

ISSA Proceedings 2002 - On Toulmin's Fields And Wittgenstein's Later Views On Logic



1. Toulmin's Fields: An Interpretative Conundrum

Perhaps one of the most significant contributions to the study of argument and applied epistemology since Aristotle's *Topics* was the introduction of the concept of a field of argument. Together with his Data-Warrant-Claim [D-W-C] model of argument, argument fields were Toulmin's principal theoretical device in the constructive program he launched against the formal model of argument analysis and evaluation. The problem for the contemporary argumentation theorist is: How ought Toulmin's concept of argument field to be interpreted, operationalized and applied in the projects of argument analysis and evaluation.

Willard has mused that the concept's "most attractive feature ... [is] that it can be made to say virtually anything" (1981: 21). To this, Zarefsky, has, more solemnly, added "there are so many different notions of fields that the result is conceptual confusion" (1982: 191). Before attempting to fathom this interpretive conundrum, it is perhaps best to situate the discussion by observing the significance and function of the concept of field in Toulmin's overall theory of argument.

1.1 The Field-Dependency Thesis

Certainly, the most significant feature of argument fields is the thesis of *field-dependency*. Toulmin introduced the concept of field in answer to the question: "How far can justificatory arguments take one and the same form, or involve appeal to one and the same standards, in all the different kinds of case which we have occasion to consider" (1958: 14)? On Toulmin's account, there can be no single, abstract model that successfully captures the rational structure of all argument. Instead, while some features of arguments are field-invariant, others vary according to the field to which an argument belongs. For Toulmin, then, the first reason, that fields are significant to the study of argument is that theorists will be unable to create accurate models of argument unless we appreciate the

nature, boundaries, and inner structure of argument fields. In fact, by failing to appreciate the field-dependency of certain features of argument, theorists fail to appreciate something fundamental about the very nature of justification.

What, then, is field-dependent? It is perhaps easier to ask what is not field-dependent. Because the structure of the D-W-C model is meant to capture “certain basic similarities of pattern and procedure [which] can be recognized ... among justificatory arguments in general” (1958: 17), about the only thing does not vary according to an argument’s field is the overall D-W-C structure itself (1958: 175; 103; 119). By contrast, everything from an argument’s evidence (or data) (1958: 16), to warrants (1958: 100), to its backing (1958: 104) is field-dependent. Further, while the *force* of certain logical terms (e.g., modal terms and quantifiers) is field-invariant, the *criteria* according to which these terms are employed is field-dependent (1958: 29-35, 111-112)(i).

Now, the question is, what is radical about the thesis of field-dependency? Certainly, it is not revolutionary to claim that the data, evidence, or premises required of an argument will vary from one argument to the next. So, if Toulmin’s only claim is that the level of acceptability of a conclusion is, in part, a function of the level of acceptability of the premises, and that the considerations the will establish the truth or acceptability of particular premises need not be (and often are not) purely formal considerations, he will have no objection from the formalist.

Rather, the real bite of field-dependency is that argument features like warrant, backing and the criteria used to employ logical terms are irreducibly normative features of argument. They capture the evidentiary and justificatory relations constitutive of ‘good reasons’ and in so doing, embody the canons and standards by which arguments are properly evaluated(ii).

Yet, these are the very features of argument which vary from one field to the next. So, the more radical aspect of the field-dependency thesis is normative pluralism. Contrary to the aspirations of the formal logicians, there cannot be a single, universal and abstract model of all justification and hence of (good) arguments. Thus, one key thesis of theoretical import in Toulmin’s program is the claim that “we must judge each field of substantial arguments by its own relevant standards” (1958: 234). It is because arguments cannot all be evaluated by the same set of standards and norms that the theorist must appreciate the nature, boundaries, and inner structure of argument fields. Fields are, as it were, the natural kinds of evidentiary relations, and it is for this reason that fields capture

something fundamental about the very nature of justification.

1.2 *The Nature of Fields*

The issue then of the nature of a field becomes a crucial question of Toulmin interpretation, and for any argumentation theorist seeking to present a model of argument informed by Toulmin's views. Yet, as I mentioned earlier, there is hardly a consensus in the literature concerning field-theory. Any "conceptual confusion" surrounding the notion of a field is not helped by the fact that Toulmin himself seems to have actively resisted any rigorous attempt to operationalize the term. In fact, it would seem that each time Toulmin approached the topic of field in his own writing he gave his reader a different version of the concept.

For example, in *The Uses of Argument*, Toulmin defines "field" in two different ways. When Toulmin introduces the term in his first essay, he defines it as follows: "Two arguments will be said to belong to the same field when the data and conclusions in each of the two arguments are, respectively, of the same logical type: they will be said to come from different fields when the backing of the conclusions in each of the two arguments are not of the same logical type" (1958: 14)(iii). Yet, in the fourth essay of the book, Toulmin writes: "we introduced the notion of a *field* of arguments by referring to the different sorts of problem to which arguments can be addressed. If fields of argument are different, that is because they are addressed to different sorts of problems" (1958: 167). In the first case, "fields" are defined with reference to logical types, while in the second, fields are defined in terms of the sorts of problem to which arguments are addressed; yet, it is by no means apparent that these two defining concepts are synonymous. The two definitions are not obviously co-extensive, let alone intensionally equivalent, and Toulmin makes no effort to clarify his meaning.

Nor is this the extent of the interpretative problem. Toulmin first uses the term "field" in his doctoral thesis, *The Place of Reason in Ethics*, where he identifies fields with modes of reasoning (1953: 83; see also sects. 6.3, 6.7 and 13.7). Later, in *An Introduction to Reasoning* (the critical reasoning textbook written with Richard Rieke and Allan Janik) Toulmin seems to link *fields* of argument to the "locations or *forums*" in which arguments occur (Toulmin, Rieke and Janik 1979: 14). Variations in forum are themselves "a direct consequence of the functional differences between the needs of the enterprises concerned" (Toulmin, Rieke and Janik 1979: 15). Similarly, in *Human Understanding*, Toulmin seems to link fields with *intellectual enterprises* (1972: 85) and rational disciplines.

Any ambiguities (latent or manifest) in Toulmin's own writing are only amplified and multiplied when one turns to the secondary literature for guidance. Given the context of this paper, I will not attempt here a review of the secondary literature **(iv)**. Instead, I will only gesture in the direction of this body of secondary literature, noting that the debate surrounding field theory seems to have reached its peak more than two decades ago, when it was the central topic of the "Second Summer Conference of Argumentation" (sponsored by Speech Communication Association and the American Forensic Association). This was followed a year later by a special issue of the *Journal of the American Forensic Association* (edited by Charles Willard), devoted to the topic of argument fields. Suffice it to say, for present purposes, that, outside of a few basic features which are accepted by all models, the discussions captured in these volumes present a diversity rather than a consensus of opinion, and the conversational momentum seems to be that of divergence rather than convergence.

Finally, it is interesting that, ten years ago, when Toulmin himself had the occasion to address this audience (the 1992 ISSA Conference) he specifically did not speak to the notion of a field in an effort to clarify what he meant. About the closest Toulmin came in that talk to any discussing the notion of fields was his remark that "If I were writing the book [*The Uses of Argument*] today, I would broaden the context, and show that it is not just the 'warrants' and 'backing' that vary from field to field: even more, it is the *forums* of argumentation, the *stakes*, and the contextual details of 'arguing' as an *activity*" (1992: 9).

2. *The Wittgenstein Connection*

In this paper, I hope to reinvigorate the discussion surrounding Toulmin's notion of fields. I hope to do so by exploring a provocative (if not lucrative) connection between Toulmin's fields and Wittgenstein's language-games. I shall try to show that these two theoretical constructs have at least enough superficial similarities as to make a thorough comparison a theoretically interesting endeavour. Further, I hope show how allowing Wittgenstein's later views on logic to inform our approach to fields, some resolution may be cast upon the conundrums surrounding Toulmin interpretation and field theory itself.

First, though, what are some of the *prima facie* reasons that the theorist hoping to understand Toulmin might be tempted to turn to Wittgenstein as an interpretative guide?

I would certainly not be the first in observing a similarity, if not attributing an

influence between Wittgenstein and Toulmin. At times, Toulmin has suffered criticism just because he came across as Wittgenstenian. O'Conner, for instance, wrote that *The Uses of Argument* "is novel in deriving its attitude from the later work of Wittgenstein rather than from better known sources of irrationalism" (1959: 244). But, there are other, perhaps better, reasons for examining the relationship between the thoughts of these two 'unhappy logicians'.

In the first place, we know that Toulmin was attending Wittgenstein's lectures while Toulmin was at Cambridge. Toulmin writes that he began his thesis work in the summer of 1946, and that the thesis was finished in February 1948 (1953: viii). Wittgenstein, on the other hand, stopped lecturing when he returned from Vienna in April of 1947 (Monk 1990: 518). Monk, in his biography of Wittgenstein *The Duty of Genius*, informs us that Wittgenstein had finished the *Philosophical Investigations* in 1945-46 (1990: 483), so we may assume that Wittgenstein would have been working this material into his lectures during this period. While Wittgenstein was lecturing primarily on the philosophy of psychology at the time, Monk writes that Wittgenstein "devoted a good deal of time in these lectures to an attempt to describe his philosophical method" (Monk 1990: 501).

Secondly, throughout his various works, Toulmin makes several acknowledgements to Wittgenstein, as well as other Cambridge professors. In the acknowledgements to *The Place of reason in Ethics* Toulmin writes that "many of the problems [dealt with in the book] would have been beyond my power but for the light which I derived from the lectures of Dr. Ludwig Wittgenstein" (1953: xiii). It should be mentioned, though, that Toulmin does not make an acknowledgement to Wittgenstein in either *The Uses of Argument*, or *Human Understanding*.

Finally, there are unmistakable similarities between the methods employed by Toulmin, especially in his earlier works, and those espoused by Wittgenstein. To cite just one example, Toulmin has continually advocated a methodology by which arguments are considered in the context of their human situation. As early as *The Place of Reason in Ethics*, Toulmin asserts an "intimate connection between the logic of a mode of reasoning and the activities in which the reasoning plays its primary part" (1953: 81). This is resonant with Wittgenstein's claim that "Language-games are a clue to the understanding of logic" (1979: 12). Yet, by starting with language in use, Toulmin has raised the ire of some of his more unsympathetic commentators. O'Conner, for instance, remarked on Toulmin's "inordinate regard for vulgar usage" (1959: 244), while Sikora remarked that "his [Toulmin's] 'logic' is essentially a phenomenology of acceptable arguments

without explanation as to why these are acceptable" (1959: 374).

Having touched upon some of the circumstances that brought Wittgenstein and Toulmin together, let us proceed to the proximity of their ideas. To do so, we must explore some of the features of Wittgenstein's later views on logic.

3. Wittgenstein's Later Views on Logic(v)

When Wittgenstein finished the *Tractatus*, he brazenly proclaimed that "the problems [occupying philosophy] have in essentials been finally solved" (1922: 29). Thereupon, he abandoned philosophical inquiry until 1927-28 when took up discussions with members of the Vienna Circle he and attended a lecture by the intuitionist mathematician Brouwer (Monk 1990: 241-251). By 1929 Wittgenstein had returned to Cambridge, and philosophy. Over the course of the development of his later philosophy, Wittgenstein came to believe that a number of views he espoused in the *Tractatus*, a number of the assumptions traditionally underpinning a rigorous, formalist approach to logic (as espoused by, e.g., Frege and Russell) were either false or untenable.

Specifically, Wittgenstein came to reject the view that logic was a single, universal and abstract model of all justification and hence of (good) arguments. At one point in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein spoke of "the all-embracing logic" which is "an infinitely fine network" and "the great mirror [of the world]" (1922: 5.511). Yet, by 1932, Wittgenstein would tell his class in Cambridge that "Russell's calculus is one calculus among others" (1979: 13). By the time Wittgenstein wrote *On Certainty* he would go so far as to claim that "everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic" (1969: §55). So, what changed?

3.1 The Logic of the *Tractatus*

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein held what has been called the 'picture theory' of language: "A proposition is a picture of reality" (1922: 4.01). On this account, language is given the job of representing or picturing reality. Language is, as it were, a picturing of facts (1922: 2.1, 2.141), and "a proposition is the description of a fact" (1922: 4.023).

Logical form is a property that is shared by all propositions and reality (1922: 2.1514), that allows any proposition to represent reality (1922: 2.16, 2.161) either correctly or incorrectly (1922: 2.17, 2.171). It is through this property that language is attached directly to reality (1922: 2.1511).

Facts are the natural kinds of the logical universe, and are those things into which the world divides (1922: 1.2). Moreover, they are logically (or metaphysically)

independent. “Any one can either be the case or not be the case and everything else will remain the same” (1922: 1.21). “Atomic facts are independent of one another” (1922: 2.061, 2.062).

The independence of atomic facts has a profound technical significance for the logical calculus. Since propositions are descriptions of facts, the truth or falsity of a proposition is tied directly to the obtaining or non-obtaining (existence or non-existence) of the corresponding fact (1922: 4.25). As such, “the truth possibilities of the elementary propositions mean the possibilities of the existence and non-existence of the atomic facts” (1922: 4.3). On the basis of this insight, Wittgenstein invented the “truth-table” schemata for representing not only the possibilities of the logical combinations of propositions (and their corresponding facts) (1922: 4.31), but also for the truth-functional semantics of the logical operators (1922: 4.431 – 5.132).

3.2 *The Problem of Determinate Exclusion*

The problem with the *Tractarian* picture of logic that Wittgenstein discovered in 1929 was the following: Since atomic propositions ascribe properties that admit of degree, and this feature that cannot be removed by any symbolism, atomic propositions cannot be logically independent of each other. This, Wittgenstein realized, quickly brought down significant structural features of the *Tractarian* edifice.

It is integral to the *Tractarian* picture that the semantics for the truth-functional operators (i.e., “not,” “or,” “and,” “if ... then,” and their stylistic variants) are given by the truth-tables, and that these truth-tables accurately capture all and only the logical possibilities pertaining to the propositions involved. As such, it is necessary that these truth-functional operators be able to combine *any* two well-formed formulae (we will deal here exclusively with atomic propositions) and that the truth-tables, in giving the semantics for the truth-functional operator, give the truth-functional result of the combination of the propositions. Yet, if atomic propositions are not logically independent, this cannot be.

Let us consider the same example that Wittgenstein presents in *Some Remarks on Logical Form* (RLF). Consider the truth-table for “and” (“&”):

	\forall	\exists	$\forall \& \exists$
1	T	T	T
2	T	F	F
3	F	T	F
4	F	F	F

Wittgenstein observes that, while the thesis that the above truth table gives the proper semantics for “and” requires that the propositional variables A and E be able to take *any* proposition as their argument, in actual fact, they cannot. In *RLF*, Wittgenstein considers the examples of two propositions, each of which asserts the existence of a different colour at single place in our visual field at the same time (1929:168). (Following Wittgenstein, I will call these two propositions ‘RPT’ for “the colour R is in the place P at time T” and ‘BPT’ for “the colour B is in the place P ant time T” (*ibid.*)). As Wittgenstein notes, “it is a characteristic of these properties that one degree of them excludes any other” (1929: 167).

That is, with the two propositions ‘RPT’ and ‘BPT’, “the top line [valuation 1 of the truth-table] ‘TTT’ must disappear, as it represents an impossible combination” (1929: 170). Moreover, it is of no help to attempt to ‘patch’ the system, by trying to amend the truth-value of “RPT & BPT” on valuation 1 from “T” to “F”. Wittgenstein claims that such an amended *truth-table* is not merely incorrect, but that it is “nonsense, as the top line [i.e., valuation 1], ‘T T F,’ gives the proposition [i.e., “RPT & BPT”] a greater logical multiplicity than that of the actual possibilities” (*ibid.*)(vi). Importantly, Wittgenstein argues that the relationship of determinate exclusion that obtains between the two propositions RPT and BPT is a logical and not a contingent feature. “It is a characteristic of these properties that one degree of them excludes any other. One shade of colour cannot simultaneously have two different degrees of brightness or redness, a tone not two different strengths, etc. And the important point here is that these remarks do not express an experience but are in some sense tautologies” (1929: 167). For example, when we consider the formuale “RPT \neg BPT” or “ \neg (RPT & BPT)” these

expressions are true on every (logically) possible valuation, and as such, are tautologies (1922: 4.46). As such, the logical character of relations like determinate exclusion is equivalent (e.g., in terms of necessity or impossibility) with formal logical relations. That is, relations like that of determinate exclusion are a kind of logical relation arising, not from the meanings of the logical operators, but from the meanings of non-logical terms.

This, in turn, dramatically alters the general nature of inference as it is conceived on a formalist model. As Wittgenstein told Waismann and Schlick, “All this I did not yet know when I was writing my work [the *Tractatus*]: at that time I thought that all inference was based on tautological form. At that time I had not yet seen that an inference can also have the form: This man is 2m tall, therefore he is not 3m tall” (Waismann 1979: 63; see also Shanker 1984, 57). Yet, as Wittgenstein quickly saw, there is no way to capture all such inferences in a single calculus, let alone a practical or axiomatizable one.

3.3 From Propositional Systems to Language Games

The immediate consequences of determinate exclusion are striking. Not only do examples such as this defeat the thesis of the independence of atomic propositions. But with the fall of the independence thesis, any aspiration of a single, unified calculus capable of capturing all justificatory relationships, and based solely on the semantics of purely logical terms is also dashed. The logician finds not a single, rarified abstract and universal calculus, but instead a series of local logical relations which hold between whole sets of concepts which come, as it were, pre-packaged.

This realization, for Wittgenstein marked the birth of the concept of a ‘system of propositions’ (*satzsysteme*). In his discussing this point with Waismann and Schlick in 1929, Wittgenstein said:

“Once I wrote, ‘A proposition is laid against reality like a ruler. Only the end-points of the graduating lines actually *touch* the object that is being measured.’ [TLP, 2.1512-2.15121] I now prefer to say that a *system of propositions* is laid against reality like a ruler. What I mean is the following. If I lay a ruler against a spatial object, I lay *all the graduating lines* against it at the same time. ... It is not the individual graduating lines that are laid against it, but the entire scale. If I know that the object extends to graduating line 10, I also know immediately that it does not extend to graduating lines 11, 12, and so forth. The statements describing for me the length of an object form a system, a system of propositions.

Now, it is such an entire system of propositions that is compared with reality, not a single proposition. If I say, for example, that this or that point in the visual field is *blue*, then I know not merely that, but also that this point is not green, nor red, nor yellow, etc. I have laid the entire colour scale against it at one go. This is also the reason why a point cannot have different colours at the same time. For when I lay a *system* of propositions against reality, this means that in each case there is only *one* state of affairs that can exist, not several – just as in the spatial case” (Waismann 1979: 64; see also Shanker 1984: 57).

Wittgenstein here realized two things: First, the meanings of the constituents of a system of propositions are inter-related in unique ways as compared with the propositions of a different system. Second, within a single natural language, there are many different and independent systems of propositions. It is for this reason that “Russell’s calculus is one calculus among others” (1979: 13).

The relations that hold between the propositions of a single system Wittgenstein came to call ‘grammatical’ (or sometimes ‘internal’) relations, and they are a species of fully-fledged logical relations. Given that grammatical relations arise out of, and are grounded in the meanings of the terms and propositions which they relate, the proper study of logic becomes a study of meaning.

While Wittgenstein was developing these views on the relationship between the study and domain of logic and the semantics of non-logical terms, he was *simultaneously* developing his views that the semantics of our language can be properly given only when we consider language in use. In 1932, Wittgenstein would introduce his students to his thesis that “the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (1958: § 43) saying “ ‘How is a word used?’ and ‘What is the grammar of the word?’ I shall take to be the same question” (1979: 3). Finally, it must be remembered that Wittgenstein introduced the methodological device of ‘language-games’ in this same series of 1932 lectures (Monk 1990: 330). Language-games are a device by which we may both properly situate and fully isolate the normal use of a single expression in a language, and, by so doing, may properly study its logical grammar – i.e., the grammatical relations governing its use and so constituting its meaning. As such, “Language-games are a clue to the understanding of logic. Since what we call a proposition is more or less arbitrary, what we call logic plays a different role from that which Russell and Frege supposed” (Wittgenstein 1979: 12-13). Moreover, it is for this reason that “everything descriptive of a language-game is part of logic” (Wittgenstein 1969: §56, see also §82).

Now, the picture that we have been left with should appear vaguely familiar. Wittgenstein's position regarding normative pluralism is rather comparable to Toulmin's own. Not only is there no single calculus capable of modeling all justificatory relations, but there is a plurality of 'logical regions' (for lack of a better term), each of which are governed by their own set of norms and standards. These standards not only form the canons of rational evaluation for the region, but are based on some kind of internal properties or relations that obtain between the constituents of the region itself. That is, both fields and language-games appear to be the natural kinds of the justificatory world

4. Field Theory: The Conundrum Revisited

So, in light of the above considerations, how might we benefit from an approach to field-theory that is informed by Wittgenstein's later views on logic?

If I am right in an unreserved and unqualified way, then we may have a solution to the interpretative conundrum surrounding field theory. After all, if I am right, then questions concerning the nature, boundaries and inner structure of fields may be simply reduced to similar questions concerning language-games.

People familiar with the discussion on this latter set of questions may not think that my solution does them any favours! In the first place, logic will remain a messy business. As Russell remarked about Wittgenstein's later views (again in the 1930 letter to G.E. Moore) "His [Wittgenstein's] theories are certainly important and certainly very original. Whether they are true, I do not know; I devoutly hope they are not, as they make mathematics and logic almost incredibly difficult." (1967: 297-98). What Russell neglected to mention is the fact that Wittgenstein's later views on logic effectively leave the old, formal structure both in place and operational. Neither the foundation nor the effectiveness of the formal calculus is challenged by Wittgenstein's later views - only its comprehensiveness, and its exclusive entitlement to the endorsement of 'logical certainty'.

Further, on the good side, Wittgenstein seems to give the theorist a much more definite and consistent account of language-games than what Toulmin has provided when it comes to fields. Admittedly, both start from a consideration of the situated use of language in a normal circumstance. But, Wittgenstein's account seems to provide, additionally, that the nature, boundaries and inner structure of language-games are logical in character, and are determined according to the meanings - the grammatical relations - of the non-logical terms employed within the language-game.

Next, if consensus is some reason to think that my reading of Toulmin is not far from the mark, then I have at least some support from the secondary literature. One of Toulmin's earliest commentators, Otto Bird, made a similar observation in his review of *The Uses of Argument*. Bird wrote:

"The examples make it clear that Toulmin is primarily concerned with arguments which derive at least some of their argumentative force from relations of meaning among non-logical words... This is to say, in terms of the medieval logical analysis, that he is concerned with material rather than with formal consequence. '*Formal*' in this connection has to do with the syncategorematic terms, such as the connectives, 'and', 'or', 'if ... then', 'not', and the quantifiers 'all' and 'some', whereas '*material*' refers to the categorematic terms. The logical study of material consequence, i.e., of logical consequence that depends in some way upon the categorematic terms, was for medieval formal logic primarily the study of the Topics" (1959: 536).

It is, perhaps, no small coincidence that one of the examples Toulmin uses in making his case for the field-variability of warrants is the argument "Harry's hair is red, so it is not black" (1958: 97). Nor was Bird the only reviewer to comment on this feature. Sikora, writing for *New Scholasticism*, wrote that "The chief significance of ...[*The Uses of Argument*] is in its return to the problems, often greatly neglected in modern logic, of *material logic*" (1959: 374).

In fact, it was Bird who first characterized Toulmin's work as "The Re-discovery of the Topics" – a characterization which Toulmin has later taken as his own. In 1982, speaking at the University of Michigan on the topic of "Logic and the Criticism of Arguments," Toulmin said the following:

"By the time I wrote *The Uses of Argument*,... logic had been completely identified with 'analytics,' and Aristotle's *Topics* was totally forgotten: so much so that, when I wrote the book, nobody realized that it bore the same relation to the *Topics* that Russell and Frege's work bore to the traditional 'analytic' and 'syllogistic.' Only in retrospect is it apparent that – even though sleepwalkingly – I had rediscovered the topics of the Topics" (1989 [1982]: 380).

Regrettably, though, this endorsement from Toulmin may not be sufficient to secure my interpretive strategy. Problematically, Toulmin disavows the thesis that the only justificatory cement of fields is the semantic relationships of non-logical terms. Instead, Toulmin claims that, "For, in the case of genuinely substantial arguments, probability depends on quite other things than semantic relations" (1958: 153).

So, as I began this talk with a problem, I shall now close it with a different one. Toulmin devised his D-W-C model and the notion of argument fields to provide an account of how arguments may be analysed and evaluated so as to capture those arguments whose evidentiary structure and justificatory success does not reside in their formal properties. Wittgenstein has provided an additional layer to the logical analysis that may be applied to arguments. By directing us, with Toulmin, back to the Topics and the study of material implication, Wittgenstein invites us to consider arguments whose justification relies on the meaning of the non-logical terms employed in the argument. The question then remains, what other fields of justificatory argument are there, and by what means shall we approach their study so as to determine their nature, boundaries and inner structure.

NOTES

- i.** Toulmin explains the force / criteria distinction as follows: “The meaning of a modal term ... has two aspects: ... the force of the term and the criteria for its use. By the ‘force’ of a modal term I mean the practical implications of its use ... This force can be contrasted with the criteria, standards, grounds and reasons, by reference to which we decide in any context that the use of a particular term is appropriate” (1958: 30).
- ii.** Take warrants for instance. Toulmin asserts that warrants “correspond to the practical standards or canons of argument” (1958: 98).
- iii.** It should be observed that Toulmin’s definition of “field” in terms of logical type is notoriously problematic. Willard has argued that “type theories are inappropriate analytical tools for argumentation and unsuitable bases for defining argument fields” (1981: 144). Earlier, O’Conner made a more general criticism of Toulmin’s move here, saying that “He [Toulmin] explains it [the notion of ‘field’] by reference to the concept of ‘logical type’. But if ‘type’ is used here in an untechnical sense, it is unexplanatory (and unexplained). And, if the use is technical, it is surprising to find one of Toulmin’s crucial concepts resting on a technicality of the formal logic that he believes to be quite irrelevant to serious argument” (1959: 244).
- iv.** I have, though, included as comprehensive a bibliography as my current research has produced.
- v.** I first became aware of Wittgenstein’s position as it is presented and discussed throughout section 3 on reading S.G. Shanker (1984).
- vi.** Instead of saying that the expression “RPT & BPT” is false, one might want to say that it is senseless (in that it does not represent any logical combination of

possibilities), just as Wittgenstein would call a contradiction senseless. Importantly, Wittgenstein would not want to say that the expression “RPT & BPT” is a contradiction – rather, the two expressions “RPT” and “BPT” exclude each other. Wittgenstein introduces this distinction to mark the difference that atomic propositions cannot contradict each other (in the usual sense), although they can exclude each other. So, Wittgenstein calls the (amended) truth-table for “RPT & BPT” nonsense, and not the expression “RPT & BPT” itself. I would like to acknowledge the observations of Eric Krabbe, Daniel Cohen and Michael Gilbert who pointed out this correction to me in the discussion following my paper presentation.

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ISSA Proceedings ~ Argumentative Moves In An Inquisitive Context About Psychological Harassment In The Workplace: A Case Study In Québec

Abstract: We summarize a recently (2013) completed doctoral research, which analyzed and commented a series of interviews led by four public servants, the mission of which was to ascertain admissibility for further inquiry, of claims of psychological harassment on the workplace by complainants, in Québec province (Canada). We combine with Argumentation and Rhetoric tools and concepts a Conversation Analysis (CA) perspective, showing how meaning obtains in speech acts constructed in interaction.

Keywords: Interviews, psychological harassment, argumentation, conversation analysis, rhetoric, admissibility, speech acts

1. Introduction

This proposal looks at argumentative strategies between complainants and investigators around harassment issues at work. A recently (2013) completed doctoral research analyzed and commented, from an argumentative point of view, a very specific corpus: a series of four interviews, totalizing ten hours, led by four public servants, the mission of which was to ascertain a first recognition of validity for further inquiry, of claims of psychological harassment on the workplace by complainants, in Québec province (Canada). The interviews having taken place in 2006, using a convention taking back accepted notations. One

interesting theoretical achievement done in the research is probably to combine a Conversation Analysis (CA) perspective, claiming that meaning obtains in speech acts constructed in interaction, with argumentative figures and cues taken in Aristotle, Perelman, Walton and Van Eemeren.

In the context of a doctoral research in philosophy (Ph.D.), we wanted to study specific discourses that certainly have a rhetorical dimension: claims of psychological harassment presented by plaintiffs and their treatment by investigators. Different conceptual and methodological tools have been used, which are coming from rhetoric, argumentation studies and also from Conversation Analysis (CA). The notions of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* were examined and used in the analysis of a corpus of scripts of taped argumentative exchanges, between complainants and investigators; details and conventions utilized are given below. We will start by providing the social and professional context of the study, recall briefly Aristotle's notions, then look at Perelman's notion of the audience's adhesion, with some contributions of Van Eemeren and Walton; we will limit ourselves to specific elements of these theories here. Then the research method used, by reference to CA, will be explained briefly while we will be finishing with the presentation of a few examples illustrating our main results about the rhetorical effects of narrative accounts of psychological harassment in the context of specific investigative interactions.

2. Research context

Our research context was provided by a public organization, the Commission des normes du travail (CNT), which is a Labour Standards Commission having its jurisdiction in Québec, Canada. People who have suffered for different reasons at work, can file complaints in front of that organism for psychological harassment, the complaints are then treated by professionals. Since 2004, it is possible in Québec for a worker (blue or white collar) to file such a complaint, with the aims of putting an end to the problematic situation. The law that clarifies the recourse determines the nature of manifestations that can be associated with psychological harassment; the text refers to notions such as "A vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures that are hostile or unwanted, that affect the employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and make the work environment harmful", (L.Q. 2002, c.80). This sentence includes a number of possible situations which resonates with workers who experience different forms of suffering in the workplace. These possible victims

can then refer to CNT as a public office, even though the procedure will represent an enormous challenge for people who feel they were or still are being harassed at work.

We looked in particular at the method that was used by the CNT in the years immediately following the implementation of the law, between 2004 and 2008. In those years, a professional of the Commission had to play the role of a psychological harassment investigator, having first to decide on the admissibility of the complaint, e.g. to see if the alleged facts described would justify an inquiry, before such a thorough inquiry would be conducted[i]. That first phase of the procedure would generally happen in a face-to-face interview with the plaintiff. It is in the frame of that conversation that complainants would have to demonstrate that the actually lived experience of suffering really could be understood as psychological harassment as the law defined it. The investigator had to decide if the set of facts presented and analyzed did meet or not the criteria for psychological harassment as currently defined.

In this first interview encounter, clearly the exchanges between plaintiff and investigator showed a rhetorical dimension: the plaintiff wanted to convince the investigator that he was in fact the victim of psychological harassment as the law defined it. As the following testimony shows, that interview is crucial, if the plaintiff is to have his-her status of being a victim recognized: « the CNT is my only resort. Elsewhere nobody wants to hear what I have been living. It is important for me to show that I am right and that I am the victim here. I am not inventing all this! » (Brun et Kedl401)[ii]. This is why the plaintiff needs to take an argumentative and rhetorical posture to obtain the adhesion of the investigator to his/her thesis: the manifestations that the plaintiff brings in recounting the events are clearly associated for that person with psychological harassment, and the rhetorical aim pursued seems to be that the investigator should accept that thesis. On the other side of the fence, the investigator will ask questions with the aim of verifying if the claims do fall under what has been defined as PH by the law.

3. The notions of logos, ethos and pathos in rhetoric

To be able to treat comprehensively the argumentative strategies deployed in this initial encounter between plaintiff and investigator, a theoretical frame had to be put in place that would be appropriate for the kind of process, here psychological harassment at the workplace. To be able to treat adequately what the actors

actually do in the practical encounter that starts the process of treating the complaint, we will briefly examine two theorists of rhetoric and argumentation, Aristotle among the ancients and Perelman among more contemporary thinkers.

Aristotle's [384-322 av. J.-C.] core notions of *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*, as they appear in *Rhetoric*, as we know are three technical means of persuasion. They are still very relevant in a reflexive approach to argumentative strategies, even outside the strict relationship between a rhetor and an audience[**iii**]. Originally, rhetoric is preoccupied with day to day problems of the city, the rhetor will use discourse to obtain adhesion of the crowd, the people gathered in the public place. As we will see, the protagonists in argumentative interaction in the context of the initial encounter in the inquiry process are not without similarity with rhetors trying to persuade and obtain adherence of a public.

The three persuasive dynamics in Aristotle's rhetoric are convergent and complete each other; *ethos* for the character of the speaker that always has to be established, *pathos* because persuasion needs the emotional dispositions of the audience, and *logos* because discourse has to be rationally convincing. In this research every one of these dimensions has been found at play, in the interaction taking place in the context of a plaintiff's speech acts and reactions in the argumentative exchange, trying to ascertain if there was a valid possibility of psychological harassment. We can understand that the *ethos* of the speaker has an impact on the reception of his or her arguments (*logos*); the emotions or passions (*pathos*) that he or she will be able to elicit will also play a part, and these three dimensions will influence one another and the result obtained in differing ways.

The *ethos* has a great role to play inside rhetoric. "It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (Aristotle, 1356a, 10-15). It is to *ethos* that Aristotle attributes the greatest capacity of influence on the audience. Persuasion is accomplished by character whenever the speech is held in such a way as to render the speaker worthy of credence, by establishing credibility and authority.

The way the speaker presents him or herself, for instance moral character and honesty, this has an effect to inspire confidence with interlocutors. In our

experimentation and study of the exchanges, we could clearly see that the plaintiff does whatever he or she can to present his or herself in a better self-image, obviously to inspire confidence to the inquirer and to help with the adhesion of that person to the thesis of psychological harassment.

4. *Perelman's notion of the audience's adhesion*

Chaïm Perelman's (1912-1984) most famous book, *La nouvelle rhétorique, Traité de l'argumentation*, written with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, was originally published in 1958. It breaks with the Cartesian notion of reason and renews a rapport with Aristotelian rhetoric. To clearly position themselves, the author begins the book with the following sentence: « The publication of a treatise devoted to argumentation and this subject's connection with the ancient tradition of Greek rhetoric and dialectic constitutes a *break with a concept of reason and reasoning due to Descartes* which has set its mark on Western philosophy for the last three centuries (Perleman and Oblbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 1).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are adapting classical aristotelian problems in the epistemological context of the middle of the 20th century. Their work is focussing on the so-called dialectic proofs; Aristotle analysed them in the *Topics* while their usefulness was explained in *Rhetoric*. Aristotle understands dialectic as the art of reasoning on the basis of generally accepted opinions. For Perelman, dialectic is preoccupied with opinions, e.g. the theses to which we adhere with a varying intensity or degree. This is not to be understood as demonstrative work as in a logic-mathematical model. « With Aristotle and Perelman, argumentative rhetoric is turned towards the other with the aim of making him adhere to a claim: this is what can be called the persuasive language activity » (Charaudeau 3, our translation). It is in part on the basis of that notion of adhesion that the authors back the idea of practical reason. The New Rhetoric is based on the idea that "since argumentation aims at securing the adherence of those to whom it is addressed, it is, in its entirety, relative to the audience to be influenced" (1969, p. 19). He uses a number of examples to show how rhetoric was "a practical discipline," that was used to have a persuasive effect on an audience. The book examines the discursive techniques meant to augment adhesion, positing that this will produce attitudes and eventually action. The force of arguments is manifested related to the strength of adhesion by the audience to presented arguments. When rhetor and audience adhere because of the rhetor's creation of an audience-oriented presence (which is then augmented with argumentative

techniques), the adherence provokes the audience to act in ways desired by the rhetor.

They still recognize the role of ethos and of emotions in the overall argumentative process, a point very useful to understand better the peculiar argumentative relation between plaintiff and professional. Rhetoric becomes a study of discourse in the context of the study of communication relationships, by contrast to a previous notion according to which it was limited to the apprenticeship of being a good debater.

5. *Van Eemeren's and Walton's contributions*

Van Eemeren' pragma-dialectic approach had a tremendous importance to finally make the link between argumentation as rational contents and argumentation as processes. Similar remarks can be made for Walton's re-reading of the *fallacies*, we can now look at them as argumentative schemes, tools in interaction that can in some cases be abusive, but not all the time. These contributions were both very useful as part of our theoretical framework, since they look at argumentation into interaction processes in given situations.

While reworking (among other elements) the whole fallacy analysis tradition, Walton has since quite a few years added a new treatment of the role of emotion in argumentation, as a major theme of reflection. In *The Place of Emotion in Argument*, published in 1992, he discussed the rational value of such appeals. « The thesis of this book is that appeals to emotion have a legitimate, even important, place as arguments in persuasion dialogue, but that they need to be treated with caution because they also can be used fallaciously » (Walton, 1992, p. 1). Not only does he demonstrate that the appeal to emotion can be justifiable and acceptable in argumentation, but he also shows how they contribute to the fundamental goal of the argumentative discussion. Instead of dismissing these appeals as fallacious wherever they occur, as many have done and still do, Walton urges that each use must be judged on its merits. He also warns us against fallacious recourses that could hinder an efficient discussion process. He will explicitly refer and back himself up with a reference to the pragma-dialectic approach as developed by Van Eemeren and Grootendorst, referring to the 1984 book. « According to this new Pragma-Dialectic concept, a fallacy is a technique of argumentation that may in principle be reasonable but that has been misused in a given case in such a way that it goes strongly against or hinders the goals of dialogue » (p.18) For instance, in the context of our research, we could verify that

the appeal to pity, *ad misericordiam*, which is present in the encounter between the plaintiff and the inquirer, can hardly be understood as fallacious, if we are to mean by this that it would be for the plaintiff a way to trump the inquirer's research, e.g. to lead him to error. In cases of misery that would be documented, we could not justifiably talk of argumentative abuse. Such an appeal to emotion can certainly have a place in our argumentative context, provided the plaintiff is not using that argument to hide a lack of strength in the proof considered.

Especially important for us was the connection established by the Amsterdam school between pragmatics of speech acts and the dialectical point of view on critical discussion. Since we do not have a formal discussion here, it was not possible to systematically treat the corpus by using the ten rules for a critical discussion (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; 2004). The pragma-dialectical theory regards argumentation as ideally being part of a critical discussion (see Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1984, p. 17). Here of course, we do not have a purely symmetrical dialogue but an inquiry process, which has an adversarial character (Walton, 2010). The inquiry does not aim at a reasonable resolution of a difference of opinion, but an authority has to judge on a complaint which is interested; even though this is not a judiciary process *per se*, it could serve as a basis for further endeavours of the kind. In a case like here, with plaintiffs and inquirers, it still is very helpful to consider, as in pragma-dialectics, argumentation as a communicative and interactional discourse phenomenon.

We did manage to find four stages that do bear a resemblance to Van Eemeren's phases in a discussion. As we recall, in Van Eemeren the four stages are:

1. Confrontation stage,
2. Opening stage,
3. Argumentation stage and
4. Concluding stage.

In our case, the four stages were the following.

1. Introduction, by each of the participants, of his or her frame of reference. This is where the inquirer explains what he or she will try to do, and the plaintiff will express the meaning as perceived of the complaint. It could be seen as a prelude to confrontation.
2. Discussion about the facts at hand, with formulations from one side, questions and answers. The plaintiff tries to build his or her own case, mostly with remarks of clarification from the inquirer.

3. Validation, by the inquirer, of the hypothesis previously constructed in the interview. During that phase, the inquirer directs more the process by working on this basis of a tentative conclusion already formulated

4. conclusion in terms of admissibility or not of the complaint. This will be a challenge for both parties; the decision will never be totally announced here, but the general direction taken is given.

6. *Methodology of the research: conversation analysis*

With situations of potential psychological harassment, it is interesting to try and capture the relationships between people, and not to focus only on isolated utterances. We also tried to recapture impacts of one's utterances on the other and reciprocally, and for this some background references to speech act theory and pragmatics was useful and necessary. A rhetorical dimension of the complaint's narrative does take place in any case, whether it will result in success or in failure to convince. So to avoid letting important elements slip by, we chose a methodology that would make it possible to refer to pieces with sufficient precision and completeness.

Language produces an effect that is not only linked or limited to the description of reality, in terms of truth hood and falsity, but it also goes with force and impacts on co-locutors. Pragmatics of speech acts permitted to reorient philosophy of language towards the interlocutors, it also helps to stress the ethical dimension since we are in the domain of interpersonal relationships.

Such a contribution of pragmatics oriented us towards tools developed inside the family of methods regrouped into *Conversation Analysis*. The object of such an analysis is to describe procedures and expectations that help interactants to act while interpreting the other's conversational behaviour in the relationship, in an interplay of exchanges that is conversation. Conversation Analysis (CA), a research tradition that grew out of ethnomethodology, has some unique methodological features. It studies the social organization of 'conversation', or 'talk-in-interaction', by a detailed inspection of tape recordings and transcriptions made from such recordings. This way the researcher does not try to judge or qualify the ways by which the participants act, but focusses on the strategies they adopt to construct an understandable exchange. Harvey Sacks (1935-1975), considered to be the founder of this approach, is a sociologist that is interested, at the beginning of the 1960's, to the experience of everyday life. Sacks became interested in the structure of conversation while working at a suicide counseling

hotline in Los Angeles in the 1960s. The calls to the hotline were recorded, and Sacks was able to gain access to the tapes and study them. By using comprehensive transcriptions of recordings of « ordinary language », Sacks sets himself the task to study without theoretical a priori, the interpretations that members had of what is happening « here and now ». He thus controls what he could understand of the actions that constitute the talk turns of the interlocutors, by their mastery of natural language. In effect, the raw data as transcribed gives access to all the important details; not only the statements themselves, e.g. the contents of the speech turns, but also the tone of voice, errors, corrections, silences, onomatopoeias and noises on which interpretations are based by preceding speakers. This way it becomes possible to deduce certain social activity models since their properties are clearly ordained and observable. Conversation Analysis may then be conceived as a specific analytic trajectory which may be used to reach a specific kind of systematic insight in the ways in which members of society 'do interaction'. In their introduction to a collection of research papers, Heritage & Atkinson (1984) write: The central goal of conversation analytic research is the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction. At its most basic, this objective is one of describing the procedures by which conversationalists produce their own behavior and understand and deal with the behavior of others. A basic assumption throughout is Garfinkel's (1967: 1) proposal that these activities - producing conduct and understanding and dealing with it -are accomplished as the accountable products of common sets of procedures.(Heritage & Atkinson (1984):1)

Conversation Analysis (CA) is the method chosen to analyse this research corpus, which includes four interviews taped on a digital recorder for audio support. This method is part of the social sciences, it requires the careful recording and the attentive transcription of the conversation in its details, in following the conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff et Jefferson 696-735). Gail Jefferson was, along with Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff, one of the founders of the area of research known as Conversation Analysis (CA). She is particularly remembered today for the methods and notational conventions she developed for transcribing talk. The system of notation widely used today in CA research bears her name. We are reproducing these transcription rules below to facilitate the understanding the analysis of the interviews.

7. CONVENTION USED IN TRANSCRIPTS

Symbol	Indication	Example
(())	Double parentheses are used to mark transcriber's description of events, rather than representations of them.	((cough)), ((whispered))
(0.3)	Numbers in parentheses indicate elapsed time in tenths of seconds. The device is used between utterances of adjacent speakers, between two separable parts of a single speaker's talk, and between parts of a single speaker's internally organized utterance.	Yes (0.2) yeah
(.)	Indicates a short pause in the speaker's talk.	
[Single bracket indicates the point at which a current	A: quite a

7. Convention used in transcripts

Each of the interviews lasted approximately 2 hours, and where chosen with different inquirers, after having obtained all the necessary approvals by the ethics committee. We chose to

transcribe the parts of the interviews where there were important verbal interactive exchanges between the partners, and left on the side longer detailed descriptions of situations by the plaintiffs, for which the impact on the development of the exchange was less obvious. Parts that looked like monologues, turning most of the times on the narration of precise events, have not been transcribed, a choice also justified by the importance of the interactive material

covered, which encompassed more than a hundred pages; comparatively, parts not transcribed were much smaller overall.

	speaker's talk is overlapped by the talk of another.	B: [yeah
=	The equals sign (=) indicates 'latching'-i.e., no interval between the end of a prior and start of a next piece of talk. It is used for the relationship of a next speaker's talk to a prior speaker's talk.	A: that I'm aware of B: =Yes. Would you confirm that?
—	Underscoring indicates various forms of stressing and may involve volume.	What's up?
↑	The up arrows mark sharper rises in pitch	[are you responsible
XX	XX indicate that transcribers are not sure about the words contained.	Would you XX anything positive

Our task was descriptive, we wanted to document as much as possible the diversity and scope of the argumentative exchanges present in these particular situations, into which the plaintiff wants to make sure he or she puts everything in play with the aim of convincing the inquirer of the well founded character of the complaint for psychological harassment. Globally taken, the eight hours of interview assuredly permitted to document the most part of the argumentative tendencies specific to this research context. We will recall here some examples of the results that emerge from a deep analysis of the transcriptions. First, we will look at sections where the preoccupation of the plaintiff to present a favorable ethos can clearly be seen. After that, we will present some examples of emotion appeals, and in the following part, we will examine argumentative strategies that emerge in contexts where the inquirer is adhering to the thesis of the plaintiff, and others where there is no adhesion on the inquirer's part.

8. A plaintiff presenting a favorable ethos

Since we remember that for Aristotle, ethos is strongest of proofs (Rhétorique, 1356a), we can easily verify that the plaintiff takes care of his speech to be able to inspire confidence in the inquirer. He or she will put everything at work to show that he or she is worthy of belief, by a number of examples that show his or her

good side. Here are two short examples in that regard. A translation from French to English is also provided.

Entrevue 1-A (97-102[iv])

P[v]: Je suis un employeur, j'en ai des employés maintenant pis j'ai été directeur pour Options Multi [ancien employeur] donc l'usine pendant plusieurs années, donc j'sais ce que c'est que de rencontrer un employé quand on encadre une procédure qui se veut euh, réparatrice on va dire.

Interview 1-A (97-102)

P[v]: I am a director, I have employees now and I've also been a manager for Options Multi (ex-employer), so the factory, I know what it is to supervise a process that needs to be – hem – repairing somehow.

Entrevue 1-C (23-26)

P: Moi je suis arrivé au Québec en 89 avec 70 dollars sur moi. J'ai commencé comme désosseur chez Options Multi ↑, pis graduellement à force de cours je suis monté. Chu, euh, défini comme un généraliste, avec (.) naïf et très axé RH.

Interview 1-C (23-26)

P: I arrived in Quebec in 89 with 70 dollars. I started with boning chickens at Options Multi ↑, then gradually I climbed up, with following courses. I am –hem – defined as a generalist, with a naïve (.) and centered on HR.

Entrevue 2-C (86-100)

P: OK, j'aimerais bien, si c'est, euh, si c'est vraiment, bon ce qui m'a fait, il se peut que c'est avec, avec d'autres, d'autres filles. Donc, qui sait, c'est son harcèlement, c'est-à-dire, euh, même si, même si moi c'est fini, il m'a congédié et tout, mais au moins qu'il doit savoir, euh, c'est-à-dire, euh, comment faire avec les autres, les autres employés

E2: [Qu'il en tire un petit peu une leçon de ça

P: C'est ça, qu'il tire, c'est ça

E2: Mm

P: L'essentiel, euh, même s'il m'a, il m'a congédiée, moi y a pas de problème.

Interview 2-C (86-100)

P: OK, I'd like, hem, if it, if it's really what he did, what he did to me, it might be that the same goes with, with other girls. So, who knows, his harassment, even if, even if for me it is over, he fired me and all, at least he should know, hem, how to

do, with the other employees

I2[vi]: [He should get some lesson of that

P: Yeah, he should, yeah

I2: Mm

P: The important thing is, hem, even if he fired me, for me this is not a problem

The examples taken from interview 1 and 2 show the importance of presenting a favorable ethos by the plaintiff. The two first examples put ahead a plaintiff centered on « human relations », who explains how he knows to treat correctly his employees, he also worked very hard to get to where he is now. He presents the ethos of a good employer that is also a good worker. The third example presents a plaintiff who declares she makes a complaint not for herself, but for female colleagues that possibly suffer the same fate. She thus shows a decentered attitude, an element that certainly can give a boost to her own ethos in front of her interlocutor.

These favorable representations of the plaintiff's ethos certainly can have an impact on the interviewer, at least they are intended thus, as if the fact of establishing trust and credibility in front of the interviewer would conduct him or her to judge favorably on her behalf in future interventions. But we should also note that this establishing of a favorable ethos is frequently put to the test in the remainder of the interviews. The inquirer will check by asking for precisions; for instance, about the last example, the following of the interview led the plaintiff to fairly contradict herself in this presentation of this altruistic «ethos». In the following she describes to which point she was in conflict with those women, for whom she supposedly is pursuing the complaint, wanting to defend them. The interview's structure, by its numerous validations and its continual asking for details, can certainly put in jeopardy an apparent construction of a favorable ethos by and in the complainant. We should also note that such is not the aim of the interview, even if to appreciate admissibility of the complaint can destabilize a plaintiff involved in a complex process of validation that is demanding for anyone.

9. Appeal to emotion

Generally speaking, the plaintiff's discourse is charged with emotions which are revived in the process of narrating the events previously lived, by which they are recalled. Three out of four plaintiffs cried in their narrative, by which they kind of relieved the suffering that they wanted to denounce.

Entrevue 1-C (14-22)

P : J'ai jamais cru, madame, que j'allais (.) être si vidé. [...] J'ai jamais cru (.) les premières semaines là madame, je me levais (.) je me recouchais (.) je me levais le midi, je me recouchais, je mettais mon cadran, pour que mon ami ne me trouve pas couché en entrant (.). Et je me suis complètement, je n'avais, d'abord j'ai jamais été congédié (.)

Entrevue 2-G (21-49)

P : C'est à ma grande surprise, là, quand j'ai vu ça, c'est pour ça que j'ai eu un choc, euh, émotif.

E2 : Ça, ça vous a vraiment,

P: [Ah vraiment

E2: [Ça vous a vraiment renversée

P: Ah, mon dieu

E2: [bouleversée

P: J'ai pleuré, j'ai pleuré ↑, pis, euh, il me demande de continuer. Je n'arrivais plus, je suis rentrée aux toilettes, j'ai lavé mon visage, mais je pouvais plus, je, je pouvais pas finir, parce que

E2: [Le choc, le choc était grand

P: [Moi, comme ça? ↑ Moi ceci, moi cela ↑, c'est comme, je n'arrivais pas, non, non, ah c'était trop fort.

E2: Ça, ça vous a fait comme un choc, enh?

P: Mon dieu, mon dieu. Maintenant ça va, je suis plus, plus forte, mais les premiers temps ↑, j'ai pleuré, j'ai pleuré, j'ai pleuré, mais c'était vraiment ((la plaignante pleure))

Interview 1-C (14-22)

P : I never would have believed that I would be so (.) exhausted.. [...] I never believed (.) the first weeks ma'am, I would get up (.) than lie down again (.) I got up at noon, would get back to bed again, I would set my alarm clock, for my boyfriend not to find me in bed while coming in (.). And I was completely, I was, I never was fired in the first place before. (.)

Interview 2-G (21-49)

P : This was a big surprise, when I saw that, this is why I had an emotional shock.

I2[vi] : So this was really,

P: [Ah really

I2: [You really were bowled over

P: Oh my goodness

I2: [devastated

P: I cried, I cried ↑, and then ah, he asks me to continue. I couldn't, i got inside the toilet, I washed my face, but I could not, I could finish because

I2: [The shock, the shock was too great.

P: [Me, being like that? ↑ Me this, me that ↑, it's like, I couldn't, nah, that was too much, too strong.

I2: This gave you a shock, han?

P: My, oh my. Now it's ok, I am more, more strong, but at beginning, in the first times ↑, I cried, cried, and cried, it was so

((the plaintiff cries))

Even if sometimes recourses to emotion denote a lack of contextualization or of nuances regarding what provoked the situation, they document and make concrete what has been lived, while at the same time they contribute to facilitate a better understanding for the inquirer of what happened to the plaintiff. The emotion appeal of the quote from interview 1 renders available to the interviewer the suffering lived by the plaintiff; her illustrations reinforce the credibility of that appeal. As for the second quote, the call to emotion by the plaintiff is provoked in particular by the narrative of an attack on her integrity ([Me, being like that? ↑ Me this, me that ↑, it's like, I couldn't, nah, that was too much, too strong. The emotion was revived by the recalling of the hurting that comes in the narrative of the hurting and cries of the employee, while confirming the importance of the attack on her integrity.

10. Argumentation which is typical in cases of the inquirer's adhesion

By studying their owl process carefully, we saw clearly that two of our four inquiries led to a conclusion of admissibility and two led on the contrary to a decision of non admissibility, and each set had specific characteristics that are worth recalling here. The fact that the inquirer concluded to the admissibility means he adhered in good part to the thesis held by the plaintiff in terms of in terms of Psychological Harassment in the work place. In the case where inquirers concluded to the contrary, this conclusion shows that the inquirer did not associate the claims of the plaintiff with the definition of psychological harassment as it is clarified by the law that gives a frame to the treatment of complaints. Let us look now more closely at the argumentative strategies that are

present in each of these sub-sets, in the cases of adhesion and non-adhesion. After a number of readings the four interviews, we could ascertain that the tones employed by the partners in the exchange were certainly not the same and we could underscore some tendencies that will be identified and commented briefly here. We will start by the interviews that led the inquirer to adhere to the thesis of the plaintiff.

10.1 *Expressions of doubt and shame by the plaintiff*

One of the lead authors on the issue of psychological harassment, Marie-France Hirigoyen (1998, 2004) documented in good part what distinguishes victims of psychological harassment of those that experience different problematical situations present in the work place but not associated to PH as such as defined by the different laws. She observed that the speech acts of “true” victims of PH are marked with uncertainty regarding the victim’s role in the situation; the complaint of the victim is punctuated with self-doubt in a person that wants to end his or her torment. This is something that is confirmed in our corpus, as we can see in the first interview that is particularly expressive on that point.

Entrevue 1-C (50-53)

P : [Une fois arrêté, j’étais comme complètement incapable de réagir et je me suis mis à (.) d’abord je me sentais extrêmement coupable (.) euh, et puis (.) je n’avais vraiment plus, j’avais plus de moral, ça n’allait plus.

Entrevue 1-E (46-51)

P : Parce qu’avec le recul, voyez-vous (.) si y a quelque chose que je me suis beaucoup reproché (.) qui je crois m’a fait complètement perdre pied, c’est de pas avoir mis, avoir eu la force d’y mettre un oh là. Vous savez, j’ai pas été capable de (.) j’étais déjà fatigué et j’ai pas été capable de l’arrêter.

Interview 1-C (50-53)

P : [Once it stopped, I was completely unable to react and I started to (.) first I felt extremely guilty (.) hem and then (.) I really did not have, I had no spirit, I did not work.

Interview 1-E (46-51)

P : Because as time passed, you see (.) if there is something I really regretted (.) is that he made me lose footage, it is that I couldn’t, I did not have the strength to put an end to it. You know, I was unable to (.) I was tired already and unable to

stop him.

We see clearly in the narrative expressions of self-doubt, guilt and even shame and regret, not for having somehow provoked the harasser's behaviour, but to stand up and make the person stop that disturbing behaviour. This self-questioning coincides clearly with a documented characteristic in the victim's experience; the person loses ground, his/her identity is under attack and the person can hardly keep a good judgement on the situation. That self-doubt in the situation of harassment is what permits the conflict to perpetuate, most of the times until the person is fired or has to leave for health reasons. On the contrary here, the expression of this self-doubt seems very close to an *ad misericordiam*, even if it is hardly of that kind. The argument seems to function this way: by trying to find his or her responsibility in the situation, the plaintiff shows good faith to the inquirer, an element that rejoins some common sense on shared responsibilities in conflicts. But since this part of responsibility will prove to be absent in the case as presented by the plaintiff, the inquirer/judge has to shift the burden of guilt somewhere.

11. *Characteristics of argumentation in cases of non adhesion*

When the inquirer does not conclude to psychological harassment, the person is not adhering to the thesis of the plaintiff. The analysis of the corpus showed that the whole development of the interview takes a very different shape in those cases. The plaintiff did not convince the inquirer that the actions of the employer or of the co-worker were something else than just ordinary conflict, that might have to do with ordinary work constraints. We will describe here the main characteristic of this expression of non admissibility of a complaint for psychological harassment.

11.1 *Expressing a work conflict and professional constraints*

In what qualifies as a simple conflict at work, reproaches are identified explicitly and the protagonists manifest their hostility in an almost equal manner. For instance, if a person feels too much pressure at work, or conversely if a manager finds some worker not efficient enough, expressions will occur of these malaises. There is no such symmetry in situations of psychological harassment.

Entrevue 2-H (55-65)

P : [...] mais de toute façon, y avait pas un bon, une bonne relation, ni de travail, ni, euh, je la voyais de toute façon comment qu'elle, euh, comment qu'elle me

regarde, comment qu'elle euh, de toute façon, c'est comme euh, à peine si je, je lui dis bonjour, din fois elle me répond même pas, donc, euh.

Mais ce n'est pas cette façon c'est, moi je pense que c'est pas la seule, c'est dans leur éducation, quelques-unes, jamais elles disent bonjour. C'est pas parce que ils m'en veulent ou quelque chose, mais c'est dans leur éducation.

Entrevue 3-B (148-149)

P: Ouais, il a explosé. Comme si ça faisait un moment qu'il me supportait pas [...].

Interview 2-H (55-65)

P : [...] in any case, it was not good, there was no good relation, of work, or of hem, I saw anyway how she looks at me, how she, in any way, it is like hem, I barely, hem, I say hello, sometimes she does not even answer me, so hem.

But it is not that way it's, me I think it is not the only, it is in their education, some of them, they never say hello. It is not because they have something against me, it is just in their education.

Interview 3-B (148-149)

P: Yes, he exploded. As if it's been coming a long time, he couldn't stand me [...].

By these and other elements not reproduced here, we see that the plaintiff of Interview 2 denounces a cultural situation, she blames the education of the colleagues, who did not have the same upbringing (her interpretation of the wrongful behaviour) and she does not see anything else in the fact that they did not salute her. There seems to be a symmetry in the conflict, she herself admits that something else than PH is going on here. The quotes from interviews 2 and 3 illustrate situations of conflict that are not in a dominant-dominee frame where the one leading the conflict would try to submit the other to the point of leading the person to loose or doubt her or his identity.

12. Conclusion

Differences of tones are present that do play a part on the inquirer's decision for the admissibility or not of the complaint. Some strategies were quite obviously put in place, around ethos, pathos and logos; we saw some examples of appeals to ethos on the plaintiff's side, but there were also some that were present on the inquirer's side - for instance, explaining the limits of what can be done, the professionalism the person was going to put in place. Adhesion is certainly a

crucial element to be obtained along the process. Since the procedure has been replaced by a form which is less personal, it would be impossible to enlarge the data set to verify some recurrences already identified.

NOTES

- i.** We should note that the admissibility phase has been conducted differently since 2009. Currently, the plaintiff would deposit his/her complaint on the website of the CNT or by phone. After that, the admissibility of the complaint is treated for a good part by phone. Our goal in the research was not to compare methods or to evaluate the interview procedure, but just to know it better with the aims of situating its resources from a rhetorical and analytical point of view.
- ii.** « Je n'invente pas toute cette histoire! » – As everywhere else in the document, the original material was in French, and the translations in English are provided by the authors.
- iii.** Most of the times, Aristotle talks about the « audience » in Rhetoric, but there is reference to a « judge-auditor », a notion relevant in our context where an orator speaks to one auditor/listener who has a mandate to take a decision.
- iv.** Numbers represent the chosen segment in the 1-A interview.
- v.** P stands for the plaintiff.
- vi.** Ibid.

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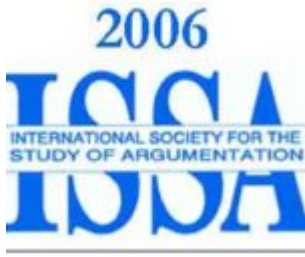
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Ehninger's Argument Violin



Douglas Ehninger's theoretical gem, "Argument as Method" (1970), introduces us to two unsavory debate characters. First, there is the "neutralist" – an interlocutor who eschews commitment at every turn. Following the Greek philosopher Pyrrho, the neutralist thinks that since nothing can be known, standpoints should float freely, unanchored by the tethers of belief. The neutralist's counterpart is the "naked persuader" – someone who approaches argument like Plato's Callicles – clinging doggedly to preconceived beliefs and resisting any shift no matter how compelling the counterpoints (Ehninger 1970, p. 104).

Naked persuaders and neutralists each have difficulty engaging in argument, but for different reasons. According to Ehninger (1970, p. 104), argumentation is a "person risking enterprise," and by entering into an argument, "a disputant opens the possibility that as a result of the interchange he too may be persuaded of his opponent's view, or, failing that, at least may be forced to make major alterations in his own." In this account, naked persuaders are hamstrung by their unwillingness to risk the possibility that the force of reason will prompt alteration of their views. Neutralists, on the other hand, prevent the "person risking enterprise" from ever getting off the ground in the first place, since they place nothing on the table to risk.

Ehninger's unsavory characters illustrate how the concept of standpoint commitment has salience in any theory of "argument as process" (Wenzel 1990). To reap the full benefits of the process of argumentation, interlocutors must adopt stances vis-à-vis their standpoints that strike an appropriate balance between perspectives of the naked persuader and the neutralist. For Ehninger (1970, p. 104), such a balanced posture consists of "restrained partisanship," where advocates drive dialectic forward with tentative conviction, while remaining open to the possibility that the course of argument may dictate that their initial standpoints require amendment or retraction. Finding this delicate balance resembles the tuning of violin strings – a metaphor that underscores his point that the proper stance of restrained partisanship must be tailored to fit each situation.

The public argument prior to the 2003 Iraq War offers a clear example of a poorly

tuned deliberative exchange. While several official investigations (e.g. US Commission 2005; US Senate 2004) have explained the breakdown in prewar decision-making as a case of faulty data driving bad policy, this paper explores how the technical concept of foreign policy “intelligence failure” (Matthias 2001) can be expanded to offer a more fine-grained explanation for the ill-fated war decision, which stemmed in part from a failure of the argumentative process in public spheres of deliberation. Part one revisits Ehninger’s concept of standpoint commitment, framing it in light of related argumentation theories that address similar aspects of the argumentative process. This discussion paves the way for a case study of public argument concerning the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War. Finally, possible implications of the case study for foreign policy rhetoric and argumentation theory are considered.

1. Standpoint commitment in argumentation

From a pragma-dialectical perspective, an argument is a “critical discussion” between interlocutors, undertaken for the purpose of resolving a difference of opinion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2003, 1984; van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans 1996, pp. 274-311). In the “confrontation stage,” parties lay their cards on the table and establish the central bone of contention. By elucidating their divergent standpoints, disputants provide the impetus that sets into motion the process of critical discussion. This step is essential, since “a difference of opinion cannot be resolved if it is not clear to the parties involved that there actually is a difference and what this difference involves” (van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans 1996, p. 284). However, in pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, once interlocutors advance standpoints, critical discussion norms oblige them to proceed in certain ways. For example, the ninth pragma-dialectical “commandment” requires arguers to retract standpoints if they are refuted in the course of argument, and conversely, to accept successfully defended standpoints offered by their counterparts (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, pp. 208-209).

Here, it becomes apparent that pragma-dialectical theory presupposes the ability of interlocutors to enact a version of Ehninger’s “restrained partisanship.” Arguers are expected to advance standpoints clearly and with conviction, but also to couple this performance with a double gesture that signals a willingness to amend or retract such standpoints should they be refuted during the course of argument. This delicate balancing act challenges participants to find an

appropriate middle ground between two poles that have served as perennial topics of inquiry for a wide variety of argumentation theorists.

Consider Chaim Perelman & Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca's distinction between "discussion" and "debate." For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969), while discussion is a heuristic activity, "in which the interlocutors search honestly and without bias for the best solution to a controversial problem" (p. 37), debate is eristic, where the focus is on "overpowering the opponent" (p. 39), regardless of the truth of the propositions at hand. Occluded in this neat polarity, of course, is the subtle fact that discussion and debate are Siamese twins. They cannot be fully separated without placing the argumentative enterprise at risk. For example, the activity that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca call "discussion" requires interlocutors to embrace, *to some extent*, a "debating" posture that moves them to contribute concrete standpoints to the conversation. This caveat does not deny that an overly aggressive debating stance runs at cross purposes with the heuristic goals of discussion, but it does, once again, point to the importance of finding that proper balance that Ehninger calls "restrained partisanship."

One can isolate other vectors of this pattern playing out in discussions about the proper role of argument in society. For example, the subtitle of Deborah Tannen's bestseller (1998) *The Argument Culture* is "Moving from Debate to Dialogue." Tannen's distinction between debate and dialogue mirrors Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's debate-discussion polarity. While Tannen thoroughly criticizes excessively adversarial and combative styles of debating, she points out that there is still value in constructive forms of argument that allow interlocutors to vet opposing viewpoints (see also Foss & Griffin 1995; Makau & Marty 2001). In fact, she underscored this point by changing the subtitle of *The Argument Culture* for the paperback edition to "Stopping America's War of Words" (Tannen 1999).

A similar pattern of analysis appears in the work of James Crosswhite (1996), who posits a distinction between argumentation as "inquiry" and argumentation as "persuasion." To elucidate the relationship between these categories, Crosswhite (1996, pp. 256-58) compares inquiry with the "context of discovery" and persuasion with the "context of justification" in philosophy of science. In this scheme, argument-as-persuasion involves attempts to convince others of settled beliefs that have already been justified, while argument-as-inquiry is a process of discovery initiated to yield new insights when clear answers may not yet be apparent. As Crosswhite (1996) explains: "There is a difference between the kind

of reasoning we engage in when we have already made up our minds about some issue and simply need to persuade other people to take our side, and the kind of reasoning that goes on when we have not yet made up our minds but are trying to come to a conclusion ourselves" (p. 256; see also Meiland 1989). Notably, Crosswhite locates the key difference between these two modes of reasoning in the "kinds of audiences that are active in the argumentation" (Crosswhite 1996, 257).

In pragma-dialectics, this distinction between modes of reasoning is connected to a corresponding differentiation between rhetoric and dialectic. Drawing on Leff (2000), Frans van Eemeren & Peter Houtlousser (2002, pp. 15-17) identify as rhetorical those aims and objectives that interlocutors pursue in their quest to achieve effective persuasion in a critical discussion. Alternately, dialectical obligations flow from the argumentative procedures that parties must respect in order for a critical discussion to proceed. Echoing the other theorists considered in the preceding paragraphs, van Eemeren & Houtlousser develop this polarity synergistically, arguing that rhetoric and dialectic are complementary concepts. If a critical discussion were an airplane, rhetoric would be the force that drives the propeller and dialectic would be the navigational system that keeps the aircraft calibrated and on course. Without a strong propeller (standpoint commitment by interlocutors), the plane cannot get off the ground. Without a sound navigational system (disputants' fealty to discussion norms), the plane cannot reach the destination point of mutually acceptable resolution of a difference of opinion.

In working out this relationship between rhetoric and dialectic, van Eemeren & Houtlousser have expounded another important concept – *strategic maneuvering*. This concept stems from their insight that "there is indeed a potential discrepancy between pursuing dialectical objectives and rhetorical aims" (van Eemeren & Houtlousser 2002, p. 16). Arguers want to persuade their counterparts to accept their standpoints, yet the passion driving such commitments may sometimes conflict with the procedural requirements for carrying on a critical discussion. Rather than declare that in these cases, dialectical obligations always trump rhetorical aims, van Eemeren & Houtlousser stipulate that interlocutors have a middle option of strategic maneuvering, a mode of arguing that bends the dialectical rules of critical discussion in a protagonist's rhetorical favor, yet stops just short of breaking them and thereby committing a fallacy.

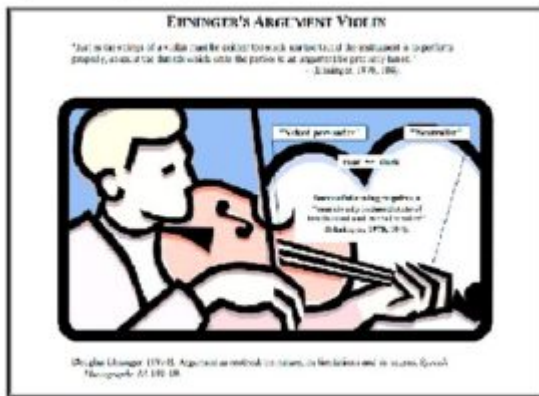
For example, in the context of establishing the burden of proof for a given critical

discussion, interlocutors may engage in strategic maneuvering by highlighting certain features of their standpoints (e.g. scope, precision, moral content) so as to configure their burden of proof in a rhetorically advantageous way (van Eemeren & Houtlousser 2002, pp. 22-25). However, there are limits to this process. Taken too far, strategic maneuvering moves beyond bending the rules for critical discussion, resulting in a “fallacious derailment” of the discussion (van Eemeren & Houtlousser 2002, pp. 22-25).

While the exact location of this boundary line that separates legitimate strategic maneuvering from fallacious derailment remains elusive, it is clear that the concept of strategic maneuvering represents an inventive response to the theoretical challenge of developing sound accounts of the relationship between “discussion” and “debate” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969); “inquiry” and “persuasion” (Crosswhite 1996); and “dialectic” and “rhetoric” (van Eemeren & Houtlousser 2002, pp. 22-25). This same challenge motivates Ehninger’s (1970) effort to explain the complementary relationship between the “naked persuader” and “neutralist” outlined in the introduction to this paper.

Anticipating a key element of pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, Ehninger (1970, p. 102) explains that the speech act of joining an argument involves an implicit agreement that the exchange will exert bilateral influence on the argumentative process. This insight dovetails with his view that argument should be a “person risking” enterprise, and that by entering such an exchange, participants signal that they are ready to place their standpoints in middle space, where tentative commitment drives the exchange, yet is contingent on what transpires in the course of argument. Ehninger (1970, p. 104) elaborates on this posture of “restrained partisanship” by comparing it to the process of tuning a violin: “Just as the strings of a violin must be neither too slack nor too taut if the instrument is to perform properly, so must the threads which unite the parties to an argument be precisely tuned.”

Figure 1. Ehninger's argument violin



Ehninger's violin metaphor may provide insight that contributes to pragma-dialectical argumentation theory's project of delineating the boundary lines that mark off legitimate strategic maneuvering from fallacious derailment. Further insight on this point can be gleaned by considering a specific case study where the issue of standpoint commitment looms large.

2. Prewar public argument on Iraq

The U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003 is widely perceived as an "intelligence failure," in large part because official investigations conducted by a presidential commission (US Commission 2005) and a congressional panel (US Senate 2004) have explained the ill-fated preventive war as a bad policy outcome driven by poor data provided by official intelligence analysts to political leaders. While it is the case that the U.S. Intelligence Community's prewar analyses on Iraq were imperfect, this is only part of the story. Journalists, citizens, members of Congress and the White House also played key roles in the breakdown. According to Chaim Kaufmann (2004, p. 7), a "failure of the marketplace of ideas" resulted in breakdown of the U.S. political system's ability to "weed out exaggerated threat claims and policy proposals based on them." Peter Neumann and M.L.R. Smith (2005, p. 96) call this phenomenon a "discourse failure," where "constriction of the language and vocabulary" produced a "failure of comprehension." Elsewhere, I have drawn upon argumentation theory to explain dynamics of this "discourse failure" (see Mitchell 2006; Keller & Mitchell 2006). Here, I isolate a specific element of this phenomenon that has not yet received rigorous scrutiny – derailments in the process of public argument caused by poor tuning of the deliberative exchange with respect to standpoint commitment.

In President George W. Bush's September, 2002 letter to Congress, he explained

that since possible war with Iraq was “an important decision that must be made with great thought and care,” he called for argumentation on the matter: “I welcome and encourage discussion and debate” (Bush 2002a). Bush (2002b) emphasized this point two days later during a fundraising luncheon, inviting “debate” on the Iraq situation, calling for “the American people to listen and have a dialog about Iraq,” and for “an open discussion about the threats that face America.” What exactly did these statements mean? From a pragma-dialectical argumentation perspective, they would seem to constitute “external” evidence that Bush sought to enter into a critical discussion with interlocutors, engaging in argumentation as a way to reach an informed decision on optimal U.S. policy toward Iraq. On this reading, one would expect Bush to proceed as a protagonist in the critical discussion, advancing standpoints, listening to counterarguments, isolating key differences of opinion, and working toward resolution of those differences.

As the first section of this paper established, one key element of this mode of constructive participation in a critical discussion involves tentative standpoint commitment that seeks a middle ground between the postures of Ehninger’s hypothetical interlocutors, the naked persuader and the neutralist. As Ehninger explains further, as disputants search for this middle ground, “investigation not only must precede decision, but is an integral part of the decision-making process” (Ehninger 1959, 284). In other words, a crucial part of an interlocutor’s constructive argument stance involves deferral of a final decision pending completion of the critical discussion. This position has a corollary in pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, where “Rule (9) is aimed at ensuring that the protagonist and the antagonist ascertain in a correct manner what the result of the discussion is. A difference of opinion is truly resolved only if the parties agree in the concluding stage whether or not the attempt at defense on the part of the protagonist has succeeded. An apparently smooth-running discussion may still fail if the protagonist wrongly claims to have successfully defended a standpoint or even wrongly claims to have proved it true, or if the antagonist wrongly denies that the defense was successful or even claims the opposite standpoint to have been proven” (van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans 1996, pp. 285-286).

In the case of President Bush’s argument regarding U.S. policy toward Iraq, Bush’s own statements seemed to express commitment to these principles. After

calling for the initiation of a debate on Iraq policy in September 2002, Bush set forth arguments justifying the ouster of Saddam Hussein, but also qualified these standpoints with gestures of “restrained partisanship” (Ehninger 1970, p. 104). For example, during a 6 March 2003 press conference, Bush (2003) stated: “I’ve not made up our mind about military action.”

However, recent disclosure of official documents and insider accounts complicate this picture. We now know that British intelligence chief Sir Richard Dearlove visited the U.S. in July 2002 for meetings where the possibility of war against Iraq was discussed. Regarding developments in Washington, Dearlove briefed Prime Minister Tony Blair on 23 July 2002 that, “there was a perceptible shift in attitude. Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy.” The memo goes on to say that it “seemed clear the Bush had made up his mind to go to war, even if the timing was not yet decided” (*Sunday Times* 2005). According to National Security Archive Senior Fellow John Prados, the Dearlove memo shows, “with stunning clarity,” that “that the goal of overthrowing Saddam Hussein was set at least a year in advance,” and that “President Bush’s repeated assertions that no decision had been made about attacking Iraq were plainly false” (Prados 2005). Further evidence in support of this view comes from insider accounts of White House communication during the September 2002 – March 2003 “discussion and debate” period. For example, journalist Bob Woodward explains that while Bush was publicly maintaining a posture of “restrained partisanship” during the public argument on Iraq, he privately told National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice in January 2003 that, “We’re gonna have to go. It’s war” (qtd. in Woodward 2004). Further, Woodward indicates that in another meeting that month, Bush wanted Saudi Prince Bandar “to know that this is for real. That we’re really doing it” (Woodward 2004). A separate leaked British memorandum detailed that later in January 2003, Bush even gave British Prime Minister Blair a specific date (10 March 2003) when he should expect war against Iraq to commence (Regan 2003; see also Sands 2005).

posture. The soundness of this line of argumentative reconstruction would hinge on the degree to which it could be established that Bush's maneuvering stopped short of actually transgressing dialectical rules governing conduct of a critical discussion.

Alternately, it is possible to reconstruct the episode by interpreting Bush's rhetoric as a fallacious derailment of a critical discussion. In this reading, Bush's 2002 statements regarding the desirability of debate, discussion and dialogue would be seen as speech acts that set into motion a cooperative process of critical discussion and concomitantly signaled a public commitment by Bush to adhere to certain dialectical rules governing conduct of the public argument (see Payne 2006). As we have seen, one of the key responsibilities of an interlocutor in such a context is to maintain a stance of restrained partisanship vis-à-vis standpoints offered in the course of the critical discussion. However, it is plausible to conclude that such a "middle ground" stance would be impossible for a protagonist such as Bush to maintain in a situation where he had already decided to act on his standpoint (Iraq should be invaded), while simultaneously continuing the critical discussion. On this reading, the excesses of Bush's rhetoric overwhelmed his commitment to dialectical norms of argumentation, resulting in a fallacious derailment of the critical discussion.

A third possible reconstruction of the episode would proceed from the premise that Bush never actually performed a speech act that signaled commitment to norms of critical discussion. This interpretation would frame Bush's September 2002 statements regarding the need for "dialogue" and "debate" on Iraq as announcements that a peculiar form of argumentation was about to commence, one perhaps consistent with Ehninger's (1970, p. 101) model of "corrective coercion." According to Ehninger, protagonists in this mode operate unilaterally: "Not only does the corrector initiate the exchange and direct it throughout its history, but he also dictates the conditions under which it will terminate." Furthermore, in corrective coercion, unlike the "person-risking" enterprise of cooperative argumentation, standpoints are not contingent, since failure to persuade interlocutors is an outcome that indicates deficiency in the passive audience, not the standpoint being advocated: "If, in spite of the corrector's best efforts, the correctee stubbornly continues to resist, the corrector may attribute his failure to a breakdown in communication or an inability to summon the necessary degree of authority; or he may write the correctee off as ignorant or

incurable" (Ehninger 1970, p. 102). This perspective on the prewar argument reconfigures the relationship between Bush's public and private statements from one of tension to one of consistency. Arguers engaging in coercive correction need not worry about fine-tuning their degrees of standpoint commitment, since the purpose of the argument is not to test or refine their positions. Here, Bush's statements to Rice, Bandar and Blair indicating that he had already decided the outcome of the dispute regarding the proper course of U.S. policy toward Iraq can be squared with his public arguments designed to coerce audiences to accept the same view.

The aim of the preceding analysis is not to argue that one particular reconstruction of the argumentative episode is necessarily correct. Rather, the point is to show how argumentation theory generates several possible descriptions of an ambiguous deliberative exchange. Similarly, a robust treatment of the normative implications flowing from each reconstruction falls beyond the scope of this limited paper, whose more modest theoretical contributions are explored in the final section.

3. Conclusion

The relationship between rhetoric and dialectic is moving up the research agenda in argumentation studies (Blair 2002). In pragma-dialectical argumentation theory, the concept of strategic maneuvering is emerging as a bridging concept to elucidate the rhetoric-dialectic interplay. Strategic maneuvering's value in this regard hinges in part on the degree to which theorists can elucidate perspicacious distinctions between legitimate acts of strategic maneuvering and fallacious derailments of critical discussions. This paper has considered how a focus on standpoint commitment offers a means of generating such distinctions, and how Ehninger's (1970) notions of "restrained partisanship" and the "argument violin" help to peg the appropriate degree of standpoint commitment in any given argument. Ehninger suggests that for cooperative argumentation to proceed constructively, it is incumbent on interlocutors to seek a "consciously induced state of intellectual and moral tension" that fine-tunes, like violin strings, their rhetorical aims and dialectical obligations (p. 104; see also Ehninger & Brockriede 1966).

Application of these theoretical concepts to a case study concerning public argument prior to the 2003 Iraq War yielded several insights. Most basically, the attempt to reconstruct the prewar public argument highlighted the salience of

Gerald Graff's (2003, p. 88) observation: "Which mode we are in – debate or dialogue? – is not always self-evident." External cues apparently signaling an interlocutor's commitment to the process of critical discussion may take on different meanings when viewed in the context of subsequent strategic maneuvering. For example, one possible reconstruction of George W. Bush's contributions to the prewar public argument on Iraq reveals that his utterances expressing commitment to processes of "debate" and "discussion" signal something very different from the sorts of speech acts that in pragma-dialectical argumentation theory indicate an interlocutor's implied acceptance of critical discussion norms. This possibility serves as a reminder that in generating argumentative reconstructions, critics should be keenly aware of the possibility that they are dealing with mixed disputes, where parties approach the argument from incommensurate normative assumptions regarding proper conduct of the dispute. The lucid exchange between James Klumpp and Kathryn Olson following Klumpp's keynote address at the 2005 Alta Argumentation Conference illustrates the value of this critical approach.

Finally, my paper provides an occasion for scholars of argumentation to take note of the trend that the argumentation is growing in prominence as a category of analysis in the field of international relations. Consider Douglas Hart and Steven Simon's proposition that one major cause of the intelligence community's misjudgments on Iraq was "poor argumentation and analysis within the intelligence directorate." As a remedy, Hart and Simon recommend that intelligence agencies encourage analysts to engage in "structured arguments and dialogues" designed to facilitate "sharing and expression of multiple points of view" and cultivate "critical thinking skills." This suggestion comes on the heels of political scientist Thomas Risse's (2000, p. 21) call for international relations scholars to focus more on "arguing in the international public sphere." These comments, coupled with the finding of this paper regarding the need to "rhetorize" the technical concept of "intelligence failure," suggest promising paths of future research that fuse parallel tracks of argumentation theory and international relations scholarship.

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What Does Play Tell Us About Human Evolution?



Brenna R. Hassett

04-26-2024 ~ Our species devotes a singular amount of time to an utterly unserious aspect of life: play. This begs the question: what is the adaptive value of horsing around? What possible evolutionary benefit could an activity that sees no specific return possibly have that we devote so much time to it?

Play holds a particularly special position in the study of both human and non-human behavior; it is accepted as a near-universal part of many animals' lives, but a definition for 'play' that covers species from birds to bats is elusive. What holds together the mock-fighting of puppies and the rhyming chants of our own children, however, is [a definition of play](#) that says it is not for any specific purpose; it's a set of actions that don't quite achieve anything that an animal repeats during certain phases of their life when they are relaxed and not under threat. Three separate types of play are usually distinguished: play with objects, with locomotor skills, and with friends. The critical thing that separates these types of activities from others, whether undertaken by a cow or a crow, is that they are *fun*.

It does not, in a strictly Darwinian sense, make any sense for animals to play unless play itself has some adaptive value. Time spent in play is not spent acquiring food or sleeping, for instance, and bouncing around unnecessarily in play burns calories that could be used for growth or survival. And yet, a [huge number of animal species](#) have been observed 'playing': monitor lizards like the giant Komodo dragon will chew and fetch objects like a dog, fish will chase balls, and [octopuses will explore Lego](#). Play is most at home, however, in mammals, and nowhere is it more obvious than in our own species.

There has been a great deal of argument in evolutionary biology and evolutionary psychology about what that adaptive value might be. Hypotheses include play in animals as physical training, allowing immature individuals to 'practice' pounces or perches that they will need as adults. The theory dating back to Victorian times that play is in fact [a serious business that serves to train adult minds](#) is still quite prominent, as can be seen by the vast array of 'educational' toys available. What these approaches have in common is that they see play as purposeful, as a kind of training mechanism. In this framing, juvenile play serves to make a fully competent adult, of whatever species.

It is clear that play does help train some animals to survive and thrive. A [study of bear cubs](#) found the cubs that played more had better survival rates; [cheetah cubs](#) that spent more time pretending to stalk their family also did more stalking of prey. There is a vast body of research on the way that play prepares human children for their lives as adults, and in fact our species spends a proportionately longer amount of time on the most playful period of our lives, childhood, than any other. So, while we know that humans engage in locomotor, object, and social play, what we need to understand is *why* it is adaptive for our species to spend so much time doing it.

One of the ways to do this is to look at how play works in closely related animals. Play does not behave like some sort of directly inherited Mendelian trait; play is deployed very differently even among relatively closely related species. Compare two of the great apes that, to the untrained eye, seem very similar: [bonobos and chimpanzees](#). Both are great ape species of similar size and morphology, but they last shared an ancestor 1 to 2 million years ago and today are separated by the Congo River. Their social systems are very different, with male-dominated hierarchies in the chimpanzees and more fluid and female-led social groups in bonobos. They also occupy different environmental niches, with more reliance on seasonal fruit by bonobos and more access to year-round foods, including plants and insects, by chimpanzees. These may relate to differences in the skills they need to eat: chimpanzees make and use tools such as [termite 'fishing rods'](#) while bonobos have never been seen to do so.

One difference is in the amount and [time the species spend in play](#). Bonobos are inveterate players throughout their lifetimes, whereas chimpanzees tend to limit play to infancy and childhood. The type of play chimpanzees and bonobos enjoy is also different. Young chimpanzees, who will grow up to become tool users, [do](#)

[more 'object' based play](#) than young bonobos. Young bonobos however, who rely more on cooperation to organize their adult societies, will spend more time in 'social' play. Play also results in different outcomes for the two species: juvenile chimp play fights often escalate into real fights, while this almost never happens in bonobos.

Perhaps one of the most critical differences in the way these two species play is that in bonobos, play carries on throughout the animals' lives. Chimpanzees, as they get older, have less and less tolerance for these kinds of interactions, while bonobos retain a kind of childlike tolerance for some kinds of play throughout their lives. That not all species give up on play as adults suggests that there is more to play than just training—adults, after all, are supposed to be fully trained. This is something that we can recognize in our own species: human adults are also champions at playing; whether it is sports, video games, dramas, or any other sort of activity that meets the not-quite-functional-but-fun definition of play.

Adult play tends to be social and to happen in species where social relationships are complicated and require a lot of finesse to manage. Playful interactions, particularly play fighting, help less-dominant adults test the boundaries of their relationships with more dominant ones, reinforce social bonds, and generally maintain the social organization of the group. This kind of adult play encourages cooperation and tolerance, and [may even support collective decision-making](#).

We can look at the evolutionary commitment to play that our species has made in two parts, then. Our long childhoods give us a great deal of opportunity to 'train' through play—to gain competence in locomotor, object manipulation, and social skills. We are certainly not the only species to do this, nor are we very unique among our closest relatives: we like to play with tools, just like chimpanzees, because we are also a tool-using species, and we engage in all sorts of social play like bonobos. For us humans, our long childhoods give us a chance to play longer—but perhaps what most stands out is our ability to carry on this childlike willingness to take things a bit less seriously into adulthood. Our dedication to play throughout our lives, then, may be precisely the mechanism that allowed us to evolve to survive with less rigid social hierarchies and more cooperative social groups.

By Brenna R. Hassett

Author Bio: Brenna R. Hassett, PhD, is a biological anthropologist and archaeologist at the University of Central Lancashire and a scientific associate at the Natural History Museum, London. In addition to researching the effects of changing human lifestyles on the human skeleton and teeth in the past, she writes for a more general audience about evolution and archaeology, including the Times (UK) top 10 science book of 2016 [Built on Bones: 15,000 Years of Urban Life and Death](#), and her most recent book, [Growing Up Human: The Evolution of Childhood](#). She is also a co-founder of [TrowelBlazers](#), an activist archive celebrating the achievements of women in the “digging” sciences.

Source: Human Bridges

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Perceptions Of Social Dominance And How To Change Them



04-19-2024 - It's surprising that human infants [as young as 10 months](#) may be able to identify social rank. Research suggests that infants learn to distinguish who around them is dominant, using relative body size as a cue.

Experiments by University of Oslo psychologist Lotte Thomsen indicate that [infants may use the cue of body size to predict that a larger-sized object will prevail](#) over a smaller-sized object in a controlled visual representation. And, a Yale University research team found that [infants as young as three months seem to be able to recognize that voice pitch correlates with body size](#), with smaller organisms producing a higher pitch sound.

How Do We Know What Infants Think?

Researching and evaluating infant perceptions is complex. Experiments assessing infant reactions involve familiarizing them with an animated visual object, such as a colored block, and then varying its relationship with another similar block.

When the expected relationship is reversed, in what's called a "violation of expectation," researchers measure how long the infant gazes at the anomalous image, as compared to the length of its gaze on an expected image. The longer gaze at the unexpected image is interpreted as meaning that the infant recognizes something is not right.

For example, to assess the perception of dominance, [Thomsen and an international team of researchers](#) showed infants animations depicting a small and a large block moving toward each other, where one or the other would bow and give way to avoid a collision. In a series of experiments, they found that the infants gazed longer when the larger object yielded to the smaller one, suggesting that this was not what the infant expected.

This line of research suggests that by one year of age, infants may be able to recognize that size is related to strength and dominance, that the bigger size will prevail in a conflict situation, and that this holds for other conflict situations. These experiments conclude that knowledge of cues about perceiving social hierarchy develops very early in the human organism, and continues to develop through childhood and adolescence.

Other Species Do It Too

Studies comparing the hierarchical structure of human societies to those of other species suggest that "[there may be no fundamental discontinuities between social structure in humans and animals](#)." Social hierarchy in animal groups is nearly ubiquitous: Non-human primates, insects, birds, and fish do it.

Social groups of non-human species form hierarchies to help protect the group from predators, reduce aggression within the group, find and allocate resources, and ensure that those at the top of the hierarchy can reproduce successfully—all of which is thought to contribute to the well-being of the group as a whole.

Social grooming is important in holding primate groups together by encouraging bonding. Studies show that primate [grooming triggers the brain to release endorphins, which promote a sense of well-being and relaxation](#) and at the same

time create a sense of mutual trust. Grooming among primates can also be used as [a form of conflict resolution and reconciliation](#). It's suggested that the time-consuming grooming necessity limits the upper limit of primate group size to about 50.

Humans replicate the grooming effect of stimulating endorphins, Oxford University psychologist R. I. M. Dunbar suggests in a 2020 article, by creating a "form of [grooming-at-a-distance](#)," which includes laughter, singing, dancing, storytelling, and communal eating and drinking. With humans as with primates, the endorphin-releasing practices allow the group members to know each other and predict the future behavior of group members.

Neural Connections

The neural connections to status and status perception are an ongoing area of research in both primates and humans. Temple University psychology researchers suggest that there is an "[evolved origin for attaining high status and recognizing status in others](#)" in both non-human primates and human adults.

Using MRI imaging, scientists looking at the brain areas related to the perception of social status and dominance have identified regions of the brain and neurotransmitters that are activated when humans or primates are involved in perception of dominance in a relationship. Research results vary by experimental setup, but the [studies have consistently identified the same specific brain areas, including the amygdala, the hippocampus, and the prefrontal cortex](#), as being part of the neural network involved.

Future research, perhaps aided by improved imaging and detecting techniques, is needed to create a more precise picture of how the brains of humans and primates are involved in social status perception, the researchers conclude. What is known is that the perception of dominance is learned in human infants and continues to develop in complexity as the individual ages and gains more social experience.

Good or Bad Hierarchy?

If hierarchical organization is actually innate and even necessary for human institutions, the question is then how to make use of this reality.

Hierarchies can be characterized as benevolent or autocratic, based on whether they primarily benefit the general good, those at the bottom and middle, or the

few at the top. Looking at human history, the hierarchical societies that come to mind are “bad” in the minds of most people. Think of dictators like Stalin or Hitler, or more modern ones.

But, as [one research team argues](#), “Equality is a mirage.” To function well, a large-scale society needs a system of organization that involves hierarchies, according to political theorists at the University of Hong Kong, Wang Pei and Canadian Daniel A. Bell. They point to the failure of China’s Cultural Revolution, as an example of failed “equality.” Instead, they propose:

“The choice is not between a society with no hierarchies and one with hierarchies, but rather between a society with unjust hierarchies that perpetuate unjust power structures and one with just hierarchies that serve morally desirable purposes.”

The question becomes not a choice between equality or hierarchy, but how to shape a hierarchical society into one that promotes more equality.

The Consequences of Inequality

Equality is now a hot topic in society, whether talking about gender, religion, race, income, or education. Generally, the arc of political development is bending toward more equality, and away from traditional inequalities such as relegating women to a lower rank.

The question of equality isn’t an abstract one. Perception of lower social status has consequences for mental and physical health and well-being, as well as life expectancy, for humans and animals. As a [2019 anthropological study of rhesus macaques reports](#), “[S]ocial adversity gets under the skin over long time spans.” Writing in the Proceedings of the American Academy of Sciences, an international team of researchers concluded that social adversity affects the immune system in female macaques, with some variation, such as type of pathogen, length of exposure, and degree of social adversity.

Scores of studies document the adverse effects of the *perception* of low socioeconomic status in human beings. For example, a [meta-analysis of 44 studies of teenagers 12-19](#), conducted by researchers at Concordia University in Montreal, found that lower self-perceptions of status correlate with worse health. Interestingly, the study suggests that objective indicators such as wealth were not as relevant to health as subjective perceptions of status.

[One very specific study published in Health Psychology in 2008](#) looked at the objective socioeconomic status and subjective perception of status and how each was affected by the common cold virus. The researchers involved 193 healthy U.S. adults, who were first ranked objectively and subjectively on social status indicators. After six weeks, the study volunteers were screened for any cold symptoms and if they had none, they were exposed to one of two varieties of a common cold virus. Over the next few days, the volunteers were monitored for cold symptoms.

The surprising bottom line: Subjectively perceived lower social status correlated with greater susceptibility to catching a cold. Objective lower social status did not have this association.

Toward Better Health and Happiness

As [University of Toronto psychologist Marc A. Fournier explains](#), “Income inequality casts a pall over the quality of societal relations, such that everyone living in a more stratified society is less likely to trust others or become involved in community life.” Further, those who subjectively rank themselves with lower social status, as many different studies show, are more likely to have lower levels of happiness.

The remedies for creating more happiness, and consequently better health, are not mysterious, just an ongoing challenge. Income redistribution is one sure measure, for example, through progressive taxation. [A few studies covering several countries](#) over a few decades have documented that this decreases income inequality and increases happiness.

Other measures also seem self-evident. Are there opportunities in society for advancing one’s status? How can public education systems foster such opportunities? How does the education system prepare young individuals to have more mastery over their lives? How do social institutions create more opportunities for positive community relationships?

Perceptions of dominance and social rank seem to begin very early in life, and later self-perceptions of lower rank, whether or not accurate, affect health and happiness. The open questions are how innate such perceptions are, and how society’s approach to equality can help change these perceptions for the better.

By Marjorie Hecht

Author Bio:

Marjorie Hecht is a longtime magazine editor and writer with a specialty in science topics. She is a freelance writer and community activist living on Cape Cod. You can read more of Hecht's work [on the Observatory](#).

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