical minimum of argumentation consists of the *basic dialogical law* and *three rules (four sub-rules)* of argumentation (Tchouechov, 2009, pp. 194-195).

Today dialectic (dialogics) of argumentation is usually considered as the theory of dialogue. Dialogue is a multifaceted communicative process. Depending on what goals people have or are trying to achieve, various forms of dialogue can be distinguished. Argumentation has a crucial role in each of these forms. Even from Ch. Perelman's rhetorical point of view

dialogue, as we consider it, is not supposed to be a debate, in which the partisans of opposed settled convictions defend their respective views, but rather a discussion in which the interlocutors search honesty and without bias for the best solution to a controversial problem (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1971, p. 37)

Although it doesn't exhaust all the aspects of quarrel, polemics, discussion and other forms of dialogue, argumentation is understood as their *inseparable element*.

Therefore the philosophical bridge from logic to rhetoric and dialectic (*dialogics*) of argumentation is based on the above mentioned dialogical law and the rules of argumentation. *The basic dialogical law of argumentation* states the following: *the lesser weight argumentation holds in the life of society, the greater weight violence and (or) threats of its use would hold*.

The highest organizational form of dialogue in epistemological perspective is critical discussion which is centered on the process of truth finding. Following Gricean Cooperative principle as well as his Maxims of conversation and according to pragma-dialectical rules of critical discussion and the concept of strategic maneuvering (Grice, 1975, pp. 45-58; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; van Eemeren, 2010), the next general rules of dialogue (critical discussion (CD)) organization are worth distinguishing.

They are the following rules and sub-rules of dialogue (CD). *The first* organizational-verbal (OV) rule - a participant in discussion must be interested in achieving its final goal.

The second OV rule - a participant in discussion must strongly contribute to the achievement of its final goal. It is known, that according to P.Grice, the Principle of Communication is the basis of interaction among people. This principle can be concretized by way of the following postulates or, in my terms, *sub-rules of dialogue*.

The first OV sub-rule - all information on certain standpoint must be contained in discussion. *The second* OV sub-rule - only truthful information must be used in discussion. *The third* OV sub-rule - only relevant information must be applied to discussion (compare to the Gricean Maxim of Relevance). *The fourth* OV sub-rule - only comprehensible and clear information must be used in discussion (compare to the Gricean Maxim of Manner). Obviously, the generalization of the Gricean one to four (1-4) sub-rules leads to the formulation of *the third* OV rule - participants in CD must be honest, objective, efficient and clear. Dialogical (dialectical) rules of critical discussion are generalization, imitation and extension of logical and rhetorical laws and principles.

It should be noted that the revision of both the amount of rules and their content has a great impact on any procedure of responding to a fallacious move of any kind. For example, H. José Plug, a Dutch scholar, correctly distinguished five ways (basing on the works of F. van Eemeren) of reaction to fallacious moves (to ignore a fallacy, a discussion stoppage, a counter fallacy, a meta-dialogue and a fallacy readjustment) (Plug, 2010, pp.1-12). A study of the list of discussion rules and their content may lead to the creation of a new critical responding technique and change the above mentioned ones, because while criticizing we are making an appeal to some list of discussion rules. Basic dialogical law and OV dialogical rules of argumentation together form dialectical maximum of argumentation.

I think that dialectical maximum of argumentation is imitated and extended in epistemological minimum of argumentation. Important information on epistemological maximum of argumentation can be found in the works of Norwegian philosopher A. Naess (Naess, 1966). But this idea needs further consideration which is beyond the scope of my article. Let me make only one hint about that perspective.

According to Biro and Siegel, an epistemic approach “founds itself on the claim that it is a conceptual truth about arguments” and that argumentation should provide “a bridge from known truths or justified beliefs to as yet unknown (or at least unrecognized) truths or as yet unjustified beliefs” (Biro & Siegel, 1992, p. 92).

From argumentological point of view, the argument of Biro and Siegel, that “argumentation theory should be understood as being concerned with ability of arguments to render beliefs rational” (Biro & Siegel, p. 97) should be complemented with following: epistemology of TA should be understood as being concerned with ability to render basic dialogical law and rules of argumentation. The epistemological maximum of argumentation is imitated in the ontological minimum of argumentation. Again, this minimum is connected with the Basic law and three dialectical rules of argumentation. Consequently, one may think that it’s possible to establish an unbroken unity of ontology, methodology and epistemology of Homo arguer.

By the way, Carl Linnaeus introduced not only the concept of Homo sapiens. He also distinguished it from two other concepts: a *troglydyte* and a *monster*. For me it means that a man (Homo arguer) who is not able to catch the ontological-

dialogical minimum of argumentation can be considered to be a modern caveman or a troglodyte, whereas a man who can argue sophisticatedly has all grounds to transform into a post-human or an *argumentative superman*. It is obviously that today this kind of man would face difficulties in communicating with a less educated man, who does not match the unattainable ideal of Homo arguer.

Today various theories of argumentation propose a lot of necessary conceptions about ideal Homo arguer. One of the examples is pragma-dialectics of the Amsterdam school. Firstly, this theory of argumentation has provided a researcher and a user of argumentation with 21 rules of reasonableness and then their number was decreased to 10 (van Eemeren, 1992, p. 208). Of course, 10 rules is less than 21, but is more than one law and three rules. Consequently, the theory of argumentation supported by basic law and three rules of argumentation is more up-to-date to almost all contemporary theories and practices of argumentation. It allows us to consider pragma-dialectics as well as other too sophisticated theories of argumentation not argumentological supported by serious backgrounds. They are a plethora of ways to scrutinize Homo arguer as a superman.

3. *Conclusion*

Homo arguer does not exist in vacuum but acts and argues in the real historical process. His yesterday, present and tomorrow stance depends not only on him, but also on his audience, argumentative means used, peculiarities of civilization and culture. This indicates that not any argumentological turn in TA is of current importance nowadays. We must seek for such an argumentological twist in which context-dependent, dynamical, ultimate grounds of theory of argumentation will be studied and evaluated thoroughly. Consequently, there are several logical, rhetorical, dialectical, and epistemological theories of argumentation, but the pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation (initially formulated at the Amsterdam school by the professors Franz van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst) is the most instructive of them.

But in order to provide unity of theory and practice of argumentation we need a more profound contemporary socio-historical and dialectical argumentology to correct the minimum and the maximum of ontology, epistemology, dialectic, rhetoric, and logic of argumentation.

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