ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Encompassing And Enacting Dialectic: Kenneth Burke's Theory Of Dramatism

The work of American self-described *"wordman"*, Kenneth Burke, is having tremendous impact on rhetorical and literary theory and criticism, speech communication, sociology, and many other academic areas, including in some small ways argumentation.Despite this recent attention, particularly in the work of Arnie Madsen (1989, 1991, 1993) and James Klumpp (1993) as well as the recent special issue of *Argumentation and Advocacy* on "Dramatism and Argumentation" (1993) and occasional argument criticisms which invoke Burkean perspectives, Burke's work still remains relatively unknown to many argumentation scholars, and potential contributions of Burkean theory to argumentation studies remain to be developed fully. Moreover, as Madsen (1993) observed, "the works of Kenneth Burke have gone relatively unnoticed in the field of argumentation theory" (164). And although it is certainly true that "Burke offers no systematic and complete theory of argument" (Parson, 1993, 145), it is also nonetheless equally the case that Burke's work on human symbol systems and motives, summarized as his theory of "dramatism," encompasses the traditional domains of rhetoric, poetic, and dialectic, thereby at least by most traditional accounts encompassing as well argumentation (See van Eemeren, Grootendorst, and Kruiger), subsuming, re-defining, and re-positioning "argument" within the orientation of "dramatism."

The current study attempts to "locate" argumentation within Burke's theoretical edifice, dramatism, and, more generally, to examine how "dramatism" transforms traditional approaches to "rationality." As "rationality" is transformed, so too, necessarily, is argumentation. The specific objectives of this paper are per force more restricted. I will sketch, generally and broadly, dramatism's *encompassing* argument move, with its attendent transformations of "rationality." Second, and a bit more specifically, I will offer a description of Burke's theory of dialectics, before concluding with some remarks suggesting how, via the agency of Burke's

"psychologized" rhetoric of identification, dialectic becomes enacted as what Burke calls the "great *drama* of *human* relations" (1955, 263).

I

Burke's "Dramatism" is set forth broadly in his informal *Motivorum Trilogy: A Grammar of Motives* (1945), which treats generally of dialectics and transformational processes, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), which treats of rhetoric as "consubstantial" with "identification," and *A Symbolic of Motives* (unpublished), which treats of poetics and ethics variously (depending upon which design for the unfinished project is featured) from within the orientation of "dramatism." A related manuscript, *Poetics, Dramatistically Considered* (unpublished), is a relatively complete treatment of precisely what the title promises; it may be a re-titled version of what began as A Symbolic.**[i]** Burke's proposed "trilogy" of "a grammar," which centered generally and paradoxically on dialectics, "a rhetoric," and "a symbolic," which subsumed both poetics and ethics, parallels in many ways classical formulations including the *trivium*,**[ii]** but Burke's interests, lying at the intersection of language, psychology, and circumstance, focus concern on human motives rather than upon probable truth, "right" action, or divine telos. As such, "'finding' a theory of argument, or positions that inform argument theory," in Burke's writings, Parson suggests, "will be an inferential process" (146; see also Madsen, 1993, 165). But given the sweeping nature of the *Motivorum* project, the process is not one of merely extending the domain of "dramatism," a theory derived most explicitly from literary studies, to the domain of "argumentation," for "dramatism" in subsuming and re-defining "dialectic" and "rhetoric" has already positioned itself atop much of the traditional "argument" domain. And in so-doing, it transformed the nature and function of argumentation itself. As Klumpp (1993) puts it, a "rapprochement" between mainstream argumentation studies and Burkean studies takes one more "toward adapting argumentation rather than dramatism" (149). One important reason for this is that frequently argumentation studies appears as a Phoenix arisen amid the detritus of formal logics, remaining under the sign of "Reason" and genuflecting instinctively toward Reason's traditional consort, Truth. Burke's orientation explicitly re-defines "rationality" and de-privileges, indeed de-stabilizes, truth. For a "rapprochement," to borrow Klumpp's terminology, to occur, "argumentation" needs to be approached from within the orientations of dramatism; that is, perhaps the most productive point of entry into a "conversation" between dramatism and argumentation is not "Where

does dramatism 'fit' in argumentation?" but rather "Where does argumentation 'fit' in dramatism?"

Burke offers a new contextualization of *rationality* in the nexus of mind, body, language, and circumstance, all infused with the spiritual goads of perfectionism, in the betweenness of action/motion: he calls this nexus "motive" and insists that its structure and functioning can be "read" in the text or verbal encompassments of a situation. These motives are visible in the "ratios" which best encompass the discourse, and the "ratios" – to be discussed more fully below – are products of dramatistic analysis. Burke's "dramatism" is an account of human "motives" and, ultimately, humans attitudes and actions. It professes to encompass vast chunks of the classical domains of dialectic, rhetoric, ethics, and poetics, as well as much of more contemporary psychology, sociology, and philosophy. While not discounting the biological, psychological, or material, dramatism privileges the linguistic in its account of motives; certainly, for Burke, *motives* per se are linguistic: they are to be located in the accounts people give of why they did what they did (1945, x). In other words, Burke, the word-man, begins always with "logos," the word. In "Curriculum Criticum," an appendix to the second edition (1953) of *Counter-Statement* (1931), Burke writes of his proposed trilogy: "The whole project aims to round out an analysis of language in keeping with the author's favorite notion that, man being the specifically language-using animal, an approach to human motivation should be made through the analysis of language" (218-19). "Dramatism" is an explanatory and critical theory which works through language to better understand human motives; in its sweeping embrace of rhetoric, dialectic, poetics, and ethics dramatism also includes in its embrace the traditional domain of argumentation.

Argumentation's break from logical formalism has moved the field toward Burke's orientation. As Klumpp notes (1993), "Through Wallace, and Toulmin, and Perelman, and Fisher, and Scott, and others, we have treatments of argument that seek to return to the root of 'logic' in *'logos'*, in the linguistic power of humans. The resources of dramatism with its commitment to a dialectical working of text and context, permanence and change, identity and identification, and dozens of other tensions resolved in linguistic acts may point argumentation more clearly to the constructive appeal of argument" (162). Yet this return to "the root of 'logic' in 'logos'" has not meant a purging of formal logic; indeed, "argumentation" may be seen as an encompassment of formal logics, and as an

encompassment it both *retains* (or preserves) and *reduces* logic. Logic is now a part of the whole, no longer a metonym standing in place of a larger dynamic. Logic is never repudiated: it is retained, yet transformed. Just as the nascent field of argumentation has moved to encompass formal logic, so too does Burke's Dramatism move to encompass argumentation itself.

From within a dramatistic perspective, the association between rationality and probability is, well, problematic: probability begs the questions, probable relative to what? That progressive linkage between the probable, the rational, and, often at least implicitly, the true, viewed from the dramatistic frame, is necessarily only a partial explanation, and hence a reductive one. A more comprehensive perspective would from the Burkean framework be the more "rational" (that with the maximum self-consciousness); that is, rather than emphasizing the *probable*, with its implicit this rather than that, either/or orientation, Burke emphasizes *situational encompassment,* "testing" the adequacy of a explanation relative to both the social and the material recalcitrances it encounters: progressive encompassment, rather than precise differentiation, becomes the desired end, the telos of the rational from within the dramatistic frame (See 1940, 138-167). That is, there is a situational encompassment via a perspective; the "rationality" of the perspective is evaluated relative to the adequacy of the orientation to the structure, including exigencies, of the rhetorical situation (See Burke, 1973).

From the Burkean orientation, a productive approach to "argument" is not simply how it functions in the constructions of formal appeals but rather how it operates from within a given motive structure. That is, questions of "validity" must be framed within the Weltanschauung of the audience; only then can how such appeals operate be seen in the full conspectus of their function. To appropriate Burke's admonition in "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'" (1940, 191ff), it is not sufficient to dismiss an argument as being 'unscientific' or lacking formal validity when that argument is holding popular sway. Along these lines, Burke writes somewhat sarcastically in 1940, "We thus need not despair of human rationality, even in eruptive days like ours. I am sure that even the most arbitrary of Nazis can be shown to possess it; for no matter how inadequate his chart of meaning may be, as developed under the privations of the quietus and oversimplifying dialectical pressure, he at least *wants* it to tell him accurately *what is going on* in his world and in the world at large" (114). From the perspective of dramatism, it would appear that argumentation's central concern with reason-giving or justificatory behavior is retained, yet the "rationality" of the reasons/justifications

is not separate from the motivational Weltanschauung from which it emanated. That is, motives are "rational" relative to their own structural/functional design and adequacy to the situations they encounter rather than to any a priori or non-contextualized form. Form, for Burke, is in the psychology of the audience (1931, 30-31); definitionally, "form" as such cannot exist apart from "situation" and "audience." Through this process, the "tests" of "rationality" are radically transformed. For instance, "that which is 'rational' is that which satisfies or would satisfy an aroused appetite, remembering always that in Burke's interpretation 'logical' structures are one of the forms of appetite and desire. It is precisely here that we have the 'psychologizing' of rationality, for the operative 'logics' in his system of rationality are the logics of desire, of the appetites" (Williams, 1990, 185). The "rationality" of desire is not to be confused with inchoate yearnings or impulsive actions: "That which is rational within a given order of desires may be seen in contrast to that which is incongruous with that order. That is, rationality is, above all else, an ordered structure of relationships; to 'be rational' is to operate within the structure or order of relationships apropos to one's time and situation" (Williams, 1990, 185). It is also, as Madsen emphasizes, to operate within the constraints of a particular terministic orientation (1989, 11; see also Jasinski).

Burke tends to equate "rationality" with but an aspect of human's symbol-using capabilities, and then he views rationality as the human genius for tracking-down the implications of our creations, linguistic and otherwise, for "perfecting" and "purifying" our categories, our dialectical desire for not just difference but opposition. In "Variations on 'Providence'" (1981), Burke writes, "The Logological concept of our species as the 'symbol-using animal' is not identical with the concept, *homo sapiens,* the 'rational' animal – for whereas we are the "symbol-using animal" all the time, we are *non*rational and even irrational *some* of the time. Somewhat along Freudian lines I take it that the very process of learning language long before we have reached the so-called 'age of reason' leaves upon us the mark of its necessarily immature beginnings; and only some of these can be called 'childlike' in the idyllic sense of the term".**[iii]** And overly diligent pursuit of the rational proper, as with any such purification, may being about its obverse, and it certainly brings about something different. From Burke's dramatistic perspective, "rationality's" penultimate perfection is ultimately a transformation into something new, different, other. From a more well rounded account of human motives, such genius, as Burke is fond of citing Santyana as saying, is almost always a catastrophe, culminating in scapegoating, wars, and

ecological destruction, for instances. Burke continues, “But implicit in its [language’s] very nature there is the principle of completion, or perfection, or carrying ideas to the end of the line, as with thoughts on first and last things – all told, goads toward the tracking down of implications. And ‘rationality’ is in its way the very ‘perfection’ of such language-infused possibilities. And what more ‘rational’ in that respect than our perfecting of *instruments* designed to help assist us in the tracking-down-of-implications, the rational genius of technology thus being in effect a vocational impulsiveness, as though in answer to a call?” (182-83). Burke’s alignment of traditional rationality and technological prowess, each containing its own genius for catastrophe, offers fruitful parallels to Habermas’s critique of technical rationality, parallels which must wait another day for further examination. Burke’s alternative in “maximum self-consciousness,” however, may diverge significantly from Habermas’s “life world.” What is needed instead of more “rationality” is what Burke calls “maximum self-consciousness”: an awareness of the very framing and structure of our own motives (and hence of alternative motive structures), a state of mind in which we use language rather than letting language use of, in which we think through the categories of language rather than letting the categories of language do our thinking for us.**[iv]** In expounding upon the educational and political value of dramatism, Burke maintains that dramatism “contends that by a methodic study of symbolic action men have their best chance of seeing beyond this clutter, into the ironic nature of the human species” (1955, 269-70).

That which is most “rational” within a dramatistic orientation (if not within others) is that which opens-up the linguistic possibilities, that which interferes with perfection and forestalls genius’s fulfillment in catastrophe, that which moves us toward “maximum self-consciousness.” The objective of such dramatistically “rational” argument is not its fulfillment as truth, or victor over dialectical opposition – ”the stylistic form of a lawyer’s plea” – , but rather as full an understanding as possible of what Burke at times calls a “calculus” of human motives: “An ideal philosophy, from this point of view, would seek to satisfy the requirements of a perfect dictionary. It would be a calculus for charting the nature of events and for clarifying all important relationships.” Or, in other Burkean language, it encompasses the situation. Burke continues, “…the only ‘proof’ of a philosophy, considered as a calculus, resides in showing, by concrete application, the scope, complexity, and accuracy of its coordinates for charting the nature of events.” “What, in fact, is ‘rationality’ but the desire for an *accurate chart for naming what is going on*?” (1940, 113-14). In dramatistic rationality, of

course, accuracy is encompassment, not precise differentiation; it is a "heaping up," not a purification (1940, 143-49). For Burke, dramatism's reflexive analytic methodologies – e.g., so-called pentadic analysis – force us toward preservation of the dialectic, toward a disavowal of the absolutism of relativism and an acceptance of the encompassing nature of paradox and irony (1945, 503-517). Burke's encompassing, or transcending, move culminates in dialectic, which is also where it started.

II

Traditional approaches to dialectics constructed dialectics as a method toward discovery of the True or probably true; it was a method of resolution toward a category of the true. Burke's approach stands the traditional orientation on its ear: for Burke, categories of the true or apparently true (e.g., the terms or categories of the pentad) become "resolved" into unnamable dialectic constructs, into "ratios" which define motive (e.g., a "scene/act" ratio). The dialectic is not resolved; instead, it is the resolution: human thought – symbolic action – is always dialectical. From this framework, "reason" must be understood not as a product of the dialectic (as a dialectically produced "sign" of the true) but rather as perpetually intrinsic to the dialectic, as itself always dialectical (1945). Again, in a Burkean orientation, a "ratio" (an explicitly dialectical construct) is a "reason" or, once 'psychologized,' a "motive." As Klumpp notes (1993), "the etymological root of 'ratios' and 'reason' are the same" (162) (sic). They share an "alchemic" core: what can be "thrown up" as a "reason" at one moment may appear distinctly as a "motive" at the next (see Burke, 1945, x). There is, of course, a close and necessarily relationship between the motive structures (ratios) and dialectics: Motives are dialectical. "The elements of the pentad constitute human motives only when they interact, which is to say only when they found dialectical relations with each other: a scene/act ratio, for instance, is neither scene nor act but rather the betweenness of scene and act which allows for transformation, for symbolic action, for motives" (Williams, 1992, 3). Given this, it is instructive to flesh-out Burke's approach to dialectics before suggesting how "drama" may be seen as the "psychologized" enactment of dialectics via the agency of rhetorical identifications.

Perhaps the most complete treatment of Burke's dialectic qua dialectic is in the report of a seminar on "Kenneth Burke as Dialectician," from the 1993 Triennial Conference of the Kenneth Burke Society (Williams, et.al.). The report offers

"nine over-lapping assertions concerning Kenneth Burke as dialectician" (17) which, in summation, offer a brief summary of Burke's orientation:

1. "Burke's dialectic is, among other things, *linguistic* in character" (17). The ineradicable negative lurking within any linguistic demarcation of difference renders dialectic and meaning virtually co-terminus: for Burke, essence or substance is always paradoxically dialectic (1945, 21-35). As the Seminar report continues, "From the dialectical structure of language emerge characteristic features of linguistic processes, e.g. merger and division (identification and difference), transformation, polarization, hierarchy, transcendence, etc." (17). Various "incarnations" of this "dialectical spirit" may be seen in various forms of social enactments.
2. "Burke's dialectic allows humans to draw distinctions – but not to reify categories" (17). By being ineradicable, the negative always provides the resources to de-construct any hermetically sealed and protected linguistic construct.
3. "Dialectic can be converted to drama via psychological identification with linguistic distinctions" (17). I will elaborate upon this assertion in my conclusion.
4. "Burke's dialectic is not one of oppositions but rather of *betweenness*. Burke's dialectic does not operate in the realm of either/ or but rather the both/and; the dialectic is in the 'margin of overlap' between the two. The betweenness of the dialectic facilitates transformations of one term into another; it does not promote oppositions or polarization. Dialectic 'dances' in the betweenness of two terms or concepts. In this sense, the 'attitude' or 'spirit' of Burke's dialectic is ironic, not contradictory or antagonistic: Burke's dialectic is the 'essence' of the comic perspective" (17-18).
5. "Burke's dialectic neither contains nor aspires toward a determined *telos*; rather, the *telos* of Burke's dialectic is undetermined and open-ended" (18).
6. "Burke's dialectic resides 'in the slash' between the terms under consideration, and dialectical freedom is enhanced as the slash is 'widened.' The metaphor 'in the slash' derives from Burke's discussion of motives as ratios between terms of the pentad (hexad). Thus, in a 'scene/act' ratio, the motive is in the 'betweenness' of scene and act, which is to say 'in the slash'" (18).
7. "Burke's dialectic inaugurates/preserves symbolic action" (18). Burke insists that there is a hard and fast distinction between motion and action, such that action is a unique species of motion characterized in large part by choice, which is to say in large measure this multidimensional structure is the work of logology – or words about [symbolic, dialectical, inhabited] words" (20).

8. “Burke is a dialectician who uses dialectic in a ‘strong’ sense.” That is, he uses “dialectic” not as a general metaphor but rather “as a *generating principle*” for much of his thinking (20). Dialectic is at the “center” of Burke’s *Motivorum* project: the very “substance” of motives is dialectical. As Burke puts it in *A Grammar,* “Whereas there is an implicit irony in the other notions of substance, with the dialectic substance the irony is explicit. For it derives its character from the systematic contemplation of the antinomies attendant upon the fact that we necessarily define a thing in terms of something else. ‘Dialectic substance’ would thus be the over-all category of dramatism, which treats of human motives in terms of verbal action” (1945, 33).

Perhaps one of the most cogent descriptions of Burke as a dialectician is that offered by his life-long friend and confidant, Malcolm Cowley, in Cowley’s review (1950) of A *Rhetoric of Motives:* Burke “is a dialectician who is always trying to reconcile opposites by finding that they have a common source. Give him two apparently hostile terms like poetry and propaganda, art and economics, speech and action, and immediately he looks beneath them for the common ground on which they stand. Where the Marxian dialectic moves forward in time from the conflict of Thesis and antithesis to their subsequent resolution or synthesis – and always emphasizes the conflict – the Burkean dialectic moves backwards from conflicting effects to harmonious causes. It is a dialectic of reconciliation or peace-making and not of war. At the same time it gives a backward or spiral movement to his current of thought, so that sometimes the beginning of a book is its logical ending and we have to reads the last chapter before fully understanding the first” (250).

III

Burke’s theory of “dramatism” psychologizes his theory of dialectics through the agency of “identification,” which in turn is Burke’s encompassing term for “rhetoric.” For Aristotle, rhetoric aims at persuasion, tempered by the ethics of rationality and, ultimately, truth; in its ideal form, rhetoric reasons through contingencies toward the probable. For Burke, rhetoric names the psychological/linguistic process by which “identification” occurs. Identification is the dramatistic counter-part of the dialectical and transformational processes of merger and division: identification with differences carved-out dialectically animates agonistically as “drama.” Through drama, both “knowledge” and “identity” are constructed. “Identification” names a psychological process

whereby a person interprets/constructs his/her symbolic world through certain constructs instead of others. By inhabiting certain constructs, a sense of identity is created: identification is constitutive of identity. “Rhetoric.” for Burke, is the process of identification (and alienation and re-identification, or re-birth). Identification, or rhetoric, is the internalization or inhabitation and enactment of the dialectical processes of merger and division. “Dramatism” is the theory of these enactments: drama, from the Burkean orientation, is literally the enactment of dialectically constructed agons of difference.

In Burke’s interpretation, dialectic demarcates differences, which refine into the *agon* of oppositions. Human agents inhabit the symbolic world through the process of identification with various and diverse dialectical distinctions. Such inhabitation, such psychological linkages, brings the dialectic to life: it quite literally *enacts* the *agon* of difference. The “lived” dialectic is thus literally drama; and since most vocabularies are lived, dialectic and drama are frequently virtually synonymous. But since the possibilities for linguistic transformations, which is to say dialectic, are not all “lived” or enacted, drama becomes a subset of dialectic (Williams, 1992, 9-10). Burke writes, “Though we have often used ‘dialectic’ and ‘dramatistic” as synonymous, dialectic in the general sense is a word of broader scope, since it includes all idioms that are non-dramatistic” (1945, 402). But when the dialectic is “lived,” when it is psychologized through the agency of identification, it is transformed into drama. Literally (Williams, 1992, 10). And it is here that the dialectic is encompassed and transformed in its enactment as drama.

Burke’s theoretical framework re-situates argumentation within his ‘psychologized’ dialectic, his dramatism. Burke’s theory of dramatism is, in his often invoked phrase, “well-rounded” in its account of human motives. Weaving together strands from dialectic, rhetoric, poetics, and ethics, Burke’s “dramatism” is framed within a general commitment to individualism (and its attendant longing for communalism; working in close conjunction with the related pairs: solipsism/communication, division/merger, etc.), pragmatism (with nagging idealizing undercurrents), and “Agro-Bohemianism,” Burke’s personal mode of adjustment to the material and social exigencies of life. Life occurs through a series of moralized symbolic choices, constrained and impinged upon by social and material conditions, and educated by the recalcitrances of the non-symbolic world as well as by other agents, agencies, scenes, purposes, acts, and attitudes in the symbolic world too. In the classical formulation, these “sites” of these

choices could be understood as giving rise to recognizable discourse forms, e.g., poetics, rhetoric, etc., as well as recurrent symbolic genre, e.g., tragedy or deliberative rhetoric, and ultimately modes of appeal within the generic orientations, e.g., personification or such elements as the modes of artistic proof, ethos, pathos, and logos. Dramatism would analyze classical appeals such as a logos appeal not simply as a form of rational argument but rather as a form of rational argument within a broader realm of symbolic action, which must be understood as transforming the "site" of argument proper. In the dramatistic perspective, "ratios" are "consubstantial" with "motives," In the traditional view, "reason" leads to "rational action" and perhaps even to "truth." In the dramatistic view, "reason," "rationality," "truth," etc., are all forms of symbolic action, not privileged above the functionings of language but rather as recurring forms of symbolic action themselves. Argument, for Burke, is not a linguistic process which leads toward an extra- or trans-linguistic truth but rather a dialectical process which yields greater understanding and appreciation of the resources and power of our symbol systems themselves. Burke's encompassment and psychologized enactment of dialectics in his theory of dramatism offers a potentially productive re-situating of argumentation theory in what some fear may be the twilight of the Age of Reason.

NOTES

i. The unfinished drafts of both A Symbolic of Motives and Poetics, Dramatistically Considered are products of the 1950s, and for the most part the early 1950s. Portions of Poetics, Dramatistically Considered were published as journal articles in the 1950s; additional sections of both manuscripts will soon be published. See the forthcoming book, Unending Conversations: Essays by and about Kenneth Burke, Ed. Greig Henderson and David Cratis Williams, which includes several unpublished sections of both Poetics, Dramatistically Considered and A Symbolic of Motives, as well as essays about these manuscripts.

ii. Burke's points of departure are frequently at least implicitly Aristotelian, as with the Motivorum project, and sometimes explicitly so, as with Poetics, Dramatistically Considered. But the reading should be Aristotle from a Burkean orientation, not Burke in Aristotle's terms. Burke 'came to' Aristotle, at least as a serious subject of study, relatively late in his theory-building process; references to Aristotle become frequent initially in the early 1950s (See Henderson). From the 'Dramatistic' perspective, Aristotelian categories are simply subsumed – retained and reduced – within a broader and more descriptively accurate

viewpoint.

iii. Perhaps because of its comfortable accomodation of the nonrational and irrational as well as the rational, Burke tends to hold poetic and literary models as more representative of human action than logical models. In charting one's way through such a life, Burke's holds forth the aesthetic as the best adapted metaphor for encompassing the situation: literature – not argument – is equipment for living. But this is not an either/or proposition for Burke: argument is subsumed within the broader anecdote.

iv. Burke is often fond of citing Coleridge from Biographia Literariato the effect that our linguistic categories, once 'naturalized', become self-evident 'common-sense': "the language itself does as it were for us" (Stauffer, 158).

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – The Effects Of Dialectical Fallacies In Interpersonal And Small Group Discussions: Empirical Evidence For The Pragma-Dialectical Approach

1. Introduction

Since Brockriede (1975) and O'Keefe (1977) publicly recognized the importance of studying arguments as they are made in the context of everyday discourse (O'Keefe's argument2), argumentation scholars have been increasingly interested in studying the phenomenon in terms of its value as a communication activity rather than a logical exercise. Rhetoricians have long been interested in the function of argumentation in persuading an audience but it has only been recently that argumentation scholars have taken up the task of examining how patterns of reason giving are created and used by those involved in everyday conversation. Scholars such as Jackson & Jacobs (1980), Trapp (1983), Walton (1992), and van Eemeren and his colleagues (e.g., van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson, & Jacobs, 1993) have extended the study of argumentation from the study of formal and informal logic structures to the study of the ways in which arguments function in resolving disputational communication.

One of the first and most productive lines of inquiry regarding the study of argumentation as it occurs in discourse has been the pragma-dialectical approach originating with van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992). The pragma-dialectical (PD) perspective extends the traditional normative logical approach of evaluating arguments by creating standards for reasonableness that have a functional rather than a structural focus. An argument is evaluated in terms of its usefulness in moving a critical discussion toward a well reasoned resolution rather than concentrating exclusively on the relationship of premises to conclusions. The PD approach recognizes the importance of normative standards for judging the

strength or cogency of single argumentative acts but in addition recognizes that arguments are constructed in order to achieve a communicative goal.
As evaluative criteria for the quality of arguments, the PD posits several normative guidelines for how communication in resolving or managing a dispute should proceed. While several argumentation scholars have elaborated, extended, or some way adopted portions of PD (e.g., Walton, 1992; Weger & Jacobs, 1995), there has been little direct empirical research seeking to verify that the violation of the kinds of discussion rules identified by van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992) indeed causes problems in the management of disagreements. The purpose of this essay is to examine empirical research in interpersonal and small group argument in order to discover what harms, if any, result from the violation of rules for critical discussion. The essay will begin by examining the effects of following and violating discussions rules on the ability to resolve disputes and the quality of the decisions that result. The next section of the essay will examine the interpersonal and relational outcomes that are associated with following or violating discussion rules as articulated by van Eemeren and his associates.

In Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies, van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992) lay the foundation for the pragmadialectical approach to argumentation study. They begin by arguing that the standard treatment of argumentation and fallacies either ignores the communicative functions in favor of examining reason/claim relationships or abandon entirely normative standards of evaluation in favor of examining whether the argument achieves the goal of gaining the acceptance of an audience. The traditional logical approach evaluates arguments based on decontextualized, abstract structural features of arguments that are applied across situations. The rhetorical perspective, on the other hand, tends to evaluates the quality of an argument in terms of its persuasiveness. PD provides an advance on these perspectives by suggesting that normative guidelines for evaluating the quality of an argument requires attention to the communicative functions served by arguing as well as the logical structure of the lines of reasoning used in the dialogue.
The functional perspective on argument is based first on the belief that argumentation is a communicative activity. And second, it is based on a functional view of communication in which messages are studied in terms of the purposes they serve and the goals they achieve. At its most fundamental level, the purpose of argumentative dialogue is the resolution and management of real or potential disputes. Therefore, it is a mistake to evaluate arguments out of the context in

which they are used or in a way that looks only at the logical structure without a description of the way certain argumentative moves effect the ability to manage or resolve a dispute based on good reasons. A functional perspective requires that arguments be studied, in part, by how they contribute to the communicative goals of resolving or managing a dispute.

The PD perspective also commits itself to a dialectical framework in which arguments are assumed to be the basis of critical discussions aimed at arriving at the truth or falsity of some standpoint or set of standpoints. It is therefore, not enough to simply describe arguments and their effects. A complete picture of argument can only be arrived at by examining the quality of an argument both in terms of its usefulness in resolving or managing a dispute and in terms of its validity or cogency according to normative standards of reasonableness.

The dual requirements of usefulness and reasonableness have given rise to ten normative criteria for conducting rational critical discussions (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992). These rules are organized around the functions that argumentative speech acts perform at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of a critical discussion. In the opening stage of a dispute a speaker presents a standpoint as true while their counterpart casts doubt upon it through presenting objections or counterproposals. In order for the dialogue to continue toward a resolution of the disagreement, arguers must maintain a climate of open exchange of ideas. The first rule presented in the pragma-dialectical approach is that, "parties must not prevent each other from presenting standpoints or casting doubt on standpoints" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992; p. 108). Tactics such as attacking an opponent personally violate this rule because it is an attempt to forestall discussion by disqualifying an opponent to speak on the issue, or to distract the opponent from the issue under discussion. For a critical discussion to advanced past confrontation, arguers must also be willing to defend standpoints. The second rule for critical discussions requires that interlocutors defend standpoints once entered into discussion. Violation of the either of the first two rules essential precludes rational testing of the truth of a proposition.

At the argumentation stage PD discussion rules chiefly concern the ways in which lines of reasoning are developed and how logical structures are applied to defending standpoints. Rules three and four require that protagonists and antagonists extend their reasoning in a way that is relevant to their own and their opponent's positions regarding the standpoint under consideration. Rule five deals with the responsibility of arguers to accurately represent the expressed and

unexpressed premises that each party is actually accountable for. This rule declares as unacceptable the attack on an unexpressed premise that is either not relevant to the opponent's standpoint or that the opponent has not committed herself to defending. Rules six and seven prohibit the representation of a premise as accepted or defended as true if the starting point has not been accepted or conclusively defended. The sixth and seventh rules also prohibit the denial of a previously accepted or conclusively defended premise. The final normative guideline at the argumentation stage stipulates that reasons ought to be logically related to the standpoint(s) they are meant to defend. Standpoints that can't, at least in principle, be shown to follow logically from the arguments offered to support them, must be withdrawn from the discussion.

The ninth rule for the rational management of critical discussions involves the closing stage. The ninth rule necessitates that standpoints that are conclusively defeated or upon which doubt has been cast must be withdrawn. The goal of offering arguments that support or cast doubt upon a standpoint is to come to some conclusion about the point at issue. Rule nine is important because it recognizes that an issue can only be resolved if discussants are willing to recognized and acknowledge that their standpoint has been shown to be untenable.

Rule ten applies at all stages of a critical discussion. Rule ten requires that arguments be made clearly and unambiguously and that an opponent's arguments must be given a faithful and charitable interpretation. Resolving a dispute on the merits of each person or group's case depends on both party's cooperation. The use of ambiguous wording, syntax, or logical schemes prevents cooperative discussion because what exactly is at issue or even whether or not a dispute actually exists is open to question. Cooperative disagreement management also depends on each party's ability and willingness to accurately interpret their opponent's messages so that counter reasoning is directed at the actual point at issue in the dispute.

These normative assumptions about what is required to successfully negotiate a controversy have a great deal of intuitive and theoretical appeal. Recent research has provided evidence of the PD model as a tool for argument criticism (e.g., van Eemeren et al, 1993). Little, if any, direct research has been conducted that examines the outcomes of following or violating these rules, however. Fortunately, a critical examination of empirical research in group and interpersonal argument illustrates that following or violating these rules are

related to the kinds of decisions that are reached regarding the point at issue as well as the perceived satisfaction with the interaction, the perceived competence of the speaker, and the perceived quality of the relationship.

2. Fallacies and Quality of Decision Making in Group Argument

Research regarding the outcomes of critical discussions have largely appeared in the small group decision making literature. In general, two qualities of decision making outcomes have been studied. One is whether or not a group is able to come to a consensus. From a PD position, coming to a consensus about a standpoint is not essential but it is preferable since the goal of a critical discussion is to resolve a dispute to the satisfaction of all parties. Research indicates that violating discussion rules prevents groups from coming to consensus.

The failure to defend a standpoint, a violation of rule two, has been found to predict whether a group comes to a consensus (Canary, Brossmann, & Seibold, 1987; Hirokawa & Pace, 1983; Pace, 1985). For example, in a study examining low and high consensus groups, Canary et. al (1987) found that low consensus groups tended to produce more unsupported assertions than the high consensus groups. Furthermore, Pace (1985) found that standpoints were developed by a variety of group participants whether or not there was overt disagreement in high consensus, but not low consensus, groups. These studies point out the importance of offering evidence for standpoints in producing mutually agreeable decisions. The use of reasoning and support for asserted standpoints facilitates the critical examination of the issue by the group and exposes flaws in the quality of decisions advocated by group members. It is easier to derive a consensus about a decision when the flawed decision alternatives are unmasked. Group members are more persuaded to come to a common assessment about a decision alternative when they have been offered reasons to do so.

Another interesting characteristic of argument in high and low consensus groups involves the willingness of group members to switch their position during a discussion. Pace (1985) found that members of high consensus groups appeared to be more likely to explore both sides of a point at issue by offering reasons that both support and cast doubt upon it. This finding offers indirect support for the importance of following discussion rules that require that parties be willing to give up defeated standpoints and be willing to accept opposing standpoints that have been successfully defended. When arguers are willing to explore and ultimately give up their own perspective in favor of a more reasonable alternative

they are also more likely to find common ground in coming to a mutually agreeable conclusion based on the merits of the case for the standpoint under discussion. On the other hand, refusing to admit that a standpoint has been defeated and failing to accept an argument that is reasonable prevents groups from agreeing about which position appears to be the most sensible.
Finally, it appears that groups that reach consensus tend to follow rules regarding the relevance of their contributions to resolving the dispute (e.g., Gouran & Geonetta, 1977; Saine & Bock, 1973). Gouran and Geonetta (1977) for example, found that non consensus groups tended to be characterized by more random contributions than consensus groups. Non consensus groups also tend to be less responsive to issues raised by group members than consensus groups (Saine & Bock, 1973). Keeping argumentative contributions relevant leads to consensus because the discussion stays on track toward resolution. As van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1987) predict, the use of irrelevant argumentation prevents productive outcomes.

Along with predicting whether a group is able to reach consensus on an issue, violating rules for critical discussion is also associated with the quality of the decision a group makes. For example, Hirokawa and Pace (1983) found that groups that make effective decisions**[i]** engage in more support and defense of standpoints offered by group members than groups that make less effective decisions. This study indicates that the failure to defend standpoints once they are met with scrutiny, and offering standpoints with little or no reasoning in support of them, lead to conclusions that are judged to be unwarranted. Leathers (1970; 1972) has also found that irrelevant remarks (violation of rules three and four), negative messages (violation of rule one), and highly abstract statements (violation of rule ten) are all associated with decisions deemed by independent raters to be of poor quality. Small group research also indicates that groups who leave inferences implicit (Leathers, 1970), and groups who treat unexamined or unchallenged inferences as though they were facts tend to make poor decisions. Along with Leathers (1970), Hirokawa and Pace (1983) also find that ineffective groups tend to draw inferences that are at best only weakly supported by the facts of the case and that are characterized by unsound reasoning. Furthermore, the ineffective groups tend not to explore the strength of their inferential reasoning and once the inferences are drawn, treat them as uncontested facts upon which they base their decisions. It seems clear then that failing the requirement to produce logically sound arguments (rules six, seven, and eight) in

a critical discussion leads to coming to conclusions that are judged to be of lower quality.

3. Fallacies and Interpersonal Outcomes

In general, critical research involving the pragma-dialectical perspective focuses on evaluating the effects fallacies produce on the strength of the reasoning used to arrive at a conclusion or the effects fallacies have on qualities of the conversation itself. It is intuitively appealing to predict that fallacious reasoning in interpersonal disagreements will have identity management and relational impacts beyond the more instrumentally oriented outcomes that have been the focus of dialectical argumentation research. Structural properties of conversation seem to point a preference for at least the appearance of rationality in managing disagreements (Jackson & Jacobs, 1980). It seems likely that serious deviations from rational dialogue will produce less favorable evaluations of those who argue fallaciously.

However, because everyday arguers don't generally hold each other to strict standards of traditional logic in resolving disagreements, the traditional approach to fallacious argument doesn't provide an especially useful framework for examining fallacies in interpersonal disagreements. The PD perspective's conceptualization of fallacies as consisting of conversational moves that derail the problem solving process maps on well to what is known about how qualities of conflictual interaction are associated with identity and relational outcomes.

To begin, research indicates that tactics designed to prevent another party from advancing a standpoint are associated with negative perceptions of the arguer and the relationship. The use of ad hominem in the form of personal criticism and defensiveness have been shown to be associated with less relationship satisfaction (e.g., Gottman, 1979; 1994) and with perceiving the partner to be a less competent communicator (Canary and Spitzberg, 1989; Canary, Brossmann, Brossmann, & Weger, 1995). Complaints that focus on personal characteristics are perceived less favorably than complaints focusing on behaviors (Alberts, 1988). Finally, personal complaints tend to be associated with creating feelings of shame and rage leading to out of control escalation in personal disagreements (Retzinger, 1991). The use of ad hominem not only is logically irrelevant to the claim being examined it also prevents critical examination of a claim by creating strong emotional reactions in listeners that make critical inquiry almost impossible.

Another way in which conversational partners attempt to discourage the examination of a standpoint is to draw attention away from the substance of a partner's complaint by responding to it with the assertion that the act of complaining is itself so objectionable that the respondent need not be held accountable for answering the complaint. In other words, a person may discourage the examination of the standpoint by complaining about the complaint (Matoesan, 1993). Similarly, cross complaining can inhibit the examination of a standpoint by offering a competing complaint about the complainer's own actions, attitudes, or intentions. Complaining about a complaint is a type of ad hominem attack that forestalls discussion of the original standpoint by asserting the act of issuing the complaint points to some disagreeable quality in the complainer. Cross complaining is a form of tu qou que in which the original complaint is disqualified based on some equally disagreeable and complainable, though unrelated, attribute found in the source of the complaint. Cross complaining can be treated as a fallacy of consistency or as a fallacy of obscuration in which the dispute becomes mired in the attempt to resolve two entirely unrelated standpoints simultaneously. Each party in a cross complaint situation is attempting to defend their own standpoint while attacking their opponent's unrelated assertion. Cross complaining both prevents another from advancing a standpoint and creates an over complicated mixed dispute in which the progression toward resolution of one issue is irrelevantly linked to the resolution of an unrelated issue. Both complaints about complaints (Alberts, 1988; 1989) and cross complaining (Gottman, 1979) have been found to be judged unfavorably or associated with dissatisfaction with a romantic partner.

Along with fallacies that prevent others from advancing standpoints, it appears that the failure to defend a standpoint (rule two) and the failure to offer reasons in support of a standpoint (rules two and seven) are related to problematic interpersonal outcomes. First, a great deal of research indicates that couples who engage in demand/withdraw interaction patterns have a substantially greater chance of being dissatisfied and eventually terminating their relationship (Gottman, 1995; Heavy, Layne, & Christensen, 1993). The demand/withdraw pattern can be interpreted as a violation of the requirement that disputants defend their standpoints when asked to do so. Characteristic of the demand/withdrawal patterns is one party attempting to advance or cast doubt upon a standpoint while the opposing party stonewalls by evading the issue or simply refusing to do anything beyond reassert their original standpoint.

Stonewalling and withdrawing prevent resolution of important relationship issues, issues which left unresolved create tension and dissatisfaction with the relationship and the partner.

Second, standards for the logical acceptability of an argument require that a claim be accompanied by a supporting proposition that implies the truth of the asserted claim. Arguments which fail to provide reasoning for assertions therefore violate both rule two and rule seven (which requires that arguments be logically sound). Research by Canary and his associates (e.g., Canary, Brossmann, Sillars, & LoVette, 1987; Canary, et al, 1995) indicate that conversations that are characterized by the use of unsupported assertions result in less satisfaction with the interaction, with the perception that the conversational partner is an ineffective arguer, and with perceptions of decreased satisfaction with the relationship. Canary et al (1995) conclude by suggesting that everyday arguers have minimum standards for rationality in resolving disputes. In other words, in managing ordinary disputes, conversational partners prefer reasoned discourse over simple assertion and counter assertion. Not only does the use of reasoned discourse produce better decisions it produces more favorable interpretations of the conversational partner and the relationship.

4. Implications and Conclusion

This research review points to several ways in which the fields of argumentation, interpersonal, and small group communication intersect and offer implications for each other. One important implication is the usefulness of evaluating and studying small group and interpersonal conflict in terms of dialectical fallacies. Research in small group and especially in interpersonal conflict resolution tends to focus on strategies and tactics as they relate to interpersonal dimensions of the interaction. Rarely does research on interpersonal interaction examine conflict tactics in terms of their acceptability as rational contributions to the resolution of a dispute (cf. Canary et al, 1987; Canary, Weger, & Stafford, 1991; Canary et al, 1995). Furthermore, as Gottman (1994) admits, the relationship of behaviors such as personal criticism, defensiveness, and withdrawal to relational outcomes is more descriptive than theoretical. One possible theoretical explanation for this relationship is that the use of unproductive tactics prevents disputes from being resolved in ways that are acceptable and/or workable for the parties involved. When problems go unresolved partners build resentment toward each other and feel that the costs of staying in the relationship outweigh the rewards. Resolutions to interpersonal disputes that are arrived through a process of reason giving and

rational testing of ideas may not only produce logically sound conclusions but also personally satisfying ones as well.

Another implication of this research review is that argumentation scholarship would benefit by paying more attention to the relational as well as the content dimension of argumentative messages. For the most part, argument research devotes its attention to the propositional content of the messages in exclusion to any meaning the messages have for the identity of the hearer or the relationship between speaker and hearer. The dialectical approaches to argumentation theory, while better than traditional logical approaches, still tends to overlook the ways in which identity management and relationship goals have implications for the way people produce and respond to arguments. While correctly pointing out that speech acts such as expressives (i.e., messages that express a speaker's feelings) can contribute or detract from the progress of a critical discussion, van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1993) largely ignore the relational dimensions inherent in speech acts such as assertives, directives, declaritives, and so on. For example, the fallacy of ad hominem can be accomplished through an assertive speech act by simply asserting that an opponent has poor character. An ad hominem, however, produces poor argument both because it shifts the focus of the dispute to an irrelevant issue and because personal attacks create a hostile and defensive communication climate in which an arguer's attention to identity management and repair become more important than the original standpoint at issue. Being personally attacked also creates strong emotional reactions such as shame and rage (Retzinger, 1991) that place cognitive demands on the disputant that makes productive thinking about the situation difficult if not impossible (Zillman, 1990).

The research on small group, interpersonal, and relational argument and conflict can be taken together to suggest that normative requirements for an ideal model of critical discussion are operative in everyday instances of dispute resolution. We can see that the system developed by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1987) for evaluating argumentation has more than intuitive appeal. Empirical research suggests that there are a number of instrumental, relational, and identity management advantages to avoiding dialectical fallacies.

NOTES

i. Effective and ineffective groups were determined by having independent judges rate the quality of each groups decision along four evaluative criteria.

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ISSA Proceedings 1998 – Linguistically Sound Arguments

The centuries-long discussion as to what constitutes "good" argument has often found supporters and opponents on the basis of the standards selected to evaluate argument. Ancient standards of technical validity have been the subject of some twentieth-century scrutiny. No issue is more fundamental to the study of argumentation than the question of what constitutes good argument. Our legitimacy as critics, practitioners and teachers of argumentation rests upon our ability to evaluate, construct and describe good arguments. Historically, argument scholars have relied primarily upon formal standards borrowed from the field of logic to provide necessary evaluative criteria. In the latter half of this century, however, those criteria have increasingly been attacked as being inappropriate or, at least, insufficient for the study of both public and personal argumentative discourse. Stephen Toulmin has suggested we replace the mathematical model of argument with one from jurisprudence, thus focusing on the soundness of the claims we make, especially as we use argument in "garden variety discourse."(Toulmin, 1958). Other theorists quickly followed Toulmin's lead.

1. Recent Interpretations of Good Argument

While a few theorists (Willard, 1979) have gone so far as to reject logical standards, most others continue to recognize their usefulness as a part of broader schemas for evaluation of argument. Toulmin's dissatisfaction with the rigidity and formalism of logic led him to propose a more open and flexible model of argument and to suggest that the evaluation of arguments involves the application of both traditional field invariant standards and previously overlooked field specific standards (Toulmin, 1958). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have advanced the concept of the universal audience composed of critical listeners, which presumably restrains advocates from making spurious arguments. At the same time, they suggest we consider adherence as the goal of argument, a focus

on the intersection of psychological effects and logical strength (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969). Drawing on the work of earlier scholars, McKerrow describes a good argument as one which provides "pragmatic justification (McKerrow, 1977). This interpretation places emphasis on the "rational perusal of arguments" by an audience in a dialectic-like relationship. Farrell interprets validity in terms of "soundness" of a rhetorical argument. An argument is sound if it conforms to three conditions:
1. is addressed to an empowered and involved audience,
2. conforms to the consensual standards of the specific field, and
3. is consistent with social knowledge (Farrell, 1977).

Zarefsky defines good argument as one that is "reasonable," and one is reasonable if "the form of inference is free of obvious defects, and the underlying assumptions of the argument are shared by the audience" (Zarefsky,1981:88).

Collectively, these authors and others suggest that good arguments are ones that have, at least, some claim to rationality and are based upon premises and standards acceptable to the specific audiences being addressed. While these conditions serve as minimal standards for good argument, they are, in our judgment, incomplete and lacking in explanatory power. What is missing from current analyses is a consideration of the role of language. Careful language usage is necessary for the construction of sound arguments, and effective language is the key to persuasive argumentation. We define a good argument as one that is *linguistically sound*. The term "linguistically sound" is intended to encompass three conditions. A linguistically sound argument:
1. conforms to the traditional field invariant standards of inductive and deductive argument,
2. is based upon data appropriate to the audience and field, and
3. is expressed in language that enhances the evocative and ethical force of argument.

In the sections that follow, we will demonstrate how each of these conditions is linguistically based and how a linguistic perspective helps to explain the strength of the argument.

2. Field Invariant Standards
Even a cursory examination of argument suggests a close relationship between language and argument. It is through language that we describe relationships and

create meaning about the world around us. Concepts such as correlation and causation allow us to perceive relationships differently than was possible before we had appropriated these methodological terms. We may have an intuitive sense of justice and love, but our ability to differentiate them occurs through language. Thus, language is the means by which we bridge the gap between the complex and confusing world of our senses and a more ordered world of meaning.

In his thoughtful essay, "Argument as Linguistic Opportunity," Balthrop examines argument from a linguistic perspective and establishes a strong relationship between language and discurive reasoning. Discursive reasoning itself arises in discourse and shares its characteristics: that is, it posits relations both syntactically and semantically and through the fundamental representativeness of linguistic symbols. Second, discursive reasoning is sequential – for without sequence, verbal expression cannot exist. It is from such insights that Langer observed in *Philosophy in a New Key*, "the laws of reasoning, our clearest formulation of exact knowledge, are sometimes known as 'laws of discursive thought." If the symbolic function of argument is reason-giving or presenting justification, then that function is accomplished through discursive means – for reason giving requires analysis beyond mere expression. And, in the practical world of both the naive and the more sophisticated social actor, such analysis is usually conducted linguistically (Balthrop, 1980: 190).

Thus language becomes the key to discursive reasoning, and is central to the whole activity of reason giving. Balthrop goes further to argue that linguistic forms reflect how people think – at least at the deep structure level. He continues: The subject-predicate structure for human thought may, in fact, be universal. Langer concludes that "to all speakers of Indo-European languages the classical syllogism seems to be a logic of 'natural inference,' because they speak and think in subjectpredicate forms." Izutsu goes one step further contending that "far from being a peculiarity of Western thought /predicatesubject thought/ seems to be normal and universal wherever the human mind has attained a certain level of logical thinking as far, at least, as it is carried on by means of verbal symbols" (1980:195).

An understanding of the relationship between language and argument is important because it explains *why* the traditional field in-variant standards of inductive and deductive argument reveal potential problems in the thinking process. Even if the traditional standards are not a perfect reflection of the ways in which experience, language, and thought are related, no one has yet provided

more useful tests. Although some may argue that Toulmin's concept of field dependent standards makes traditional invariant standards irrelevant, it is well to remember that Toulmin, himself, did not propose field variant as a *substitute* for field invariant standards. Moreover, research to date has tended to reveal differences among fields only in the *importance* assigned to particular forms and standards of argument rather than in the forms and standards themselves. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's concept of a universal audience is too abstract to be of much practical use for either the construction or criticism of arguments. And even Fisher's concepts of narrative probability and narrative fidelity are only more generalized, and therefore, less analytical, forms of the traditional standards for evaluating arguments.

Thus, the field invariant standards of argument are an important component of a linguistically sound argument. They are grounded in our language and thought structures; they are supported by historic experience, and alternative standards seem to be insufficient. As Zarefsky concludes, reliance on these standards "in the past has led to satisfactory results far more often than not" (Zarefsky, 1980:88).

3. Data Appropriate to the Audience

The second condition for a linguistically sound argument is that the data must be appropriate to the audience and field. The audience has always been central to rhetorical theory so that Toulmin's concept of field invariant standards of argument has been readily embraced by rhetorical scholars. Much of the literature of both classical rhetorical theory and contemporary field theory emphasizes the need for advocates to build their arguments on premises that are shared by their audiences. Bitzer's "revisitation" of the enthymeme grounds his analysis in what the rhetor shares with his or her audience (Bitzer, 1959). So much importance is placed on shared assumptions that it sometimes appears that audiences can only be addressed on subjects they already believe in. What is often not discussed, however, is how an advocate can proceed if her basic assumptions differ from those of her audience. An examination of the role of language in argument is helpful in this regard.

Language can be used to create a greater harmony of beliefs than might otherwise exist. The ambiguous nature of values and the abstract language used to identify them make it possible to minimize differences and maximize agreement through careful conceptual choices. Kenneth Burke's description of how dialectical terms (terms of opposition) may become transcendent (or terms of union, god terms) is a good illustration of this process (Burke, 1945). In recent

years, politicians have regularly assumed that they and their audiences share a comon commitment to equal opportunity. Although most American audiences probably believe in equal opportunity at some level, such a belief does not translate into a common commitment to affirmative action; nor is a belief in affirmative action the same thing as a belief in racial and gender quotas. Thus, the ability to identify a common assumption and to link that assumption to an audience may depend in large part in the language of identification employed.

Not only are our beliefs abstract, but our belief systems encompass many different assumptions that exist in some loose hierarchy of values. This multiple, hierarchical nature of premises provides an additional opportunity for using language to establish a common ground. A linguistic bridge that embraces multiple beliefs can sometimes create a common ground out of conflicting assumptions. President Kennedy's concept of a Peace Corps created such a linguistic bridge. The Peace Corps' concept incorporated elements of economic assistance, service opportunities for young and elderly persons, and greater American involvement in foreign nations.

While the community service aspect of the program had relatively broad appeal, the ideas of increased foreign spending and greater U.S. involvement in the problems of third world nations were not popular with large segments of the American public. Kennedy's labeling of the program as the Peace Corps allowed him to embrace all of these values and minimize resistance by linguistically identifying it with the higher, and more encompassing, shared value of peace.

Premises are, of course, not the only form of data. When the shared assumptions of speaker and audience are insufficient and need to be built upon, evidence is required. The amount and type of evidence needed depends upon the expectations of the specific field and audience. But even within those constraints, language factors can significantly affect the impact and acceptability of that evidence.

When a range of expert testimony is available, the author's language should be a fundamental consideration in deciding which source to rely on. The language used in the evidence should be free of offensive references. Currently, evidence which relies on "he" as a pronoun for persons in general may function to alienate certain audiences. In addition, the language should be appropriate to the level and background of the audience, and it should enhance the emotional and ethical appeal of the argument. Similarly, even statistical evidence is frequently difficult for audiences to comprehend so that special attention should be given to explaining and interpreting its meaning. For general audiences, the use of non-

technical terminology is especially important. Whether data of fact or opinion, language functions centrally in both creating understanding of evidence for an audience and shaping audience attitudes toward that data.

4. Enhancing Emotional and Ethical Force

A third condition for a linguistically sound argument is that it be expressed in language that enhances the argument's emotional and ethical force. The two preceding conditions of a good argument have generally been recognized by other authors, although they have focused less attention on the linguistic dimensions of these standards. The third condition of argument, however, has been largely overlooked as a positive element of argument. Logicians have generally viewed language as a negative factor in argument. Many of the logical fallacies, for example, are based upon language problems or upon unacceptable emotional or ethical appeals. Much of the rhetorical discussion of style has viewed it as an artistic adornment that functions to enhance effect but is largely unrelated to argument.

It is not our purpose here to disagree with specific categories of logical fallacies. We recognize that language can be misused and that the substitution of emotion or appeals to authority for reasoned argumentation is inappropriate. Nor do we wish to devalue the artistic dimensions of rhetoric. Rather it is our position that language is not only inherent to the argument process, but that an understanding of its proper role resolves the tension between the standards of logical validity and audience effectiveness.

Alan Gross and Marcelo Dascal in their essay "The Question of the Conceptual Unity of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*" argue that in the *Rhetoric* inference (argument) is intimately related to language and style as well as to ethos and pathos. They describe Aristotle's theory of language and style in the following terms:

Though little more than a sketch, Aristotle's theory of style and arrangement is clearly cognitive in that it depends on the inferential abilities of particular audiences. Style is both a level at which discourse is pitched (in modern linguistics register) and a set of semantic, syntactic and prosodic variants within that register. In the former sense, a particular style is appropriate if it is proportional to situation and subject matter; in Aristotle's words, "the lexis will be appropriate if it is … proportional /analogon/" (3.7.1). The mathematical analogy is exactly right; it emphasizes the close fit between a rhetorical situation and its verbal response (Gross and Dascal, 1998: 9).

In another passage, Gross and Dascal elaborate on Aristotle's theory of emotion:

…….. with Aristotle's theory of emotions, a cognitive theory in which inference plays a central role ….. an audience experiences an emotional state when the necessary and sufficient conditions of that state have been met. Beliefs that speakers instill in audiences can never guarantee their anger. It certainly helps when audiences are, as Aristotle says, "irascible and easily stirred to anger" (2.2.10). Nevertheless, since the belief that one has been belittled or insulted is a necessary condition for the presence of this emotional state, speakers can stimulate anger by increasing inferential likelihood of that belief. Equally, speakers can dissipate anger by decreasing that likelihood. Inference to a articular belief or set of beliefs is a necessary condition of each emotion with which Aristotle deals – fear, shame, kindliness, pity, anger, friendship and their opposites (1998:9).

In his classic article on Aristotle's enthymeme, James McBurney makes much the same point concerning how the forms of proof in Aristotle – ethos, pathos, and logos –relate to the dominant deductive and inductive forms of argument, the enthymeme and the example.
Rather than viewing the enthymeme and example as derivative of logos alone, he depicts both forms of argument as a product of the possible interaction of ethos, pathos, and logos. Hence the appeal to emotion, the possible instrument of style, such as the metaphor, or the character of the speaker may all interrelate in the production of an enthymeme. In this sense, the distinction between between language and argument may disappear, even in Aristotle (McBurney, 1936).
Even without an elaborate analysis of the cognitive dimensions of particular figures of speech such as those found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* it is possible to demonstrate with references to familiar examples the evocative force that appropriate language gives to an argument. In his "House Divided" speech Lincoln used a powerful metaphor to express the fundamental claim of his speech. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved – I do not expect the house to fall – but I do expect will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other (Peterson, 1954:491).

Lincoln's metaphor was not a mere rhetorical flourish. It was, rather, an integral part of his proof, and functions as a good example of metaphor as enthymeme. At that point in United States history, families were literally being torn apart over the issue of slavery so that the reference to a "house divided" served both as a

appropriate metaphor and as compelling evidence of the crisis facing the nation.
William Faulkner's speech accepting the Nobel Price offers a different, perhaps even more moving example, of how language enriches and empowers argument:
I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure; that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last red and dying evening, that even then there will be one more sound: that of his puny, inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's duty is to write about these things (Faulkner, 1954: 815-16).
Faulkner's argument is a simple one, but it is the imagery, the language of his imagination which gives the argument its ethical and emotional force.
In the terminology of the ancient Greeks, logos is not necessarily separate from ethos and pathos. Through the effective use of language these three forms of proof become united to form a linguistically sound argument.
A focus on language as the primary instrument of argument suggests that three necessary conditions exist for good argument. This paper explores the role of language in field invariant standards, how language functions in selecting and presenting data appropriate to the audience, and how language can enhance the emotional and ethical force of argument.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ A Study Of Undergraduate And Graduate Students' Argumentation In Learning Contexts Of Higher Education

Abstract: This study sets out to examine to what extent the arguments used by undergraduate and graduate students refer to scientific notions and theories related to the discipline taught in the course. The results of this study indicate that only graduate students advance arguments that refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to the discipline taught in the course, whereas undergraduate students typically advance arguments based on common-sense knowledge and previous personal experience.

Keywords: Argumentative Strategies, Higher Education, Pragma-Dialectical

Approach, Qualitative Research, Student-Teacher Interaction

1. Introduction

In the learning contexts, argumentation is not a heated exchange between rivals that results in winners and losers, or an effort to reach a mutually beneficial compromise; rather it is a form of "logical discourse whose goal is to tease out the relationship between ideas and evidence" (Duschl et al., 2007, p. 33). Argumentation enables students to engage in knowledge construction, shifting the focus from rote memorization of notions and theories to a complex scientific practice in which they construct and justify knowledge claims (Kelly & Chen, 1999; Sandoval & Reiser, 2004). Notwithstanding, current research indicates that learning how to engage in productive scientific argumentation to propose and justify an explanation through argument is difficult for students. Thus, empirical research that examines how students generate arguments has become an area of major concern for science education research.

The present study intends to provide a further contribution to the line of research on student-generated arguments. It specifically focuses on the learning context of higher education and sets out to investigate the arguments used by undergraduate and graduate students in Developmental Psychology during the disciplinary discussions with their teacher and with their classmates, i.e., task-related discussions concerning the discipline taught in the course. In particular, the objective of the present study is to verify the following two hypotheses:

1. "Undergraduate students draw their arguments from common sense and personal experience more often than graduate students".
2. "Graduate students put forth arguments that refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to the discipline taught in the course, i.e., Developmental Psychology, more often than undergraduate students".

These two hypotheses will be verified by means of a small-scale corpus study, and this certainly limits the generalizability of the results obtained by the present. A larger database would probably permit more quantitatively reliable data for certain statistical relationships, thus drawing conclusions of general order. However, the careful study of a small number of conversations will allow a more penetrating "data-close" analysis of the argumentative dynamics in the classroom. In order to focus on the arguments used by students, the object of investigation will be the argumentative discussions between students and teacher, as well as

among students, occurring during their ordinary lessons, rather than an ad hoc setting created to favour the beginning of argumentative discussions. Tools developed in argumentation theory will be useful in this respect as they can be employed to respond to this need. The analytical approach for the selection of the students' arguments is, in fact, the pragma-dialectical ideal model of a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992, 2004).

The paper is structured as follows: in its first part, a concise review of the most relevant literature on argumentation in learning contexts of higher education will be presented. Afterwards, the methodology on which the present study is based and the results of the analyses will be described. In the last part of the article, the results and the conclusions drawn from this study will be discussed.

2. Argumentation studies in learning contexts of higher education

The studies focusing on the argumentative practices in higher education have brought to light relevant insights in the fields of education and argumentation theory. In particular, two main lines of research need to be distinguished within these studies.

The first line of research aims to single out the cognitive skills that can be improved through argumentative practices in the classroom. Overall, the results of these studies indicate that favoring argument debates in the classroom can enhance students' motivation and engagement (Chin & Osborne, 2010; Hatano & Inagaki, 2003), and help them detect and resolve errors (Schwarz et al., 2000). A series of other studies have also shown that engagement in constructing arguments enhances students' knowledge by promoting conceptual change (e.g., Nussbaum & Sinatra, 2003; Wiley & Voss, 1999), and that the engagement in argumentative small- or large-group discussions improves conceptual understanding (Andrews, 2009; Alexopoulou & Driver, 1996; Mason, 1996, 2001).

The second line of research aims at investigating students' argumentative skills, and how such skills can favor or disfavor the learning process. In this respect, the role of argumentation in the academic context is currently stressed by a growing literature that emphasizes how students rarely use criteria that are consistent with the standards of the scientific community to determine which ideas to accept, reject, or modify. For example, the work of Hogan and Maglienti (2001) and Linn and Eylon (2006) suggests that students often rely on inappropriate criteria such as the teacher's authority or consistency with their personal beliefs

to evaluate the merits of a scientific explanation. This research suggests that students rarely use criteria based on theories and scientific models. Other research suggests that students often do not use sufficient evidence (Sandoval & Millwood, 2005) or struggle to understand what counts as evidence (Sadler, 2004). Moreover, McNeill and Krajcik (2007) found that if students are confronted with large amounts of data, they often encounter difficulties differentiating between what is relevant and what is irrelevant.

Within the research strand on students' argumentative skills, a series of studies devoted attention to the problem of constructing students' knowledge, taking into account their previous beliefs (Macagno & Konstantinidou, 2013; Sampson & Clark, 2008; Driver et al., 2000; Jiménez-Aleixandre et al., 2000; Kelly & Takao, 2002). For instance, Alexander, Kulikowich, and Schulze (1994) have shown that previous knowledge in the domain is a significant predictor of comprehension of the arguments advanced in support of a scientific theory. In a case study analysis of argumentative discourse among high school science students, von Aufschnaiter et al. (2008) suggest that the quality of argumentation itself is mediated by students' prior knowledge and familiarity with the content. Thus, high-level argument requires high-level knowledge of the content. According to the authors, students can engage effectively in argumentation only on content and levels of abstraction that are familiar to them. In the same vein, Sadler and Zeidler (2005) investigated the significance of prior knowledge of genetics for the argumentation of 15 undergraduate students on six cloning scenarios. The findings of this study indicated that students with more advanced genetics understanding demonstrated fewer instances of reasoning flaws, such as lack of coherence and contradiction of reasoning within and between scenarios, and were more likely to incorporate content knowledge in their argumentation than students with more a naïve understanding of genetics.

Overall, despite differences in methodology and interpretation, the studies on the argumentative skills of students in the learning contexts of higher education have had the merit to show that students are able to understand and generate an argument, and to construct justifications in defence of an opinion. However, the results of these studies have also indicated that students often do not base their decisions to accept or reject an idea on available evidence and appropriate reasoning. Rather, they tend to use inappropriate reasoning strategies to warrant one particular view over another and distort, trivialize, or ignore evidence in an

effort to reaffirm their own ideas.

The present study intends to provide an innovative and relevant contribution to the recent literature on student-generated arguments in the learning contexts of higher education. In the next sections of the paper I will present the research design, as well as the main results of this study.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data Corpus

The present investigation is based on a corpus of sixteen video-recorded separate lessons of one Bachelor's degree (*sub-corpus 1*) and one Master's degree course (*sub-corpus 2*), constituting about 24 hours of video data. The length of each recording varies from 84 to 98 minutes. The two courses have been selected according to the following criteria:

i. similar number of students (about 15 students);
ii. similar disciplinary domain (both courses considered handle themes in the area of developmental psychology);
iii. both courses are taught by the same teacher in English language.

Sub-corpus 1 consists of 8 video-recorded lessons of the third year elective course "Adolescent Development: Research, Policy, and Practice" of the Bachelor's degree at the University College of Utrecht (UCU). Sub-corpus 2 consists of 8 video-recorded lessons of the first year elective course "Human development and developmental psychopathology" of the Master's degree program Development and Socialization in Childhood and Adolescence (DASCA) at the Utrecht University (UU).

3.2. Population

The sub-corpus 1 is constituted by 14 students, 4 boys and 10 girls. All the students at the time of data collection were in their early 20s (M = 21.80; SD = 1.80). There was no significance difference of age between boys (M = 21.89; SD = 2.66) and girls (M = 21.74; SD = 1.20). The sub-corpus 2 is constituted by 16 students, who were all girls. Most of the students at the time of data collection were in their early 20s (M = 23.00; SD = 1.60).

Before starting the last lesson of the course (December 2013), both undergraduate and graduate students were asked (i) to rate in a scale from 1 (none) to 9 (excellent) their own ability to communicate in English language, (ii) if

they had already took an academic course in Developmental Psychology, and (iii) to rate in a scale from 1 (none) to 9 (excellent) the level of their previous knowledge in Developmental Psychology, i.e., before taking the course. As for the ability to communicate in English language, in a scale from 1 to 9 the average score of the undergraduate students, according to their own perception, was M = 8.28, whilst the average score of the graduate students was slightly lower M = 7.56. The most part of the students did already take an academic course in Developmental Psychology, both undergraduate (Yes N= 12; No N= 2) and graduate level (Yes N= 15; No N= 1). In regard to the level of their previous knowledge of the discipline taught in the course, in a scale from 1 to 9 the average score of the undergraduate students, according to their own perception, was slightly lower (M = 6.35) than graduate students (M = 7.25).

4. Analytical approach

4.1. The Ideal Model of a Critical Discussion

The approach adopted for the analysis is the pragma-dialectical ideal model of a critical discussion (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1992, 2004) that proposes an ideal definition of argumentation developed according to the standard of reasonableness: an argumentative discussion starts when the speaker advances his/her standpoint, and the listener casts doubts upon it, or directly attacks the standpoint. Accordingly, confrontation, in which disagreement regarding a certain standpoint is externalized in a discursive exchange or anticipated by the speaker, is a necessary condition for an argumentative discussion to occur.

In the present study, this model is assumed as a grid for the analysis, since it provides the criteria for the selection of the argumentative discussions and for the identification of the arguments put forth by students.

4.2. Criteria used to select argumentative discussions

The analysis we present in this paper will be limited to and focused on the study of what the pragma-dialectical of critical discussion defines as *analytically relevant argumentative moves,* namely, "those speech acts that (at least potentially) play a role in the process of resolving a difference of opinion" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 73). If there is not a difference of opinion between two parties, therefore, we cannot talk of an argumentative discussion between them. For the present study, only the discussions that fulfill two of the following three criteria, one between *i.a* and *i.b* and always the *ii.*, were selected for analysis:

i.a at least one standpoint concerning an issue related to the discipline taught in the course put forth by one or more students is questioned – either by means of a clear disagreement or by means of a doubt – by the teacher or by (at least) one classmate,
i.b at least one standpoint concerning an issue related to the discipline taught in the course put forth by the teacher is questioned – either by means of a clear disagreement or by means of a doubt – by one or more students;
ii. at least one student advances at least one argument either in favor of or against the standpoint being questioned.

The argumentation data for each session were obtained by reviewing both the video recording and the corresponding transcript. In a first phase, all the argumentative discussions between students and teacher or among students arisen around an issue related to the discipline taught in the course that occurred in the corpus of sixteen separate lessons were selected (N= 94). Subsequently, for the scope of the present study, I only referred to the argumentative discussions in which at least one student advanced at least one argument either in favor of or against the standpoint being questioned (N= 66).

4.3. *Criteria used to identify and distinguish students' arguments*
In order to identify the arguments put forth by students, the analysis is focused on the third stage of the model of a critical discussion, i.e., the *argumentation stage*. As stated by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, p.138), in this stage the interlocutors exchange arguments and critical reactions to convince the other party to accept or to retract his/her own standpoint: "The dialectical objective of the parties is to test the acceptability of the standpoints that have shaped the difference of opinion". Accordingly, in line with the pragma-dialectical approach, we considered as students' arguments only the argumentative moves by students that aim to support, explain, justify and defend their own position.

Once identified, the arguments put forth by students were distinguished according to the following two criteria:
– the argument refers to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to Developmental Psychology (hereafter, SCIENCE ARG).
– the argument refers to student's personal experience or to any other information that does not refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to Developmental Psychology (hereafter, NO SCIENCE ARG).

An example of SCIENCE ARG is the second part (in *Italic*) of the following discourse by a student: "I think that Piaget's notion that children's development must necessarily precede their learning is wrong, *because according to Vygotsky learning is a social phenomenon and it come before development*". An example of NO SCIENCE ARG is, instead, the first part (in Italic) of the following discourse by another student: *"In my school, bullies were above all rich and spoiled guys.* I wouldn't say that bullies typically come from poor families".

5. Results

Within the total of N= 66 argumentative discussions analyzed, the graduate students advanced arguments in support of their standpoint more frequently than the undergraduate students. Overall, the undergraduate students advanced at least one argument in N= 23 discussions, for a total number of N= 75 arguments (average number of arguments advanced during an argumentative discussion N= 3.26). These arguments were in most cases advanced during student to student interactions (N= 51; 68%), whilst a fewer number of arguments were observed during student-teacher interactions (N= 24; 32%). The graduate students advanced at least one argument in N= 43 discussions, for a total number of N= 167 arguments (average number of arguments advanced during an argumentative discussion N= 3.88). Similar to what was observed in regard to undergraduate students, a higher number of arguments were found in student to student interactions (N= 95; 57%) than in student-teacher interactions (N= 72; 43%).

A detailed description of the number of arguments put forth by undergraduate and graduate students is presented below, in Table 1:

	Bachelor	Master	TOTAL
Argumentative discussions in which (at least) one student put forth (at least) one argument	23	43	66
Arguments put forth by students	75	167	242
Average number of arguments advanced during an argumentative discussion	3.26	3.88	3.66
Arguments put forth by students during student to student interactions	51	95	146
Arguments put forth by students during interactions with their teacher	24	72	96

Table 1. Contributions of undergraduate and graduate students in argumentative discussions in the classroom

In order to present the results of this study, a selection of excerpts of talk-in-interaction representative of the results obtained from the larger set of analyses conducted on the whole corpus of students' arguments will be presented.

5.1. Undergraduate Students' Arguments

The analysis of the arguments put forth by the 14 undergraduate students involved the N= 23 argumentative discussions arisen around an issue related to the discipline taught in the course in which they put forward at least one

argument to support their own standpoint, for a total number of N= 75 arguments. The findings show that in large part the undergraduate students put forth NO SCIENCE ARG (N= 66; 88%), both in interactions with their classmates (N= 50 out of N= 51 total arguments put forth in interactions with their classmates) and with the teacher (N= 16 out of N= 24 total arguments forth in interactions with their teacher).

In the following example we can see how an undergraduate student (STU2F) put forth a NO SCIENCE ARG (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 9: "there is not a mother that would accept to kill her son. it is not culture it is the nature of human beings") to oppose a NO SCIENCE ARG (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 2: "otherwise slavery wouldn't have been permitted. at a certain time at a certain place, it was possible"; and line 4: "at a certain time at a certain place, it was possible") previously advanced by one of her classmate (STU14M) during a discussion favoured by the teacher concerning the cultural approach and its implications (line 1):

Excerpt 1
Lesson 3. Min. 38:12. Participants: teacher (TEACH), students (STU2F; STU14M).

1. *TEACH: according to the cultural approach, all the values, what is right or what is wrong is cultural specific, they depends on culture […] what do you think about this?
2. – *STU14M: yes, is right. *otherwise slavery wouldn't have been permitted*
3. – *TEACH: yes, good point
4. – *STU14M: *at a certain time at a certain place, it was possible*
5. – *TEACH: right
6. – %pau: 2.0 sec
7. – *STU2F: not everything, though
8. – *TEACH: what?
9. – *STU2F: not everything is acceptable*. there is not a mother that would accept to kill her son. it is not culture it is the nature of human beings*

[…]

In the corpus, undergraduate students put forth SCIENCE ARG almost exclusively in interactions with their teacher (N= 8 out of N= 9 total SCIENCE ARG put forth in interactions with their teacher). A clear example of the use of this type of

argument is the following discussion concerning to moral development in adolescence, where it is possible to observe the following difference of opinion between the teacher and a student (STU6M): according to the student, adolescents' behaviors show to be very often more mature than adults' ones, whilst the teacher clearly disagrees with her student's opinion (line 3: "no::") and puts forth an argument in support of her standpoint (line 5: "adolescence typically have more dangerous behaviors than adults"). In turn, the student advances a SCIENCE ARG (in *Italic* in the excerpt) that refers to the well-known Kohlberg's theory of moral development in order to support his own opinion (line 6: "but Kohlberg said that adolescents can normally respect authority ad rules, and that's pretty good"). This discussion will continue for several minutes, involving other students as well.

Excerpt 2
Lesson 4. Min. 59:50. Participants: teacher (TEACH), student (STU6M).
1. – *STU6M: adolescents' behaviors are very often more mature than adults'ones
2. – %pau: 3.0 sec
3. – *TEACH: no::
4. – *STU6M: oh. yes professor ((laughing))
5. – *TEACH: adolescence typically have more dangerous behaviors than adults
6. – *STU6M: *but Kohlberg said that adolescents can normally respect authority ad rules, and that's pretty good*
7. – *TEACH: yes, but

[…]

5.2. Graduate Students' Arguments

The analysis of the arguments put forth by the 16 graduate students involved the N= 43 argumentative discussions arisen around an issue related to the discipline taught in the course in which they put forward at least one argument to support their own standpoint, for a total number of N= 167 arguments. Unlike from what was observed for undergraduate students, the findings show that slightly more than half of the all arguments put forth by graduate students were SCIENCE ARG (N= 87; 52%). These arguments were used a little more frequently in student-teacher interactions (N= 46 out of N= 72 total arguments forth in interactions with their teacher) than in student to student interactions (N= 41 out of N= 95 total arguments put forth in interactions with their classmates).

In the following short example we can observe an argumentative discussion having as protagonists the teacher and one student, STU10F, occurred during a lesson centred on the development of identity and personality in adolescence. The teacher explains that adolescents face a phase in which they are committed to choose their values and goals for the future (line 1). The student shows to be in disagreement with the claim made by her teacher, and in turn advances a SCIENCE ARG in support of her opinion (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 2: "some adolescents decide not to choose, according to Marcia it's the identity diffusion, they are not ready to take these decisions"). The discussion continues with the teacher that accepts the argument advanced by her student (line 3: "this is true, some of them don't") and reformulate her previous claim accordingly (line 4).

Excerpt 3
Lesson 6. Min. 32:15. Participants: teacher (TEACH), student (STU10F).
1. – *TEACH: during this phase ((adolescence)) they ((adolescents)) have to decide their goals and values for their future
2. – *STU10F: some adolescents decide not to choose though, *according to Marcia it's the identity diffusion, they are not ready to take these decisions*
3. – *TEACH: this is true, some of them don't
4. – *TEACH: they are supposed to choose their values and goals

[…]

As far as NO SCIENCE ARG are concerned, graduate students used these arguments more frequently during student to student interactions (N= 54 out of N= 95 total arguments put forth in student to student interactions) than during the interactions with their teacher (N= 26 out of N= 72 total arguments forth in student-teacher interactions). A clear example of the use of this type of argument is the following discussion, whose beginning is initially favoured by the teacher, about mental disorders in adolescence and the moment of their actual initiation. Here, it is possible to observe an argumentative discussions initially involving two students: STU15F and STU1F. According to the first student, the actual initiation of a mental disorder is before the manifestation, and she supports her opinion by advancing a NO SCIENCE ARG based on common sense knowledge (in *Italic* in the excerpt) (line 2: "you need to have a predisposition, because the genes produce a predisposition to have that:: it's before the manifestation"). On the other hand, the second student claims that having a predisposition is fundamental only for certain mental disorders, not for all of them, since *it can still go in*

multiple ways. In particular, she supports this claim by also advancing a NO SCIENCE ARG that is based on her own personal experience (in Italic in the excerpt) (line 3: *"I know people who were depressed and now they are not*"). This discussion will continue for several minutes, involving other students as well as the teacher.

Excerpt 4
Lesson 2. Min. 24:30. Participants: teacher (TEACH), students (STU15F; STU1F).
1. – *TEACH: when is an actual initiation of a ((mental)) disorder? is it when you see some first symptoms or when you see the disorder, when is really labeled as a disorder?
2. – *STU15F: you need to have a predisposition, *because the genes produce a predisposition to have that*:: it's before the manifestation
3. – *STU1F: it's different for disorders. even if you have a predisposition it can still go in multiple ways. *I know people who were depressed and now they are not*

[…]

The presentation of different excerpts concerning the types of arguments used by the two groups (sub-corpus 1 and sub-corpus 2) of students shows an interesting element that can summarize the argumentative choices (and strategies) used by them with their classmates and with their teacher. The undergraduate students advance only rarely SCIENCE ARG (N= 9; 12%), and these arguments very used almost exclusively in student-teacher interactions. On the other hand, slightly more than half of the arguments put forth by graduate students were SCIENCE ARG (N= 87; 52%), which were used both in student-teacher interactions (N= 46) and in student-to-student interactions (N= 41). The NO SCIENCE ARG was instead the type of argument advanced in almost all cases by undergraduate students (N= 66; 88%), especially in student to student interactions (N= 50). The Table 2 shows a comparison between the types of arguments advanced by the two groups of students.

Bachelor's Students	**SCIENCE ARG**	in Student-to-Student Interaction	in Student-Teacher Interaction	**NO SCIENCE ARG**	in Student-to-Student Interaction	in Student-Teacher Interaction
	N= 9; 12%	N= 1	N= 8	N= 66; 88%	N= 50	N= 16
Master's Students	**SCIENCE ARG**	in Student-to-Student Interaction	in Student-Teacher Interaction	**NO SCIENCE ARG**	in Student-to-Student Interaction	in Student-Teacher Interaction
	N= 87; 52%	N= 41	N= 46	N= 80; 48%	N= 54	N= 26

Table 2. Descriptive frequencies of the types of arguments put forth by the two groups of students

Table 2. Descriptive frequencies of the types of arguments put forth by the two groups of students

6. Discussion

The findings of this study appear to confirm the two initial hypotheses: 1) "undergraduate students draw their arguments from common sense and personal experience more often than graduate students"; and 2) "graduate students put forth arguments that refer to scientific notions and theories strictly or somehow related to the discipline taught in the course, i.e., Developmental Psychology, more often than undergraduate students". How can we explain these results? Among the many reasons than can contribute at different degrees to explain these results, I want to focus on two aspects that I think are the most important.

The first reason is *the actual students' knowledge of the discipline taught in the course,* i.e., Developmental Psychology. Even though the students of both groups – according to their own perception – seems to have a similar knowledge in Developmental Psychology, the observations of the topics treated during the lessons, of the student-teacher and student to student interactions, and the analysis of the arguments advanced by students has led me to realize that the graduate students had an actual knowledge of the discipline much higher than undergraduate students, even more than what was claimed in the answers to my short questionnaire (graduate students M= 7.25 vs. graduate students M= 6.35).

As we have seen in the excerpt 3, the graduate students showed to be able to use as an argument a limited, well-specific aspect of a scientific theory in order to support their own standpoint. Moreover, they were able to engage in critical discussions related to the different theories that treat certain limited aspects of a certain topic discussed during the lessons. On the other hand, the knowledge in Developmental Psychology of the undergraduate students was often limited to a more superficial knowledge of the discipline. In most cases, their SCIENCE ARG (N= 9) refer to a well-known theory, however avoiding to mention the correct term of the scientific notion they refer to. For example, in the excerpt 2 we have seen that a student advanced a SCIENCE ARG that refers to a well-known psychological theory, i.e., Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984), claiming that according to this theory adolescents can normally respect authority and rules. Evidently, the student is referring to the "stage four" of

Kohlberg's theory of moral development, however without mentioning it correctly.

The second reason is related to the *institutional commitment requested to the students*. From the observations of student-teacher interactions, I noticed that an argumentative effort by students is requested only at the graduate level, not at the undergraduate one. Both at undergraduate and at graduate level, it is the teacher that in most cases favors the beginning of argumentative discussions in the classroom. She does it by asking questions to her students, inviting them to express their opinions, doubts about the theories and notions presented during the lesson. However, looking at the questions used by the teacher to favor the beginning of argumentative discussions, I observed some differences. At the undergraduate level, the teacher asks open questions to her students. These are questions can favor a large discussion with and among students, and they are not focused on limited, specific aspects of a theory, but instead these questions aim to favor a discussion around a more general topic. The focus of the discussion is not the single theory, but the more general topic. The following are good examples of these questions: What are the main reasons leading to episodes of bullying among adolescents? How can the family relationships affect the adolescent development? What are the consequences of adolescent drinking and substance use?

At the graduate level, instead, the teacher asks questions that refer to specific aspects of a certain theory. These questions are often followed by a further Why-questions asked to the students. Here, the students are expected to provide the reasons at the basis of their own opinions. The following are good examples of these questions: What are the most important processes that according to Steinberg explain the fact that many risk behaviors tend to peak in adolescence? … Why? Which developmental processes can be studied by each of the seven models described by Graber and Brooks-Gunn and how? … Why? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a person-centered approach? … Why?

Accordingly, it seems that at the undergraduate level students are (only) requested to be interested in and curious of the discipline taught in the course by asking questions. At the graduate level curiosity is not enough. Students are expected to support their standpoints – and even a mere doubt – by advancing arguments that have to refer to scientific theories.

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ The Argumentative Role Of Visual Metaphor And Visual Antithesis In 'Fly-On-The-Wall' Documentary

Abstract: In this paper, we explore the argumentative role of visual metaphor and visual antithesis in the so-called 'fly-on-the-wall' documentary. In this subtype of documentary, which emphatically renounces voice-over narration, the filmmakers guide their viewers into reaching certain conclusions by making choices regarding the editing as well as the cinematography. We analyse a number of scenes from two films by one major representative of the Direct Cinema or 'fly-on-the-wall' documentary, Frederick Wiseman.

Keywords: visual/pictorial metaphor, visual antithesis, multimodal rhetoric, fly on the wall documentary, Direct Cinema, Frederick Wiseman

1. *Introduction*

While a number of argumentation scholars would probably still maintain that argumentation is essentially a verbal activity, there has been substantial work in the last two decades arguing for the possibility and actuality of conveying argumentation by means of other modes than the verbal one (Groarke, 1996; Kjeldsen, 2012; Roque, 2012; Tseronis, submitted; Van den Hoven & Yang, 2013).

It is to this line of research within argumentation studies that we want to contribute by discussing the possible argumentative functions of metaphor and antithesis conveyed visually or multimodally in a specific genre of documentary film, the fly-on-the-wall documentary. To identify the verbal and visual cues that may be combined in order to convey a certain figure constitutes the first step. To explain their use and effect as having to do with argumentation is the next one. For the latter task, the analyst needs to have systematic recourse to the properties of the modes used, their interaction, as well as to the broader context (consideration of the narrative, the genre as well as the cultural context and background knowledge).

By taking a broad understanding of argumentation as a procedure, not merely as a product consisting of premises that support the acceptability of a conclusion, we seek to identify the function of such figures as metaphor and antithesis, when conveyed multimodally, in the process of arguing for one's position. Such functions are not merely decorative but, as explained by Fahnestock (1999), can be understood as epitomizing the line of reasoning of the filmmaker. Kjeldsen (2012, p. 239) makes a similar point with regard to the use of pictures in advertisements, namely that figures "are not only ornamental, but also support the creation of arguments". According to him, "rhetorical figures direct the audience to read arguments" (ibidem) by delimiting the possible interpretations of the pictures used, and thereby evoking the intended arguments.

Among the various rhetorical figures, metaphor has received substantial attention within the Cognitive Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Lakoff and Johnson's central idea is that humans think metaphorically rather than just use metaphorical language. Acceptance of this idea means that, in principle, metaphor can have visual manifestations as well. Indeed, the past two decades have witnessed a series of studies (see for example, Forceville, 1996, 2008; Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009; El Refaie, 2003) that analyse visual and multimodal metaphors in genres including advertising and political cartoons, wherein verbal elements interact mainly with static images. Steps have also been taken to analyse visual metaphors in other genres of argumentative communication centrally involving *moving* images, and to investigate how tropes other than metaphor can be cued non-verbally or multimodally (Forceville, 2009; Teng & Sun, 2002). The argumentative effect that the use of metaphor and other tropes may have is an area that needs to be yet further explored.

The fly-on-the-wall documentary**[i]** constitutes an object of study that allows us to explore the potential of combining insights from argumentation studies and metaphor theory and to illustrate their usefulness for the multimodal analysis of moving images. As this type of documentary is a genre that leaves the drawing of conclusions largely to the viewer, due to the fact that it lacks voice-over narration and staging of events, it becomes even more important to study the visual (and audio) means by which the filmmaker guides the audience's inference process. To show the direction this kind of research could take, we analyse the argumentative use of metaphors and antitheses in a number of scenes from two documentary films by one representative of the fly-on-the-wall cinema, Frederick Wiseman.

2. *On metaphor and antithesis*

2.1 *Metaphor*

Metaphor is traditionally studied under the banner of 'tropes,' together with synecdoche, metonymy and irony, among others. It has received extensive attention from both rhetoricians and cognitive linguists. While the former have been sensitive to the fact that metaphor is not the only figure of speech, Lakoff and Johnson take metaphor to underlie much, if not all, of our thinking. In the first chapter of her book, Fahnestock takes issue with this 'dominance of metaphor'. She writes (1999, pp. 5-6):

The tight focus on metaphor in science studies, like the fixation on metaphor and allied tropes in textual studies, has taken attention away from other possible conceptual and heuristic resources that are also identifiable formal features in texts and that also come from the same tradition that produced metaphor, the rhetorical tradition of the figures of speech.

According to Aristotle, metaphor plays an important role for prose style, since it contributes clarity as well as the unfamiliar, surprising effect that avoids banality and tediousness. While in the later tradition the use of metaphors has been seen as a matter of mere decoration, which has to delight the hearer, Aristotle stresses the cognitive function of metaphors. In order to understand a metaphor, the hearer has to find something common between the metaphor and the thing the metaphor refers to (Rapp, 2010).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) discuss metaphor under their third type of argumentative techniques, namely those establishing the structure of reality. Within this technique, two subcategories are identified, namely those arguments that establish the structure of reality through a particular case (by example or

illustration) and those whereby one reasons by analogy. They write (p. 399):
In our view, the role of metaphor will appear most clearly when seen in the context of the argumentative theory of analogy. … In the context of argumentation, at least, we cannot better describe a metaphor than by conceiving it as a condensed analogy, resulting from the fusion of an element from the phoros with an element from the theme.

Forceville (1996) has combined insights from Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and from Black (1979) in order to propose a way for extending the cognitive account of metaphor into the field of visual communication. He formulates the following three questions for identifying a pictorial metaphor of the creative variety in static advertisements:
(1) Which are the two terms of the metaphor, and how do we know?
(2) Which is the target and which is the source, and how do we know?
(3) Which are the features that are mapped from source to target, and how do we decide on these features?

These questions remain pertinent in the analysis of visual metaphor in moving advertisements, that is, commercials – although the latter can draw on a wider variety of techniques than static advertisements that help answer these three questions. Moving images can for instance make use of specific camera movements and montage to create metaphors. What makes the identification of metaphors in advertising (whether in static or in moving images) relatively easy, is the genre convention, namely that advertisements always want to make a positive claim about a product or service. This means that usually the target of the metaphor coincides with the product, which is then presented in terms of a source domain from which appropriate positive features are mapped onto the target/product. As we will see later on, in the absence of such clear-cut genre conventions, identifying metaphors and other tropes in fly-on-the-wall documentaries is less easy.

2.2 *Antithesis*
Fahnestock (1999, pp. 46-47), following Aristotle, defines antithesis as a verbal structure that places contrasted or opposed terms in parallel or balanced cola or phrases. She writes:
[*Parallel phrasing without opposed terms does not produce an antithesis, nor do opposed terms alone without strategic positioning in symmetrical phrasing. Instead, the figure antithesis, according to Aristotle, must meet both syntactic*

*and semantic requirements.***[ii]**

The opposed terms may be contraries (both terms can be true of an object depending on the perspective one adopts: good vs evil; cold vs hot), contradictories (pairs that form exhaustive either/or alternatives: clean -/- unclean; polite -/- impolite), or correlatives (pairs that convey reciprocal or complementary relationships: buying and selling; cause and effect; lead and follow) (see Fahnestock, 1999, p. 48). When it comes to identifying the various contrasting relations in the visual mode, it may be difficult to identify exhaustive either/or alternatives. Based on the viewer's knowledge of what is being depicted and on such formal cues as the use of colour (or the use of sounds when it comes to the audio mode), it may be possible to identify contraries or correlatives.

As regards the syntactic requirement, the opposed terms need to be placed in some parallel structure. This syntactic requirement is also typical of the figure parallelism. Antithesis, however, contains only two parallel clauses, featuring pairs of antonyms and cannot be used to deliver more than two examples, while parallelism does not use antonyms and typically presents three things before an audience (see Fahnestock, 2003, p. 128). In film, such a parallel structure can be conveyed first and foremost by the mere sequencing of the scenes but also within the shot by means of composition and mise-en-scène.

Questions one can ask for identifying an antithesis and distinguishing it from mere contrast (following Forceville's questions for the identification of a pictorial metaphor) would be:
(1) Which are the two terms of the antithesis, and how do we know?
(2) How are these two terms opposed (contraries – contradictories – correlatives), and how do we know?
(3) What are the differences being stressed?

In antithesis, unlike metaphor, the direction (identifying which is target and which is source) of opposition between the two elements does not play a role. Moreover (as in metaphor), the two elements of the antithesis may be conveyed each in a different mode, verbal, visual, or audio, for example. As we have pointed out above, the contrasting relation between the two elements can be conveyed not only in what is being depicted but also in *how* something is being depicted.

Both metaphor and antithesis seem to rely on a certain comparative/parallel

structure, whereby in the first case likeness is stressed (or differences are backgrounded) while in the second case it is difference that is stressed (or likeness that is backgrounded). Clifton (1983), who provides an inventory of rhetorical figures found in films, notes the following with respect to simile, a figure that is usually seen as related to metaphor (p.72):
It is clear then that in every simile there is present both difference and likeness, and both are a part of its effect. By ignoring differences, we find a simile and may perhaps find an antithesis in the same event, by ignoring likeness.

Fahnestock, too, observes that both a simile and an antithesis are based on a parallelism structure, that invites comparison. The question then arises: how do the similarities become salient in one case and how do the differences stand out in the other? It seems that audiovisual cues as such can be used to trigger different tropes; we need to take into consideration genre-conventions and contextual information within a specific scene to make an appropriate assessment which trope, if any, is at stake.

2.3 *Possible argumentative functions*
As has been suggested above, metaphor can be related to the use of analogy in argumentation. The distinctive argumentative work of metaphor, according to Fahnestock (2011, p. 105) is that it "creates new links, allowing the rhetor to illuminate one term (or concept) by features or senses borrowed from another". For Fahnestock then, metaphor, like other figures, does not merely have a decorative role, accompanying an argument, but constitutes
a verbal summary that epitomizes the argument. It is a condensed or even diagram-like rendering of the relationship among a set of terms, a relationship that constitutes the argument and that could be expressed at greater length. (1999, p. 24)

Whether metaphor is to be identified exclusively with a scheme of arguing from analogy, however, is an issue that requires further study. According to Garssen (2009), for example, the argumentative relevance of the use of figurative analogy in argumentation should not to be related to the analogy argument scheme. Instead, Garssen maintains that figurative analogy functions as a presentational device used to put forward other (symptomatic or causal) types of argumentation. Moreover, Garssen and Kienpointner (2011, p. 40) stress the fact that not all metaphors are to be analysed as argument by analogy:
utterances containing metaphors can only be classified as arguments from

figurative analogies if they are used as argumentative utterances and the speaker wants to prove a controversial standpoint by making a comparison based on relevant similarities between entities from different domains of reality.

Garssen and Kienpointner (2011, p. 46) mention, among others, the following functions of figurative analogies: creative function (used as a creative means of opening the argumentative space),**[iii]** persuasive function (a means of shifting the burden of proof by choosing highly persuasive types of *phoros*), didactic function (a pedagogical device for illustrating and clarifying complicated issues), refutative function (as ironical *reductio ad absurdum*), and competitive function (as provocative attack at the opponent).

When it comes to antithesis, a distinction can be drawn between antithesis of words and antithesis of thought, the former being a purely stylistic one, while the latter provides a premise-conclusion pair, according to Fahnestock (1999). Within the latter type of antithesis, three cases can be distinguished, depending on the status of the opposed terms. In the first case, the antithesis employs two opposing terms that are already known to the audience. In this way, the arguer exploits the audience's prior recognition of the contrast as well as the values attached to the opposed terms. In the second case, the antithesis pushes the two terms apart, creating thus an opposition between them that the audience was not necessarily previously aware of. In the last case, the antithesis reconfigures an existing opposition by changing or reinforcing the relation between the two terms in order to change the audience's conception of a known antithetical pair.

Following Garssen and Kienpointner (2011), who take metaphor to constitute a presentational device for conveying a number of argumentative functions, we believe that antithesis, too, can be shown to contribute in a number of ways to the argumentative activity. To begin with, it needs to be acknowledged that not all antitheses have an argumentative role, just as is the case with metaphors. Contrasting two elements in order to win the viewer's attention or merely claiming that two elements are opposed, without making it explicit that the stated opposition contributes in a direct or indirect way to an act of convincing an audience about the tenability of a standpoint, do not count as an argumentative use of antithesis. In a clearly defined argumentative situation, antithesis can be said to contribute directly to the argumentation when it is used to convey the claim for which further support is advanced. In this case, the antithesis is either used to push two terms apart or to reconfigure an existing opposition. Antithesis

may also be used to convey the argument in support of a contested claim. In this case, the arguer would be making use of an antithesis that contains opposed terms already accepted as such by the audience. Finally, another direct contribution of antithesis to an argumentative discussion would be its use to refute or anticipate counter-arguments advanced by the audience. When antithesis contributes in an indirect way to the argumentative discussion, its role is to draw attention to the argument or to assist the audience in testing the case in dispute, as Tindale (2009) suggests.

In general, the rhetorical effect of the use of metaphor or antithesis – or of any other figure for that matter – can be explained in terms of the inference process that the audience is invited to follow in order to determine the meaning of the similarities or contrasts that each of these two figures conveys. The audience confronted with a metaphor or antithesis is invited to participate in the construction of the meaning, adding the second term of the antithesis or identifying the properties that are mapped in the metaphor, for example, or attaching their own values and norms to the terms involved in either figure. Once the audience understands the metaphor or the antithesis, it may be more prone to accept the mappings proposed by the figure as premises for a certain conclusion. In what way exactly the different nature of metaphor and antithesis can be exploited so as to contribute accordingly to the possible argumentative functions named in the previous paragraph remains a subject for further study. Moreover, the effect achieved by conveying either of these figures verbally, visually or multimodally deserves further attention. Kjeldsen (2013, p. 437) explains the effect of conveying figures visually or multimodally instead of using exclusively the verbal mode in the following way:
In order to make meaning of the multimodal presentation, the viewer has to actively transform a main line of reasoning. In this way, the images contribute to making the viewer himself construct the arguments meant to persuade him.

When it comes to the argumentative role these figures may play in a film, in particular, it is important not to over-interpret their presence and their use. Clifton (1983) has inventoried a great number of figures found in scenes from a number of films; but even if one takes the identification of these figures to be correct, it is another matter whether these figures have an argumentative function in all of the scenes described. In addition, it is important to consider whether their role is to contribute to an argument identified at a local level,

within a sequence or scene of the film, or to an argument that can be said to run through the whole film.**[iv]** In order to be justified in searching for the argumentative function of these figures in film, one needs to specify an argumentative situation in which a contested claim is being supported and in which a figure may play a role other than a purely aesthetic one. One needs therefore to have recourse to the specific genre of the film as well as to background knowledge concerning the theme of the film and the filmmaker's own interests. Assuming that the documentary is a genre that seeks to communicate a message to its audience more than simply to please them, we can be justified in searching for the argumentative function of metaphor and antithesis when we have identified these figures in a documentary film.

3. *On documentary film and fly on the wall documentary*
As Nichols (2010, p. 104) puts it, in his Introduction to Documentary:
Documentary work does not appeal exclusively to our aesthetic sensibility: it may entertain or please, but does so in relation to a rhetorical or persuasive effort aimed at the existing social world.

Compared to fiction films and experimental films, the subject matter of documentaries is real life itself.**[v]** It is from this reality that filmmakers extract their material to use as evidence in support of the assertive stance they take towards what is being filmed (see Plantinga, 1997). In the various typologies of documentary film that exist, three main forms can be identified namely narrative, categorical and rhetorical (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013, p. 355). But even when a documentary represents historical events as they occurred in time (narrative form), or when it conveys categorized information about a given topic mostly from a synchronic perspective (categorical form), it is safe to expect that it still employs rhetorical techniques to address an audience so that they eventually accept that information as valid or endorse the filmmaker's perspective. After all, as Plantinga (1997, p. 105) remarks, it is rarely the case that each of these forms appears independent of the others and does not mix in the course of a documentary film.

An extensive typology of documentary films has been proposed by Nichols (2010), based on the "voice" that is predominant throughout the film. He identifies the following six modes: the expository, the observational, the interactive (also called participatory), the reflexive, the performative and the poetic. Of these, it is the expository mode, the mode that most people associate with documentary in

general, that emphasises verbal commentary and has a clear argumentative logic. The Direct Cinema documentary (also known as fly-on-the-wall) falls under the observational mode.

Documentary films of the observational mode have no voice-over commentary, no supplementary music or sound effects, no inter-titles, no historical re-enactments, no behaviour repeated for the camera, and do not make use of interviews (Nichols, 2010, pp. 172ff). Editing and cinematography in the fly-on-the-wall documentary avoid directing the viewer along a clear path of meaning, as Plantinga (1997, pp. 153-155) observes. The viewer is therefore invited to take a more active role in determining the significance of what is said and done, as Nichols (2010, p. 174) also remarks. It is thus not without a reason that we focus on the use of rhetorical figures such as metaphor and antithesis, which may be construed by choices made regarding the editing and the cinematography, as an alternative means employed by the filmmaker to guide the viewers through a path of meaning.

4. *Frederick Wiseman's documentaries*

Frederick Wiseman began making films in the 1960s, working at the same time as Richard Leacock, D.A. Pennebaker and David and Albert Maysles, who are all considered as representatives of the fly on the wall documentary (see Aitken, 2013). His films focus on American institutions, such as the school, the court, the hospital, the army, and the prison, among others; they thus become "studies of the exercise of power in American society", as Barnouw (1993, p. 244) puts it.

Nevertheless, as Plantinga writes (1997, p. 195), Wiseman has always distanced himself from direct cinema, even though his films are considered prototypical examples of the observational mode of documentary film. Wiseman calls his cinema 'reality fiction' and acknowledges the creative manipulation in his films, whereby he makes use of editing in order to restructure his material according to principles other than chronology and narrative (see Benson & Anderson, 2002, pp. 1-2). Nichols (1981, p. 211) notes that while the individual sequences are organized by narrative codes of construction, aiming for a smooth flow of time and space, the relations between these sequences are organized by principles that are more rhetorical. The sequences may thus relate, for example, in terms of comparison, contrast, parallelism, inversion, irony, evidence, summation and so on. Benson (1980, 1985), who has analysed *High School* (1968) and *Primate* (1974), from the perspective of rhetorical criticism, concludes that Wiseman's

films are characterized by a dialectical structure that invites the audience to construct meaning and grasp the film's logic.

Wiseman acknowledges that he began making films out of an urge for social reform and awareness (Grant, 1998). At the same time, he refrains from dictating his own point of view to the audience. In an interview cited in Nichols (1981, p. 218), he says:
One of the things that intrigues me in all the films is how to make a more abstract, general statement about the issues, not through the use of a narrator, but through the relationship of events to each other through editing.

While it is true that Wisemans's films, like other documentary films of the observational mode, leave it up to the audience to interpret the film and discover the director's position, it does not mean that the director himself does not have a point of view. It is then up to a close examination of his films to show how such a view can be reconstructed.

4.1 *Titicut Follies (1967)*
Titicut Follies is Wiseman's first documentary. It was filmed at Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Bridgewater, a prison hospital for the mentally ill. Due to a legal ban by the state of Massachusetts on the presentation of the film in public, it was only in 1991 that the film became widely known.**[vi]** The title of the film refers to the title of the musical show that the inmates put on.

The film's opening sequence shows eight inmates lined up in two rows and dressed up in parade costumes singing George Gershwin's song 'Strike up the band'. The camera is placed among the audience giving a view of the stage on which the inmates perform, before it zooms in to the face of each inmate singing in the front row. The light comes from below, illuminating their faces in a horror-like manner. At the end of the act, the director of the institution appears, saying "It keeps getting better" and goes on to tell a joke to the audience who is applauding. The opening scene contrasts with the following sequence that shows the guards at the institution inspecting the new inmates and asking them to take their clothes off. In this scene, the director appears again, wearing his uniform this time, instead of the black costume of the master of ceremonies he was wearing in the opening scene. In the rest of the film, there are at least two other moments where the inmates and the director of the institution are shown singing. Nevertheless, the majority of the film depicts moments in which the inmates are

being treated rather disrespectfully and as less than human by the staff.

Wiseman makes thus a salient choice from his material by not only opening the film with a scene from the inmates' musical show but also by ending it with the final act of the same show. Grant (1998, p. 243) remarks that by framing the film in this way Wiseman suggests that "the inmates are forever 'on stage', as they are always under observation by the staff". The director of the institution is thus presented as the ringmaster and the patients as attractions in a theatre of curiosities, where they are being inspected, undressed, washed, put into their cells, entertained, fed etc. A metaphor could thus be construed whereby the mental institution is associated with a theatre of curiosities and freaks. The close-ups of the faces of the inmates performing on stage as well as their body language do not suggest that they are particularly enjoying it – unlike the director of the institution – but rather that this is just one other chore they are asked to perform.

In the rest of the film, Wiseman creates contrasts between the inmates' world and the outside world, doctors and patients, sanity and insanity inviting the audience to think over these boundaries. Even if Wiseman does not stage the events or directs the inmates and controls their positions, he nevertheless succeeds in conveying these antitheses not only be means of editing the material in the post-production but also by means of composition within the frame, while filming.

One such moment is the scene where an inmate is singing a popular song from the 1920s called 'Chinatown, my Chinatown' in front of the camera, while in the background a TV screen shows Nana Mouskouri singing a love-song called 'Johnny'. The contrast is cued not only in the audio mode, with the inmate's cacophonous voice juxtaposed with Mouskouri's melodious voice, but also by the posture: the inmate is facing the audience directly while Mouskouri is facing the side (see Figure 1).

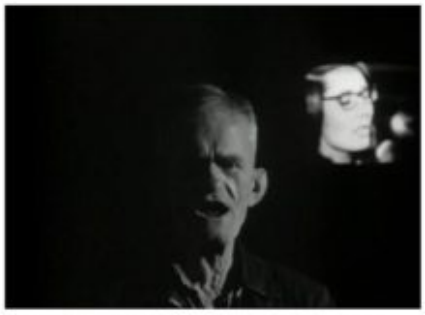

Figure 1. Still from *Titicut Follies* (1967), scene starting at app.18:44.
© 1967 Bridgewater Film Company, Inc. - Photo provided courtesy of Zipporah Films, Inc.

Figure 1. Still from Titicut Follies (1967), scene starting at app.18:44. © 1967 Bridgewater Film Company, Inc. – Photo provided courtesy of Zipporah Films, Inc.

Another moment is the scene where inmate Vladimir is arguing with dr. Ross about his wish to leave the institution and return to prison where he believes he belongs, since he claims that he is not mentally insane. For the most part of the scene the two interlocutors are filmed in medium long shot facing each other against the background of the bricked wall of the institution's courtyard. Wiseman spots the water pipeline going down the wall and slightly reframes the camera so as to let the pipeline appear in the background, thereby dividing the two interlocutors, the one representing the institution and the other the patients (see Figure 2).**[vii]**

These antitheses, and others conveyed by the editing of the scenes, can be considered as putting forward evidence for Wiseman's claim about the internal contradictions of the mental institution or as opening up the space for discussion on what is (in)sanity and who decides on the boundaries.

Figure 2. Still from *Titicut Follies* (1967), scene starting at app.34:01.
© 1967 Bridgewater Film Company, Inc. - Photo provided courtesy of Zipporah Films, Inc.

Figure 2. Still from Titicut Follies (1967), scene starting at app.34:01. © 1967 Bridgewater Film Company, Inc. – Photo provided courtesy of Zipporah Films, Inc.

The sequence which crowns the film, and in which Wiseman's critique of the staff becomes most apparent, is the one which depicts the forced tubefeeding of an aged and starving patient, Mr. Malinowski, by dr. Ross (see also Aitken, 2013, p. 914). It is part of a larger sequence which lasts for almost ten minutes, starting with the scene where dr. Ross visits the patient in his cell and asks him whether he has eaten, and ending with the scene of a staff member pushing a tray with a dead body inside the mortuary refrigerator. The whole sequence is placed almost in the middle of the film. The scene of Mr. Malinowski's tubefeeding is cross-cut with shots from another scene in which the dead body of an inmate, probably Mr. Malinowski himself, is being shaved and perfumed. While there is a certain parallelism between the two scenes (there is a match on action between the shot where the doctor removes the towel from the patient's face and the shot where a staff member is airing a towel on the corpse's face, as well as between the shot where the guards shut the door of Mr. Malinowski's cell and the shot where the guard is pushing the tray with the dead body in the refrigerator), overall a stark contrast is created both through the visual and the audio mode. In the shots of the tubefeeding scene, one hears the dialogue between the staff involved in the action as well as the surrounding sounds from the room. The shots of the embalming scene, however, have no sound whatsoever. Moreover, a great contrast exists between the way the patient in the two scenes is treated. While in the tubefeeding scene the live Mr. Malinowski is kept tied and treated disrespectfully, the dead body of Mr. Malinowski receives the careful attention of the staff.

With the last shot of the whole Malinowski sequence being the pushing of the tray with the dead body into the refrigerator, Wiseman lets the audience see the paradoxical consequences of the doctor's act of feeding that patient. By creating a parallel between the two events, Wiseman lets the inconsistencies in the behaviour of the staff members come to the fore. At the same time, the acts carried out by the staff members in both scenes underlie the passivity of the patient who is treated as a lifeless object (in the second scene this is literally the case). As a whole, the sequence can be understood as evidence in support of

Wiseman's critique of the institution and its staff for acting upon and treating the patients in ways that counter the patients' own dignity and needs, if not put their lives in danger.

4.2 *Primate (1974)*

Primate is Wiseman's eighth film and the first of a trilogy of films, produced over a period of three years, expressing how far life has become objectified and commodified (see Aitken, 2013, p. 988).**[viii]** As the title suggests, the film is about a federally funded research institute on primates, the Yerkes Primate Research Centre in Atlanta. Grant (1998, p. 251) notes that this is the only other Wiseman documentary, next to *Titicut Follies*, to have caused substantial controversy, not only about its disturbing scenes of vivisection experiments carried out on gibbons, chimpanzees and gorillas, but also on the questions it raises on the ethics and goals of medical research involving animals.

The opening sequence of the film establishes an analogy between apes and humans. This is how Benson (1985, p. 208) describes it:

The film opens with a long series of shots in which we may first notice the ambiguity of the film's title, which applies equally well to men and apes. We see a large composite photograph, with portraits of eminent scientists, hanging, presumably, on a wall at the Yerkes Center. Wiseman cuts from the composite portrait to a series of eight individual portraits, in series, then to a sign, an exterior shot of the Center, and then a series of four shots of apes in their cages. The comparison is obvious, though not particularly forceful, and it depends for its meaning both upon the structure Wiseman has chosen to use – at least he does not intercut the apes and the portraits – and upon our own predictable surprise at noticing how human the apes look.

While the analogy could indeed be read in either direction, humans are like apes or apes are like humans, we think it is important for understanding the way the rest of the film builds up to consider that Wiseman takes apes to be the source not the target of the metaphor. The assumption that humans are like apes is used to justify the research carried out on primates with the aim of discovering more about humans, by conducting experiments that otherwise could not have been carried out on humans. Framing the film's topic in this way, it becomes even more gruesome for the viewer to imagine that the vivisection experiments shown later in the film could have actually been carried out on humans. Moreover, the analogy between humans and apes, underscored in a number of sequences

throughout the film, succeeds in making even stronger the contrasts that Wiseman's camera captures between the words and deeds of the scientists. As Benson (1985, p. 209) observes:

comparison both justifies and condemns the research, and Wiseman exploits that comparison not simply to attack vivisection, or scientific research in general, but also to engage us in actively considering the paradoxes of our institutions and ourselves.

Figure 3. Still from *Primate* (1976), scene starting at app.56:38.
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The metaphor is thereby used to open the space for the discussion, in a similar way that the various antitheses discussed in *Titicut Follies* do.

One interesting moment, in which Wiseman employs antithesis as a means for countering possible refutations of the analogy he has established between humans and apes, is the sequence in which a researcher explains his view about the differences between the great apes on the one hand and humans on the other. The sequence starts with a number of shots where the researcher is shown interacting with a chimpanzee in a laboratory room, inciting the animal to grab fruits hanging from a rope and to hang from a swing. At one moment, the researcher is shown being suspended from the swing in an attempt to make the chimpanzee imitate him (see Figure 3).

Then comes a shot of the researcher in close-up against a background of electronic equipment explaining how the experiment is conducted and what its

rationale is (see Figure 4). From then on, there is intercutting between the researcher and shots of the actual experiment carried out by himself and an Afro-American assistant. Wiseman lets the researcher's voice run over the shots from the laboratory experiment, functioning, in a certain way, as a voice-over commentary of what is being depicted.

When the researcher utters the sentence: "I do not subscribe to the theory that the living apes, chimpanzee and gorilla, closely resemble the ancestry of man", a shot from the laboratory experiment is shown in which the researcher is running around, jumping from one corner of the room to the other inviting the chimpanzee to chase him (see Figure 5).

Figure 4. Still from *Primate* (1976), scene starting at app.57:01.
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Wiseman lets the image of the researcher defeat the content of the latter's own words. He thereby exploits editing and voice-over to refute any possible objection to the idea that humans are like apes, that one may put forward in order to suggest that violence to apes is not the same as violence to humans. By similarly contrasting the filmed actions of the researchers with their own words, Wiseman shows that the increasingly violent and ultimately mortal experiments carried out on gibbons and gorillas are not necessarily justified by the significance of the findings. After the climactic sequence in which a researcher is shown cutting the head of a living gibbon, a scene in a laboratory is edited, where two colleagues looking through a microscope at tissues from presumably the same dead gibbon's brain have difficulty in specifying what it is they are looking at and what its

significance is (see Benson, 1985, p. 211).

Figure 5. Still from *Primate* (1976), scene starting at app. 58:04.
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5. *Conclusion*

In this paper, we have only begun to tease out the valuable contributions that the combination of insights from metaphor theory, argumentation studies and film analysis can make to the argumentative analysis of multimodal communication. By extending Fahnestock's (1999) view of rhetorical figures as epitomes of a line of reasoning to the visual and the audio modes we have tried to describe the possible argumentative functions of such tropes as metaphor and antithesis. In order to illustrate the usefulness of the distinctions we propose, we have analysed a number of scenes from two documentaries by Frederick Wiseman, a representative of the so-called fly-on-the-wall documentary. Despite the lack of a voice-over commentary that could have made explicit the filmmaker's own position on the depicted material, the identification of metaphors and antitheses construed visually or multimodally has allowed us, in connection with our knowledge of the specific genre and of the specific director's work, to propose an interpretation of the contribution these figures make to the argument of the film.

A more systematic identification of the various metaphors and antitheses used in the two films as well as in other films by Wiseman is still required in order to

show how these figures may combine in order to contribute to the overall argument that is built throughout the film. Moreover, a comparative study involving films by other representatives of the fly-on-the-wall genre would help support our view that these figures – and possibly others – can help guide the viewer's interpretation of the filmmaker's stance, despite the characteristic lack of voice-over and of other techniques that would explicitly mark the director's presence. Finally, further study is required for developing criteria to identify the various visual and multimodal tropes as well as to specify their argumentative relevance in a given situation.

Acknowledgement
The authors would wish to thank Zipporah Films for granting permission to use stills from Frederick Wiseman's films, *Tituct Follies* (1967) and *Primate* (1974). Zipporah Films is the distribution company of the Frederick Wiseman films. For more information visit http://www.zipporah.com/.

NOTES
i. See Aitken (2013) under the term 'direct cinema'
ii. Tindale (2009), on the other hand, maintains that the figure antithesis does not require that two cola contain opposites, stressing the syntactical rather than the semantic property of this figure.
iii. Interestingly, this function of figurative analogy is similar to the one that Tindale (2009) describes for antithesis, namely to assist an audience in testing or weighing a case.
iv. Clifton (1983) remarks that antithesis or metaphor can be conveyed within one single shot and that the most extended form of antithesis or metaphor is when either is used to condense the meaning of the whole film. See the examples he discusses on pages 121 and 125 for antithesis, and on page 100 for metaphor.
v. Nichols (2010, pp. 7-17) summarizes the three commonsense assumptions about documentaries thus: "documentaries are about reality; documentaries are about real people; documentaries tell stories about what happens in the real world".
vi. The film was banned for reasons pertaining to the issue of the patients' informed consent and the of the prison authorities in it. See chapter 2 in Benson and Anderson (2002) for a detailed chronicle of the production of the film and the ensuing trials and controversy.
vii. Interestingly, when one also follows the content of the dialogue between

Vladimir and dr. Ross, it becomes clear that it is Vladimir who builds a clear and strong argument in support of his request to be transferred to a prison, while the doctor's responses seem dogmatic and unconvincing. This provides an ironic view of who is the sane and who is the mad one of the two.

viii. The other two films are Welfare (1975) and Meat (1976).

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ISSA Proceedings 2014 ~ Linguistic Argumentation As A

Shortcut For The Empirical Study Of Argumentative Strategies

Abstract: A recent interest for the empirical observation of argumentation through institutional practices was underlined by van Eemeren (2010). Since discourses give empirical hints which inform the observer on the institutional conventionalized practices involved in the study of strategic manoeuvring, there must be ways of describing meaning which allows to account for the dynamics of this field: a study of these ways is the object of this paper.

Keywords: empirical study of strategic manoeuvring, experiments in semantics, utterance meaning, sentence meaning, empirical observation of institutional practices, indirect observation, inhabited words, points of view, viewpoints semantics.

1. *Introduction*

Research in argumentation has acknowledged the important role of discourse in the study of argumentative strategies and manoeuvring. This acknowledgement is not recent; however, more recent is the inclusion, within the possible objects of research on argumentation, of the relationship between institutional contexts and argumentative discourse, via conventionalized institutional practices. The recent interest for the empirical observation of argumentation through institutional practices was underlined by van Eemeren (2010, p. 129) in these terms:

… the term argumentation [… also refers to] an empirical phenomenon that can be observed in a multitude of communicative practices which are recognized as such by the arguers. Because these communicative practices are generally connected with specific kinds of institutional contexts […] they have become conventionalized. Due to this context-dependency of communicative practices, the possibilities for strategic manoeuvring in argumentative discourse in such practices are in some respects determined by the institutional preconditions prevailing in the communicative practice concerned.

This new interest for an empirical approach to the relationship between institutional contexts and argumentative strategies, *via* communicative practices linked to institutional preconditions, opens a wide and important field of research,

as van Eemeren convincingly shows it in his 2010 book.

As van Eemeren pointed out, the empirical study of this multidimensional space is possible because, among other reasons, all the terms of these relations are, at least partially, observable through discourse. Since discourse gives empirical hints to grasp the different facets of this space, it may be argued that there may be a way of describing meaning, which would allow to account, at lest partially, for the dynamics of those relations: this would provide a sort of shortcut to the description of argumentative strategies, as they are partially in-formed by the institutions. Obviously, such a shortcut lives aside an enormous part of the field opened by the abovementioned remarks. Nevertheless, for one who is 'only' interested in a better description of the semantics of natural languages, it offers interesting and rich perspectives.

This is what this paper is intended to show. We will also see that this shortcut is not a completely new idea in semantics: I will examine how several ideas borrowed from the paradigm of *Argumentation Within Language* can be adapted to an empirical study of the relationship between argumentation and the institutional constraints. Finally, I defend the idea that this shortcut is useful also for the one who is engaged in the complete study of the field: since most of what is observable in that field is discourse, it may be useful to make explicit the reasoning which compels to describe the institutional conventions the way we do. A rigorous semantic description is more than useful for this purpose.

Among the various ways of describing meaning that might meet those requirements, I emphasize the interest of several aspects of the so called "View-Point Semantics" (VPS), partially inspired by Mikhaïl Bakhtin's work on the "inhabited" character of natural language words (see, for instance, Bakhtin (1929, p. 279), as well as by Oswald Ducrot's work on the semantic constraints on argumentative orientation and strength (see, for instance, Ducrot (1988)). In particular, I insist on the technique it provides for, so to speak, extracting ideological and cultural preconditions from discourses, which inform the observer on the institutional conventionalized practices.

2. *From strategic manoeuvring to semantics (through the route of empiricity…)*
The field of research opened by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2009) and further investigated by van Eemeren (2010) includes, among other, the study of the multi-dimensional space of relationships between the different kinds of institutional

contexts, the different types of institutionalized purposes, the different aspects of conventionalized communicative practices, the different aspects of communicative activities, and the different types of argumentative strategies. As for the parameters that must be taken into account in order to investigate that field, van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2009, p. 11) circumscribe them in this way:

In analyzing the strategic function of the maneuvering that is carried out by making a particular argumentative move, the following parameters need to be considered:

1. *the results that can be achieved by the manoeuvring;*
2. *the routes that can be taken to achieve these results;*
3. *the constraints imposed by the institutional context;*
4. *the commitments defining the argumentative situation*

Following van Eemeren and Houtlosser (and one really wants to follow them –at least on those points), what we have to observe are things like *results, routes, constraints* and *commitments*. Moreover, in agreement with one of the cornerstones of pragma-dialectical theories, the empirical study of that field is possible because those 'ingredients' are observable through discourse. Finally, as van Eemeren insisted in his introductory lecture at ISSA 2014, the study of strategic manoeuvring must be *contextualized*, *empirical* and as *formal* as possible.

We will see how an empirical semantics of human languages can do the job and collect and organize observational data for a study of strategic manoeuvring that would meet the requirements proposed by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2009).

2.1. *Empirical observation for strategic manoeuvring and semantics*
From the three theses I underlined (the ingredients, the observability through discourse, and the three desired properties of the study) it follows there must be a way of describing meaning which accounts for how utterances inform with respect to *results, routes, constraints* and *commitments*.

The claim is stronger than what it first appears: the term *meaning* is used here in a technical sense, where it refers to the *semantic value of languages units*, independently of the situation in which they are used; as opposed to the term *sense,* (utterance meaning), which we use to refer to the *semantic value of utterances in situations.*

The reason why that claim has to be acceptable is that the only observable facts that lead a hearer, in a given situation, to reach a particular *result, route, constraint* or *commitment*, rather than others, are the linguistic units used in the utterance. Obviously, in other situations, the same linguistic units might (and will) lead the hearer to reach other *results,* etc., so that the study of strategic manoeuvring really has to be contextualized, in spite of that claim. But, given that in each particular situation, it is the choice of some linguistic unit rather than some other that produce some effect rather than some other, in order to carry an empirical study, it must be acknowledged that a set of instructions which is stable with respect to situations, must be given by the language units which are used in the discourse. Acknowledging this allows to meet the last requirement underlined by van Eemeren: having the study of strategic manoeuvring supported by semantic descriptions (i.e. independent of context), is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for a possible formal study.

2.2. *Empirical observation in general*

From a more general perspective, I will now address two essential aspects of empirical observation: causality and subjectivity. This will help understand (a) why and how, in spite of the fact that causal relations are not accessible to our sensorial system, they play an essential role in empirical sciences, and (b) why and how, in spite of the necessary radical subjectivity of individual observation, a certain degree of constructed objectivity can be achieved within a community.

a. *Causality*

Empirical observation concerning the parameters underlined by van Eemeren and Houtlosser can be expressed by (meta-)statements of the form:

The linguistic segment *X* used in the institutional situation *S*
produced the effect *R,* with respect to parameter *P*.

As can be seen by the reference to *produced effects,* these (meta-)statements convey implicit causal attributions. This is not specific to the field of strategic manoeuvring, nor to that of argumentation, and not even to linguistics or any human or social science: indeed, any scientific observational statement, like, for instance, “water boils at 100° C”, carry implicit causal attributions; in our last example, if we try to substitute “43 years old” to “100° C”, we immediately understand that the original statement conveys the implicit causal assumption according to which the cause of the boiling is the temperature (and not the age of

the technician…).

Now, no scientist and no thinking human being in general would ever pretend they have observed some causal relation *with their sensorial apparatus:* causal relations are not observable through our sensorial apparatus and causality is always *only* a hypothesis. Obviously, some causal attributions are more plausible than others, but *plausibility* is not a proof…

Acknowledging that causal relations are not directly observable through our sensorial apparatus does not imply believing that *causality doesn't exist,* but only understanding that *causal statements cannot be used as empirical evidences*. And, since we have just seen that all scientific empirical observational statements convey an implicit causal attribution, it follows that no scientific empirical observational statement can be directly used as an evidence for some theoretical standpoint. This may seem paradoxical, but it is not so. The same idea can be reformulated in another way, which shows an exit to that apparent paradox: 'any statement about the world, which evokes a causal relation between facts of the world, refers to non directly observable facts'. The apparent paradox dissolves itself as soon as we abandon the naïve belief that only material things *really* exist for science, belief which entails that only direct observation can count as an evidence. This is why sciences, and especially 'hard' sciences have developed a very sophisticated system of indirect observation, including criteria of validity for the causal attributions supposed by that indirect observation.

b. *Objectivity and intersubjectivity*
Since scientific statements suppose previous causal attribution hypotheses, our perception of the world is significantly influenced by our theoretical biases.

Again, acknowledging that our beliefs about the existence of what we perceive cannot be invoked as a proof of its existence is *something different from* believing that those beliefs are false. And, in the same way, acknowledging that the way we perceive the world is influenced by our theoretical biases is *something different from* believing that the world plays no role in the way we perceive it.

Roughly, the essential reason for that difference is that, though we cannot directly access the world (we can only access it through the individual interpretation of what our sensorial apparatus gives), the world accesses our actions and reacts to them. Thus, analyzing what is stable in different selected

human actions and in the world reactions to them may give us collective stable elements to make hypotheses about how the world is within that zone of stability.

In Raccah (2005), I showed that an essential scientificity requirement, valid for any kind of science, is that it should provide descriptions of a class of phenomena, in such a way that the descriptions of some of those phenomena provided *de dicto* explanations for the descriptions of other ones. I also pointed out that fulfilling empiricity requirements could not lead to believe that science describes the phenomena 'the way they are', since one cannot seriously believe that there is a possibility, for any human being, to *know* the way things are. Though scientific observers cannot prevail themselves of *knowing* how the world is, they have access to the world through their interpretation of the states of their sensorial apparatus: that interpretation often relies on previously admitted scientific – or non scientific – theories.

If we want to apply these requirements to semantic theories, we have to find observable semantic facts, which can be accessed to through our senses. As we will see in the next section, it seems that we are faced with a big difficulty, which might force us to admit that there cannot be such a thing as an empirical semantic theory: we will see that semantic facts are abstract and thus not directly accessible to our sensorial apparatus. We seem to be in a situation in which the very object about which we want to construct an empirical science prevents its study from being an empirical study…

However, if we admit that physics is a good example of empirical sciences, we should realize that we are not in such a dramatic situation. For what the physicist can observe through her/his senses, say, the actual movements of the pendulum (s)he just built, is not what her/his theory is about (in that case, the virtual movements of *any* – existing or non existing – pendulum): the object of physical theories is not more directly accessible to the observers' sensorial apparatus than the object of semantic theories. Physicists use different tricks in order to overcome that difficulty, one of which is the use of indirect observation: some *directly observable***[i]** entities are considered to be traces of non directly observable objects or events, which, in some cases, are seen as one of their causes, and, in other cases, as one of their effects.

If we are willing to keep considering physics as an empirical science, we are bound to consider that that *indirect observation* strategy is not misleading; we

only have to see how it could be applied to the study of meaning. In order to illustrate how this could be done, I will examine an example and will abstract from it.

2.3. *Empiricity in what concerns the study of human languages semantics*
Now that we have been reminded that (i) causality is not directly observable, (ii) scientific empirical statements of observations suppose causal attributions, (iii) sciences speak of indirectly observable entities embedding relations between directly observable entities, I would like to elaborate on a few interesting properties of the causal attributions used within the sciences of language(s), and, in particular, semantics. This will help understand why semantics can be a shortcut for strategic manoeuvring.

2.3.1 *A few conceptual distinctions*
The concepts I resort to for this study are not all used in a normalized way: in the intent to be understood by different trends of thoughts, I will first insist on several conceptual differences (it should be noted that the terms I used do refer to these concepts may very well not be the ones some or other reader would use. I do not mean to compel them to use the same terms I use rather than the ones they prefer: I only aim at characterizing the concepts and insist on their differences.

a. *Several concepts of language*
Though it is unavoidable that notions which are deeply related to our ways of thinking are grasped in different manners, according to the differences in those ways of thinking, it is avoidable, and highly desirable (see Pascal 1655, pp. 523-535) to ascertain that these *conceptions* are about the same *concept*. In the case of *language*, the differences in *conceptions* are frequently altered by an abusive assimilation of three distinct concepts:

(i) something that human beings speak (or write) in, that is usually acquired by all human beings between birth and 24 months, that may serve to communicate, to think, to deceive, etc., that may be different from one group of human beings to another, that may be learnt, taught, etc.; English, French, Spanish, etc. are different instances of this *something*, which is called “idioma” in Spanish, “langue” in French; the noun referring to it may be pluralized;
(ii) the faculty that human beings have (some people may believe that it is also the case for some animals, robots, gods, etc.), and that enables them to learn, use and

possibly forget the *something* I coined as the first concept; this second *object* is called “lenguaje” in Spanish, “langage”, in French; the noun referring to it cannot be pluralized;
(iii) an abstract system, consciously and deliberately built by a human being, or by a team of human beings, in order to achieve a specific goal or set of goals.

The fact that these three different concepts happen to be called, in English, by the same name is not an evidence for their being the same concept… To avoid such confusions, I will use the term *human languages* for concept (i), *Language Faculty*, for concept (ii), and *artificial language*, for concept (iii).

b. *Several concepts of meaning*
The difference between a sign and its use in a particular situation is acknowledged by most linguists. However, one of its consequences on the study of semantics and pragmatics, namely the essential difference in nature between *utterance meaning* and *sentence meaning*, is not so often taken into account**[ii]**.

In order to fully understand the rest of this paper, it will be necessary to keep this difference in mind: I will speak of utterance meaning in order to refer to the result of some interpretation of a discourse or of an utterance in a particular situation; in contrast, I will speak of sentence meaning in order to refer to the contribution of language units (not only grammatical sentences) to the interpretation of their different possible utterances.

Note that this apparently ‘neutral’ terminology presupposes that each unit of any language has something stable which is partially responsible for the infinitely many possible interpretations its use may lead to**[iii].**

2.3.2 *Instructional semantics*
Semantics can thus be conceived of as the discipline which empirically and scientifically studies the contribution of language units (simple or complex) to the construction of the meanings of their utterances in each situation. The contribution of the situations to the construction of utterance-meanings is studied, according to that conception, by pragmatics.

According to that conception of semantics, *utterance-meaning* is, clearly, the result of a construction achieved by some hearer, construction influenced by the *linguistic meaning* (*sentence-meaning, phrase-meaning*) of the language units used in the utterance and by the elements of situation taken into account by the

hearer. Diagram 1 illustrates this conception:

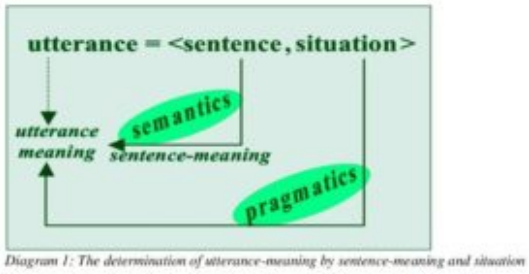

Diagram 1: The determination of utterance-meaning by sentence-meaning and situation

This pre-theoretic way of understanding the canvas of utterance-meaning construction belongs to the instructional semantics trend, as presented, for instance, in Harder (1990, p. 41):

the emphasis is on meaning as something the speaker tells the addressee to do. If A (the addressee) does as he is told (follows the instructions), he will work out the interpretation that is the product of an act of communication

2.3.3 *Causal attributions in semantics, and their essential properties*
Suppose an extra-terrestrial intelligence, ETI, wanted to study the semantics of English and, for that purpose, decided to observe speech situations. Suppose ETI hides in a room where several – supposedly English speaking – human beings are gathered, a classroom, for instance. Suppose now that ETI perceives that John pronounces "It is cold in here". If all of ETI's observations are of that kind, there is no chance that it can formulate grounded hypotheses about the meaning of the sequence it heard. For what can be perceived of John's utterance is only a series of vibrations, which, in themselves, do not give cues of any kind as to what it can mean (except for those who understand English and interpret the utterance using their private know-how). If ETI wants to do its job correctly, it will have to use, in addition, observations of another kind. Intentional states are ruled out since they are not directly accessible to the observers' sensorial apparatus. It follows that we will have to reject any statement of the kind: "the speaker meant so and so", or "normally when someone says XYZ, he or she wants to convey this or that idea" or even (in case the observer understands English) "I, observer, interpret XYZ in such and such a way and therefore, that is the meaning of XYZ". ETI will have to

observe the audience's behaviour and see whether, in that behaviour, it can find a plausible effect of John's utterance: it will have to use indirect observation. The fact that it may be the case that no observable reaction followed John's utterance does not constitute an objection to the indirect observation method: it would simply mean that ETI would have to plan other experiments. After all, even in physics, many experiments do not inform the theorists until they find the experimental constraints that work.

Before we go further, let me insist and emphasize that we have just seen that the different 'popular learned conceptions'**[iv]** of semantics are wrong. Indeed, the observable phenomena of semantics
(i) cannot be *directly* meanings, since these are not accessible to our sensorial apparatus;
(ii) they are not just *utterances*, since that would not be enough to describe meaning phenomena;
(iii) they are not pairs consisting of *utterances* and '*intended meanings*', since such intentional things are not accessible to empirical observation. In our extra-terrestrial example, we suggested that they are pairs consisting of utterances and behaviours.

I will take that suggestion as seriously as possible: in the rest of this section, I examine how to constrain the relationship between utterances and behaviours, and sketch some of the consequences of this choice.

a. *The causal attribution hypothesis*
Suppose that, in our example, ETI notices that, after John's utterance, the following three actions take place:

(i) Peter scratches his head,
(ii) Paul closes the window and
(iii) Mary writes something on a piece of paper.

We all know (actually, we think we know, but we only believe…) that the correct answer to the question "what action was caused by John's utterance?" is most probably "Paul's". However, ETI has no grounds to know it and, in addition, it may be the case that Paul closed the window not because of John's utterance (which he may even not have heard), but because he was cold, or because there was too much noise outside to hear what John was saying… Obviously, the most

plausible hypothesis, in normal situations, is the one according to which Paul's action was caused by John's utterance; but the fact that it is plausible does not make it cease to be a hypothesis…
Thus, before ETI can continue its study, it must admit the following general hypothesis

H0: *Utterances may cause behaviours*

Moreover, in each experimental situation s, ETI must make specific hypotheses hS which particularise H0 in the situation s, and relate particular actions with the utterance under study (an aspect of van Eemeren's *contextualization*).

It is important to remind that H0 and the different hS are not facts about the world but hypotheses: they do not characterise the way things are but rather the way things are *conceived* of in our rationality.

b. *The non materiality hypothesis*
Let us suppose that ETI shares with us the aspects of our contemporary occidental rationality expressed by H0. This would not prevent it from believing that the way John's utterance caused Paul's action is that the vibrations emitted by John during his utterance physically caused Paul to get up and close the window. Though it hurts our contemporary occidental rationality, this idea is not absurd: the fact that we simply cannot take it seriously does not make it false**[v]**. Moreover, utterances do have observable physical effects: a loud voice can hurt the hearers' ears, specific frequencies can break crystal, etc. What our rationality cannot accept is the idea that the linguistic effects of the utterances could be reduced to material causality. In order to rule out this idea, we need another hypothesis, which is also characteristic of our rationality rather than of the state of the world:

H1: *The linguistic effects of an utterance are not due to material causes*

As a consequence of H1, if we cannot believe that the observable actions caused by an utterance are due to its materiality, we are bound to admit that they are due to its form. In our rationality, the causal attribution requested by H0 is constrained to be a formal causality.

c. *The non immediateness hypothesis*
If we use the term *sentence* to refer to a category of form of utterances, we start

to be in the position to fill the gap between what we can observe (utterances and behaviours) and what we want semantics to talk about (sentences and meanings). However, there is yet another option that our rationality compels us to rule out: ETI could accept H1 and yet believe that though the causality that links John's utterance to Paul's action is not material, it directly determined Paul's action. That is, one could believe that John's utterance directly caused Paul to close the window, without leaving him room for a choice. This sort of belief corresponds to what we can call a 'magic thinking'; indeed, in Ali Baba's tail, for instance, there would be no magic if the "sesame" formula were recognised by a captor which would send an "open" instruction to a mechanism conceived in such a way that it could open the cave. The magical effect is due to the directedness of the effect of the formula. It is interesting to note that this feature of our rationality, which compels us to reject direct causality of forms, is rather recent and probably not completely 'installed' in our cognitive systems: there are many traces in human behaviour and in human languages of the 'magic thinking'. From some uses of expressions like "Please" or "Excuse me" to greetings such as "Happy new year!", an impressing series of linguistic expressions and social behaviours suggests that, though a part of our mind has abandoned the 'magic thinking', another part still lives with it. Think, for instance, about the effects of insults on normal contemporary human beings…

However, for scientific purposes, we definitely abandoned the 'magic thinking' and, again, since it is a characteristic of our rationality and not a matter of knowledge about the world, no observation can prove that it has to be abandoned: we need another hypothesis, which could be stated as follows:

H2: *The directly observable effects of utterances are not directly caused by them*

The acceptance of that "anti-magic" hypothesis has at least two types of consequences on the conception one can have of human being.

The first type of consequences pertains to ethics: if utterances do not directly cause observable effects on human actions, no human being can justify a reprehensible action arguing that they have been told or even ordered to accomplish them. If a war criminal tries to do so, he or she will give the justified impression that he or she is not behaving like a human being, but rather like a kind of animal or robot. As human beings, we are supposed to be responsible for our actions; which does not mean that we are free, since a reprehensible decision

could be the only way of serving vital interests. Though this type of consequences of H2 are serious and important, they do not directly belong to the subject matter of this paper and we will have to end the discussion here. However, we think they were worth mentioning…

The second type of consequences of H2 concern the relationship between semantics and cognitive science. Indeed, H2, combined with H0 and H1, can be seen as a way of setting the foundations of a science of human cognition and of picturing its relationship with related disciplines. If we admit, in agreement with H0, H1 and H2, that an utterance may indirectly and non materially causes an action, we are bound to accept the existence of a non physical causal chain linking the utterance to the action, part of that chain being inaccessible to our sensorial apparatus. The object of semantics is the first link of the chain; the first internal state can be seen as the utterance meaning. The action is determined by a causal lattice in which the utterance meaning is a part, and which includes many other elements and links; none of these elements or links are directly observable, though indirect observation can suggest more or less plausible hypotheses about them. Different theoretical frameworks in cognitive science construe that causal lattice in different ways; they also use the variations of different observable parameters in order to form these hypotheses. In our example, the only two directly observable parameters were utterances and actions, for the part of the lattice that we are interested in is the chain that links utterances to actions. However, other kinds of cognitive science experiments could be interested in studying the variations of other directly observable parameters, such as electrical excitation, visual input, outside temperature, etc. for the beginning of the chain and movement characteristics, body temperature, attention, etc. for the end of the chain**[vi]**.

Note that the fact that cognitive science and semantics may share experimental devices is not sufficient to adhere to the present fashion and suggest that there can be a "cognitive semantics": the object of semantics (the link between utterances and utterance meanings, as it is inscribed in languages units) does not belong to the causal lattice which constitutes the object of cognitive science**[vii]**.

3. *Strategic manoeuvring, human languages & argumentation*

From the necessity of devising experiments providing indirect observation for semantics, as analyzed above, many consequences follow, from many different points of view. For the purpose of this paper, I would like to insist on two of them,

which are related to the connection between strategic manoeuvring and semantic approaches to argumentation: namely the essential role of discourses analysis, and the essential insufficiency of ordinary corpora.

3.1 *The essential role of discourses analysis in semantics*

As acknowledged by the pragma-dialectical approach to strategic manoeuvring, most, if not all, of what we know about results, routes, constraints and commitments involved in the that is carried out by making an argumentative move, we know it through the interpretation of texts or discourses. It follows that, if we don't use an empirically grounded formal model in order to account for how this knowledge is built out of these texts and discourses, the essential knowledge used for describing argumentative strategies will remain intuitive.

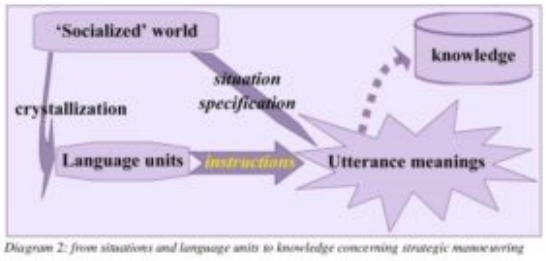

Diagram 2: from situations and language units to knowledge concerning strategic manoeuvring

In order to account for how this knowledge is built, out of the interpretation of texts and discourses, the semantic models that can be used must enable to describe how languages units impose the construction of the particular senses (utterance meanings), in the situations in which they are uttered, senses which constitute the different pieces of that knowledge. And, in order to allow such descriptions, the language units have to crystallize some aspects of the socialized world which constitute the institutional situation. Diagram 2 illustrates this point.

3.2 *About corpora*

The second consequence of this causal study which I would like to emphasize concerns the kind of corpora that can be useful for an empirical study of strategic maneuvering through semantics. The requirements for such corpora are limited to the ones for semantic corpora, since any discourse and any text refers to the institutional constraints on its own interpretation. However, these 'limited'

requirements that must meet a corpus in order to be usable for an empirical study of semantics are not so weak and, actually, are very seldom met in the corpora used in the literature.

Indeed, ordinary corpora provide only (in the best cases) one half of the empirical data required to study semantics: they usually only provide the linguistic units that have been used (the signifier), but do not give cues for the utterance meanings that have bean actually constructed in the real situation in which they have been used. This leaves the second half of the necessary data to the observer's intuition. The fact that observer's intuitions are usually rather good does not help: on the contrary, it makes the observer rely on these intuitions without even noticing it. In order to illustrate this point, one only needs to imagine a physicist's reaction to another physicist claiming "I know where the cannon ball will fall, so I don't have to tire myself to examine what is happening in the field"…

Obviously, the actual interpretation that a reader or a hearer made in the actual situation in which those linguistic units were used (like any interpretation whatsoever) is not accessible through our sensorial apparatus. Therefore, no corpus could possibly provide it. However, it is the burden of the observers to justify the interpretations they assign to those texts and discourse. Again, indirect observation is necessary: a useful corpus for semantics should contain cues for assessing the correctness or, at least, the plausibility of hypotheses on what has been understood.

4. *Provisional conclusions, and perspectives*

I will conclude underlining some of the consequences of the ambition to use semantics in order to more formally and more empirically access institutional knowledge within the study of strategic manoeuvring.

In this study, we saw that, if we want to take seriously the findings of the pragma-dialectical approach to strategic manoeuvring, we must be in the position to take into account the institutional preconditions prevailing in the communicative practice, preconditions which can be observed mainly through discourses and texts. For that reason, we must be able to, so to speak, extract those preconditions out of these discourses and texts, as rigorously as possible; in particular, in order to limit the role of intuition, we need a semantic model which can determine the contribution of language units to the assessment of those

preconditions.

Neither cognitive semantics nor truth-conditional semantics can do the job because the descriptions they provide have nothing to do with socialized ways of understanding the institutions: what is needed is an instructional semantics that accounts for how the languages units influence the hearer's ways of seeing the role of institutions, or, from a complementary point of view, how the languages units reveal the speakers' ways of understanding the impact of institutions. As a consequence, what is needed is a semantics that assigns socialized points of view to language units, constraints on points of view to connectors and operators, in order to allow to compute the points of view suggested by more complex language units. Given that causal relations are not observable though our sensorial apparatus, particular attention must be paid to the refutability of each observational statement. Moreover, given that the interpretation that was actually built out of a discourse or a text is not directly accessible to observation, particular attention must also be paid to the justification of the interpretation assigned to the triple <language unit, situation, addressee>.

Such semantic models, called *ViewPoint Semantics* (VPS), have been developed and are mainly used to extract knowledge and/or ideologies from texts and discourses. Their use for assessing institutional preconditions prevailing in the communicative practice, in order to study strategic manoeuvring, is promising, from a practical point of view, and inspiring, from a theoretical point of view.

NOTES

i. Though I have shown (ibid.) that nothing can be directly observable by a human being (since anything requires the interpretation of the state of our sensorial apparatus), I will use that expression to refer to objects or events whose access is granted by the interpretation of the effect they directly produce on our sensorial apparatus. This terminological sloppiness is introduced for the sake of legibility…

ii. As far as I know, one of the first explicit modern presentation of the conceptual difference between utterance meaning and sentence meaning is due to Dascal (1983).

iii. This very strong claim is evidenced by the fact that any dunce can acquire, and does acquire, a human language in 18-24 months, being exposed only to speech and human attitudes

iv. That is, the conception an educated person could have about semantics without having learnt and reflected about it previously… This is, it must be

admitted, the conception held by many people who speak or write about language!

v. Some Buddhist sects seek the "language of nature" in which the words emit the exact vibrations which correspond to the objects they refer to… Even though most of us, occidental thinkers, reject the belief underlying that quest, there is no ground to profess that the belief is silly independently of our set of beliefs.

vi. I obviously didn't choose realistic nor very interesting parameters… but my purpose is only illustrative.

vii. See Raccah (2011) for more about this subject.

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