

THE GENRE OF RATIONAL ARGUMENT

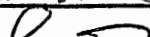
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## CHAPTER I

### THE GENRE OF RATIONAL ARGUMENT

Perhaps if ideas and words were distinctly weighted and duly considered, they would offer us another sort of logic and criticism than we have heretofore been acquainted with.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Problem of Analysis

Because argument is the substance of rhetoric,<sup>2</sup> calls for a new rhetoric are implicitly calls for a new theory of argumentation. A few rhetorical theorists have made some effort to heed this call,<sup>3</sup> but most either dreading the contentiousness and lack of concern for theory associated with "debate" or remembering the incredible dullness and non-practicality of "logic," have avoided theoretical association with

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<sup>1</sup>John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding, as quoted in Logic and Language, ed. by Anthony Flew (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), p. v.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Wallace, "The Substance of Rhetoric: Good Reasons," Q.J.S., XLIX (Oct., 1963), 239-249.

<sup>3</sup>Special notice and credit should be given the following: Ray Lynn Anderson and C. David Mortenson for "The Limits of Logic," Journal of the American Forensic Association, VII (Spring, 1970), 71-78 and "Logic and Marketplace Argumentation," Q.J.S., LIII (April, 1967), 143-151, Jesse Delia for "The Logical Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," Q.J.S., LVI (April, 1970), 140-148, Vasile Florescu for "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (Fall, 1970), 193-223, Glen E. Mills and Hugh G. Petrie, "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," Q.J.S., LIV (October, 1968), 260-267, and Stephen Toulmin and Chaim Perelman for works too numerous to mention at this point.

argument like the plague. Although Chaim Perelman's claim that "the study of the methods of proof has been completely neglected by logicians and epistemologists for the last three centuries"<sup>4</sup> seems a bit extreme, he is essentially correct in his analysis which shows an extreme paucity of philosophic concern for the field of argument--at least until very recently.<sup>5</sup>

This lack of concern for a theory of argument seems somewhat paradoxical in light of Western tradition which makes the thinking, rational man its paradigm and which claims that democracy, its leading form of government, functions through debate and discussion, in a word, through argument. However, a surprising number of analysts are more or less agreed as to the causes for the decline in interest for a theory of argument as part of the decline of interest in the language arts: grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic.<sup>6</sup> With the rise of the natural sciences and the theories of Descartes, the precision of geometry became the scientific ideal and science the epitomy of intellectualism. The hope was, as Robert Scott states, "to reduce everything to an

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<sup>4</sup>Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, trans. by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>The publishing of The Uses of Argument by Stephen Toulmin and of The New Rhetoric by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in 1958 and the establishment of the journal, Philosophy and Rhetoric, in 1968 seem to demonstrate a reviving interest in the interrelations of philosophy, rhetoric, and argument.

<sup>6</sup>See those mentioned in footnote No. 2. See also Robert L. Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," Speech Teacher, XVII (March, 1968), 134-139, Mortimer Adler, Dialectic (N. Y.: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1927), and William S. Smith, "Formal Logic and Debate," Southern States Speech Journal, XXVII (Summer, 1962), 330-338.



axiomatic system. This is to say, to discover a finite set of propositions that can be accepted without proof and on the basis of which theories can be derived with no other means than logic."<sup>7</sup> From knowledge of natural laws, those with intelligence, scientists, would instruct others in the simple ways of truth, and thus would the wisdom of the one correct, valid way be disseminated to all.

Jesse Delia calls such a theory the "logic fallacy."<sup>8</sup> Vasile Florescu notes that such demonstration "presupposes not only a perfect science, but a perfect audience as well."<sup>9</sup> Naturally, any such theory was doomed from the start. In science, Godel's proof concerning the impossibility of a simple, functional, axiomatic system shattered the illusions of a single, precise, mathematical universe and helped modify Einstein's relativity theories. In rhetoric, however, the equating of formal logic and rationality with the substance of rhetoric lingers on. Many are frustrated at following the formula and express lingering doubts about its applicability to real world, substantive arguments. Teachers of argument seem to realize "that students seem to gain little they can use"<sup>10</sup> in that portion of the class spent on analysis, the syllogism, and reasoning in general, but their fear of the relativism of "psychologic," and the fact that they don't think there are any better available substitute methods for looking at argument makes them continue in the tradition.

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<sup>7</sup>Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," 136-137.

<sup>8</sup>Jesse Delia, "The Logical Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," 140.

<sup>9</sup>Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," 207.

<sup>10</sup>William S. Smith, "Formal Logic in Debate," 330.

It is little wonder that the preponderant majority of teachers of argument and rhetoric continue in the analytic, neo-Aristotelian tradition. After all, this tradition seems to have the forces of "logic," "validity," "rationality," and even of "science" if not of "God" arrayed on its side.<sup>11</sup> Through conceptual slippage, which has prevailed for centuries, "logic," "validity," "science," and "rationality" have come to have extremely narrow functional parameters but extremely broad theoretical connotations. In formal usage, logic applies mainly to the syllogism. The syllogism, in turn, is composed of logical propositions. These logical propositions, must have precise characteristics as explained by David Shepard in "Rhetoric and Formal Argument":

. . . it is a declarative sentence; the verb is tenseless; the pattern is noun + linking verb + predicate nominative; it is true or false by virtue of its form; the truth or falsity is independent of any state of affairs; it is true or false for all possible worlds; it is trivial, tautological, and imparts no factual information; and the relation between the subject and the predicate is definitional.<sup>12</sup>

From such propositions through the rules of the syllogism, the advocate arrives at a valid conclusion. This is the "stuff" of argument and, in a narrowly conceived sense, of science, for the mechanistic formal logicians, the logical positivists, and the analytic philosophers.

Formally, logical arguments are univocal, universal, and timeless.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Julius Stone, Legal System and Lawyers' Reasonings (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 302.

<sup>12</sup>David Shepard, "Rhetoric and Formal Argument," 243.

<sup>13</sup>This, at least, is the ideal paradigm. Logic is not itself a univocal term. There are other forms of logic than analytic logic, but the analytic paradigm has become so preeminent and is so interwound with these terms that they will be temporarily employed in a seemingly singular sense.

Toulmin would call them "context-invariant."<sup>14</sup> Formal arguments are composed of propositions which meet stringent linguistic or symbolic rules. Their validity is dependent "on the consistency with which we use whatever language we have . . ."<sup>15</sup> As long as the argument is consistent, that is as long as it meets the rules, and as long as the Law of Non-Contradiction is satisfied, the argument is presumed to proceed to truth. Many logicians even prefer to use symbols in formal arguments rather than words because of the ease of their invariant interpretation. Most, assuming common meaning, are ~~unconcerned~~ with defining terms. Cohen and Nagel even go so far as to contend that it is the job of the philosopher, not of the logician or scientist, to define terms and to check on the material as versus the formal validity of argument.<sup>16</sup> It may be assumed that they would also claim it the job of the poet to deal with analogy and metaphor and the perils of shifting everyday language.

Formal logic and argument are, indeed, formal. As Mortenson and Anderson point out in their fine article, "The Limits of Logic":

. . . the closer we come to arguments reflecting all the tensions of marketplace controversy, loosely of the style of an Alfric or a Webster or a Fulbright, the more concerned we must be with matters of individual taste and judgment, and the less truck the critic has with the 'public' application of the rules of syllogistic.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 180.

<sup>15</sup>Morris Cohen and Ernest Nagel, An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method (N. Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1934), p. 17.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>17</sup>Mortenson and Anderson, "The Limits of Logic," 75.

Formal logic and argument just don't seem to fit everyday reasoning or marketplace arguments.<sup>18</sup> Because of the requirement for univocality and the demand that propositions be stated in true-false dichotomous form, the realm of decision and action and the realm of values lay outside demonstration and the syllogism. However, despite their narrow formal application, logic, validity, and constellatory terms have come to be theoretically equated with rationality. In the public mind, only a logical or valid argument is a "good" argument. Logic and validity are almost universally taken from the narrow realm where they apply and are utilized as standards for all argument. To attack these icons is to attack tradition and to be declared "emotional" if not outright "irrational."

In addition to the general problem of conceptual slippage noted above, two other problems are simultaneously functioning to keep rhetoric and argument in a supposedly pure and pristine state. Robert L. Scott points to the first of these problems in his article "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic":

The attractiveness of the analytic ideal, ordinarily only dimly grasped but nonetheless powerfully active in the rhetoric of those who deem truth as prior and enabling, lies in the smuggling of a sense of certainty into human affairs.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Mortenson and Anderson are joined in this assertion by Delia, Scott, Toulmin, Perelman, Shepard, Stone, and a host of others.

<sup>19</sup>Robert L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," Central States Speech Journal, XVIII (Feb., 1967), 12.

It is comforting to have a set of formulary rules that will provide "truth" and insure "rationality." The analytic ideal supposedly provides for both. A second, closely allied problem, is that any substitute for the analytic ideal leads invariably to complication. As Vasile Florescu states:

. . . as opposed to the theory of demonstration, which is concerned only with correct proofs, that is, conforming to universally accepted rules, and with incorrect proofs which do not fulfill these conditions, things are much more complicated in the theory of argumentation.<sup>20</sup>

It is difficult to fight conceptual slippage, the comfort of certainty, and simplicity all at once.

Nevertheless, we shall take up the challenge for we believe with Karlyn Kohrs Campbell:

. . . that indistinct boundaries and wider horizons are precisely the price we shall have to pay in order to theorize about and examine the many language acts which do not fall easily into neat classifications of purpose or genre.<sup>21</sup>

The purpose of this dissertation is to forward the thesis that there are alternative methods for looking at rational argument. As Scott writes:

Once free of the false notion that man can make what he thinks fully rational, that he can if he simply presents his thoughts in proper form win the assent of all worthy listeners, perhaps speech teachers can find ways to enable man to take more nearly complete advantage of those powers of reason that he does possess.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Phil." 218.

<sup>21</sup>Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetoric Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (Spring, 1970), 106.

<sup>22</sup>Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," 139.

Through an analytic, synthetic examination of the questions, "What constitutes a rational argument and therefore an argument worthy of having an effect on a decision?" and "How ought one to go about evaluating rational argument?," the author hopes to provide an alternative perspective or perspectives to that of the mathematically inclined, symbolic, analytic, positivists who for so long have held the theory of argument statically bound in their grasp.

A study of this sort seems fully warranted on grounds already implied. First, the field of argument has been peculiarly devoid of new philosophic speculation for some time and theory qua theory is a necessity. Second, if theories concerned with the rational man and with democracy are to keep pace with the times, a proper theory of argument is needed to clarify just what the rational man is and what reasons in what form justify democratic decision making. Third, recent alternative views toward argument have proliferated in the last few years, and it is time that someone with a rhetorical rather than a philosophic or legalistic inclination attempted to summarize, synthesize, and set in perspective those few gains which have been made. Fourth, and finally, if there is ever to be a new rhetoric or rhetorics, the substance of rhetoric, argument, must be examined and fitted to the new schematas, for mere changes in the calling of the tune through vocabulary permutations or speculations with regard to form just will not do the necessary job of reformation.

#### Method of Approach

A rather thorough examination of the resources available concerned in some fashion with the genre of rational argument reveals a vast plentitude of potential materials, in fact, far too much material for

one person let alone one dissertation to encompass. Choices have to be made in uncertain situations. Therefore, the author will restrict his examination to an analysis and synthesis of those theoretical contributions to argumentation theory which are recognized as most insightful and influential and which, at the same time, are outside the analytic tradition and might thereby more readily contribute to a rhetorical analysis of argument.<sup>23</sup> Three authors' works, one ancient and two modern, and correlated materials seem to best fit these prerequisites; the works of Aristotle, the works of Ch. Perelman, and the works of Stephen Toulmin.<sup>24</sup>

Instead of the constantly narrowing process which typifies some dissertations, this dissertation will spiral outward. Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin will be examined individually and their notions discussed and critiqued in conjunction with commentary concerning their interpreters and critics. Then their ideas will be combined, compared and contrasted, and utilized for leads to a new theory of argument as

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<sup>23</sup>This criterion will prevent an examination of formal logic, logical positivism, and analytic philosophy except as it is involved as an anti-thesis to rhetorical argument. Those works with "insight" and "influence" are subjectively picked by the author based on wide reading in the area and his best analysis of the considered opinions of others writing in the field.

<sup>24</sup>Aristotle is selected because a misinterpretation of his analysis of argument is the basis of "the logic fallacy" and because he presents alternative constructions that can be used as a starting point for reconstructing argument. Ch. Perelman has been selected as one of the key contributors to the ideas of the "new argument." Toulmin was selected on the basis of his subtle analysis of the "logic fallacy" as well as for his provocative notions concerning argument.

viewed in ordinary, natural, or everyday language philosophy,<sup>25</sup> dialectic,<sup>26</sup> and symbolic interaction.<sup>27</sup> The course does not promise to be easy nor the answer reached simple nor entirely satisfactory, but it must be remembered that replacing the simple with the complex and the static with the dynamic never satisfies those who demand the comforts of faith or the illusion of permanent truth.

Aristotle, the Stagirite, the Master of Them Who Know, might be accused of founding the analytic tradition such as we know it today, but to view him solely as the intellectually obtruse, totally rationalistic,

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<sup>25</sup>Ordinary language philosophy encompasses a number of writers in philosophy in the last forty years not all of whom would like the designation. Most prominent are Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin, Gilbert Ryle, P. F. Strawson, and Stephen Toulmin. For further information concerning this school see later references and two dissertations: Charles E. Caton, "A Description and Evaluation of the Method of the Ordinary-Language Philosophers and Its Doctrinal Basis," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), and John Stewart, "Rhetoricians on Language and Meaning: An Ordinary Language Philosophy Critique," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Calif., 1970).

<sup>26</sup>The idea of dialectic is most thoroughly discussed in a now dated work by Mortimer Adler. Mortimer Adler, Dialectic. (N. Y.: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927). However, the idea also appears in a series of works by Natanson and Johnstone and occasionally appears elsewhere in the literature. Maurice Natanson and Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., eds., Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Argumentation (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965). Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Philosophy and Argument (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959). Nicholas Abagnano, "Four Kinds of Dialectic," Philosophy Today, II (Fall, 1958), 143-149. Robert Pruet, "The Process of Dialectic: A Starting Point for Argument," The Ohio Speech Journal, VIII (1970), 42-47.

<sup>27</sup>Symbolic interaction is another ambitiously broad conceptualization. The most prominent symbolic interactionist known to rhetoricians is probably Kenneth Burke. For an especially perceptive presentation of the relevance of symbolic interactionism to rhetoric see Jackson Harrell, "Symbolic Interaction as the Basis for Rhetorical Theory," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1972).



scientist is to take a very incomplete look at the total Aristotelian corpus.<sup>28</sup> John Herman Randall, Jr., properly emphasizes that Aristotle "distinguished three different kinds of reasoning. . ." <sup>29</sup> the dialectical, the rhetorical, and the demonstrative or scientific. Only the demonstrative or scientific type of reasoning dealt with apodexis or certain proof proceeding from first causes through necessary forms to episteme or science.<sup>30</sup> Dialectical and rhetorical reasoning both proceeded from opinions generally accepted by all or, at least, by those illustrious few concerned, endoxa, to probabilistic conclusions.<sup>31</sup> The tool of dialectical and rhetorical reasoning, the enthymeme, was socially and culturally determined through the value orientations necessarily implicit in ethics, politics, religion, and the law.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>For purposes of this dissertation that corpus includes all of Aristotle's works except his natural science efforts.

<sup>29</sup>John Herman Randall, Jr., Aristotle (N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 37.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-39.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Vast interest in the enthymeme as a representation of non-formal reasoning has recently been reflected in a plethora of articles including: Lloyd Bitzer, "Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," Q.J.S., XLV (Dec., 1959), 399-408, Gary Cronkhite, "The Enthymeme as Deductive Rhetorical Argument," Western Speech, XXX (Spring, 1966), 129-134, Edward H. Madden, "The Enthymeme: Crossroads of Logic, Rhetoric, and Metaphysics," The Philosophical Review, LXI (July, 1952), 368-376, Arthur Miller and John D. Bee, "Enthymemes: Body and Soul," Philosophy and Rhetoric, V (Fall, 1972), 201-214, Charles Mudd, "The Enthymeme and Logical Validity," Q.J.S., XLV (Dec., 1959), 409-414, Edward D. Steele, "Social Values, the Enthymeme, and Speech Criticism," Western Speech, XXVI (Spring, 1962), 70-75. All this may seem unimportant, but as David Shepard states in "Rhetoric and Formal Argument," 242, "Rhetoricians have brought some of their heaviest thinking to bear on the role of formal argument in rhetoric. The resulting debate is almost as unprofitable as it is interminable, relieved only by occasional expeditions in search of the abominable enthymeme."

The rational man was not totally scientific in Aristotelian theory. Aristotle, a thorough humanist as well as scientist, realized that man is a political or social animal as well as an animal who wishes to know. To cull out those abilities leading to individual decision and action or to societal policy and to call them irrational was not a viable Aristotelian choice. Instead, Aristotle encompassed such decisions, actions, and policy making within the framework of an enlarged view of rationality which a thorough analysis and synthesis concerning the three forms of rational argument as developed in The Organon, The Ethics, The Politics, and The Rhetoric will clearly show.

Ch. Perelman, Belgian philosopher and legal theorist, argues "that the very nature of deliberation and argumentation is opposed to necessity and self evidence. . ." <sup>33</sup> In a series of essays written over the past twenty years <sup>34</sup> and in the epochal New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argument, <sup>35</sup> Perelman lashes out at the analytic tradition and offers an alternative perspective for rational argument. Professor Perelman seeks a probabilistic argument which can deal with everyday sorts of controversy. His theory of argumentation functions through the creation of "presence," a

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<sup>33</sup>Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup>Some of these essays are collected in The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, trans. by John Petrie (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963). Others of particular significance include: "On Self-Evidence in Metaphysics," International Philosophical Quarterly, IV (Feb., 1964), 5-19, "Proof in Philosophy," Hibbert Journal, LII (July, 1954), 354-359, "Rhetoric and Philosophy," trans. by Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (Jan., 1968), 15-24, and "Value Judgments, Justifications, and Argumentation," Philosophy Today, V (Spring, 1962), 45-50.

<sup>35</sup>Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric.

concept similar to Burke's "identification," which gains various degrees of "adherence" from varying types of "audience" and is associated with "persons" and "actions."<sup>36</sup> Perelman claims that "Only the existence of an argument that is neither compelling nor arbitrary can give meaning to human freedom, a state in which a reasonable choice can be exercised."<sup>37</sup> Through analysis and synthesis of the works of Perelman and his interpreters, it is hoped that a vision of rational argument which is "neither compelling nor arbitrary" can come clearly to the forefront of argumentation theory.

Stephen Toulmin, former English philosopher and historian of science, now resident at Michigan State, has probably caused more controversy in speech communication and rhetorical circles with regards to argument than anyone since Aristotle.<sup>38</sup> The Uses of Argument has been praised, touted, extended, and defended, damned, cursed, interpreted and even reinterpreted, but, most of all, used, since its publication in 1958.<sup>39</sup> Human Understanding, a more ambitious and thorough

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<sup>36</sup>Words in quotation marks assume special meaning in Perelman's works to be defined in the chapter concerning Perelman's theory of argument.

<sup>37</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 514.

<sup>38</sup>This statement is based on usage in courses in the theory of argument and on the number of citations to Mr. Toulmin in books and articles concerned with argument.

<sup>39</sup>Praise and extension come from Wayne Brockriede and Douglas Ehninger, "Toulmin on Argument: An Interpretation and Application," Q.J.S., XLVI (Feb., 1960), 44-53. Criticism comes from H. N. Castenada, "On the Proposed Revolution in Logic," Philosophy of Science, XXVII (July, 1960), 279-292, and from J. C. Cooley, "On Mr. Toulmin's Revolution in Logic," Journal of Philosophy, LVI (March 26, 1959), 297-319. Interpretation and reinterpretation come from Albert L. Lewis, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," Central States Speech Journal, XXIII (Spring, 1972), 48-55.

work, the first volume of which only has been published of an anticipated three, promises to cause even more pandemonium.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps to an even greater extent than Perelman, Toulmin offers the modern student of argument a non-analytic, optional, interpretative view of argument.

Toulmin begins with the hypothesis that:

. . . the categories of formal logic were built up from a study of the analytic syllogism, that this is an unrepresentative and misleadingly simple sort of argument, and that many of the paradoxical commonplaces of formal logic and epistemology spring from the misapplication of these categories to arguments of other sorts.<sup>41</sup>

He proceeds from this hypothesis to offer an optional system of analysis of arguments based on "field-dependent" criterion as applied to "substantive" versus "analytic" arguments.<sup>42</sup> In Human Understanding,

Toulmin explains that this means that:

The more positive and constructive aim of this whole argument has been to indicate just what 'digging behind' existing intellectual procedures implies, and what is involved in 'bringing to light the underlying comparisons' on which rational procedures rely for justification. This positive part of our account is encapsulated in the phrase "intellectual ecology." Normally it is evident, from the context in which our concepts are employed just what rational enterprise or activity we are implicitly concerned with, and what 'point of view' the discussion in question is adopting. Once this

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<sup>40</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, Vol. I (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1972).

<sup>41</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 146.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., pp. 146-210. This idea is far more important, Brockriede and Ehniger to the contrary, than the layout of arguments.

point of view is clearly identified, we can then use previous experience with the concepts and procedures involved to define the relevant reservoir of unsolved problems; recognize the outstanding intellectual or practical 'demands' which accordingly face us in the rational enterprise concerned and compare the 'rational merits' of proposed conceptual changes by seeing how far, and in what respects, they would give us the means of solving the outstanding conceptual problems and meeting the actual demands of the current problem-situation.<sup>43</sup>

In other words, one determines what field one is dealing with, orients oneself to the standards and vocabulary of that field, and determines that to be rational which best helps explain perplexing concepts involved in the field.<sup>44</sup> This process involves an understanding of specialized vocabulary, standards of authority, and the functional use of concepts. Once such understanding is attained, it can then be utilized for a theory of argument. This is what our analytic synthesis of Toulmin's works hopes to make somewhat clearer.

Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin deny the concept of a totally rational man in a mechanical universe. They are unanimous in their opposition to a sterile, mechanistic, abstract theory of argumentation. A close examination of their works makes perfectly clear that "the traditional equating of 'rational' and 'logical' is simply inaccurate."<sup>45</sup> As Scott says "the ordinary sense of rationality ought not simply to be

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<sup>43</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 488.

<sup>44</sup>Toulmin's meaning for field is elusive but will be made somewhat clearer through the more detailed explanation presented in the chapter on his view of rational argument.

<sup>45</sup>Delia, "The Logic Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," 141.

called into question . . . it ought to be discarded as unsupportable."<sup>46</sup>  
Scott even argues that those arguments which Toulmin calls analytic  
might not be arguments at all.

It is questionable (although Toulmin does not put the matter  
in this fashion) whether or not analytic arguments should be  
called arguments at all since the word 'argument' suggests  
the drawing of conclusions which are somehow fresh, new,  
unknown, or unaccepted otherwise.<sup>47</sup>

It is clear that the totally rational man and the mechanical universe  
have been eliminated as viable models. What is to take their place?  
Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin suggest a number of answers: the  
enthymeme, psychologic, dialectic, presence, adherence, field-  
dependent arguments, etc. But it is critical to note that their ideas  
are buttressed and extended in the themes of the ordinary language  
philosophers, in dialectic, and in the writings of the symbolic inter-  
actionists.

Ordinary language philosophy starts with the thesis that artificial  
languages are improper as the sole subject matter for philosophers,  
logicians, and students of argument. As Gilbert Ryle states in Dilemmas  
"questions which can be decided by calculation [in artificial languages  
S.B.H.] are different toto caelo, from the problems that perplex  
[ordinary language S.B.H]."<sup>48</sup> Strawson states that "side by side with

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<sup>46</sup>Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," 135.

<sup>47</sup>Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," 11.

<sup>48</sup>Gilbert Ryle, Dilemmas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,  
1960), p. 114.

the study of formal logic, and overlapping it, we have another study; the study of the logical features of ordinary speech."<sup>49</sup> J. L. Austin argues that:

Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth making in the life-times of many generations. In relation to everyday practical matters, the distinctions which ordinary language incorporates are likely to be sounder than any that you and I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs in an afternoon. They are to be neglected at our peril; if not the end-all, they are certainly the 'begin-all' of philosophy.<sup>50</sup>

Ordinary language philosophy concentrates on everyday, marketplace argumentation. Its strength, thus, is the very weakness of formal logic. However, it may be weak where formal logic is strong, in precision and clarity. The exploration of ordinary arguments, at best, only "establishes the boundaries of related concepts."<sup>51</sup> Ordinary language philosophy explores some intriguing problems but as Herman Tennessen remarks in "Ordinary Language in Memoriam" "the outlandish, vague, and imprecise language of the so-called 'ordinary language philosophers'"<sup>52</sup> may tend more toward individual criticism than a public 'logic.' This

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<sup>49</sup>P. F. Strawson, Introduction to Logical Theory (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1952), p. 231.

<sup>50</sup>Quoted in John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (Baltimore: Penquin Books, Inc., 1968), p. 451.

<sup>51</sup>R. J. Howard, "Ryle's Idea of Philosophy," New Scholasticism, XXXVII (April, 1963), 161. See also Steward, "Rhetoricians on Language and Meaning: An Ordinary Language Philosophy Critique," pp. 155-157 on John Wilson's Thinking With Concepts.

<sup>52</sup>Herman Tennessen, "Ordinary Language in Memoriam," Inquiry, VIII (Autumn, 1965), 227.

remark may, however, represent professional chauvinism and a half-truth on Tennessen's part, and I shall argue, that for all its weaknesses, ordinary language philosophy starts towards a definition of the new argument.

The boundaries of the new argument are further delimited in a renewed study of dialectic. Perelman argues that "philosophical argumentation, especially when it is constructive . . . is dialectical in the sense of Aristotle."<sup>53</sup> Natanson states in his oft reprinted "The Limits of Rhetoric" that "the unification of rhetoric and dialectic is really the reaprochement between philosophy and rhetoric because dialectic is given a unique interpretation; dialectic constitutes the true philosophy of rhetoric."<sup>54</sup> Mortimer Adler in Dialectic, now regrettably out of print, states:

Dialectic is a convenient technical name for the kind of thinking which takes place when human beings enter into dispute, or when they carry on in reflection the polemical consideration of some theory or idea. It is presented here as a methodology significantly different from the procedure of the empirical scientist or the method of the mathematician. It is an intellectual process in which all men engage in so far as they undertake to be critical of their own opinions, or the opinions of others, and are willing to face the difficulties that arise in communication because of the opposition and conflict of diverse insights.<sup>55</sup>

He connects dialectic to ordinary language in the idea that common discourse constitutes a vast network of definitions, implied classifica-

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<sup>53</sup>Perelman, "Reply to Henry W. Johnstone," reprinted in Natanson and Johnstone, Philosophy and Argument, pp. 136-137.

<sup>54</sup>Natanson, "The Limits of Rhetoric," reprinted in Natanson and Johnstone, Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Argumentation, p. 98.

<sup>55</sup>Adler, Dialectic, p. v.



tions, and distinctions in constant process.<sup>56</sup> In its formal sense, Adler relates and equates dialectic to philosophy as "the emancipation of the intellect and the cultivation of the comic *spirit*"<sup>57</sup> which sees not only the brute force of things but the multiple, flexible meanings of the world of discourse.

The same world of discourse is the prime staging area for the symbolic interactionists. Toward the end of his penetrating dissertation, written with just a touch of whimsy, Jackson Harrell makes a plea for more work with symbolic interactionism as related to argument.

In addition, work needs to proceed in devising theories of argumentation and rhetorical criticism based in this perspective. In recent years many writers have attacked the formal systems of argument which have been relied upon by rhetoricians in the past. However, no fully adequate counter-theories seem to have emerged. Symbolic interaction theory would seem to support strongly any move against objectively imposed formal systems of argument.<sup>58</sup>

Symbolic interactionists see the world through "terministic screens."<sup>59</sup> For them, the world is a world of language. The permutations and combinations of words with families of meaning constitute arguments.<sup>60</sup> Symbolic interactionism blends nicely with ordinary language and dialectic, pointing the way toward a new argument.

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<sup>56</sup>Adler, Dialectic, p. 90.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>58</sup>Harrell, "Symbolic Interaction as the Basis for Rhetorical Theory," p. 225.

<sup>59</sup>Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (N. Y.: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 18.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

### Resources and Limitations

As already hinted by the many bibliographic footnotes scattered through the first sections of this chapter, the resources for this study are copious. Selecting those books and articles which particularly fit non-analytic argument is, admittedly, a Gargantuan task. But such selectivity is not impossible and does not necessarily involve superficiality as the following synthesis hopefully will prove. A synthetic study can be as "deep" as any "particular" analysis. Particular analyses have been the trend in dissertations, but perhaps it is as important to know a little about an important problem as it is to know a lot about an insignificant difficulty; the newer synthetic studies certainly deserve a chance, at least, to go in this direction.

The Aristotelian corpus is both deep and broad which is only befitting for that rhetor whose guiding hand or "dead hand," depending upon how you wish to look at it, has undergirded rhetoric and argument for two thousand years. Besides the original sources and articles on the enthymeme already mentioned, the author wishes to point to those translations he thinks are particularly well done and to those secondary references of particular penetration. The best translations of The Rhetoric are by Cooper<sup>61</sup> and Rhys Roberts.<sup>62</sup> Each has its individual

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<sup>61</sup>The Rhetoric of Aristotle, translated by Lane Cooper (N. Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932). Note that previously cited materials are not footnoted in this section unless it was originally unclear as to what part of the dissertation they applied.

<sup>62</sup>The Rhetoric, translated by W. Rhys Roberts (N. Y.: The Modern Library, 1954).

strengths and weaknesses. Cooper is better at relating The Rhetoric to the entire Aristotelian corpus. Roberts is perhaps the more felicitous translator. For functional usage it is impossible to pick between them. Translations of other Aristotelian works of significance to argument can most conveniently be found in Richard McKeon's The Basic Works of Aristotle.<sup>63</sup> Among the older translators, interpreters, and commentators the works of Cope<sup>64</sup> and Jaeger<sup>65</sup> are critical. The best modern interpretation of Aristotle on argument is probably John Herman Randall, Jr.'s Aristotle, though Richard McKeon has any number of works pertinent to an understanding of Aristotle's argumentation theories.<sup>66</sup>

Ch. Perelman's critical works are Justice<sup>67</sup> and The New Rhetoric. Also important are his articles either done independently or in collaboration with Madame L. Olbrechts-Tyteca from whom he gets his philosophic background: "How Do We Apply Reason to Value?," "Rhetoric and Philosophy," "Proof in Philosophy," "Value Judgments, Justifications, and Argumentation," etc.<sup>68</sup> The most important interpreter of Perelman

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<sup>63</sup>Richard McKeon, ed., The Basic Works of Aristotle (N. Y.: Random House, 1941).

<sup>64</sup>E. M. Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric with Analysis and Notes (London: Macmillan and Co., 1867).

<sup>65</sup>Werner Jaeger, Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>66</sup>See, for example, Richard McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," Classical Philology, XLI (Oct., 1946), 193-206 and XLII (Jan., 1947), 21-50.

<sup>67</sup>Perelman, Justice, trans. by Susan Rubin, (N. Y.: Random House, 1967).

<sup>68</sup>See Footnote No. 34.

in America is Ray Dearin<sup>69</sup> though Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. has also done important work on Perelman's ideas in philosophy and argument.<sup>70</sup>

Perelman is better known abroad. There his best interpreters are Max Loreau,<sup>71</sup> Julius Stone,<sup>72</sup> and Vasile Florescu's excellent "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy."

Stephen Toulmin's most important argumentation texts are The Uses of Argument and Human Understanding. A short article which he published in 1957, "Logical Positivism and After or Back to Aristotle,"<sup>73</sup> is also particularly illuminating. Logicians have, by in large, not treated Toulmin well but among them his most penetrating critics are Castenada, Cooley, Cowan,<sup>74</sup> and Manicas.<sup>75</sup> Rhetoricians have extrapolated from Toulmin for their own purposes (see Brockriede and Ehninger, McCroskey,<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Ray Dearin, "Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1970) and "The Philosophical Basis of Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," Q.J.S., LV (Oct., 1969), 213-224.

<sup>70</sup>Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "A New Theory of Philosophical Argumentation," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XV (1954), 244-252.

<sup>71</sup>Max Loreau, "Rhetoric as the Logic of the Behavioral Sciences," Q.J.S., LI (Dec., 1965), 455-463.

<sup>72</sup>Stone, Legal System and Lawyers' Reasonings.

<sup>73</sup>Toulmin, "Logical Positivism and After or Back to Aristotle," Universities Quarterly, XI (August, 1957), 335-347.

<sup>74</sup>Joseph Cowan, "The Uses of Argument--An Apology for Logic," Mind, LXXIII (Jan., 1964), 27-45.

<sup>75</sup>Peter T. Manicas, "On Toulmin's Contribution to Logic and Argumentation," in Arthur Kruger, Counterpoint (Meuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1968).

<sup>76</sup>James McCroskey, An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1968).

and Windes and Hastings<sup>77</sup>) but Spicer<sup>78</sup> and Lewis give him fair treatment. Of the three giants of argument cited in this dissertation the resources concerning Toulmin are in greatest flux for he is still producing at an ever accelerating rate and commentary about his ideas continues to proliferate, though much by and about him does not concern argument.

The study of ordinary language philosophy necessarily begins with Wittgenstein's Philosophic Investigations.<sup>79</sup> The works of J. L. Austin,<sup>80</sup> Gilbert Ryle,<sup>81</sup> John Wisdom,<sup>82</sup> and P. F. Strawson<sup>83</sup> are also important. For a quick summary of the work of the natural or ordinary language philosophers the best work this author has seen is the section in John Passmore's A Hundred Years of Philosophy on "Wittgenstein and Ordinary Language."<sup>84</sup> The two dissertations previously mentioned by Caton and

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<sup>77</sup>Russell Windes and Arthur Hastings, Argument and Advocacy (N. Y.: Random House, 1965).

<sup>78</sup>Holt Spicer, "Stephen Toulmin's Functional Analysis of Logic and Ethics and Its Relation to Rhetoric." (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1964).

<sup>79</sup>Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Philosophical Investigations, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott, Ltd., 1953).

<sup>80</sup>J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers, ed. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961) and How to Do Things with Words, ed. J. O. Urmson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

<sup>81</sup>Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (London: Hutchinson, 1949), Dilemmas, and "Systematically Misleading Expressions," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, XXXII (1931-1932), 139-170.

<sup>82</sup>John Wisdom, Other Minds (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952).

<sup>83</sup>P. F. Strawson, Introduction to Logical Theory and, editor, Philosophical Logic (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>84</sup>John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, pp. 424-465.

Steward<sup>85</sup> are also insightful if not well written. In addition, several books of readings in ordinary language philosophy are now available the best of which are A. G. N. Flew, Logic and Language, 1st and 2nd series,<sup>86</sup> and Charles Caton, Philosophy and Ordinary Language.<sup>87</sup> Other than these sources, one interested in ordinary language philosophy, which might be called "philosophic, rhetorical analysis," would have to go to the professional philosophy journals.

Dialectic is best represented by Adler's Dialectic previously mentioned. The works of Natanson and Johnstone are also of significance as Johnstone's argumentum ad hominem is nothing more nor less than technical dialectic. Steve Shiffrin's article, "Forensics, Dialectic, and Speech Communication,"<sup>88</sup> vaunting dialectic as the art of policy analysis is insightful and provocative. Dialectic is mentioned in Burke as the overarching process for "merger and division" and the making and breaking of verbal hierarchies.<sup>89</sup> Holt Spicer states that "references to 'dialectic' are relatively infrequent in the current literature of rhetoric and philosophy,"<sup>90</sup> however, dialectic is the indefinite referent

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<sup>85</sup>See Footnote No. 25.

<sup>86</sup>A. G. N. Flew, ed., Logic and Language, 1st series and 2nd series (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959).

<sup>87</sup>Charles Caton, ed., Philosophy and Ordinary Language (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

<sup>88</sup>Steven Shiffrin, "Forensics, Dialectic, and Speech Communication," Journal of the American Forensic Association, VII (Spring, 1972), 189-191.

<sup>89</sup>Kenneth Burke, Grammar of Motives (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969), p. 403.

<sup>90</sup>Spicer, "Stephen Toulmin's Functional Analysis of Logic and Ethics and Its Relation to Rhetoric," p. 1.

of any number of works some of which will be referred to in the fifth chapter of this dissertation.

Jackson Harrell bemoans that "the wide range of sources available to the student of rhetoric interested in studying symbolic interaction theory must surely approach infinity."<sup>91</sup> While this is not entirely true, even those symbolic interactionist works which apply particularly well to argument are plentiful. Several of the works of Kenneth Burke come instantly to mind.<sup>92</sup> Two comprehensive articles giving concise statements regarding the basic positions and goals of the symbolic interactionists follow: Herbert Blumer's "Society as Symbolic Interaction,"<sup>93</sup> and Arnold Rose's "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory."<sup>94</sup> Three books of collected readings are also of particular value: Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, edited by Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman,<sup>95</sup> Human Behavior and Social Processes, edited by Arnold Rose,<sup>96</sup> and Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, edited by Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer.<sup>97</sup> And, as if this were

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<sup>91</sup>Harrell, "Symbolic Interaction as the Basis for Rhetorical Theory," p. 9.

<sup>92</sup>Esp. Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), A Grammar of Motives, and Language as Symbolic Action (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

<sup>93</sup>Herbert Blumer, "Society as Symbolic Interaction," in Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, eds. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967).

<sup>94</sup>Arnold Rose, "A Systematic Summary of Symbolic Interaction Theory," in his Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962).

<sup>95</sup>Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, eds. Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970).

<sup>96</sup>Rose, Human Behavior and Social Processes.

<sup>97</sup>Manis and Meltzer, Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology.

not enough, many commentaries on "new rhetorics" must be considered in the symbolic interactionist vein.<sup>98</sup>

Several limitations have already been implied in the survey of the literature. The examinations of Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin will be rather thorough but ordinary language theory, dialectic, and symbolic interaction will be only highlighted as alternatives to traditional argumentation studies. The author cannot in this dissertation present a whole new comprehensive theory of argument but wishes only to accomplish the more modest and appropriate task of pointing to new directions in argument. This is more than many have accomplished, and the concrete suggestions will hopefully constitute a contribution to the field. If this dissertation can point to some of the weaknesses in the study of traditional logic as related to argument, point to Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin to highlight and account for this difficulty, and formulate some alternatives from these three gentlemen as related to one another and to ordinary language philosophy, dialectic, and symbolic interaction, a modest contribution should have been made.

#### Organizational Schemata

I will complete the study of the genre of rational argument through analysis and synthesis of the various theories of argument mentioned in five independent but related chapters. These chapters flow from the outward spiraling methodological approach previously covered, and their content has been hinted at already.

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<sup>98</sup>Specific commentaries as to these "new rhetorics" will be presented in the fifth chapter.



Chapter I, "The Genre of Rational Argument," states the problem for analysis, covers the methodological approach, reviews the available literature, states the various limitations of the study, and presents the organizational schemata. As with all introductory chapters, its attempt is to interest, state the main thesis, and preview the work of the dissertation.

Chapter II, "Aristotle on Rational Argument: A Reinterpretation of Tradition," explores Aristotle's analysis of argument and those of his followers in the neo-Aristotelian tradition. Essentially, the chapter concludes that Aristotle has been misinterpreted by many for two thousand years. While it is true that his emphasis is on episteme, Aristotle also considered phronesis. The scientific syllogism was counterbalanced by the theories of dialectic and by the enthymeme. Though he was interested in scientific knowledge, Aristotle was also interested in the practical affairs of men. His view of that which is rational is more encompassing than the neo-Aristotelian tradition, narrowly considered, would grant.

Chapter III, "Ch. Perelman on Argument: The Assault on a Narrowed Vision of Rationality," presents the argumentation theories of an innovative Belgian legal philosopher. Perelman contends that the theory of argument is separate and distinct from the theory of demonstration. Argument is probabilistic, tentative, imprecise, and weighted on its strength as opposed to demonstration which is necessary, final, precise, and correct or incorrect. An argument is advanced before an "audience" seeking that audience's "adherence." The advocate must through language, through the interaction of arguments, and through association and dissociation, create "presence." Argumentation functions in the realm of decision and values instead of in the realm of facts. An argument

is "just," relevant and forceful, weighty, rather than right or wrong, and it is just for a particular time, audience, and situation. Perelman, and his companion, L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, create a theory of argument that is open and flexible and, though they backslide toward the analytic ideal upon occasion, they tend toward a dynamic new view of what constitutes argument and towards different methods for the evaluation of what they consider to be rational argument.

Chapter IV, "Stephen Toulmin and his Quest for the Foundations of Substantive Argument," analyzes the "logic fallacy" through the subtle commentaries of the most provocative argumentation theorist of our time. Toulmin attacks the "analytic ideal" with vigor attempting to separate "substantive argument" from the warrant-using, formally valid, analytic syllogism model of the past. He contributes a more sophisticated and clear "layout of arguments" model of his own and the ideas of field-dependency and intellectual ecology. This chapter also analyzes and critiques some of Toulmin's interpreters and evaluators. Following the lead of Albert Lewis, Toulmin's commentators are divided into the camp of the logicians and the camp of the rhetoricians. The logicians criticize Toulmin but admit there is a need for some method for interpreting "informal argument." The rhetoricians extrapolate from Toulmin to create innovations that sometimes add to the theory of rhetoric and argument but which do not always represent Toulmin's thought.

Chapter V, "Visions for a New Argument," concludes the dissertation. Abstracting from the analyses of Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin, the author finds a problem in the analytic ideal of argument. Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin suggest that the analytic vision of rationality is too narrow, too confined, for an adequate theory of argument. They themselves suggest some alternative options, but, more importantly,

their suggestions constitute leads into ordinary language theory, dialectic, and symbolic interaction. The theories of Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin as buttressed and extended by ordinary language theory, dialectic, and symbolic interaction theory suggest the basis for a more complex theory of argument and for a different sort of evaluation of argument. They suggest that the student of argument must be a student of language. They suggest that the student must know his culture and milieu. And they suggest that argument is "context-variant" and that rhetorical argument, the argument of values and of decision and action, must be related to people, times, and places. Rhetorical argument must be evaluated as strong or weak not as right or wrong, and such evaluation must take place within the proper jurisdictions or fields and according to intellectually ecological criteria. All this makes an adequate theory of argumentation far more complex, but it also makes such a theory more worthwhile as applicable to "ordinary every day argumentation."

## CHAPTER II

### ARISTOTLE ON RATIONAL ARGUMENT: A REINTERPRETATION OF TRADITION

Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic (that is, the art of public speaking and the art of logical discussion are coordinate, but contrasted, processes); for both have to do with such things as fall, in a way, within the realm of common knowledge, things that do not belong to any one science.<sup>1</sup>

#### An Introduction of Purpose

To those seeking new rhetorics and the requisite new logics it might seem ridiculous, even counterproductive, to go back to Aristotle. After all, to these persons, the Stagirite is part of the problem not part of the solution as regards a substantive view of rational argument. However, a return to the thought of Aristotle seems warranted on the basis of three considerations: (1) Despite two thousand years of supposed progress, his logic is still the basic assessment mechanism for "reasoned discourse";<sup>2</sup> (2) Aristotelian appraisal criteria for reasoned discourse often have been seriously mistranslated, misanalyzed, and misapplied; and (3) Consequently, students of argument have received a false impression as to what constitutes reasoned discourse according to Aristotle and have been left to their own devices or, if you will, to common sense and intuition, in evaluating rhetorical artifacts.

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, translated by Lane Cooper (N. Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932), 1354a.

<sup>2</sup>Aristotle's logic is here taken to include all writings commenting upon the syllogism, the enthymeme, the example, induction, reductio ad impossibile, and ethos, pathos, and logos.

Any cursory examination of recent texts on persuasion and argument reveals that Aristotelian evaluative criteria for reasoning are still pre-eminent in the field of rhetoric. The discussions of Freeley,<sup>3</sup> Capp,<sup>4</sup> Minnick,<sup>5</sup> and Kruger<sup>6</sup> all make the syllogism central to their analysis of reasoned discourse. Thompson<sup>7</sup> and Brockriede and Ehninger,<sup>8</sup> despite following a basically Toulminesque pattern of logic, still employ the basic principles of induction and deduction, the idea of logos, and the concept of the enthymeme. Leaving aside temporarily those comments which make reference to the contributions of Toulmin on patterns of argument, and of Bacon and contemporary science on induction, texts on argument and debate today treat formal logic as Aristotelian logic, just as they did ten years ago when William Smith<sup>9</sup> examined the field, and just as they have, basically, for two thousand years.

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<sup>3</sup>Austin J. Freeley, Argumentation and Debate: Rational Decision Making, 3rd ed. (Belmont Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1971).

<sup>4</sup>Glenn R. Capp and Thelma Robuck Capp, Principles of Argumentation and Debate (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965).

<sup>5</sup>Wayne C. Minnick, The Art of Persuasion (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957).

<sup>6</sup>Arthur N. Kruger, Modern Debate: Its Logic and Strategy (N. Y.: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960).

<sup>7</sup>Wayne N. Thompson, Modern Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Practices (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971).

<sup>8</sup>Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, Decision by Debate (N. Y.: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1967).

<sup>9</sup>William S. Smith, "Formal Logic in Debate," Southern State Speech Journal, XXVII (Summer, 1962), 330-338.

Regrettably for the sharp, probing analysis so essential to a healthy criticism, the logical apparatus which rhetoricians have borrowed from what they supposed to be the Aristotelian methodology have often proven to be but blunt instruments.<sup>10</sup> The blame for this condition, however, may not lie so much with Aristotle as with those whom J. A. K. Thomson calls "the logical martinets"<sup>11</sup> who for twenty centuries have mistranslated, misanalyzed, and misapplied the words of the Master.<sup>12</sup> These scholastics<sup>13</sup> have turned what was meant to be a humanistic, multivariate, flexible approach to rhetoric and criticism into a supposedly scientific but actually simplistic, cliché-ridden, bankrupt methodology.<sup>14</sup> In encapsulated fashion, they have turned Aristotle from the Master of Them Who Know into the caricature "of that syllogistic gentleman with a category for every emergency."<sup>15</sup> Stressing science,

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<sup>10</sup>The best analysis of this problem may be found in Edwin Black's Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method (N. Y.: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

<sup>11</sup>Aristotle's Ethics (Baltimore, Md.: Penquin Books, 1953), p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>For references to the mangling of the Aristotelian corpus see especially John Herman Randall, Jr. Aristotle (N. Y. : Columbia University Press, 1960), Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (Fall, 1970), 193-223, Jesse G. Delia, "The Logic Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," Q.J.S., LVI (April, 1970), 140-148, and Smith, "Formal Logic and Debate," 330-338.

<sup>13</sup>Scholastics is used here in a loose sense to refer not only to formal Scholastics but also to those of the neo-Aristotelian tradition who have attempted to make Aristotle a formal logician and supposedly systematic philosopher.

<sup>14</sup>See Black, Rhetorical Criticism, esp. pp. 91-132.

<sup>15</sup>Lawrence Rosenfield, Aristotle and Information Theory (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouten & Co., Printers, 1971), p. 23.

formal logic, the syllogism, and demonstration as well as thoughtlessly trying to apply the mechanisms for episteme and apodeixsis across the board to any type of discourse, the scholastics have given a lastingly false impression of the methodology of Aristotelian scholarship.

The false interpretation of Aristotelian methodology is, in the main, the reason why, "although much time is devoted to teaching formal logic in classes of argumentation and debate, students often seem to gain little that they can use . . ."16 It is probably also the reason why Edwin Black and a coterie of new critics are trying so very hard to break away from a neo-Aristotelian framework of rhetorical criticism.<sup>17</sup> Finally, the same false impression provides the justification for this chapter in which the author will attempt to: (1) Explain the deficiencies in the traditional interpretations of Aristotle on rational argument, (2) Provide a broad general framework for the Aristotelian multiple systems of rational argument, and (3) Comment in detail upon scientific demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric as separate rational systems of argumentation.

#### Deficiencies in Traditional Interpretation of Aristotle on Argument

Vasile Florescu in his insightful essay, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," states the main problem regarding the many misinterpretations of Aristotle: "As opposed to the theory of demonstration, which is concerned **only** with correct proofs,

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<sup>16</sup>William Smith, "Formal Logic in Debate," 330.

<sup>17</sup>In addition to Black one might mention Lawrence Rosenfield, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, and some Burkeans, though not necessarily Burke himself, as members of this "escaping" group.

that is, conforming to universally accepted rules, and with incorrect proofs which do not fulfill these conditions, things are much more complicated in the theory of argumentation."<sup>18</sup> One is reminded of Burke's "Prologue in Heaven" in The Rhetoric of Religion where "The Lord" must 'constantly explain to "Satan" "there is more to it than that."<sup>19</sup> Briefly, the problem is that for two thousand years many of Aristotle's translators and commentators have tried to transform his theory of argument (which is very complex and not particularly clear) into a simple, easily understood, theory of demonstration. To the extent these false disciples have succeeded in their quest is the extent to which the real Aristotelian corpus has been dismembered through "scholastic logic chopping."<sup>20</sup>

While the attempt to make Aristotle's theory of argument a theory of demonstration involves considerable twisting of the Aristotelian corpus, four distortions stand out as most crucial. First, because natural language inherently involves the risk of ambiguity and, further, because many insidiously take advantage of the potential for verbal slippage to purposefully manipulate concepts, many commentators chose to

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<sup>18</sup>Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Rhetoric," p. 218.

<sup>19</sup>Kenneth Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. 282.

<sup>20</sup>Florescu comments in "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," 207 that "we ought to recognize that, for the contemporary philosophers, traditional Aristotelian logic is arbitrarily reduced to the theory of syllogistic reasoning which is found in the Analytics. But, in the conception of the Stagirite, the syllogism is only a perfect instrument in the case of a perfect science, of which the principles have no longer a history, since they are admitted no matter where and no matter when. Enormous areas escape the jurisdiction of this method. The discovery of the first principles of a science is not governed by the syllogism, nor are the many aspects of practical life. How could one justify the presence of the Topics, and especially of the Rhetoric, other than as ways of exploring the gaps of the syllogistic method?"



emphasize Aristotle's artificial symbol system for logic which was but cursorily developed in The Prior Analytics.<sup>21</sup> Second, because Aristotle himself stressed its significance and because the other forms of proof tended toward intricacy if not outright ambiguity, various Aristotelian interpreters embraced the syllogism almost to the exclusion of any other type of proof. Third, because material validity, necessitated in Aristotle's theory of science,<sup>22</sup> tends to be extremely hard to verify, many chose to make the new pre-eminent syllogism totally formalistic. There were factors in Aristotle's writings which partially justified such a reformation, but the key fact seemed to be that "the traditional logic was a logic for clarifying and organizing that which was already known . . ." <sup>23</sup> It was not a logic of inquiry but a logic of proof,<sup>24</sup> so many of Aristotle's interpreters merely went one step beyond Aristotle to systems of complete formal validity. Fourth, and finally, some Aristotelian analysts, having strayed this far, decided to go still further and conflated formal validity with logic and rationality.<sup>25</sup> By emphasizing these four distortions, these scholastics (philosophers, logicians, and rhetoricians alike) managed to obtain what they thought

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<sup>21</sup>Jan Lukaseiwicz, *Aristotle's Syllogistic* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 7-10. Lukasiewicz argues that a symbolic logic is implicit in Aristotle even though it was the Stoics who explicitly developed most of the variables.

<sup>22</sup>Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, 71b.

<sup>23</sup>King Broadrick, "The Relationship of Argument to Syllogistic and Experimental Logic," Q.J.S., XXXVI (Dec., 1950) 480.

<sup>24</sup>James Duerlinger, "Proof in Aristotle's Organon," American Journal of Philology, XC (July, 1969) 320-328.

<sup>25</sup>This is what Delia calls the logic fallacy. It appears in many disguised forms, but its essence always mistakes validity for truth and formal logic for rationality.

to be a timeless, non-contextual, axiological system supposedly applicable to all human knowledge.

There are many reasons why Aristotle's theories of rational discourse cannot be legitimately generalized and simplified into an axiological theory of scientific demonstration. Among the more prominent of these reasons is the simple fact that the condition of the Aristotelian corpus simply decently won't allow for it. As Randall states:

The Aristotelian documents are fragmentary, and frequently break off; they are repetitious, and often display little clear order in their parts. Still more, they exhibit manifest contradictions, of approach, of mood, of theory, and even of fundamental position and 'doctrine.' The obvious reason for this somewhat chaotic character is that our present text is not as Aristotle left it.<sup>26</sup>

What we have of Aristotle is more in the form of a compilation of relatively disjointed student notes than it is a series of systematic monographs. It is simply unfair to try to make these "notes," which Aristotle developed contingently over a prolonged period of time,<sup>27</sup> serve as a methodical exegesis for a mythical Aristotelian superscience.

Another reason why Aristotle's theories cannot be extrapolated into a universal, timeless, master formulation is that Aristotle was very much time bound and situationally oriented. Many have pointed out that various Aristotelian rules best fit or only fit Athenian society in 300 B.C.<sup>28</sup> Edward Steele, especially, has quite lucidly noted that the very essence of the theory of the enthymeme is dependent upon the ideas that "any delineation of the premises in a value orientation can

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<sup>26</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 23.

<sup>27</sup>See esp. Werner Jaeger, Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>28</sup>See esp. W. F. R. Hardie, Aristotle's Ethical Theory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968) and John Herman Randall, Jr., Aristotle.

be appropriate only for the group studied."<sup>29</sup> and that "furthermore, the basic premises of the desirable may not prevail from one period of time to another."<sup>30</sup> Only by ignoring the many many Aristotelian references to time and circumstance could a critic possibly view Aristotle as a formalist rather than as "the outstanding functionalist in the Western tradition."<sup>31</sup>

Finally, and most critically, Aristotle ought not be categorized solely as a scientific exponent of formal demonstration because he himself states that he ought not to be so characterized. Admittedly, Aristotle stresses the scientific approach but this is because "on the subject of Rhetoric there exists much that has been said long ago, whereas on the subject of reasoning we had nothing else of an earlier date to speak of at all."<sup>32</sup> Actually, the Stagirite:

. . . distinguishes three separate but related methodologies for knowing and persuading, scientific demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric. Scientific demonstration is developed in the Prior and Posterior Analytics as the method of discovering and demonstrating truth; dialectic is explained in the Topics as a method of discovering what is probable truth through special forms of dialogue; and rhetoric is understood as the method of discovering the available means of persuasion.<sup>33</sup>

Only demonstration is theoretical, a science, the subject of episteme.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Edward Steele, "Social Values, the Enthymeme, and Speech Criticism," Western Speech, XXVI (Spring, 1962), 72.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 31.

<sup>32</sup>Aristotle, On Sophistical Refutations, 184b, 1-5.

<sup>33</sup>James McBurney, "The Place of the Enthymeme in Rhetorical Theory," Speech Monographs, III (1936) 52.

<sup>34</sup>Randall, Aristotle, pp. 32-35.

Dialectic and rhetoric are arts concerned with phronesis or practical wisdom.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the way to distinguish between the three is not through any artificial reduction to symbols or through form but substantively! through "the character of the premises from which they proceed."<sup>36</sup> A. E. Taylor makes so much of this fact that he proclaims that the mistaking of demonstration for argument or of the theoretical sciences for the practical arts is "a proof of a philosopher's lack of grounding in logic . . ."<sup>37</sup>

Nonetheless, most, not just a few, expositors of Aristotle have through the years fallen into the "logic fallacy," or formalism trap.<sup>38</sup> Possibly this is because they are unfamiliar with the whole of Aristotle's works having merely read the Rhetoric or the Organon or the Ethics or Politics without relating the analyses contained therein as demanded by Aristotle.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Randall, Aristotle, pp. 32-35.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Aristotle (N. Y.: Dodge Publishing Co., 1908), p. 16.

<sup>38</sup>Besides those previously mentioned one might add Lloyd Bitzer, King Broadrick, and Delton Thomas Howard.

<sup>39</sup>Aristotle cross-references his own works. Perhaps the most significant reference is Rhetoric 1355a where Aristotle hints that no one can really understand the rhetoric without a thorough knowledge of his logical works. "New Proof (persuasion) is a kind of demonstration; for we entertain the strongest conviction of a thing if we believe that it has been 'demonstrated.' Rhetorical proof, however, (is not scientific demonstration); it takes the form of an enthymeme, this being in general, the most effective among the various forms of persuasion. The enthymeme, again, is a kind of syllogism; now every kind of syllogism falls within the province of Dialectic, and must be examined under Dialectic as a whole, or under some branch of it. Consequently the person with the clearest insight into the nature of syllogisms, who knows from what premises and in what modes they may be constructed, will also be the most expert in regard to enthymemes, once he has mastered their special province (of things contingent and uncertain such as human actions and their consequences), and has learnt the difference between enthymemes and logical syllogism. (The latter are complete and yield an absolute demonstration.)

Perhaps many analysts were merely Platonists trying to force Aristotle into a preconceived theory of forms as suggested by Vasile Florescu.<sup>40</sup> Maybe it simply became impossible to separate what Aristotle had actually said from the hundreds of commentaries arising from and inundating his works. Or, just possibly, A. E. Taylor might be correct in his analysis that the misinterpretations of Aristotle are caused by a distinctive lack of grounding in logic and philosophy by many, who despite their inabilities, have nonetheless insisted in commenting upon the works of the Master. Whatever the case, however, it is best to pass over past mistakes, leaving it to the pundits and those who excel in philological exercises to expose error, while passing on ourselves to the attempt to obtain a more correct explanation of Aristotle on rational argument.

The Aristotelian Framework for the Study of  
the Three Types of Discourse

As previously noted, one cannot derive a proper framework for the study of Aristotle on rational discourse without a basic knowledge of the Organon, the Rhetoric, and the Ethics.<sup>41</sup> In addition, for a truly thorough perspective, it would be helpful to have a knowledge of The Politics, the Metaphysics, the Poetics, and even some familiarity with

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<sup>40</sup>Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," 193.

<sup>41</sup>The most easily accessible translation of the Organon is probably contained in Richard McKeen, ed., The Basic Works of Aristotle (N. Y.: Random House, 1941). Many translations of the Rhetoric are readily available, but two stand out, The Rhetoric, translated by W. Rhys Roberts (N. Y.: The Modern Library, 1954) and The Rhetoric of Aristotle, translated by Lane Cooper (N. Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932). The least expensive quality translation of the Ethics is by J. A. K. Thomson and was printed by Penquin Books in 1953.

On the Soul.<sup>42</sup> Several secondary commentators are also particularly perspicuous and deserve some consideration, namely John Herman Randall, Jr.,<sup>43</sup> Richard McKeon,<sup>44</sup> Arthur Miller and John D. Bee,<sup>45</sup> and W. F. R. Hardie.<sup>46</sup> The Stagirite's seeming straightforwardness and simplicity covers a multitude of complexities and vagaries, and, on occasion, even a contradiction or two. One needs some overall foundations in the theories of the man and some basic strategy for approach before turning to the subject of reasoned discourse. Thus, this section is included as a necessary introduction to a more detailed account of the three modes of sautory discourse.

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<sup>42</sup>The Politics summarizes man's activities in the polis. With the Ethics, which summarizes the activities of men in smaller groups, The Politics constitutes Aristotle's substantive comments on the nature of man, one of the two great areas of knowledge. The Metaphysics provides basic analysis on how one can come to know the nature of things and of the modes of science. The Poetics provides additional insights into the functioning of language. On the Soul is an inquiry into the nature of mind and the acquisition of knowledge.

<sup>43</sup>Randall has several interesting articles out but his most significant contribution has to be his 1960 publication, Aristotle. This book is probably the single finest easily understood commentary on the works of Aristotle.

<sup>44</sup>McKeon must be noted for his several introductions to various works of Aristotle and for his many articles about Aristotle and his works, particularly "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," Classical Philology, XLI (Oct., 1946) 193-206 and XLII (Jan., 1947) 21-50.

<sup>45</sup>Miller and Bee's article, "Enthymemes: Body and Soul," is one of the most scholarly in existence on the nature of the enthymeme. Also, unlike many other articles on the enthymeme, their analysis tends toward a correct interpretation by treating the enthymeme in the context of the various reasoning processes.

<sup>46</sup>Noted for his fine interpretation of Aristotle's Ethical Theory.

A careful reading of Aristotle and a few of the more knowledgeable of his commentators reveals that the Stagirite considered man to be a rational and political animal. In contradiction to Gorgias, Aristotle thought that man lived in an ordered universe, that he could know this universe, and that he could communicate his knowledge to his fellow man.<sup>47</sup> As Joseph Schwartz states, for Aristotle, "the truth exists, man can acquire it, and acquiring it will lead to a fuller and better life."<sup>48</sup> In fact, the fulfillment of the rational impulse through knowledge of self and society and of the nature of the universe constitutes the entelechy of man. "The world is intelligible, and Man's intelligence is a kind of flowering of the world's intelligibility."<sup>49</sup> The philosopher, man writ large or the quintessence of man, strives throughout his lifetime to know the world through nous and logos or reason which reveals the way of things, and to know man through a slightly different type of nous and logos which reveals the way of men.<sup>50</sup>

Man's instrument in the pursuit of knowledge both of himself and of his world is "analytics." "Analytics," for Aristotle, is not a science but a dynamis, a 'power'; a teche, an 'art'; an organon, a 'tool'.<sup>51</sup> Analytics functions through language or logos which is both

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<sup>47</sup>Randall, Aristotle, pp. 6-7.

<sup>48</sup>Joseph Schwartz, "Kenneth Burke, Aristotle, and the Future of Rhetoric," College Composition and Communication, XVII (Dec., 1966), 214.

<sup>49</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup>Richard McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," 194 states that the word logos, since it signified both linguistic and rational processes, may be extended in one direction to the forms which are signified in things and in another direction to the regulative principles which guide actions in men.

<sup>51</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 30.

a way of knowing and of expressing knowledge.<sup>52</sup> By describing things and acts in words, by making statements about those things and acts, and by reasoning from one statement to another, by employing discourse, man has the ability to structure his world or to reason. "Analytics" is a rule bound system for the correct processes of merger and division, but, to an even greater extent, it is the power behind the rules which accounts for a knowable cosmos and a rational mankind.<sup>53</sup>

When man "knows" or utilizes his reason, he can employ his mind in one of two ways to get one of two types of knowledge. Aristotle divided the "rational" into two faculties; one which enables us to speculate about those things whose first principles admit of no variation, the other whereby we deliberate about those things which do admit of change . . ."<sup>54</sup> He called "these faculties the "scientific" (or theoretical, or sophia, or the subject of episteme S.B.H.) and the "calculative" (or practical, the subject of phronesis S.B.H.) respectively, using the later term because we may identify calculation with deliberation, which is never exercised upon invariable things."<sup>55</sup> Mind speculative functions as pure intellect. It is mind speculative that grasps forms and universals. It is mind speculative that perceives relationships and functions in a purely logical fashion. It is mind speculative that operates in scientific demonstration. But it is

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<sup>52</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 6-7.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Aristotle, Ethics, 1139b.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.



mind calculative that is operant in determining human conduct.<sup>56</sup> The logic of decision and action which is applied to human affairs is practical. Its end is not merely to know, but to know and then to act. Scientific demonstration applies to things but practical wisdom applies to the affairs of man. Both are "rational states."<sup>57</sup>

These two types of rationality function through three modes of arguments: demonstration, dialectics, and rhetoric. Actually, "dialectics is the mother science of probable reasoning which handles every question; and rhetoric, which argues practical questions of politics and ethics a subordinate branch or departure, or offshoot or scion,"<sup>58</sup> however, for practical purposes it is convenient to separate arguments into the three types. Demonstration functions as a tool of each science proceeding from first principles or archai through cause to universal timeless truth. Dialectics functions as a tool in the realm of the contingent, particularly in social science, proceeding from accepted social wisdom through probable arguments to practical decisions for values and action. Rhetoric functions as the tool of persuasion proceeding from the beliefs of its audience through verbal manipulation to values and actions applicable in human affairs. E. M. Cope summarized many of the differences between demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric with the statement that:

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<sup>56</sup>Miller and Bee, "Enthymemes: Body and Soul," 203-204.

<sup>57</sup>Raphael Demos, "Some Remarks on Aristotle's Doctrine of Practical Reason," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, XXII (Dec., 1961), 153.

<sup>58</sup>E. M. Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric with Analysis and Notes (London: Macmillan and Co., 1867), p. 91.

. . . whilst science from universal and necessary principles, some of them always special and peculiar to each science, the latter of which it assumes a priori and will not suffer to be called in question or submit to the caprice of an opponent, deduces universal and necessary conclusions, and all the materials that it employs are impressed with the same character of universality and necessity, which alone constitute exact knowledge and truth, the sole object and aim of science; . . . dialectic on the other hand . . . has for its sphere the probable, its principles current popular opinions; it is universal in its application, and may deal even with the principles and propositions of science, only in that case they are not to be treated as necessary, but regarded like all the rest as only probable and open to question; it is indifferent to truth, and aims only at proving its point, and thereby refuting an adversary, whose existence is always assumed in every dialectical discussion, even when it is carried on in a man's own brain and in his own study; it therefore regards every thing as an open question, takes either side of an alternative indifferently, concludes as readily the negative as the affirmative; it depends absolutely for its arguments upon the concessions of the opponent, real or imaginary; to it the form or method is everything, the truth of the conclusion nothing, except so far as it follows legitimately from the exact observance of the rules of the syllogism, which is its instrument.<sup>59</sup>

Cope's statement includes many of the differentiae between science and dialectic and, by implication, between science and rhetoric. A more explicit differentiation, however, seems essential as this is the critical key to an understanding and appreciation of the subtlety of the Aristotelian schemata which has so often been lacking. The differences between demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric are not matters of form, rather they are differences of substance, of purpose, and of audience, in sum, differences of generic type.

John Herman Randall notes that the "three kinds of reasoning do not differ in their form; the difference between them lies in the character

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<sup>59</sup>Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric with Analysis and Notes, p. 88.

of the premises from which they proceed."<sup>60</sup> Richard McKeon agrees, arguing that "the differentiation of the theoretic sciences . . . depends on differences found in the things which constitutes their subject matter."<sup>61</sup> The unchanging things, largely things of the physical universe,<sup>62</sup> are the matter of science. The realm of the contingent, particularly human action, "ethics, law, and politics belong to the domain of rhetoric and of dialectics."<sup>63</sup> Dialectic, in turn, is distinct from rhetoric in that it can handle first principles or archai even if contingently.<sup>64</sup> But in all cases it is substance or subject matter that is the primary criterion dissociating demonstration, dialectic and rhetoric.

Substance is not the only differentia with regards to demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric. The three differ in purpose as well. As Lloyd Bitzer states: "(1) Demonstrative syllogisms are those in which premises are laid down in order to establish scientific conclusions; (2) Dialectical syllogisms are those in which premises are asked for in

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<sup>60</sup>Aristotle, p. 37.

<sup>61</sup>McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," 40.

<sup>62</sup>The sciences are physics, metaphysics, and theology. Aristotle is not completely consistent in leaving human affairs out of the sciences but the emphasis is in that direction.

<sup>63</sup>Allessandre Giuliani, "The Aristotelian Theory of the Dialectical Definition," Philosophy and Rhetoric, V (Summer, 1972), 129.

<sup>64</sup>Randall, Aristotle, pp. 43-44. Dialectic is formally separated only in part from rhetoric through the mechanisms of the syllogism. The real distinction lies in the expanded parameters for dialectic which allows it to handle archai, or first principles, whereas rhetoric should never deal with such subjects.

order to achieve criticism; (3) Rhetorical syllogisms, or enthymemes, are those in which premises are asked for in order to achieve persuasion."<sup>65</sup> The purpose of demonstration is to establish scientific laws, reasonable expectations for the predicted functioning of things. The purpose of dialectic is social or self-criticism. In its ways it is very much like the true, philosophic, ad hominem argumentation of Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.<sup>66</sup> The purpose of rhetoric is persuasion, a legitimate art in its own right, but a sort of tertiary substitute for science and dialectic when there isn't time for proper instruction or extended criticism or when the subject matter or audience just aren't appropriate for demonstration or dialectic.

Aristotle also distinguishes between the proper types of audience to respectively view demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric. The complicated chains of syllogisms necessitated by a complete demonstration, on the model of geometry, demand a scientist, a special kind of man separate from the human community, yet still a part of it.<sup>67</sup> Dialectic, in its more technical sense, requires a philosopher as its proper audience.<sup>68</sup> Rhetoric, however, applies to the common mass of

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<sup>65</sup>"Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," Q.J.S., XLV (Dec., 1959) 405.

<sup>66</sup>In fact, the similarity between Johnstone's argumentum ad hominem developed in Philosophy and Argument (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959) and Aristotle's technical dialectic is so striking that one wonders why Johnstone never gave Aristotle any credit for the idea. He does mention the word dialectic in reference to argument that is open, clear, bilateral, and morally compelling on the basis of the logical consequences of the respective interlocutors own basic presuppositions but doesn't credit the idea to Aristotle.

<sup>67</sup>This idea is nowhere clearly developed in Aristotle but is hinted at throughout the Posterior and Prior Analytics and in the brief prefatory warning, already cited, at the beginning of The Rhetoric; footnote #39.

<sup>68</sup>Aristotle, Topics, 101a.

humanity.<sup>69</sup> In some respects this differentiation in audience seems merely a matter of degree of intellectual ability, but it is a quantitative separation so significant that it might well almost be qualitatively considered.

Demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric differ one from another also in degree of probability, in linguistic format, and in contextual applicability. "Scientific demonstration must be expressed in univocal terms,"<sup>70</sup> through strict genus et differentia, but the definitions "in the practical sciences are not strict definitions by genus and differentia."<sup>71</sup> Science must be sure whereas the practical arts are deliberative, "concerned with things which, while in general following certain definite lines, have no predictable issues, or the results of which cannot be clearly stated. . ."<sup>72</sup> Science is true for all time for all men while dialectic and rhetoric apply only to specifically defined groups of men on particular occasions.<sup>73</sup> In sum, in substance, purpose, and audience, and through an interlacing of other criteria, science or demonstration, episteme, is not to be confused with dialectic, the art of philosophic debate, or with rhetoric, the art of finding the available means of persuasion.

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<sup>69</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1355a.

<sup>70</sup>Richard McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," 44.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 41.

<sup>72</sup>Aristotle, Ethics, 1112a.

<sup>73</sup>Aristotle, Ethics, 1112b.

### The Three Modes of Discourse

Aristotle, of course, not only provides a theoretic framework for demonstration, dialectic, and rhetoric, he is thorough enough to furnish the necessary details and/or practical criteria for the functional use of each of the three modes of discourse. Scientific demonstration is his paradigm and the subject upon which he concentrates most of his attention,<sup>74</sup> an emphasis which might well account for the confusion between demonstration and argument manifested by some writers. But science applies only to unchanging things, is strictly formal, and can be thoroughly understood by only an enlightened few. Therefore, for the mass of subjects and of people, dialectic and rhetoric are concomitant studies focusing upon cultural wisdom and philosophic debate and upon "adjusting ideas to people and people to ideas."<sup>75</sup>

#### (A) The Paradigm of Science

Science, demonstration, apodeixis, or episteme functions through the syllogism or complete induction. Aristotle also discusses reductio ad impossibile as a technical measure which makes possible the semi-understandable procedures of reduction and conversion, but since it is merely a technical concept it will be perfunctorily dismissed from this analysis.<sup>76</sup> The concept of the syllogism was loosely originally employed

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<sup>74</sup>That is most of his attention with regards to the technical procedures of reasoning. The Categories, On Interpretation, and the Posterior and Prior Analytics are all concerned with scientific demonstration. The Rhetoric and Ethics are, of course, longer works but the comments on reasoning per se contained within them are scattered.

<sup>75</sup>Donald G. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope," Q.J.S., XXXIX (Dec., 1953), 413.

<sup>76</sup>Those interested can look up these procedures in Prior Analytics. The comment about semi-understandability is not made without cause as this is one of the most confusing and contradictory of all of Aristotle's concepts.

by the Greeks to refer to the process "of putting facts together by argument."<sup>77</sup> Aristotle defined the syllogism "as discourse in which, certain things being stated, something other than what is stated follows of necessity from their being so."<sup>78</sup> Lukasiewicz, in his technical exposition of Aristotle's Syllogistic, argues quite persuasively that Aristotle's idea of the syllogism is closer to the non-technical sense of the original Greek than it is to the modern conceptualization which is enmeshed in a plethora of technical rules.<sup>79</sup> Lukasiewicz's comments, notwithstanding, however, it is clear that the syllogism is the fascinating if not facile tool of science since complete induction only applies to those relatively few sets all of whose members can be known, so this short subdivision of the chapter will deal with the rule bound criteria of syllogistics.

The basic building block of the syllogism is the word. "Words are like verbal icons in that they set our minds off on patterns of thought which parallel the patterns of reality we have experienced in connection with those words,"<sup>80</sup> writes Rosenfield in interpretation of the Stagirite. Aristotle himself proclaims that:

Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words. Just as all men have not the same writing, so all men have not the same speech sounds, but the mental experiences, which these directly symbolize, are the same for all, as also are those things of which our experiences are the images.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, translated by W. Rhys Roberts, p. xvi.

<sup>78</sup>Aristotle, Prior Analytics, 24b.

<sup>79</sup>Lukasiewicz, Aristotle's Syllogistics, pp. 34-38.

<sup>80</sup>Aristotle and Information Theory, p. 79.

<sup>81</sup>Aristotle, De Interpretatione, 16a.

For knowledge through words reality must be translucently expressed by the symbols of argument. "The achievement of truth . . . depends not only on knowledge of the form in things but also on awareness of the properties of language which make it possible to reproduce its form in argument."<sup>82</sup> This, in turn, requires an emphasis on terms which are univocal, that is, on words which retain the same meaning each time they are used.

For a word or category to be univocal it must reflect something which itself is both clear and unchanging, that is, universal and timeless. The first principles or archai of the theoretical sciences, alone, fit these criteria. These archai are ideas in the mind which directly reflect the patterns of reality. They are a priori, and, as such, unchallengeable and non-demonstrable. They can probably best be compared to the assumed hypotheses of geometry.

Whence are these archai derived? How do we arrive at them? Aristotle's answer to this question, obviously fundamental for his whole conception of science, is that we learn them from observation of facts, of particular instances, by epagoge, which is usually translated into Latin as 'induction.' We have the power of perceiving particular "thats" by our senses. These perceivings remain as a 'memory,' and generate a logos, a meaning. 'Many like memories make one experience, one empeiria. That is, by 'experience' of facts, by repeated observations, we become aware of the arche, the universal, that is implicit in them.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," 195.

<sup>83</sup>John Randall, Aristotle, p. 42.



Not everyone has the intuitive ability or insight necessary to see universals in particular experiences, but those who do have an ability to grasp basic, a priori truths or archai which may then be translated into the univocal words so necessary to the propositions of the syllogism.

The next building block for the syllogism is the premise or proposition so laboriously described by Aristotle in On Interpretation. The premise of an apodeictic syllogism must, of course, be expressed through the a priori universal terms necessary to the scientific view of language. Meeting this fundamental criterion, however, is but the first task of the premise. Its labors, like Hercules', continue many fold before it can find rest. Aristotle advanced the notion that "a premise is a sentence affirming or denying one thing of another."<sup>84</sup> A premise must be propositional, that is, composed of a sentence which is true or false "and all other sentences, such as prayers, commands, threats, or all statements considered in any function other than their expression of truth or falsity, are relegated to the study of rhetoric or poetic."<sup>85</sup> This is the reason why material validity is just as fundamental to the scientific demonstration as is formal validity. Aristotle knew that the construction of the apodeictic syllogism called for sound materials as well as for exact planning concerning the use of those materials.

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<sup>84</sup>Prior Analytics, 24a.

<sup>85</sup>Richard McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," 39.

Because "Aristotle's gaze is fixed entirely on what a completed and perfected science is like,"<sup>86</sup> and because the apodeictic syllogism concerns proof rather than inference or inquiry,<sup>87</sup> the premises of such syllogisms must demonstrate cause. "As in geometry, apodiexsis, demonstrates the reasons why, ta dioti, things are as they are observed to be, and why they must be so."<sup>88</sup> Episteme demands that we know not only what things are, hoti, but why they are as they are, dioti.<sup>89</sup> We possess science only when we can prove and demonstrate statements about things by relating those statements to others of which they are the necessary consequences.<sup>90</sup> This is what McBurney was attempting to describe when he differentiated between mere rationes cognoscendi or reasons for acknowledging the being of things and rationes essendi which includes also a knowledge of the reason for the being of some fact.<sup>91</sup> The syllogism does not provide any real new knowledge but neither is it a petitio principii, a begging of the question. The syllogism provides, not new facts, but the connection between facts, the demonstration, the proof, the reason why the facts fit together convertibly. Thus, the significance of causation in demonstration.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>John Herman Randall, Aristotle, p. 33.

<sup>87</sup>This conclusion is independently reached by Duerlinger, "Proof in Aristotle's Organon," 320-328, McKeon, "Aristotle's Conception of Language and the Arts of Language," 19-23, and Randall, Aristotle, 41.

<sup>88</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 35.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-34.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>G. McBurney, "The Place of the Enthymeme in Rhetorical Theory," 53.

<sup>92</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 40.

Looking back over the totality of the criteria concerned with the paradigm of science, one notes that the apodeictic syllogism is hardly the simplest functional instrument ever created. Perhaps this is the reason why most beginning logic and argumentation classes omit the facts that: (1) The scientific syllogism must be related to the real world; (2) The scientific syllogism must be universal and timeless; (3) The scientific syllogism is concerned only with archai or first principles; (4) The scientific syllogism must be expressed in univocal terms; (5) The scientific syllogism must be propositionally constructed; (6) The scientific syllogism must be a priori; (7) The scientific syllogism must be causally connected; and, last and probably, least, (8) The form of the scientific syllogism counts too; Aristotle **prefers** it in the first figure.<sup>93</sup>

(B) Dialectics: Cultural Wisdom and Philosophic Debate

Aristotle used dialectic to refer to at least two major ideas. In one case, dialectic referred to a social potpourri or mass discussion through which cultural wisdom was derived. In another instance, dialectic bore upon the meticulous technical debating of philosophers.<sup>94</sup> Aristotle was not overly careful to separate those two senses of dialectic, and the two meanings constantly shade into one another. The tool of dialectic in either case is still the syllogism, but it is a different type of syllogism than the apodeictic. Thus, this segment of the paper will concentrate upon the distinctions between the two types of dialectic and upon the so-called dialectical or practical syllogism.

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<sup>93</sup>Posterior Analytics, 79a.

<sup>94</sup>William Kneale and Martha Kneale, The Development of Logic (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 7.

In its broad cultural usage dialectic functions from premises based "on opinions that are generally accepted, which are accepted by every one or by the majority, or by the philosophers--i.e., by all, or by the the majority, or by the most notable and illustrious of them."<sup>95</sup> Moreover, dialectic functions in the realm of "ordinary language."<sup>96</sup> The carefully contrived essences of the sciences are not for humanistic subjects nor for the mass of men. As opposed to precise demonstration, dialectic functions as a kind of intellectual agon in which meanings are created, live, wither and die, or are transformed to be born again as something similar but new.<sup>97</sup> Dialectic, however, is not untrammelled conversation nor the random social discourse of ordinary fellows. Dialectic seeks the correct naming of things. Through the arts of definition, analysis, and synthesis, dialectic attempts the creation of verbal hierarchical order.<sup>98</sup> The opinions and values that bind men together are created jurisprudentially in the vast open court of dialectical inquiry. Giuliani describes the dialectical process as "a field which, in a certain sense, is intermediate between that which is certainly true (apodeictic reasoning) and that which is certainly false (sophistic reasoning)."<sup>99</sup> The truths of dialectic are intuitively

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<sup>95</sup>Aristotle, Topics, 100a.

<sup>96</sup>Mortimer Adler, Dialectic (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1927), p. 142; and Alessandro Giuliani, "The Aristotelian Theory of the Dialectical Definition," Philosophy and Rhetoric, V (Summer, 1972), 134.

<sup>97</sup>Elbert Harrington, "Rhetoric and the Scientific Method of Inquiry," University of Colorado Studies, Series in Language and Literature, No. 1, 1948, p. 13.

<sup>98</sup>Mortimer Adler, Dialectic, p. 142.

<sup>99</sup>Alessandro Giuliani, "The Aristotelian Theory of the Dialectical Definition," 134.

acquired after much verbal conflict concerning those matters about which men deliberate and about which they must make decisions and take action, namely, ethics, politics, and the law. Neither totally true nor necessarily false, the conclusions of dialectic must be taken on faith for they constitute the mortar which holds together the fragile edifice of society.

In its more technical usage dialectic functions in a manner roughly comparable to a school or college "debate only practiced on a much larger scale and in more casual encounters."<sup>100</sup> As Kneale and Kneale point out, The Topics, that treatise in which Aristotle takes the most time to comment about dialectic, "is avowedly a handbook for the guidance of those taking part in public debating contests."<sup>101</sup> In such contests, through an alternating pattern of question and answer, the questioner and his interlocutor mutually created the substance of dialectical syllogisms. Aristotle thought such exercises were valuable:

1. for exercise, as an aid in the practice of disputation, to cultivate the faculty
2. . . . in conducting arguments which necessarily arise in common conversation. In dealing with ordinary people who are incapable of following a scientific demonstration, and comprehending scientific definitions, we must have recourse to probable principles and to arguments upon probable grounds. . .
3. The use of the dialectical method, and the habit of arguing upon either alternative of a question will quicken our discernment of the truth or falsehood of scientific demonstrations and conclusions. . .
4. The first principles of any special science cannot be demonstrated by the science itself as they are absolute and independent, and must be taken for granted without proof. . . these, if they are to be investigated, at all, must be investigated through the medium of the all sifting, all questioning, method of dialectics.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Elbert Harrington, "Rhetoric and the Scientific Method of Inquiry," p. 13.

<sup>101</sup>Kneale and Kneale, The Development of Logic, p. 33.

<sup>102</sup>Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric with Analysis and Notes, pp. 79-80.

In its technical sense then, "dialectic constituted the art of discussion by question and answer, of attacking and defending a given thesis from principles of probability, such as the opinions of men in general, or of the majority, or of certain eminent authorities."<sup>103</sup>

As previously mentioned, in its technical guise the process of dialectic is quite similar to Henry W. Johnstone, Jr.'s valid philosophic argumentum ad hominem.<sup>104</sup> Such arguments, between those trained in philosophy and/or merely in dialectical techniques are (1) open, (2) systematic, (3) self-reflective, and (4) impose some moral obligation upon the respondent to accept the logical conclusions of his own presuppositions.<sup>105</sup> Aristotle's theory is not to be completely equated with that of Johnstone, however, for the old Master couldn't quite bring himself to a total I and Thou stance. One of the purposes of dialectic in its debate stance remains the joy of reducing "the opponent in the discussion to babbling. . ."<sup>106</sup> Whether considered in its technical guise or in its general cultural wisdom format, though, dialectic is concerned with open, natural language, inquiry into the affairs of men. It provides probable grounds for its conclusions based on a formal procedural process which begins with socially accepted opinions and values and proceeds through the syllogism to decisions and

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<sup>103</sup>McBurney, "The Place of the Enthymeme in Rhetorical Theory," 53.

<sup>104</sup>See Footnote No. 66.

<sup>105</sup>Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Philosophy and Argument, or see Johnstone, "Persuasion and Validity in Philosophy," in Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Argumentation (University Park, Pa: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), pp. 138-148.

<sup>106</sup>Aristotle, On Sophistical Refutations, 181b, 15.

actions. Its model is more the law court than the laws of nature.<sup>107</sup>  
And, finally, its purpose is criticism, whether of self, antagonist,  
society, or even, rarely, of first principles themselves.

(C) Rhetoric: Adjusting People to Ideas and Ideas to People

When rhetoricians complain about going back to Aristotle, they are usually bemoaning the state of articles concerned with the enthymeme published since 1952.<sup>108</sup> The plethora of contradictory interpretations is almost enough to make any rhetoricians bewail his fate and lament the state of the art. Some interpretation of the enthymeme is certainly necessary, however, since "for Aristotle the enthymeme was the focal concept or element of all reasoned discourse,"<sup>109</sup> and since "the arguments good speakers actually use in persuasion are enthymemes."<sup>110</sup> And the confusion about the enthymeme, while regrettable, is somewhat understandable for though "the enthymeme is discussed in many passages

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<sup>107</sup>Randall, Aristotle, p. 38, Allessandre Giuliani, "The Aristotelian Theory of the Dialectical Definition," 133, and Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," 207-208.

<sup>108</sup>Edward H. Madden, "The Enthymeme: Crossroads of Logic, Rhetoric, and Metaphysics," The Philosophical Review, LXI (July, 1952), 368-376, Earl W. Wiley, "The Enthymeme: Idiom of Persuasion," Q.J.S., XLII (Feb., 1956), 19-24. William Grimaldi, "A Note on the Enthymeme in Aristotle's Rhetoric, 1354-1356," American Journal of Philology, LXXXIII (April, 1957), 188-192, Lloyd Bitzer, "Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," 399-408, Charles S. Mudd, "The Enthymeme and Logical Validity," Q.J.S., XLV (Dec., 1959), 409-414, Edward D. Steele, "Social Values, The Enthymeme, and Speech Criticism," 70-75, Gary Cronkhite, "The Enthymeme as Deductive Rhetorical Argument," Western Speech, XXX (Spring, 1966) 129-134, Jesse Delia, "The Logical Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," 140-148, and Arthur B. Miller and John D. Bee, "Enthymemes: Body and Soul," 201-214.

<sup>109</sup>McBurney, "The Place of the Enthymeme in Rhetorical Theory," 50.

<sup>110</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, translated by Lane Cooper, p. xxvii.

in the Rhetoric, it is impossible to extract from them a completely consistent theory of its nature."<sup>111</sup> Aristotle states that "whenever men in speaking effect persuasion through proofs, they do so either with examples or enthymemes; they use nothing else."<sup>112</sup> His pronouncements are clear with regards to examples, but a kind of enigma surrounds and obscures the enthymeme.

Lloyd Bitzer has done much to unravel this riddle which hides the essence of the enthymeme.<sup>113</sup> Gary Chronkhite has taken up the banner to complete an expostulation of the enthymeme in its technical context.<sup>114</sup> Adding to the technical work of Bitzer and Chronkhite, Jesse Delia has given the enthymeme a strikingly new psychological interpretation which probably comes closer to the true Aristotelian meaning of the term than scholars have been for some time.<sup>115</sup> There is little need to repeat these

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<sup>111</sup>W. D. Ross, Aristotle's Prior and Posterior Analytics (Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1949), p. 409.

<sup>112</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1356b.

<sup>113</sup>"Aristotle's Enthymeme Revisited," Bitzer accurately points out that Aristotle is confused, that the enthymeme cannot be distinguished on the basis of probability alone, nor on the basis of formal deficiency alone, nor by completeness alone, nor by concreteness alone, and that the key differentia is that the premises of the enthymeme are taken from the audience. In his delight at cutting through past misinterpretations, however, he is unfair and claims far too much credit for himself as at least Ross and McBurney before him had deciphered the key to the enthymeme.

<sup>114</sup>After what Bitzer has done to others it is poetic justice that he should be hoisted upon his own petard noting the unfairness and credit-seeking of Chronkhite in his article, "The Enthymeme as Deductive Rhetorical Argument."

<sup>115</sup>Delia, "The Logic Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," 146.



gentlemen's explanations, so the author will keep this section short, summarizing only those points critical to a clear expostulation of the functioning of the enthymeme with regards to the genre of rational argument.

In this regard it must first be remembered that everything which applies to dialectic, except the technical parameters which apply only to philosophical argument as explored by the complete dialectical syllogism, applies also to the enthymeme or rhetorical syllogism.<sup>116</sup> This is because the enthymeme is a subcategory of dialectic.<sup>117</sup> This means that the enthymeme is oriented chiefly towards human opinions and actions, is composed in ordinary language with the mixed consequences such construction implies, that it takes its premises from its audience, and that it has probabilistic rather than certain conclusions.

The fact that the enthymeme takes its premises from the beliefs of the audience,<sup>118</sup> the unique way in which it assimilates those beliefs, and the consequences of this action are critical to an understanding of the distinctiveness of the enthymeme. Basically, what it all amounts to is that the enthymeme is rational but not strictly logical.<sup>119</sup> Such a conclusion may be abhorrent to formal logicians and demonstrative

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<sup>116</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1354a.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 1394a, 26-28; 1395b, 1-4.

<sup>119</sup>Miller and Bee, "Enthymemes: Body and Soul," 212, Delia, "The Logic Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," 146-147, and Edward Steele, "Social Values, the Enthymeme, and Speech Criticism," 70.

rhetoricians, "but a careful reading of all Aristotle's passages regarding the enthymeme reveals that its persuasive power comes not from its following of abstract, external rules of structure, but from the operation of the deductive form within the psychological field of the listener."<sup>120</sup> The enthymeme, in essence, uniquely combines the effects of logos, ethos, and pathos rather than separating these effects as has been traditional.<sup>121</sup> The rhetor "asks for" the premises for the enthymeme by considering the nature of the audience and selecting those attitudes and general opinions which he knows are characteristic of that audience.<sup>122</sup> He then uses these premises in such a manner that the audience, emotionally as well as logically--in other words, psycho-logically--help build the arguments which point toward the conclusions the orator wishes to reach.

Such a psychological interpretation might seem to many to border on subjectivism. These persons could accuse Aristotle of having created a kind of sophisticated sophistic showing a disdain for the abilities of the common man. Such interpreters, however, would be incorrect in their conclusions. Aristotle believed that "things that are true and things that are better are, by their nature, practically always easier to prove and easier to believe. . ."<sup>123</sup> than that which is false or less good. The

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<sup>120</sup>Delia, "The Logic Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," 146.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>122</sup>Smith, "Logic for the New Rhetoric," 307.

<sup>123</sup>Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1354b, 37-38.

enthymeme, functioning in a dialectical environment in which opponents would ever be ready to sift for the fallacy or the lie, was protected from subjectivism by the open forum and the truth.

Aristotle on Rational Argument:  
Retrospect and Prospect

In summary, Aristotle's theories concerned with the genre of rational argument are central to anyone claiming a knowledge of reasoned discourse but not for the reasons traditionally invoked. The Master does not provide a simple, timeless, non-contextual, axiological theory of demonstration. Instead, he provides something far more significant and relevant, a vast complex and ambiguous theory of argument. Within this theory, Aristotle recognizes two kinds of rationality and three types of reasoning instrumentalities. Science is his paradigm. It is, indeed, timeless, universal, and even univocal. It maintains both material and formal validity. And, for the logicians, it is a priori. Dialectic and rhetoric, however, are calculative as opposed to theoretic. They concentrate their methodologies on probable events and on human affairs. Theirs is the logic of opinion and value, of decision and action, rather than the causal logic associated with material phenomena. Dialectic depends on the common fund of cultural wisdom or upon the concessions of highly skilled debaters for its syllogistic premises. Rhetoric depends on psychology through the enthymeme. Totally, Aristotle's theory of argumentation is a non-precision theory, but perhaps it is a theory which could be productive of positive criticism as opposed to the relative sterility of the more precise but inaccurate traditional theory of demonstration.

## CHAPTER III

### CH. PERELMAN ON ARGUMENT:

#### THE ASSAULT ON A NARROWED VISION OF RATIONALITY

Besides demonstrative and calculating reason, there exists a reason that deliberates and argues. Without a broadened vision of reason, which would enable us to understand what is meant by deciding and making an enlightened choice, a rational concept of liberty and human responsibility remains impossible. Besides the Cartesian conception of liberty, adherence to evidence, there is room for a concept of liberty-responsibility where, being face to face with arguments pro and con, neither of which is compelling, we decide that one side has more weight . . .

This broadening of our concept of reason, which no longer limits the rational to the analytical, opens a new field of study to the investigations of the logicians; it is a field of those reasons which, according to Pascal and according to contemporary logicians, reason does not know.<sup>1</sup>

#### An Introduction of Purpose

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., editor of Philosophy and Rhetoric, recently proclaimed that "there is no doubt that the main stimuli to the development of the theory of argumentation in the period 1956-1966 have been the writings of Perelman and the analysis provided by Toulmin."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ch. Perelman, "How Do We Apply Reason to Values?," Journal of Philosophy, LII (Dec., 22, 1955), 802.

<sup>2</sup>Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "Theory of Argument," in Contemporary Philosophy, ed. by Raymond Klibansky, (Firenze, 1968), p. 177.

Johnstone's recognition of Toulmin is expected. After all, the former English philosopher and historian of science, now resident at Michigan State, has been prominent in academia since the early 1950's. Toulmin's schemata for the "layout of arguments" has even filtered down to the beginning courses in speech communication.<sup>3</sup> Johnstone's recognition of Ch. Perelman, however, may come as somewhat of a surprise to many Americans as only recently have many of the works of this Belgian legal philosopher been translated into English.<sup>4</sup> In fact, it is only in the 1970's, really, that Perelman has received significant attention in America.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>James McCroskey, "Toulmin and the Basic Course," Speech Teacher, XIV (March, 1965), 91-100.

<sup>4</sup>Perelman's article, "Rhetoric and Philosophy," translated by Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. for Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (Jan., 1968), 15-24 serves as one example. Even more importantly, Perelman's major books were not translated in readily accessible form until the 1960's: The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, translated by John Petrie, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), Justice, translated by Susan Rubin, (N. Y.: Random House, 1967), and with the collaboration of L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, translated by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969).

<sup>5</sup>In 1970 Ray D. Dearn completed his dissertation, "Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," at the University of Illinois. In that same year the S.C.A. held a symposium concerned with Perelman at its annual meeting in New Orleans. Perelman was known to a few American scholars before 1970 through scattered, expensive translations and through his visits to Pennsylvania State University, but his rise to prominence seems to coincide with the interest shown to him and his works in 1970. As an aside, America's lack of attention to Perelman has been reciprocated by Perelman's lack of knowledge of American rhetorical scholarship. Carroll Arnold chastises Perelman as "parochial" in his review of The New Rhetoric for his ignorance concerning fifty years of work on rhetoric and argument in American departments of speech. Q.J.S., LVI (Feb., 1970), 87-92.

Johnstone's selection of Perelman as one of the two pre-eminent contemporary philosophers of argument, however, is probably justified. Despite a lack of consideration in America until the late 1960's or early 1970's, Perelman has been writing about rhetoric "or the study of the means of argumentation which allow us to obtain and to increase the assent of people to specific theses presented to them"<sup>6</sup> for more than three decades.<sup>7</sup> A bibliography of his published works in the December, 1963 issue of Logique et Analyse, an issue totally dedicated to articles about Perelman and his scholastic contributions to argumentation, listed nearly one hundred titles by one Charles Perelman.<sup>8</sup> The author's own survey in 1973 indicated that over thirty books and articles by Perelman had been translated into English, most in the past ten years.<sup>9</sup> In 1970, The Speech Communication Association of America chose to honor Perelman by dedicating an entire conference session to an examination of his thoughts on rhetoric, argument, and philosophy.<sup>10</sup> And Perelman was

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<sup>6</sup>Ch. Perelman, "Proof in Philosophy," Hibbert Journal, LII (July, 1954), 356.

<sup>7</sup>Perelman began writing about argument and justice in the late 1930's. His career was interrupted by World War II at which time he joined the Resistance. The peak of his writing career seems to have come in the late 1950's and during the 1960's. His more recent articles tend to be mainly popularizations and clarifications of his already extent ideas.

<sup>8</sup>"Bibliographie de Ch. Perelman," VI, 606-611.

<sup>9</sup>Besides those books and articles already mentioned, one might esp. point to: "On Self-Evidence in Metaphysics," International Philosophical Quarterly, IV (Feb., 1964), 5-19, "Theoretical Relations of Thought and Action," Philosophy Today, IV (Spring, 1960), 138-143, and "Value Judgments, Justifications, and Argumentation," Philosophy Today, V (Spring, 1962), 45-50.

<sup>10</sup>This is the same New Orleans Conference referred to in Footnote No. 5.

again honored by The Speech Communication Association when he was chosen as one of but a half dozen scholars to critically comment on The Prospect of Rhetoric.<sup>11</sup> As Perelman's reputation has advanced, it has become increasingly obvious that a more thorough examination is needed concerning his assault on a narrowed vision of rationality through an expansion of the concerns of argument.<sup>12</sup>

Perelman's greatest contribution to the theory of argument may well be his assault on a narrowed vision of rationality which he attributes to Descartes and to modern, formal, analytic logicians. In a negative sense, this assault encompasses a continuing attack on Descartes, Pascal, Locke, and a long line of logical positivists who reduce the realm of reason to the realm of self-evident truths and those conclusions which can be deductively derived from those self-evident truths.<sup>13</sup> In a more positive vein, the assault calls for a return to the sources of rational discourse recognized by the Ancients, and particularly by Aristotle, in dialectical reasoning.<sup>14</sup> Perelman asks:

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<sup>11</sup>This is the S.C.A.'s officially sponsored prospectus for rhetoric in the 1970's. Lloyd F. Bitzer and Edwin Black, editors, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971). Perelman's review does not show him at his best, but it is the thought that the S.C.A. would have him do it that counts.

<sup>12</sup>This chapter will specifically relate Perelman's contributions to rhetoric to the genre of rational argument. Dearin, in his previously noted dissertation, and in his article, "The Philosophical Basis of Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," Q.J.S., LV (Oct., 1969), 213-224 has done good work but has not concentrated specifically on Perelman's conceptualization of rational discourse but rather has taken a more general approach. In addition, so far, Dearin has been the only major American commentator on Perelman.

<sup>13</sup>Perelman, "Self-Evidence and Proof," Philosophy, XXXIII (Oct., 1958), 289-302.

<sup>14</sup>Perelman, Justice, pp. 58-59.

Must we draw from the evolution of logic, and from the very real advances it has made, the conclusion that reason is entirely incompetent in those areas which elude calculation and that, where neither experiment nor logical deduction is in a position to furnish the solution of a problem, we can but abandon ourselves to irrational forces, instincts, suggestion, or even violence?<sup>15</sup>

In all his works from the mid-1940's to the present, the Belgian answers his own question with an emphatic negative:

. . . if essential problems involving questions of a moral, social, political, philosophical, or religious order by their very nature elude the methods of the mathematical and natural sciences, it does not seem reasonable to scorn and reject all the techniques of reasoning characteristic of deliberation and discussion--in a word, of argumentation.<sup>16</sup>

To the contrary, it is worthwhile to study more clearly those argumentative procedures which are of such social and philosophic importance.

Perelman writes:

We have given the name 'rhetoric' to the discipline which we thus propose to revive, in recognition of the fact that, at least in Greek antiquity and particularly for Aristotle, the object of rhetoric was precisely the study of those techniques of nondemonstrative argument, its end being to support judgments and thereby win or reinforce the assent of other minds.<sup>17</sup>

Max Loreau declares that Perelman's ambition is "to produce an instrument capable of achieving in the realm of values results exactly analogous to those pursued by analytical reasoning in the domain of the exact sciences."<sup>18</sup> Perelman himself states that:

. . . logicians owe it to themselves to complete the theory of demonstration obtained in this way by a theory of argumentation. We seek here to construct such a theory by analyzing the methods of proof used in the human sciences, law, and philosophy.

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<sup>15</sup>Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 512.

<sup>17</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, pp. 168-169.

<sup>18</sup>Max Loreau, "Rhetoric as the Logic of the Behavioral Sciences," Q.J.S., LI (Dec., 1965), 456.



We shall examine arguments put forward by advertisers in newspapers, politicians in speeches, lawyers in pleadings, judges in decisions, and philosophers in treatises.<sup>19</sup>

In distinguishing between formal logic, which he thinks is applicable, only to those fields in which artificial languages neatly fit, and argument, which applies to the reasoning processes more commonly utilized, Perelman creates many problems for himself such as distinguishing conviction from persuasion and rhetoric from philosophy which are discussed later.<sup>20</sup> If the demarcation line between demonstration and argument is not clear, however, Perelman's goal is; "If a narrow conception of proof and logic has led to a constricted view of reason, the broadening of the concept of proof and the resulting enrichment of logic must likewise react on the way in which our reasoning faculty is conceived."<sup>21</sup>

Perelman and his longtime collaborator Madame L. Olbrechts-Tyteca make many specific recommendations regarding rational discourse. Their analyses of value, audience, adherence, dialectic, presence, association and dissociation, interaction, philosophy, and justice deserve intensive scrutiny. As John Kozy points out, however, others have written more thoroughly about these specific concepts before and, in many cases,

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<sup>19</sup>The New Rhetoric, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-14. See specifically the discussions in section three of this chapter concerning the contradictions in Perelman's thoughts vis-a-vis conviction/persuasion, rhetoric/philosophy, and various sorts of audiences.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 510.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's ideas concerning these concepts seem vague and/or sketchy, as we shall see, and do not seem wholly to fit together.<sup>22</sup> It is the thrust of their analysis against an unwarranted diminution of the realm of rationality that deserves primary credit. Therefore, this analysis will proceed first to a macrocosmic analysis of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's overall perspective on argument then to an attempt to fit their specific notions to that perspective.

### The Scope of the New Rhetoric

The key to understanding the scope of the new rhetoric lies in the realization that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's attacks on formal logicians, analytic philosophers, and those with a narrowed conceptualization of what constitutes the sciences are necessary concomitants to their theory of argument. They comment:

The evolution of rhetoric and of the theory of argumentation follows the fate of the epistemological status of opinion as opposed to truth. According as it is claimed that all truth presents itself as the most defensible opinion or that opinion is nothing but mock truth, the position allotted to rhetoric and argumentation will be more or less important.<sup>23</sup>

Rhetoric and argument gain in scope as faith in a singular truth and a pure logic or method wavers. For Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, demonstration and necessity are opposed to dialectic and deliberation. Self-evidence is counterbalanced by social agreement. Mathematics, formal logic, and the physical sciences with their tendencies towards closure

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<sup>22</sup>John Kozy, "Essay Review of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's The New Rhetoric, in Philosophy and Rhetoric, III (Fall, 1970), 252-254.

<sup>23</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, pp. 158-159.

are opposed by philosophy and the social sciences with their proclivity for openness. When science, conceived as a necessary, axiological system deduced from a few self-evident truths, prevails, rhetoric becomes mere sophistry.<sup>24</sup> Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's purpose is not to denigrate demonstration and science but "to deny the exclusiveness of rationality to demonstration . . ."<sup>25</sup> To some this may seem like an attack on a long dead straw man, but the two students of Dupreel argue, rather convincingly, that such attacks are essential for an expansion of the concept of reason and for argument and rhetoric to regain some of their ancient illustrious station and scope.<sup>26</sup>

What Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are arguing is that science, mathematics, reason, logic, deduction, and form have all been over-emphasized and that the pendulum ought to swing back a little in the direction of dialectic, substance, philosophy, deliberation, and humanism. Even as they make this point, however, they realize that they will have extreme difficulty with the argument for when taken out of simplified form and amplified and clarified, the argument becomes quite complex. In addition, the terms of the argument are inherently confusing as rationality, logic, reason, science, method, etc., already highly

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<sup>24</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 159.

<sup>25</sup>Nathan Rotenstreich, "Argument and Philosophic Clarification," Philosophy and Rhetoric, V (Winter, 1972), 15.

<sup>26</sup>It is important to understand that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca are not attacking logic and science per se but only a narrow conceptualization which maintains that logic and science are all encompassing and singularly fitted for the finding of truth, and which, therefore, preclude any role for what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca see as argument.

abstract concepts, have all become positively valued god terms. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca realize that they are dealing with an intricate, sensitive proposition at a rather high level of abstraction, but they consider the point critical. It is, in fact, the central theme of most of Perelman's books and articles, and he tries to make his point clear through elaboration and repetition at a general level and through scientific exploration of: (1) the jurisprudential model versus an axiological system; (2) the realm of facts versus the realm of opinion and values; (3) the contrast between dialectic and rhetoric conducted in natural language and logic and science conducted in artificial language; and, (4) general form versus individualized disciplinary criteria. The rest of this section of the chapter will follow that same order proceeding first to further generalities and definitions and then on to the four aforementioned areas of differentiation.

At the macrocosmic level, Perelman battles against what Scott has called "the dream that has haunted rationalists since Plato,"<sup>27</sup> that is, the dream of discovering a finite set of propositions that can be accepted without proof and on the basis of which theorems can be derived with pure logic to explain all things.

Our own position is quite different. Instead of basing our philosophy on definitive, unquestionable truths, our starting point is that men and groups of men adhere to opinions of all sorts with a variable intensity, which we can only know by

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<sup>27</sup>Robert L. Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," Speech Teacher, XVII (March, 1968), 136.

putting it to the test. These beliefs are not always self-evident, and they rarely deal with clear and distinct ideas. The most generally accepted beliefs remain implicit and unformulated for a long time, for more often than not it is only on the occasion of a disagreement as to the consequences resulting from them that the problem of their formulation or more precise definition arises.<sup>28</sup>

Perelman lashes out at self-evident truths and at univocal arguments supposedly true for all times and all contexts. "Every demonstration requires that the elements on which it is based should be univocal . . . Things are different in argumentation."<sup>29</sup> An argumentative speech will nearly always be more complex.<sup>30</sup> "It is because of the possibility of argumentation which provides reasons, but not compelling reasons, that it is possible to escape the dilemma of adherence to an objectively and universally valid truth, or recourse to suggestion and violence to secure acceptance for our opinions and decisions."<sup>31</sup>

Perelman and his adherents, Dearin, Stone, Florescu, and Loreau believe that argument constitutes a middle path between "a universally accepted objectivity and an incommunicable subjectivity, of a reality binding on everybody and values that are purely individual."<sup>32</sup> Rhetoric is the methodology of the sociology of knowledge.<sup>33</sup> It functions in those

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<sup>28</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 511.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 495.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 514.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 510.

<sup>33</sup>Dearin, "The Philosophical Basis of Ch. Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," Q.J.S., LV (Oct., 1969), 217.

areas where the facts are unknown or unclear and where things are merely probable rather than sure. Rhetoric or argumentation functions in politics, ethics, religion, philosophy, the social sciences, and the law, in those areas where truth is uncertain or less certain and where "a reasoned decision" is necessitated as opposed to a "right decision." Argument functions to combat uncompromising and irreducible philosophical oppositions presented by all kinds of absolutism: "dualism of reason and imagination, of knowledge and opinion, of irrefutable self-evidence and deceptive will . . ." <sup>34</sup> In sum, as Max Loreau puts it:

Behold then the theory of argumentation, the enterprise which shatters the traditional connection of the rational with the necessary, of the unnecessary with the irrational, and which moves forward toward a wiser conception of reason integrating argumentation in league with demonstration. Reason serves not only to discover truth and error, but also to justify and to argue, to organize the free play of preferences, not only to decree and to compel, but also to work out and to generalize the destruction of hierarchies, to order structures which, far from pretending to be eternal and absolute, are responsible for the entire system of extant practical signification. <sup>35</sup>

Perelman and his collaborator, Olbrechts-Tyteca, try to make their argument for the scope of rhetoric even clearer by comparing and contrasting a jurisprudential model of argument with an axiological model. In Justice, which is a philosophical summary of thirty years of work, Perelman states that "the traditional role of law is to organize effectively and in various ways the dialectic of imperfect human will

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<sup>34</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 510.

<sup>35</sup>Max Loreau, "Rhetoric as the Logic of the Behavioral Sciences," Q.J.S., LI (Dec., 1965), 457.

and human reason. It contrasts with the divine model of the rationalists which is inadequate precisely where it admits of the room for the idea of rational decision."<sup>36</sup> The jurisprudential model applies to human opinions and values and takes note of varying degrees of preference or adherence. It allows for a degree of "loose reasoning" within a system of rules.<sup>37</sup> The legal system is not closed but open, ever changing and expanding as some values fall and others rise and as the degree of force behind various preferences alters. Finally, in the law or jurisprudence, despite various rationalizations and deceptions to the contrary,<sup>38</sup> the goal is justice, a kind of unique blending of rights and powers in conflict, which never really even claims perfection nor complete equitability but which does claim palatability and fairness.

Perelman attempts to clarify further just what it is he is dealing with by distinguishing the realm of opinion and values, the realm of argument, from the realm of facts, truths, and given presuppositions, the realm of demonstration, of science, or of formal logic, Loreau says "as opposed to logic, the procedure and ends of which are imperative,

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<sup>36</sup>Perelman, Justice, p. 98.

<sup>37</sup>Quasi-arguments, dilemmas, and even emotional appeals are allowed by the law to the degree that they are relevant to the case or, at the very least, acceptable to the presiding judge.

<sup>38</sup>Julius Stone stresses that legal claims to precedent or to logic are mere window dressing and rather non-substantive in many cases. The law is arbitrary only to the extent that judges wish to make it so. Judges can justify departures from precedent or even from the law itself on grounds of equity or justice. They then must "justify" their decision, but this is quite a different matter from "proving" their decision. Legal System and Lawyers' Reasonings (Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford U. Press, 1964), pp. 331-335.

rhetoric examines the pragmatic portion of reason."<sup>39</sup> This pragmatic portion of reason explores the domain of choice, of human belief and action, as opposed to the domains of facts and universals. Perelman forwards the idea that:

The most general principles of such a system, instead of assorting what is, establish what has value. They lay down a value, the most general value, whence are deduced standards, norms, commandments. Now this value has no basis either in logic or in reality. Since its affirmation results neither from a logical necessity nor from an experiential universality, value is neither universal nor necessary. It is logically and experientially, arbitrary.<sup>40</sup>

Since values or opinions are arbitrary, they are, by their very nature, controversial, and this is exactly the point. Professor Perelman states quite clearly that "argumentation, an activity of human beings, is normally opposed only to what is not considered objectively valid. The opinions it deals with are not beyond all discussion, the authorities who offer them or combat them are not beyond all attack, and the solutions which finally will be accepted are not known beforehand."<sup>41</sup> Quite to the contrary, presuppositions of value are always open to argument and are never sure. This is precisely the differentia which Perelman wishes to make clear.

The third series of attacks by which Perelman hopes to refine the distinction between his view of argument and other perspectives concerns natural as opposed to artificial language systems. He is adamantly opposed to the view that language reflects reality and that through

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<sup>39</sup>Loreau, "Rhetoric as the Logic of the Behavioral Sciences," 457.

<sup>40</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 52.

<sup>41</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 209.



proper, that is to say uninflected, manipulation of linguistic terms truth can be demonstrated once and for all. As he states of this view:

The first requirement presupposes both an atomic conception of reality, and the existence of a language the structure of which conforms to that of reality. It assumes, further, that this reality is perfectly known. It also presupposes that immediate knowledge of it is possessed by all rational users of this language, which, to satisfy the requirement I have just given, must be logically prior to all human usage. In fact, I need hardly say that the very enumeration of these preconditions is enough, nowadays, to give pause to the most fanatical defenders of the establishment of criteria for self-evidence.<sup>42</sup>

Perelman instead opts for a natural, inflected, ambiguous conception of language. Perelman realizes that such language may lead to misunderstandings but thinks the retention of power in language is well worth the cost. Also, he argues that:

Although language is a human artifact, it is not produced by any irrational decision of a single individual. It develops normally, in the midst of a community, the members of which can modify it by the use they make of it as soon as they consider there are any reasons for promoting any change.<sup>43</sup>

Language is a social creation and, in the realm of opinion and values at least, reflects a social view of rationality which is neither individualistic nor universal but rather intermediary between the two reflecting the ideals of a particular culture and milieu or of selected group and set of circumstances within that culture and milieu.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 113.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>44</sup>Vasile Florescu, "Rhetoric and Its Rehabilitation in Contemporary Philosophy," 211-215 or Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 166.

Still a fourth set of oppositions is established by Perelman. This last set of opposing stances is concerned with a general formal criterion for all argument versus individualistic substantive criteria established in various broad areas of knowledge which Perelman calls disciplines. He does not believe that one set of criteria can suffice for all argumentation. Certain types of argument are general enough to cross cultures, groups, and times but most argumentation is fitted only for a particular group and time. Perelman believes that,

What we usually call common sense consists of a series of beliefs which are accepted within a particular society and which the members of that society suppose to be shared by every reasonable being. But beside beliefs of this kind, there are agreements that are peculiar to the members of a particular discipline, whether it be of scientific or technical, juridical, or theological nature. Such agreements constitute the body of a science or technique. They may be the result of certain conventions or of adherence to certain texts, and they characterize certain audiences . . . usually distinguishable by their use of a technical language of their own.<sup>45</sup>

He further believes that "initiation into a given discipline consists of communicating rules, techniques, specific ideas, and presuppositions, as well as the method of criticizing its results in terms of the discipline's own requirements."<sup>46</sup> A universal form as the critical tool for examining argument simply won't do. Perelman insists that the more worthy critic will examine the substance of the arguments too, in some fashion considering the rubrics that the advocate in a discipline must himself employ in establishing the argument.

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<sup>45</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 99.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., pp. 99-100.

The differentia between Perelman's view of argument and what he calls logic or demonstration is not perfectly clear-cut. Rather, it is partly attitudinal, partly in the method of approach, and partly in the substance of criticism. The general attacks on self-evidence, closed systems, and form, and the forwarding of the distinctions of the jurisprudential model versus in axiological model, the attempt to separate the realm of opinion and values from that of facts and universals, the emphasis on natural language, and the concentration on disciplinary criteria in opposition to more generalized formal criteria for criticism all interact upon one another to form the basis of Perelman's "new rhetoric." No one factor clearly divides "the new argument" from the "old logic," but the Belgian legal philosopher argues that the total effect of the sum of all the variances is to establish a new realm for argument and an expansion of the concepts of reason, reasoned, and reasonable. Perelman, like anyone arguing from what they consider to be a minority position, is probably too strident in the stating of his case, but his appeals are always to temperance and moderation and for a consideration of argumentation rather than for a throwing over of formal logic, mathematics, or science.<sup>47</sup>

Perelman's Specific Contributions to  
the Theory of Argument

Perelman's main contribution to rhetoric in his own estimation is as a synthetic philosopher reviving dialectic as the ideal of social rationality.<sup>48</sup> He chooses to call his revival of justified opinions and

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<sup>47</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 510.

<sup>48</sup>Perelman, Justice, pp. 58-62.

values, or choices based on culture or disciplinary norms, the new rhetoric because of the "changed meaning of dialectic since the time of Hegel . . ."49 It is this addition to logic and demonstration for which Perelman wishes to be remembered. However, in amplification of his theories, he does discuss several specific ideas which contribute greatly to the theory of argument and, at the same time, clarify yet further the distinction he thinks exists between demonstration and argument. The rest of this section will be concerned with Perelman's specific contributions to the theory of argument: the idea of the new rhetoric, the relationship of dialectic to rhetoric, the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy, the concept of adherence, distinctions between various sorts of audiences, Perelman's theories concerning language and values and norms, the idea of presence, the concepts of association, dissociation, and interaction, and the effect of argument on the relationship between act and person, and, finally, the idea of justice as the overarching judgmental criterion by which argument is evaluated. Most of this section will be explicatory as the author feels that much of what Perelman has to say is beneficial for a new theory of argument. In certain instances, however, especially as regards a certain confusion between rhetoric and philosophy manifested in a conviction-persuasion duality, with some remarks concerning the universal audience, and with some ambiguities with regards to the concept of justice the tone and tenor of the section will switch to criticism.

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<sup>49</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 5.

### The New Rhetoric

By way of summary, Perelman equates the new rhetoric with a revived theory of argument. Perelman believes that "all argument is rhetorical"<sup>50</sup> and that "rhetoric is the study of the means of argumentation which allow us to obtain and to increase the assent of people to specific theses presented to them."<sup>51</sup> The new rhetoric functions in the realm of values and is concerned with the reasons why people maintain certain opinions with various degrees of force and with why they take the various actions they do. Argument functions through language not through force or by other nonartistic means and "any action designed to obtain adherence falls outside the range of argumentation to the degree that the use of language is lacking in its support or interpretation . . ."<sup>52</sup> Argument or dialectic, the new rhetoric, is the means whereby the individual is socialized to the norms of his community or discipline and whereby the individual checks the rationality of his social judgments. As Perelman states:

It would seem that we are never sure of the rationality of our theses as long as we have not submitted them to the proof of communication and criticism, a proof that cannot be dissociated from rhetoric in the expanded and non-pejorative sense of this word.<sup>53</sup>

As with Aristotle's dialectical arguments, Perelman's rhetorical arguments are checked out with the majority of men or, at the very least, with the most illustrious of men, the philosophers, for social credibility.

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<sup>50</sup>Perelman, "Replay to Mr. Zaner," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (Summer, 1968), 168.

<sup>51</sup>Perelman, "Proof in Philosophy," 356.

<sup>52</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup>Perelman, "Reply to Mr. Zaner," 170.

Rhetoric and Dialectic

This checking out of ideas with one's fellow beings for acceptability or rationality ties the new rhetoric closely to dialectic in its Aristotelian conceptualization. As previously mentioned, Perelman states that he would have used the term dialectic instead of rhetoric had dialectic not accrued additional connotations since the time of Aristotle and had he not thought the title of rhetoric potentially illustrious enough for his supposedly revived subject matter.<sup>54</sup> Perelman thinks that "dialectical reasoning is considered as running parallel with analytic reasoning, but treating of that which is probable instead of dealing with propositions which are necessary."<sup>55</sup> In effect, he claims that dialectical knowledge or socially conditioned knowledge "concerns the beliefs, the agreements, the adhesions of men . . ."<sup>56</sup> Dialectic is both a process and an end product. Perelman states that "dialogue, as we consider it, is not supposed to be a debate, in which the partisans of opposed settled convictions defend their respective views, but rather a discussion, in which the interlocutors search honestly and without bias for the best solution to a controversial problem."<sup>57</sup> The result of this honest, mutual searching for a solution is a dialectic which consists of a series of value hierarchies which together constitute the norms and values of a given group or society.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>See Footnote No. 49. See also Perelman, Justice, pp. 58-59 and Dearin, "Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," pp. 17-18.

<sup>55</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 5.

<sup>56</sup>Perelman, "Sociologie de la connaissance et Philosophie de la connaissance," Revue Internationale de Philosophie, IV (July, 1950), 315.

<sup>57</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 37.

<sup>58</sup>Ray Dearin, "Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," p. 127.

Rhetoric and Philosophy

The new rhetoric is also peculiarly related to philosophy, though here the equation does not work out so well. Just as Perelman equates the new rhetoric with dialectic, so also does he amalgamate rhetoric and philosophy. In An Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking, Perelman claims that the "goal of philosophy is to influence the mind and win its agreement, rather than to perform purely formal transformations of propositions."<sup>59</sup> This definition is quite close to if not exactly the same as Perelman's definition of the goal of rhetoric.<sup>60</sup> Perelman also claims that ". . . the proper object of philosophy is the systematic study of confused ideas."<sup>61</sup> Since the realm of rhetoric is the realm of probability and of the contingent as opposed to the realm of the necessary, the universal, or of fact or truth, it is evident that here too Perelman blends philosophy and rhetoric. And the Belgian theorist conjoins rhetoric and philosophy in yet a third fashion. Rhetoric is always situationally contingent and time bound for Perelman, and so is philosophy. Nathan Rotenstreich states that "The New Rhetoric is predicated on the proposition that in philosophy there are only

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<sup>59</sup>Ch. Perelman, An Historical Introduction to Philosophical Thinking, trans. by Kenneth A. Brown (N. Y.: Random House, 1965), p. 101.

<sup>60</sup>Perelman's goal for rhetoric as stated in The New Rhetoric, p. 14 is "gaining the adherence of minds . . ."

<sup>61</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 4.

arguments and no ultimate propositions. Philosophy is always under way."<sup>62</sup> Rotenstreich's statement neatly fits with Dearin's explanation that Perelman believes in "regressive" as opposed to "primary" philosophy.<sup>63</sup> Regressive philosophy is always open, always contingent, with automatic provisions for reformation whereas primary philosophy is closed and immutable and must be destroyed before any reformation or reformulation is possible.<sup>64</sup>

Though he intertwines rhetoric and philosophy to a great extent, Perelman wishes to leave himself an out and clouds the issue somewhat with one caveat. Rhetoric is the tool of the philosopher. It is also the tool of every man. Perelman does not wish all rhetoric to be considered philosophic nor all men philosophers at all times. He wants to restrict the title of philosophy to the product of the most thoughtful of men or to some minor percentage of the thoughts of all men, so he states that philosophy is systematic rhetoric or argument which convinces rather than merely persuades.<sup>65</sup> He ties this idea to the concept of the universal audience, and has been deservedly attacked at this very point in his analysis for a tendency to regress towards the very analyticity which has borne the brunt of his opposition.

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<sup>62</sup>Nathan Rotenstreich, "Argumentation and Philosophical Clarification," 12.

<sup>63</sup>Dearin, "The Philosophical Basis of Ch. Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," 216.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 27. Perelman previously labeled the conviction-persuasion duality a false dichotomy but contradicts himself when it comes to philosophic argumentation or argument for a universal audience.



Basically, Perelman's claims for the nobility of philosophy catch him in a kind of back door introduction of analyticity.<sup>66</sup> Perelman simply cannot simultaneously maintain that the persuasion/conviction dichotomy is false and that philosophy convinces as opposed to the mere persuasion of most argumentation.<sup>67</sup> This contradicts his whole basic thesis that argumentation parallels demonstration and ought to be considered just as noble and rational a process. It also contradicts his own immediately prior parallels between rhetoric and philosophy. It seems that when it comes to the crunch and the ship is endangered, the Belgian philosopher reneges on his position that everyone ought to try the murky waters of argument and reaches for the lifebuoy and theoretic solidity of demonstration.

#### Adherence

The purpose of the new rhetoric or of argument even of philosophy in Perelman's treatises is to gain adherence. "Every argumentation in fact aims at a change in the mind of the auditors," claims Perelman, "whether it be to modify the theses themselves to which the auditors adhere or simply the intensity of that adherence as measured by the eventual consequences it tends to produce in action."<sup>68</sup> Dearin argues that this idea "sharpens a traditional concept of rhetoric" by exploiting the concept "that beliefs are highly unstable, fluid phenomena, which are adhered to with varying degrees of intensity."<sup>69</sup> As opposed to the

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<sup>66</sup>See Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "Discussion: A New Theory of Philosophical Argumentation," Philosophy and Phenomenologic Research, XV (Dec., 1954), 244-252 and Richard Zaner, "Philosophy and Rhetoric: A Critical Discussion," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (Spring, 1968), 61-77.

<sup>67</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 27 versus p. 28.

<sup>68</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 155.

<sup>69</sup>Dearin, "Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," p. 213.

traditional concept of conviction associated with demonstration, the adherence of argument can just as easily be the product of emotion as the consequent of logic. In addition, instead of representing a black or white choice, adherence can vary in degree and offer an interlocuter a choice of more acceptable grays.<sup>70</sup> Perelman insists that the inclusion of the emotional factor and the allowance for variation in degree of intensity are important "because the theses to which we adhere may be in conflict in concrete situations . . ."71 In such situations, we don't have to dichotomize, falsely, but can instead, with the concept of adherence, merely readjust our hierarchies of values in such a fashion as to account for the temporary dissonance and avoid ultimate conflict altogether.<sup>72</sup>

The idea of adherence is also important to Perelman as it helps to account for the importance of epideictic addresses. He forwards the notion that the links of society are forged by the intensification of the fires of belief and faith. Knowledge alone cannot suffice to anneal the social contract. There must also be faith, faith in leadership, faith in the law, faith in common values, and faith even in the idea that man can endure and conquer. Perelman believes that the idea of adherence, unlike conviction or demonstration, combines knowledge and belief. And this is essential for knowledge of commonly held community values and faith in these values are both necessary for the community to survive. Thus, an understanding of adherence is critical to an ability

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<sup>70</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 45.

<sup>71</sup>Perelman, "How Do We Apply Reason to Values?," 799.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

to analyze epideictic addresses and an understanding of epideictic addresses is critical to an understanding of the functioning of the community or society. In the creation of this connection, Perelman has, indeed, made a real contribution to our knowledge of the functioning of rhetoric.<sup>73</sup>

#### Various Types of Audience

Because Perelman's analysis depends upon the changing of minds, he is very much dependent upon the idea of rhetoric as addressed to various types of audience. As he and Olbrechts-Tyteca analyze the rhetorical situation in The New Rhetoric, they proclaim:

The unfolding as well as the starting point of the argumentation presupposes indeed the agreement of the audience. This agreement is sometimes on explicit premises, sometimes on the particular connecting links used in the argument or on the manner of using these links; but from start to finish, analysis of argumentation is concerned with what is supposed to be accepted by the hearers.<sup>74</sup>

All argument assumes the existence of intellectual contact between people. The key to argument is not to meet some arbitrary form but to win over people, audiences. Perelman never loses sight of this basic truth and reiterates it frequently in opposition to those who he argues have taken the social and psychological conditions out of argument thereby gaining precision but losing relevance.<sup>75</sup> He seems almost to be

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<sup>73</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, pp. 47-51. Perelman declares that the defense of traditional and accepted values through the arguments of education is as worthy if not a more worthy process than stirring up controversy through polemics. He is very probably quite correct, and his analysis does make a point not previously recognized or, at the very least, emphasized much.

<sup>74</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 165.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

saying that you can take the feeling out of argument but you can't take argument out of the realm of human feelings and emotions.

Perelman defines an audience "as the ensemble of those whom the speaker wishes to influence by his argumentation."<sup>76</sup> He believes that three types of audience are of particular importance for the gleaning of adherence:

Three kinds of audience are apparently regarded as enjoying special prerogatives as regards this function, both in current practice and in the view of philosophies. The first such audience consists of the whole of mankind, or at least, of all normal, adult persons; we shall refer to it as the Universal audience. The second consists of the single interlocuter whom a speaker addresses in a dialogue. The third is the subject himself when he deliberates or gives himself reasons for his actions.<sup>77</sup>

Of these three types of audiences the most interesting creation by far is that of the universal audience. Perelman does not regard the universal audience as "a concrete social reality but a construction of the speaker based on elements of his experience."<sup>78</sup> This is as clear as Perelman wishes to be on this point. When the advocate constructs an argument for the universal audience, he creates a philosophic argument, a systematic, nearly objective, valid argument, one which Perelman believes, quoting Plato, might be capable of "convincing the gods themselves."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 19.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>78</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 155.

<sup>79</sup>Perelman, "How Do We Apply Reason to Values?," 800 or The New Rhetoric, p. 7.

Of course, this type of argument smacks of the sort of timeless, universal construction to which Perelman has previously so vehemently denied efficacy. However, in conjunction with his ideas about philosophy and the possibilities in certain remote circumstances for complete adherence or conviction, Perelman insists on this Platonic trace. He never resolves the contradiction between this ideal and the essence of the bulk of his writings. He does make a brief foray when he declares that the coupling of the obligation of "the orator to adapt himself to his audience with limitation of the audience to an incompetent mob"<sup>80</sup> has discredited rhetoric, but he is never desirous of open battle concerning the subject which is entirely understandable.

As for the two other types of audience, Perelman swiftly dispenses with them with the brief comments that a man must convince himself before he can argue with others and that argumentation with a single interlocutor many times provides moments of especially penetrating insight as the quintessence of the dialectical process. The traditional rhetorical situation, the situation in which one speaker argues before an audience of indeterminant composition and size, is neglected by Perelman except to the extent that he comments that particular audiences will accept only certain "values, hierarchies, and loci"<sup>81</sup> peculiar to their time and circumstance. This omission, which might be caused by

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<sup>80</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 25.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 179.

the previously mentioned lack of familiarity of American rhetorical scholarship,<sup>82</sup> is particularly regrettable for the particular audience has got to correspond in some degree with Perelman's "disciplines." If he will not get any more particular than this, and especially if he won't give any concrete examples of the functioning of various criteria relative to at least one discipline, then his concept of "disciplines" diminishes markedly in value.

### Language

When one is arguing, seeking to obtain adherence from an audience, one uses language. For Perelman, as previously mentioned, natural language is critical to the general argumentative process in opposition to what he calls artificial language for:

When an author does not express himself after the fashion of a mathematician, in an artificial language that he may have created wholesale, but instead used the natural language of a cultural community, he adopts, with respect to all those points which he has not explicitly modified, the classifications and evaluations that the language carries with it.<sup>83</sup>

Perelman believes that natural language is the result of prolonged usage and contains within itself thousands of functional evaluations, presumptions, and implied or applied connections. It reflects the argumentative middle path which is "neither the reflection of an objective reality nor the manifestation of individual arbitrariness."<sup>84</sup> Indeed, natural language is the ultimate dialectic, for natural language

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<sup>82</sup>See Footnote No. 5.

<sup>83</sup>Perelman, "Rhetoric and Philosophy," 18.

<sup>84</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 513.

is not only the tool of the new rhetoric but reflects the product of that rhetoric, that which is deemed socially rational.

### The Realm of Values

As previously noted, the most important portion of social rationality reflected by language concerns the realm of values. This is true as Perelman argues that all agreements can be divided into two classes: "the first concerning the real, comprising facts, truths, and presumptions, the other concerning the preferable, comprising values, hierarchies, and lines of argument relating to the preferable."<sup>85</sup> The first class of agreements is the subject matter of logic and demonstration while the second comprises the substance of argument. Perelman is not altogether didactic about this point and, in fact, shifts a bit to say:

Values enter, at some stage or other, into every argument. In reasoning of a scientific nature, they are generally confined to the beginning of the formulation of the concepts and rules that constitute the system concerned, and insofar as the reasoning aims at the truth value, to the conclusions . . . But in the fields of law, politics, and philosophy, values intervene as a basis for argument at all stages of the development.<sup>86</sup>

Like Kenneth Burke, with whose works he is slightly acquainted, Perelman establishes a somewhat ambiguous hierarchy of arguments dependent upon the types of language or agreements employed.<sup>87</sup> At the bottom of the

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<sup>85</sup> Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 66.

<sup>86</sup> Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 75. Here is yet another example of where Perelman is self-contradictory on the specifics of his system. At some points he states that values are not involved in logic or demonstration. At other points, he tries to argue that there is merely a substantial degree of difference as to how values enter the picture.

<sup>87</sup> For a more detailed comparison one might want to see Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 183-189.

hierarchy are facts and truths supposedly expressed univocally and proceeding upward in generality, emotionality, and ambiguity, there are presumption, values, and finally, loci.<sup>88</sup> In this shift upward in the hierarchy, according to Perelman, the potential degree of adherence by all men diminishes,<sup>89</sup> however, particular audiences can be characterized precisely "by the way they grade values."<sup>90</sup> What Perelman is stating is that as meaningfulness and precision increase evaluation decreases. In the abstract, complete agreement is obtained only on those matters that are clear but valueless on the one hand or nearly totally ambiguous but quite highly valued on the other. In the middle realm, the realm of dialectic as opposed to the realms of fact or the realm of bodiless abstractions such as love, patriotism, etc., advocates must forever argue. Argument concerns only those matters which are valued but unclear.

### Presence

The purpose of various linguistic and value choices is to create presence. "By the very fact of selecting certain elements and presenting them to the audience, their importance and pertinency to the discussion are implied. Indeed, such a choice endows these elements with a presence,

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<sup>88</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, pp. 169-171 or The New Rhetoric, pp. 67-85. See also Dearin, "Chaim Perelman's Theory of Rhetoric," p. 127.

<sup>89</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 81.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.



which is an essential factor in argumentation."<sup>91</sup> Perelman writes that those arguments brought to the forefront by repetition, emphasis, or by the disproportionate amount of time spent on their construction will have presence. Presence "has a negative as well as positive aspect," in that, "deliberate suppression of presence is an equally noteworthy phenomenon . . ."<sup>92</sup> Mader claims that presence is important to the theory of argumentation as it is the factor which "focuses the hearer's attention on the attitude to be adopted or the action to be performed, while on the other hand it distracts the hearer from taking into account other matters that might impede the adoption of the attitude or the performance of the action."<sup>93</sup> Others have considered the idea of presence or of emphasis or choice before, but by naming it and amplifying its manifestations in convenient form, Perelman makes yet another contribution to argumentation theory.

#### Association/Dissociation

Perelman states that:

By processes of association we understand schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them, which aims either at organizing them or at evaluating them, positively or negatively by means of one another.

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<sup>91</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 116.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>93</sup>Mader, "The Divine Persuasion: Presence, Transcendence, Freedom and God," (paper presented at the 1970 S.C.A. convention at New Orleans), p. 2.

By processes of disassociation, we mean techniques of separation which have the purpose of dissociating, separating, disuniting elements which are regarded as forming a whole or at least a unified group within some system of thought; dissociation modifies such a system by modifying certain concepts which make up its essential parts.<sup>94</sup>

These processes might well be compared to Burke's ideas of merger and division.<sup>95</sup> Association and dissociation, or merger and division, are complementary processes and are always at work at the same time, one always dependent on the existence of the other. In any particular argument, the advocate will usually emphasize one process while suppressing the other. However, both procedures are dependent on the making and breaking of linkages between parts of various contentions which must then be fitted together to form a complete piece of argumentation or discourse. The act of creation always implies the possibility of destruction and vice versa.

### Interaction

Association and dissociation lead inevitably toward the idea of interaction. Perelman claims that:

. . . the meaning and the scope of an isolated argument can rarely be understood without ambiguity; the analysis of one link of an argument out of its context and independently of the situation to which it belongs involves undeniable dangers. These are due not only to the equivocal character of language, but also to the fact that the springs supporting the argumentation are almost never entirely explicitly described.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 190.

<sup>95</sup>For a further comparison see Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives, (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 403-406.

<sup>96</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 187.

The answer to this problem is the valuable concept of interaction.

He uses a metaphor concerning "the threads of cloth" to make his point.<sup>97</sup>

Unlike proofs by deduction which function within closed systems of premises with singular force, rhetorical proofs depend upon a cumulative building process. That is, rhetorical arguments are dependent upon the mutually reinforcing subarguments which, only when added together, give a piece of discourse weight. As with a chair, all the legs have to be there for the argument to really hold up. As Perelman puts it ". . . the elements of arguments are in constant interaction at more than one level: interaction between various arguments put forward, interaction between the arguments and the overall argumentative situation, between the arguments and their conclusions, and finally, between the arguments occurring in the discourse and those that are about the discourse."<sup>98</sup>

Interaction fits well with Perelman's entire conceptualization of argumentation as opposed to demonstration. It is a requisite concept for a theory where the total weight of argument is to be considered rather than a singular proof.

### Justice

Perelman summarizes his theory of argumentation under the aegis of the idea of justice. In opposition to demonstration, argumentation requires justification. This is because the strong argument is not necessarily a correct argument but rather an argument "which has survived

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<sup>97</sup>Julius Stone, The Legal System and Lawyers' Reasonings, p. 331.

<sup>98</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 460.

all objections and criticism and with regard to which we have a certain confidence, though no certainty, that it will resist all such future attacks."<sup>99</sup> Basically, Perelman states that an argument ought not even be considered correct or incorrect as with demonstration, but rather justified or unjustified, strong or weak, weighty or ephemeral.

It is useless to try to define rational argumentation the way we define a demonstrative technique, namely by its conformity to certain prescribed rules. Unlike demonstrative reasoning, arguments are never correct or incorrect; they are either strong or weak, relevant or irrelevant. The strength or weakness is judged according to the Rule of Justice, which requires that essentially similar situations be treated in the same manner.<sup>100</sup>

Under the rule of justice, "we are the judges of the force, value, and relevance of arguments."<sup>101</sup> The individual or group must weigh the arguments and declare a decision.

. . . in default of an impersonal and absolute criterion of validity furnished by self-evidence and providing a method of proof founded on self-evidence, we can still justify our decisions in the fields of thought and actions by forms of argument which are neither constraining nor mechanical. The guarantee of these, in the last analysis, is supplied by the solidarity which their use and their evaluation establishes between the person who constructs them and the person who adopts them. The responsibility of the man who thus engages himself, is as even, a corollary of his freedom.<sup>102</sup>

An argument is just rather than correct and justified by its social relevance rather than by its ability to meet a set of arbitrarily constraining rules or some abstract form. Perelman believes that functionality is the only ultimate criterion for argumentation.

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<sup>99</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 117.

<sup>100</sup>Perelman, Justice, p. 83.

<sup>101</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. 124.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

Of course, when the arbitrary absolutist point of view is rejected "the problem of knowing who is qualified or competent to criticize and judge and the problem of determining the modalities of criticism and of justification, then become essential problems."<sup>103</sup> Perelman solves this difficulty by turning to the juridical model and to the idea of disciplines. For him, the definition of justice is constant, but there are "varying criteria for its application in different situations or to different subject matters."<sup>104</sup> These criteria are the subject matter of various fields or disciplines:

Our hypothesis is that this strength is appraised by application of the rule of justice; that which was capable of convincing in a specific situation will appear to be convincing in a similar or analogous situation. The comparison of situations will be the subject of constant **study** and refinement in each particular discipline. Initiation into a rationally systematized field will not merely furnish knowledge of the facts, truths, and special terminology of the branch of learning involved and of the method of using the available tools, it will also provide instruction in assessing the strength of the arguments used in these connections.<sup>105</sup>

Like Stephen Toulmin, Perelman believes that the force of argument remains constant through the Rule of Justice but that the criteria for the argument changes from discipline to discipline.<sup>106</sup> Like Kenneth Burke, he believes that analogous situations are constantly repeated and can be interpreted through argument or criticism by the finding of

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<sup>103</sup>Perelman, Justice, pp. 64-65.

<sup>104</sup>Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. viii.

<sup>105</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 464.

<sup>106</sup>For further information on this comparison see later information on Toulmin in Chapter IV or H.L.A. Hart's introduction to Perelman, The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, p. viii.

patterns to which to apply the rule of justice as regards human opinions and actions.<sup>107</sup>

Unfortunately, as with his conceptualizations of the universal audience, conviction as opposed to persuasion, and of philosophy as opposed to rhetoric, Perelman is vague and unnecessarily brief concerning justice. In the abstract, the idea is intriguing. When it comes down to the concrete reality of giving an example of the criteria for justice for but a single discipline or of mentioning a single pattern repeated in social life, however, Perelman fails to complete his task. It is almost as if when he comes to the most critical concepts, Perelman alights like a bee but fails to pollinate the flower. He contributes some solid work on adherence, presence, interaction, etc. and is very good at the macrocosmic theoretical level. Regrettably, Perelman is weak with regards to examples and applicability. For a clearer picture on the questions of fields, substantive argument, and disciplinary criteria, it is necessary to proceed to the works of Stephen Toulmin.

#### Ch. Perelman on Rational Argument: A Summary

Perelman attacks a narrowed vision of rationality. He argues for argumentation as a rational process paralleling logic and demonstration. He feels that in the two thousand years since Aristotle, particularly in the last three hundred years, the Stagirite's dialectical and rhetorical methods of argument have been theoretically neglected in preference for his methodology concerning apodeixis. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's

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<sup>107</sup>For further possible detail on the potential of this comparison see Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (N. Y.: Random House, 1957), p. 5.

concern is for a revival of Aristotle's theories on rhetoric and dialectic, and they call this revival the new rhetoric.

Though their main contribution to the theory of argument may well be in the area of clearing out some of the remaining subtle psychological attachments to demonstration, formal logic, and the idea of a possible, all encompassing, axiological, primary philosophy, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca also make specific contributions to argumentation theory. Save in those few areas where there is a tendency towards backsliding towards analyticity, namely the universal audience, the confusion of philosophy and rhetoric, the contradiction concerning conviction, and a few of the comments concerning a theoretically perfect justice, the two authors make some significant contributions to a more complicated but more refined theory of argument. Their ideas concerning adherence, interaction, presence, association and dissociation, value, and language are particularly illuminating. Also important is their carrying through of some of the old Aristotelian concepts regarding dialectical argumentation. Their theory is tentative, however, and some concepts are still vague. Further detail is necessary before a new theory of argument can be clearly presented. Some of this detail is found in Stephen Toulmin, some in other modern authors, but Perelman sets the stage at least for a new argument by blasting at the barrier in its path, namely the remains of logical positivism, and by hinting at its constituents: a concern for dialectic, the importance of natural language, the addition of substantive disciplinary criteria to formal criteria for evaluating argument, the social determination of some types of rationality, and the idea of cumulative strength in the weighing of argument.

## CHAPTER IV

### STEPHEN TOULMIN AND HIS QUEST FOR THE FOUNDATIONS OF SUBSTANTIVE ARGUMENT

. . . how far logic can hope to be a formal science, and yet retain the possibility of being applied in the critical assessment of actual arguments will be a central question for us.<sup>1</sup>

If a theory of human understanding is to follow the rest of twentieth-century science and history then it must be based not on unchanging principles and guarantees but on the developing interactions between Man, his concepts and the world in which he lives . . . Instead of Fixed Mind gaining command over Fixed Nature by applying Fixed Principles, we should expect to find variable epistemic relationships between a variable Man and a variable Nature.<sup>2</sup>

#### An Introduction of Purpose

Stephen Toulmin, former King's College don, philosopher of science, and sometimes argumentation theoretician, has probably had a greater impact among rhetoricians with regards to argument than any other man in the twentieth century. Despite the fact that most of his time has been spent in more popular and profitable, and some would argue,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Stephen Toulmin, Human Understanding, Vol. I (Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Toulmin has received much praise and little criticism for his work in the philosophy of science. See, for example, J. C. Cooley, "On Mr. Toulmin's Revolution in Logic," Journal of Philosophy, LVI (March 26, 1959), 297-319.



felicitous excursions into the philosophy of science,<sup>4</sup> Toulmin's few encroachments upon argument have had stunning effects. The Uses of Argument has been the most controversial work about argument in the last dozen years.<sup>5</sup> Human Understanding, the first volume only, of a projected three, to be published, seems destined to extend upon the polemical issues raised in The Uses of Argument. It may well turn out to be the most controversial argumentation text of the next dozen years.

Toulmin comes from a background of English logical positivism, but he is anything but a logical positivist himself. His heroes were not Russell and Whitehead with their Principia but rather John Wisdom, G. E. Moore, and the later Ludwig Wittgenstein.<sup>6</sup> Holt Spicer, in his doctoral dissertation at the University of Oklahoma, carefully explains that Toulmin is a functional analyst tending to deal with ordinary language difficulties in reaction to analytic philosophy.<sup>7</sup> In this type of

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<sup>4</sup>By far the majority of Toulmin's work has been as a philosopher of science. See, for example, Stephen Toulmin, The Philosophy of Science (London: Hutchinson and Co., Ltd., 1953), Stephen Toulmin, Foresight and Understanding: An Enquiry Into the Aims of Science, Foreword by Jacques Barzun (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1961), and note that the bulk of Human Understanding seeks to explain science and uses examples from predominantly scientific disciplines.

<sup>5</sup>Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., "Theory of Argument," in Contemporary Philosophy, ed. by Raymond Klibansky, (Firenze, 1968), p. 177.

<sup>6</sup>See the acknowledgements in The Uses of Argument and in Stephen Toulmin, An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958).

<sup>7</sup>Holt Vandercook Spicer, "Stephen Toulmin's Functional Analysis of Logic and Ethics and Its Relation to Rhetoric," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1964), p. 66.

analysis he joins Wittgenstein and Ryle in opposition to Carnap, Kneale, and Quine.<sup>8</sup> As a functional analyst of ordinary language, Toulmin's problem area is "everyday argument."<sup>9</sup> He wants to deal with "practical questions about the manner in which we have occasion to handle and criticize argument in different fields . . ."<sup>10</sup> His basic theme in all this is that "the rational assessment of arguments requires experience, insight, and judgment. In such an appraisal, a mathematically based model can never be more than one tool among many."<sup>11</sup> In opposition to the logical positivists and analytic philosophers, Toulmin has argued for twenty years for a substantive, audience centered, situational logic with which to criticize ordinary, everyday arguments.

Like Perelman, there are two aspects to Toulmin's thesis, the offensive, destructive aspect and the positive, constructive aspect. Stephen Toulmin may very well be at his best in the attack. This is because he thoroughly believes that one must remove the false beliefs in analyticity, the equating of form with logic, and mathematical paradigms before one can really get to an analysis of argument. He states:

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<sup>8</sup>Holt Vandercook Spicer, "Stephen Toulmin's Functional Analysis of Logic and Ethics and Its Relation to Rhetoric," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1964), p. 54.

<sup>9</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Albert L. Lewis, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," Central States Speech Journal, XXIII (Spring, 1972), 52.

The first step is to reject the commitment to logical systematicity which makes absolutism and relativism appear the only alternatives available. This decision brings us to the heart of the matter. For it was, in fact, always a mistake to identify rationality and logicity--to suppose, that is, that the rational ambitions of any historically developing intellectual activity can be understood entirely in terms of the propositional or conceptual systems in which its intellectual content may be expressed at one or another time. Questions of 'rationality' are concerned, precisely, not with the particular intellectual doctrines that a man--or a professional group--adopts at any given time, but rather with the conditions on which, and the manner in which, he is prepared to criticize and change those doctrines as time goes on. The rationality of a science (for instance) is embodied, not in the theoretical systems current in it at a particular time, but in its procedures for discovery and conceptual change through time.<sup>12</sup>

Toulmin argues that, by now, "mathematical logic has become a frozen calculus, having no functional connection with the canons for assessing the strength and cogency of arguments."<sup>13</sup> But he does also provide an alternative. Using a jurisprudential model, like Aristotle and Perelman, Toulmin champions the view that a sound argument is "one which will stand up to criticism, one for which a case can be presented coming up to the standard required . . ."<sup>14</sup> for its audience and the situation. His idea of rationality for substantive argument "is concerned far more directly with the matter of function and adaptation--with the substantive needs and demands of the problem-situations that men's collective concepts and methods of thought are designed to handle--than it is with formal considerations . . ."<sup>15</sup> He presents a system for the layout of arguments,

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<sup>12</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 186.

<sup>14</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. vii.

for differentiating between substantive and analytical argument, and for establishing the criteria of field dependency in opposition to universal, timeless, forms. And, though he may be at his best in the attack, Toulmin is certainly provocative in his argumentative constructions.

The purpose of this chapter will be to explore some of the provocative aspects of Toulmin's ideas. The first major section will be focused upon his major contributions to argument based largely on The Uses of Argument and Human Understanding. Like the previous explanation and analysis of Perelman, this section will begin with an analysis of Toulmin's assaults against traditional, formal logic, and then proceed to his more positive contributions including: the idea of substantial versus analytical argument, the idea of warrant-establishing versus warrant-using argument, the idea of field dependency, including the concepts of discipline, profession, and field dependent criteria versus the force of field independency, the layout of arguments, and Toulmin's comments on intellectual ecology and rationality. The second major section will encompass some commentary on Toulmin's friends and foes. As Albert Lewis has pointed out in his fine article, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," logicians have tended to respond quite unfavorably to Mr. Toulmin while rhetoricians, with admittedly selective interpretations,<sup>16</sup> have reacted quite favorably to his

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<sup>16</sup>Rhetoricians have typically taken only a portion of Toulmin's system and incorporated it into their own systems or have extended upon Toulmin in such a manner as to make him seem an advocate of their own particular visions of rhetorical criticism. See, for example, the psychological, audience analysis based version of James McCroskey, "Toulmin and the Basic Course," Speech Teacher, XIV (March, 1965) or An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1968) or the extension of the Toulmin system into traditional categories by Wayne Brockriede and Douglas Ehninger, "Toulmin on Argument: An Interpretation and Application," Q.J.S., XLVI (Feb., 1960), 44-53 and Decision by Debate (N. Y.: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1967).

ideas,<sup>17</sup> and this varied reaction needs to be noted and explained. The final segment of this chapter will be a review in retrospect with a tentative judgment concerning the usefulness of Toulmin's theoretical contributions to argument in full realization that his potential contribution has not yet been completed for he is still very much alive and writing now more than ever.

The Decline of the Analytic Ideal and the Search  
for an Alternative in Substantive Argument

(A) Attacks on the Ideal of the Analytic Syllogism

Toulmin claims that all his ideas are "ballons d'essai, trial ballons designed to draw the fire of others."<sup>18</sup> This reasonable, scholarly qualifier might well apply to his tentative, constructive ideas but seems inapplicable to his attacks on the analytic syllogism, the paradigm of formal logic. Toulmin is vehement in his assaults on the claim that an axiomatic, singular, scientific model can ultimately represent reality for all men for all time. Perhaps typical of his comments is the following remark from Human Understanding:

Perhaps the idea of timeless, eternal standards, applicable to arguments-in-general in abstraction from their practical contexts, was always a Cartesian delusion. Over-reliance on the model of Euclidean geometry has led philosophy into dead ends before new; since the mathematicians themselves have reappraised the status of their knowledge, philosophers too should reconsider their own standards of certainty.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Albert L. Lewis, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," 48.

<sup>18</sup>Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 23.

Toulmin, like Perelman, whose attacks he amazingly parallels, thinks that the analytic ideal of Plato and Descartes has for too long caught the imaginations of men and sent them in false quests for a perfect logic patterned after geometry, supposedly applicable to the real world, universal, and timeless. He is utterly unrelenting in his criticism of this sort of formal logic and its modern advocates: Frege, Russell, Whitehead, the early Wittgenstein, Carnap, et al.<sup>20</sup>

The former Cambridge don makes two basic points. First, everyday, practical, substantive arguments tend to be far more complex than the analytic syllogism would lead one to believe. Second, evaluating argument is a more difficult task than simply checking to see if the propositions of the case meet some arbitrarily established rules of form. As he puts it:

. . . the categories of formal logic were built up from a study of the analytic syllogism, . . . this is an unrepresentative and misleadingly simple sort of argument, and . . . many of the paradoxical commonplaces of formal logic and epistemology spring from the misapplication of these categories to arguments of other sorts.<sup>21</sup>

Basically, Toulmin doesn't believe that "rational demonstration is a suitable subject for a timeless, axiomatic science."<sup>22</sup> Many arguments have their field-invariant aspects that can best be assessed with analytic apparatus, but "a total argument is a much more complex process than the

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<sup>20</sup>Toulmin's attacks encompass all those who have been called logical positivists but he especially picks out the individuals named for both rapier thrusts and sledgehammer blows.

<sup>21</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 146.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

stating of propositions that necessarily lead to a conclusion."<sup>23</sup> For one thing, "certainly language as we know it consists, not of timeless propositions, but of utterances dependent in all sorts of ways on the contexts or occasion on which they are uttered."<sup>24</sup> For another, the analytic syllogism can't encompass that which is relative nor predictions about the future. Aristotle himself recognized this weakness but was unable to resolve it even for himself.<sup>25</sup> Then, too, substantial arguments, at least, demand leaps of faith and do not necessarily follow at all. Finally, the judgmental criteria for the evaluation of arguments, especially as concerns material validity, are always dependent upon a current knowledge of the standards of the field involved. For all these reasons Toulmin argues that it is simply not possible for an idealized, mathematical logic to remain relevant to the evaluation of actual arguments.<sup>26</sup>

In The Uses of Argument, Toulmin provides what he calls five crucial distinctions between everyday arguments and the analytic syllogism, distinctions which he claims formal logicians miss:

- (i) The distinction between necessary arguments and probable arguments . . .
- (ii) The distinction between arguments which are formally valid and those which cannot hope to be formally valid . . .
- (iii) The distinction between those arguments, including ordinary syllogisms, in which a warrant is relied on whose adequacy and applicability have previously been established, and those arguments which are themselves intended to establish the adequacy of a warrant.

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<sup>23</sup>Lewis, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," 52.

<sup>24</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 180.

<sup>25</sup>Aristotle, On Interpretation, 13, 22b.

<sup>26</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 147.

- (iv) The distinction between arguments expressed in terms of 'logical connectives' or quantifiers and those not so expressed.
- (v) The fundamental distinction between analytic arguments and substantial ones . . .<sup>27</sup>

He claims that the typical argument of the formal logician is deductive, analytic, "formally valid, warrant-using, unequivocal in its consequences, and expressed in terms of 'logical words.'"<sup>28</sup> By contrast, most real arguments are "far less tractable, less trustworthy and more tentative, involve substantial leaps . . ." and are "expressed in terms of vague, unlogical words . . ."<sup>29</sup>

With regards to the first distinction, Toulmin believes that most real world arguments must be merely probable. They cannot be necessary except in an idealized abstracted sense. This is because:

Whether we turn to social or intellectual history, evolutionary zoology, historical geology or astronomy--whether we consider explanatory theories or star-clusters, societies or cultures, languages or disciplines, organic species or the Earth itself--the verdict is not Parmenidean but Heraclitean. As we now understand it, nothing in the empirical world possesses the permanent unchanging identity which all Greek natural philosophers (the Epicureans apart) presupposed in the ultimate elements of nature.<sup>30</sup>

The world is in flux, real things change and change constantly. There is no entelechy, no essence, that can be captured and fixed for argument. There are no universal and necessary forms. The abstractions of math and of formal logic alone remain fixed and immutable. The particulars of the empirical world and the actions and decisions of men are variable. Arguments about variable propositions can only be probable. They can never be necessary. Only arguments about forms can be necessary.

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<sup>27</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 148-149.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, pp. 355-356.



As for the second distinction, "Toulmin's basic objection to the syllogism is that it is inappropriate to real life situations because the conclusion presents no new information."<sup>31</sup> The valid syllogism, according to Sir Stephen, "cannot in its conclusion tell us anything not already included in the data and warrant-backing . . ."<sup>32</sup> It is, by its very nature, a tautology. An analytic syllogism, by necessity, involves a mere shifting of the terms of the premises to reach its conclusion. This is because the categories for the terms must have been previously established and which term fits within which must already be known. While it may be true that the information in the conclusion was only implicit in the premises and may even be psychologically novel, those who know the premises by logical implication know the conclusion. Toulmin goes on to state:

If the purpose of an argument is to establish conclusions about which we are not entirely confident by relating them back to other information about which we have greater assurance, it begins to be a little doubtful whether any genuine, practical argument could ever be properly analytic.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, a substantial argument or practical argument, in opposition to an analytic argument, cannot hope to be formally valid precisely for the reason that it makes an argument. It is not a demonstration. It is not one-hundred percent sure or necessary. A

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<sup>31</sup>Jimmie Trent, "Toulmin Model of Argument: An Examination and Extension," Q.J.S., LIV (Oct., 1968), 152.

<sup>32</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 150.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-127.

substantial argument, by its very nature, will involve more than a mere "shuffling of terms."<sup>34</sup>

Toulmin's third distinction introduces a differentiation between warrant-using and warrant-establishing arguments. This will be discussed more thoroughly later so for now a preliminary examination will have to suffice. A warrant-using, analytic argument is one in which "a single datum is relied on to establish a conclusion by appeal to some warrant whose acceptability is being taken for granted."<sup>35</sup> A warrant-establishing argument, on the other hand, is one "in which the acceptability of a novel warrant is made clear by applying it successively in a number of cases in which both 'data' and 'conclusion' have been independently verified."<sup>36</sup> Since warrants are "bridges or inference licenses"<sup>37</sup> allowing one to go from data to a conclusion, warrant-using arguments proceed from accepted data through accepted inference to a supposedly previously questionable conclusion. Warrant-establishing arguments proceed from accepted data through a previously unaccepted link to an accepted conclusion.

The fourth "crucial distinction" is concerned with the difference between accepted logical modalities and the "non-logical goats, i.e. the generality of nouns, adjectives and the like, and unruly, connectives and quantifiers such as 'most,' 'few,' 'but.'"<sup>38</sup> Toulmin is not so much concerned that logicians use such words as necessary, impossible, probable, and improbable as he is that they use these words

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<sup>34</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 148.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

in a highly artificial, technical sense then attempt to apply them in their ordinary senses thus hiding the real complexity of arguments. He thinks this is unfair as:

Somewhere in the minds of logicians--even if often at the back of them--it has always been assumed that, in sufficiently devious ways, the results of their labours could be used in judging the cogency and strength of actual, everyday arguments.<sup>39</sup>

He gives one example using the word "impossible." Impossible, for a logician, means absolutely impossible; by logical rules something is precluded; it cannot occur without contradicting some given in the argument. However, in its ordinary language contexts impossible can have many meanings. Something can be physically impossible, theoretically impossible, terminologically impossible or inconsistent, morally impossible or reprehensible, etc.<sup>40</sup> Toulmin is concerned that the force of the word remains the same while the criteria for its application changes from field to field. Later it will be noted that this distinction is at the very heart of the division Toulmin makes between field-dependent arguments and field-independent arguments.

The fundamental distinction between analytic arguments and substantial ones includes the various previous distinctions and summarizes Toulmin's position vis-a-vis the analytic ideal versus the majority of arguments. Briefly, Sir Stephen states:

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<sup>39</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 187.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-30.

An argument from D to C will be called analytic if and only if the backing for the warrant authorising it includes, explicitly or implicitly, the information conveyed in the conclusion itself. Where this is so, the statement 'D, B, and also C' will, as a rule, be tautological. Where the backing for the warrant does not contain the information conveyed in the conclusion, the statement 'D, B and also C' will never be a tautology, and the argument will be a substantial one.<sup>41</sup>

In other words, the analytic ideal encompasses a narrow range of arguments which are simultaneously deductive, universal, formal, univocal, timeless, and tautological. Substantial argument, by way of contrast, circumscribes all other kinds of argument.

Toulmin's attacks are finely honed precision, instruments, but his constructive substitutes for that which he has demolished tend to be vague, hazy apparitions. They are as colorful as a rainbow, but it is just as difficult to find the pots of gold at the end. Toulmin camouflages his theories within his attacks. One often finds very little concrete detail for such ideas as warrant-establishing arguments or for substantive argument even though these ideas seemingly have great potential.

Toulmin has good reason for his peculiarities. He knows that his attacks on the analytic syllogism are reasonable and that his distinctions between analytic and substantive argument represent some penetrating work, but he also knows that:

Failing an impartial forum and procedures, rationality would end by going the same way as justice. Truth would yield to the belief of the loudest-mouthed, soundness to the ideas of the most respectable, validity to the intellectual methods of the most persuasive. In the theoretical as in the practical realm

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<sup>41</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 125.

disagreements would be decided by the balance of power rather than by principles; and the pursuit of well-founded intellectual positions would be replaced by a verbal clobbering-match . . .<sup>42</sup>

Avoiding the abstraction of the analytic syllogism may make arguments relevant but runs smack into the problem of historical relativism.<sup>43</sup>

If practical arguments aren't susceptible to the critical apparatus of the analytic syllogism, what standards can be applied? Toulmin successfully destroys the applicability of the analytic ideal to argument, furthering distinctions that others have missed, but the key becomes the substitute. What is it? How can one avoid subjectivity and have good reasons for maintaining a position?<sup>44</sup>

Toulmin answers these questions with several contributions to argumentation theory. First, he presents a more complex pattern for the conceptualization of an argument which he calls the "jurisprudential model."<sup>45</sup> This model encompasses the macrocosm of argument or the organism in toto while the "layout of arguments" covers the finer physiological structure; the argument in microcosm.<sup>46</sup> Next, he attempts to explain how this pattern fits warrant-establishing, substantive arguments. With these two steps completed, he feels he has answered

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<sup>42</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 43.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>44</sup>The Key question of Toulmin in Reason In Ethics, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 94-96.

<sup>46</sup>This critical distinction between the jurisprudential model as the representation for the whole of an argument versus the layout of arguments as the representation of the finer parts of an argument has been missed by all too many critics. The distinction perhaps helps to explain a little better why the model is not necessarily entirely contradictory to the rest of Toulmin's interpretation. Only the finer parts of an argument are time bound and univocal. The argument, in toto, is an on-going, flexible, construction.

the question what is an argument and can get on to the question of how one evaluates an argument. At this stage Toulmin introduces the idea of field-dependence as an evaluative methodological substitute for the rules of the analytic syllogism. The subdivisions of this section will follow this same outline.

(B) The Layout of Arguments

Despite its prominence in argumentation texts,<sup>47</sup> Toulmin's layout of arguments appears but once in all his writing. It is sketchily presented in The Uses of Argument.<sup>48</sup> There Toulmin warns that the layout schemata's "form may not be final"<sup>49</sup> and that he is introducing it only for the purposes of the particular discussion of The Uses of Argument.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, this pattern has proven to be fascinatingly fruitful. Because of this and because the pattern has been picked up and interpreted, reinterpreted, misinterpreted, extended, and alternately praised and damned, some exegesis and analysis concerning the layout of arguments seems mandatory.

Sir Stephen claims that syllogistic reasoning is too simplistic for the multitude of reasons already presented.<sup>51</sup> The syllogism patterns

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<sup>47</sup>Argumentation texts that utilize Toulmin's model for analysis of arguments include: Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede, Decision by Debate; Russell Windes and Arthur Hastings, Argumentation and Advocacy (New York: Random House, 1965), and Gerald R. Miller and Thomas R. Nilsen, editors, Perspectives on Argumentation, (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1966).

<sup>48</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 94-115.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>See the five reasons referred to in pages 105-110.

itself after geometry. Toulmin prefers a "jurisprudential model."<sup>52</sup> This is because the law is sophisticated enough to deal with many types of claims in varying categories and because the law deals with relatively loose terminology in time bound and situationally bound contexts.<sup>53</sup> "Surely," claims Toulmin, "we shall need to employ a pattern of argument no less sophisticated than is required by law."<sup>54</sup> His preference for a juridical model might also be traced to his concern for functional analyses. The law continuously questions both jurisdiction and substance. It demands to know who should judge, then seeks reasons for a particular judgment. Each part of a forensic argument has some peculiar function which applies either to the question of jurisdiction or to the question of substance. Toulmin argues that a model for general argument ought really to do the same.<sup>55</sup>

Toulmin begins his system through defining a primary triad for argument consisting of data, warrants, and claims. Data are "facts we appeal to as foundations"<sup>56</sup> for a claim. Just exactly what facts are is never made clear, but Toulmin implies that they are agreed upon statements of some sort between an advocate and his audience.<sup>57</sup> Claims

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<sup>52</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>55</sup>I can find no explicit statement of this exact judgment. However, the statement is implicit in Toulmin's entire functional approach to argument and meshes neatly with Spicer's categorization of Toulmin as a 'functional linguistic analyst.'

<sup>56</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 97.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. Toulmin discusses the idea of a 'lemma' at this point. This is a preliminary agreement about at least something concerning the point at issue. Without such an agreement argument cannot proceed.

are conclusions "we are seeking to establish."<sup>58</sup> They are the controversial points of the argument. Warrants are justifications for taking the step from the data to the claim. They are "the rules, principles, inference-licenses or what you will"<sup>59</sup> that allow for proceeding from that which is agreed upon to the point the advocate wishes to make. Thus, in its simplest, pristine form an argument flows from data through warrant to claim.

All this seems simple enough, but the Michigan State philosopher warns of impending difficulties. It is not easy to tell the difference between data, warrants, and claims.

By grammatical tests alone, the distinction may appear far from absolute, and the same English sentence may serve a double function; it may be uttered, that is, in one situation to convey a piece of information, in another to authorise a step in an argument, and even perhaps in some contexts to do both those things at once.<sup>60</sup>

What is in one instance data may be a warrant in another instance and a claim in yet a third. Toulmin tries various linguistic manipulations to try to make the distinction clear such as stating "data are appealed to explicitly, warrants implicitly."<sup>61</sup> He himself, however, knows that this sort of verbal smoke screen won't do and ultimately differentiates between the three members of the primary triad simply according to the functions they perform.<sup>62</sup> As in so many cases, function is the key to differentiation.

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<sup>58</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 97.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 105 and Peter T. Manicas, "On Toulmin's Contribution to Logic and Argumentation," in Arthur Kruger, Counterpoint (Meuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1968), p. 159.



If the primary triad were the sole constituents of Toulmin's layout of argument, he would have contributed little to the theory of argument save for the renaming of various parts of the syllogism with an interpretation of their functionality. But he goes on to add three secondary elements to his layout which he feels add clarity and sophistication to the analysis of argument. The first element so added is the qualifier, "some explicit reference to the degree of force which our data confer on our claim . . ." <sup>63</sup> This allows for an argument to be explicitly probabilistic and to be weighed on its strength rather than according to its supposed correctness or incorrectness. Next, he adds "conditions of exception or rebuttal." <sup>64</sup> This allows for the explicit statement of those rare circumstances when the warrant will not apply. Finally, feeling that there may be some need for a general reinforcement for the warrant, Toulmin adds the backing. The backing is the most significant addition of all for it leads directly to the idea of field-dependency. <sup>65</sup> The standards for the backing, Toulmin claims, are uniquely derivative of the particular criteria of the field which encompasses the argument. He does not explain how a particular argument necessarily belongs to a particular field for judgment, and he is quite vague at this point about giving any examples of field-dependent arguments. <sup>66</sup> However, he does explain this later in

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<sup>63</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 101.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>66</sup>Instead of explicit examples of field-dependent arguments, Toulmin insists on repetitive discussions of Peterson and Catholicism, Harry and Bermuda, and Anne and red hair. This shortcoming has been pointed out by all of Toulmin's critics and is, indeed, devilishing inconvenient of him.

Human Understanding to some extent, at least, and the concept of backing will be picked up again under the overall analysis of field-dependency.<sup>67</sup>

Looking at Toulmin's layout of argument in toto, one might claim that it has the potential for greater clarity and sophistication in the analysis of argument. Unlike the syllogism which tends to be a prescriptive, organizational pattern, Toulmin's pattern tends to be a descriptive, functional approach. The attempt, at least, is for the explicit analysis of the functionality of each portion of an argument. Furthermore, Toulmin may have gained some sophistication and clarity by the addition of the rebuttal, qualifier, and backing. These elements make manifest ideas that are submerged within the analytic syllogism. However, due to the ambiguity of the primary triad which is only further exacerbated by the addition of the secondary triad, Toulmin's layout of argument also has some problems. These will be taken up as we analyze substantive, warrant-establishing arguments and under the discussion of the whole critical idea of field-dependency.

#### (C) Substantive Argument

Toulmin's comments about substantive, warrant-establishing argument are even briefer but still more tantalizing than his comments concerning the layout of arguments. Largely his criteria for such arguments must be derived by contrast to the criteria for analytic, warrant-using arguments.

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<sup>67</sup>There is some analysis of backing and field-dependency in The Uses of Argument but it is too sketchy to do more than intrigue the reader. This is why I refer to Human Understanding for these criteria later on.

This criterion would lead one to expect that substantial arguments are probable, informal, warrant-establishing, propositions expressed in non-technical vocabulary. To some extent this is indeed the case, but Toulmin demurs. "To begin with, the division into analytic and substantial arguments does not correspond at all exactly to the division into formally valid arguments and others."<sup>68</sup> "Nor does the distinction between analytic and substantial arguments correspond, either, to that between warrant-using and warrant-establishing arguments."<sup>69</sup> Nor, claims the confusing Toulmin, can "the task of identifying analytic argument . . . be performed by looking for key (logical) words . . ."<sup>70</sup> And, "the division of arguments into analytic and substantial is . . . entirely distinct from that into conclusive (necessary) and tentative (probable) arguments."<sup>71</sup>

Toulmin's one example of a substantive argument in The Uses of Argument concerns a scientific case of induction.<sup>72</sup> Other examples of the same sort appear in Human Understanding.<sup>73</sup> And, Toulmin does state that "induction can be used to refer to warrant-establishing arguments."<sup>74</sup> However, he also claims that the difference between induction and

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<sup>68</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 135.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>73</sup>See any example from any of the so-called scientific disciplines scattered throughout Human Understanding, e.g. pp. 145-147, 232-233, etc.

<sup>74</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 121, and Holt Spicer, "Stephen Toulmin's Functional Analysis of Logic and Ethics and Its Relation to Rhetoric," p. 149.

deduction is so hopelessly muddled in philosophical and logical jargon, that this distinction has become meaningless.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, he provides a test, called the verification test, which he argues will supposedly separate analytic from substantive arguments every time.

We shall therefore class an argument as analytic if, and only if, it satisfies that criterion--if, that is, checking the backing of the warrant involves ipso facto checking the truth or falsity of the conclusion--and we shall do this whether a knowledge of the full backing would in fact verify the conclusion or falsify it.<sup>76</sup>

All this terminological obsfucation is utilized to demonstrate that substantive, warrant-establishing arguments are those about which there can be some doubt. Since all arguments concerned with empirical data or with the decisions and actions of men are always subject to some doubt, all such arguments will always be substantive. The technical pyrotechnics are but a tour de force by Toulmin to demonstrate his logical refinement and the extreme paucity of those arguments that simultaneously meet all the tests of analyticity.<sup>77</sup> Almost all arguments are substantive, warrant-establishing arguments or based upon lemmas which are substantive, warrant-establishing arguments. This particular subject will be left at that to get on to Toulmin's key contribution to argumentation theory, field-dependency, which concerns the critical method for interpreting and criticizing substantive, warrant-establishing arguments.

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<sup>75</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 122.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

(D) Evaluating Argument: Fields and Intellectual Ecology

Toulmin's key contribution to the field of argument is the idea of field-dependency and its associated concepts, particularly intellectual ecology. This idea of a field is his middle way between subjectivity and a universal, timeless logic. Like most of Toulmin's conceptualizations, field-dependency is a fascinating notion. However, like the ideas of substantive argument and warrant-establishing argument with which it is so inextricably interwoven, the idea of field-dependency proves to be an illusive concept. When it comes to the particulars, Toulmin fails to develop it with much thoroughness. The basic idea is there, but detail is missing.

This is particularly the case in The Uses of Argument. In this work, though field-dependency is probably the most critical idea presented, only a few lines can be found giving the reader any impression whatsoever as to what a field is and how it functions. Near the beginning Toulmin states:

Two arguments will be said to belong to the same field when the data and conclusions in each of the two arguments are, respectively, of the same logical type; they will be said to come from different fields when the backing or the conclusions in each of the two arguments are not of the same logical type.<sup>78</sup>

Toulmin then leaves it at that. He never explains how arguments are categorized as of "the same logical type" nor does he explain how they are categorized as "not of the same logical type." He does give some little hint later when he implies that science, ethics, law, art-

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<sup>78</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 14.

criticism, and character-judging might all be considered as fields.<sup>79</sup>

And he gives another hint when he states that the "force of conclusions . . . is the same regardless of fields; the criteria or sorts of ground required to justify such a conclusion vary from field to field."<sup>80</sup> From this one might get the idea that fields are more-or-less well defined problem areas with their own standards of judgment, but how a problem fits into a field and how the criteria of a field uniquely fit the criticism of a problem is never covered by Toulmin in The Uses of Argument.

Toulmin's explanation of field-dependency is somewhat better in Human Understanding. Here he is a bit more specific both about what a field is and how the criteria of a field function as a standard for criticism.

Within any particular culture and epoch, men's intellectual enterprises do not form an unordered continuum. Instead, they fall into more-or-less separate and well-defined disciplines, each characterized by its own body of concepts, methods, and fundamental aims.<sup>81</sup>

Like Kenneth Burke,<sup>82</sup> Toulmin argues that these fields, disciplines, rational enterprises, forums of judgment, or intellectual endeavors<sup>83</sup> rise out of the fact that "men living in different milieus have faced

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<sup>79</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 176.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>81</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 359.

<sup>82</sup>Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (N. Y.: Random House, 1957), p. 5. See also, Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 3-21.

<sup>83</sup>Exactly why Toulmin keeps switching his terminology is unclear to the author. As far as I can discern, all these terms are synonyms. Field is the most prominent term in The Uses of Argument but discipline becomes the most prominent term in Human Understanding.

similar collective problems."<sup>84</sup> They have organized to face these problems, and these collective attempts at problem-solving are called disciplines by Toulmin.

A collective human enterprise takes the form of a rationally developing 'discipline,' in those cases where men's shared commitment to a sufficiently agreed set of ideals leads to the development of an isolable and self-defining repertory of procedures; and where those procedures are open to further modification, so as to deal with problems arising from the incomplete fulfillment of those disciplinary ideals.<sup>85</sup>

At one time or another Toulmin mentions as examples of such disciplines: law, atomic physics, molecular biology, chemistry, ethics, and even a few of the more sophisticated technologies.<sup>86</sup>

This is clearer but Toulmin is not wholly candid. He leaves himself several outs at crucial points. First, as concerns the problem of intellectual change of the transformation of a discipline over time, he relies on the idea of a discipline as a set of procedures rather than as a particular set of ideas.

The intellectual content of any rational activity forms neither a single logical system, nor a temporal sequence of such systems. Rather, it is an intellectual enterprise whose rationality lies in the procedures governing its historical development and evolution.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 492.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 359.

<sup>86</sup>Most of these examples come from Human Understanding. There is some question as to whether ethics ought to be considered a discipline for at one point Toulmin includes it as a "non-disciplinable field" in Human Understanding, p. 396. Perhaps there is a slight change of perspective between The Uses of Argument and Human Understanding, and this might account somewhat for the switch from field to discipline.

<sup>87</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 85.

It is the questions asked and the methods of approach rather than the particular current paradigms that define a field. A discipline does not consist of "a logically-structured propositional system,"<sup>88</sup> but of a developing, self-critical, set of explanatory procedures and a theoretical set of attitudes.

Second, as concerns the problem of boundaries, Toulmin begs the question. He considers that "disciplineness" is a matter of degree. There are "compact" disciplines, "diffuse" disciplines, "would-be" disciplines, and even some activities, including ethics and philosophy, which might not be disciplines at all.<sup>89</sup> The compact disciplines include "the better-established physical and biological sciences, the more mature technologies, and the better-conducted judicial systems."<sup>90</sup> The diffuse disciplines include the less well developed sciences and technologies. The would-be disciplines encompass the behavioural sciences. Toulmin leaves no place at all for the humanities lest the bemuddled quasi-syllogism includes them in its realm.<sup>91</sup> Toulmin implies at some points that there are cultural norms or common experiences that over-bound common fields, but this subject is quite unclear.<sup>92</sup> Generally,

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<sup>88</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 165.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 378-394. Note again that this constitutes somewhat of a retreat from some of the ideas of fields in The Uses of Argument.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 380.

<sup>91</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 131-134.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-141.



when the subject of a field is unclear or when the methodology is murky, Toulmin places the field beyond the pale of rationality. Field-dependency seemingly applies mainly to those subject matters whose research problems and methodologies are rather well defined and structured, and Toulmin leaves the impression that it's rather inappropriate to be too concerned about the rest.<sup>93</sup>

When a field does exist, however, Toulmin does give some idea about how it functions to determine rationalness, and he calls this idea intellectual ecology. Intellectual ecology presupposes consistency and coherence in an argument and proceeds from there.

Consistency and coherence are prerequisites for rational assessment. A man who purports to make an assertion, but contradicts himself in doing so, will fail even to make himself understood; the question whether what he says is true cannot even be reached. So also, a man who puts forward a series of statements as an argument, but whose final conclusion contradicts certain of his data, fails to make himself understood; until his case is stated in consistent, coherent form, questions about merits of the argument or conclusion cannot yet be asked.<sup>94</sup>

Once an idea is stated in consistent, coherent form it enters the intellectual jungle. Because men "demonstrate their rationality, not by ordering their concepts and beliefs in tidy formal structures, but by their preparedness to respond to novel situations with open minds,"<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, pp. 390-394.

<sup>94</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 171-172.

<sup>95</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. vii.

an idea is weighted as it adapts to the demands of its environment. It fits an ecological, intellectual niche and if it proves fit, it survives.

Fitness is determined through variation and selection just as in biology.

It will count in favor of a conceptual variant, for instance if its adoption extends the scope of an established explanatory procedure to cover hitherto anomalous phenomena, if it makes possible the unification of explanatory techniques from hitherto separate sciences, or if it resolves inconsistencies between the concepts of a special science and related extra-scientific concepts.<sup>96</sup>

If some new idea or argument better fits the problem demands of a discipline than its predecessors, by reason of intellectual ecology, it ought to replace those predecessors eventually. This isn't a matter of one argument being right while another is wrong, but of one argument better fitting a problem or problems than another. Nor is this a permanent solution for one idea replaces another endlessly as problems and explanations change through time.

Such evaluations are always a matter of comparison. The operative questions are never of the form, 'Is this concept uniquely 'valid' or 'invalid'?', nor of the form 'Is this concept 'true' or 'false'? Instead, the operative form is: 'Given the current repertory of concepts and available variants, would this particular conceptual variant improve our explanatory power more than its rivals?'<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 225.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

As can be seen, this idea applies best to the sciences, but as a matter of socially determined rationality it could be transferred in part to the social sciences and perhaps, Toulmin dissenting, even to the humanities.

Within a single science or discipline, Toulmin argues that an idea will survive only if it is enough like its predecessors to be recognized yet different enough to have some advantage. He always gives presumption to the status quo. This is because "the essential loci of conceptual change . . . still remain, not the opinions of individuals, but the collectively attested repertories of concepts that form . . . disciplines."<sup>98</sup> Within a field, the standards of the most and the best still apply. The ideas that appeal to the majority of those recognized as competent workers in a field and which appeal to those recognized as the most competent, the guiding lights of a field, will have a tendency to thrive and propagate. Toulmin gives some concrete manifestations of such criteria when he states that ideas forwarded by 'names' in a field, accepted by respected journals, and acceptably critiqued by others in a field are good ideas.<sup>99</sup> Like the ideas of a debate topic which develop over time and through practice, the ideas of a discipline develop through trial and error and the current ideas and procedures are considered rational as they are the collective artifacts of the successes and failures of the past. They have been functionally tested in the intellectual jungle with whose fierceness not even nature can compete.

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<sup>98</sup>Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 289.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

Their rationality lies in the fact that they have withstood the ultimate test, the test of time.

Toulmin's Interpreters and Evaluators:  
Friends and Foes

The analysis of this chapter would not be complete without extensive comments on Toulmin's interpreters and critics. This is especially the case since what has often passed as Toulmin's "revolution in logic"<sup>100</sup> has not been anything he proposed but someone else's extended interpretation of his ideas.<sup>101</sup> In pursuit of this subject, the organizational schemata will be borrowed from Albert L. Lewis who has divided Toulmin's friends and foes into the camp of the logicians and the camp of the rhetoricians. Concerning the two, Lewis remarks that "logicians (have) either made no comment or responded unfavorably to . . ." Toulmin's ideas in general, while "rhetoricians (have) . . . wrestled with (his) concepts, then widely accepted them."<sup>102</sup> The analysis will begin with the angered protestations of the logicians then proceed to the open arms welcome of the rhetoricians.

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<sup>100</sup>Toulmin states that his aims are 'radical' in The Uses of Argument p. vii. This has been picked up and turned into the phrase "the proposed revolution in logic" which is a popular cathall for all of Toulmin's notions. This same title applies also to the whole ordinary language movement.

<sup>101</sup>This especially applies to the extensions of the rhetoricians in the second portion of this part of the chapter. The logicians' extensions are far more minor.

<sup>102</sup>Lewis, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," 48.

A plethora of logicians have protested Toulmin's "revolution in logic." Rather than reviewing all their arguments, four representative figures will be utilized: Joseph L. Cowan,<sup>103</sup> J. C. Cooley,<sup>104</sup> Hector Castaneda,<sup>105</sup> and Peter T. Manicas.<sup>106</sup> Each approaches Toulmin's works from a slightly different perspective, and each picks relatively distinct avenues of attack. All coalesce in their general distaste for the Toulmin model, but they tend to give Toulmin his due as a perceptive--if in their view, incorrect--critic.

Joseph Cowan contends that Toulmin attacks "exactly that part of traditional logic which should be retained, the basic concepts and forms, and retains exactly that part which should be rejected,"<sup>107</sup> The misinterpretations of those concepts and forms. Cowan maintains that the traditional concepts, the syllogism, form, validity, and necessary conclusions, "if properly understood and applied, are highly useful tools for the criticism of actual discourse and the conduct of actual inquiry."<sup>108</sup> However, he denies this view just a few paragraphs later.

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<sup>103</sup>Joseph L. Cowan, "The Uses of Argument--An Apology for Logic," Mind, LXXIII (Jan., 1964), 27-45.

<sup>104</sup>J. C. Cooley, "On Mr. Toulmin's Revolution in Logic," Journal of Philosophy, LVI (March 26, 1959), 259-319.

<sup>105</sup>H. N. Castaneda, "On the Proposed Revolution in Logic," Philosophy of Science, XXVII (July, 1960), 279-292.

<sup>106</sup>Peter T. Manicas, "On Toulmin's Contribution to Logic and Argumentation," in Kruger, Counterpoint.

<sup>107</sup>Cowan, "The Uses of Argument--An Apology for Logic," 28.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 27.

Cowan argues the idea of an analytic, valid argument as the product of form. He sees argument as an "organizational structure"<sup>109</sup> as opposed to a mechanism for interpretation and analysis. The purpose of an argument is not to justify but to organize propositions. Ultimately, these propositions are true in a Platonic sense on the basis of form or self-evidence simply because "we insist . . . that they be considered true come what may."<sup>110</sup> Ideas are articles of faith, and argument allows for the categorical organization of concepts into structures so that man can understand the universe. As to where the ideas come from and how categories are formed, Cowan is remiss or considers that to be the subject matter of epistemology and philosophy and of no concern to argument and logic.<sup>111</sup>

Another logician, J. C. Cooley, asserts that Toulmin's ideas are not new at all:

Only a few years ago P. F. Strawson put forward a program for the revision of formal logic which, in effect, divided it into two subjects, one concerned with artificial language systems, the other with ordinary discourse. His own interests were focused on the later and his thesis was that philosophers had been seriously misled . . . in supposing that it would be replaced by the more mathematically oriented discipline.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Cowan, "The Uses of Argument--An Apology for Logic," 28.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>111</sup>This matter of the prior establishment of ideas and categories is one of the very problems that Toulmin attempts to get at. Cowan misses the point here but proceeds with his criticism nonetheless.

<sup>112</sup>J. C. Cooley, "On Mr. Toulmin's Revolution in Logic," 297.

Cooley disdains Toulmin's cavalier dismissal of those whose work has gone before him,<sup>113</sup> and finds Toulmin's perspective "interesting" but discovers nothing to which conventional logic could not be accommodated. He argues that what Toulmin has, in fact, done is nothing more nor less than shifted the burden of argument into the secondary triad of his layout which makes it rather like two syllogisms in a chain rather than any new innovation.<sup>114</sup> What Mr. Cooley does not understand in his arguments concerning the backing is that Toulmin operates from a timebound rather than a timeless framework. Checking the backing, involves checking a relative truth for the moment concept and is not equivalent to two chained syllogisms.<sup>115</sup> It is understandable that Cooley should reach such a conclusion, however, for he freely admits that Toulmin's idea of field-dependency is thoroughly ambiguous to him and that, he himself at least, finds great difficulty in differentiating between warrants, conclusions, and backing in the first place.<sup>116</sup> As we have earlier argued, Toulmin is certainly at fault here, but Cooley's extension of this fault to dealing with "the layout of arguments" as two chained syllogisms with the emphasis on the second in the set seems unfair.

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<sup>113</sup>J. C. Cooley, "On Mr. Toulmin's Revolution in Logic," 297. Most logicians are rather angered at Toulmin for claiming extensive credit for himself for innovations and attacks that others before him have actually accomplished.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 303.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid. Refer back to the "layout of arguments" for Toulmin's distinction for the backing vis-à-vis this interpretive error.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 311.

Hector Neri Castenada, perhaps the sharpest critic of The Uses of Argument, claims that Toulmin proves none of his two basic theses or five basic charges against traditional logic.<sup>117</sup> Castenada further argues that Toulmin's own new logic "is at best only vaguely hinted at and that his suggestions are positively obscure or mistaken."<sup>118</sup> He too forwards the idea that the various elements of Toulmin's system are most difficult to differentiate from one another, and that one can't tell the significance of the field-dependent backing without being able to distinguish it from the other elements of an argument. He then reproves Toulmin for failing to take note of the enthymeme, of advances in the theory of induction, or of informal logical theory of any sort.<sup>119</sup> Castenada states that logic has recognized its problems and has made material progress in the last one hundred years. Logicians do not exclusively support the ideal of the analytic syllogism. Many are working with induction theory, deontic logic, or with other types of modal syllogisms.<sup>120</sup> Castenada chastises Toulmin for compounding the division between formal logic and philosophy and rhetoric and insists that for progress to be made in all fields, these subjects ought to "walk together"<sup>121</sup> again.

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<sup>117</sup>H. N. Castaneda, "On the Proposed Revolution in Logic," 279. Castaneda goes into detail on both theses and on each of the five charges, which are the five crucial distinctions between analytic and substantive argument which Toulmin draws and which have been previously discussed.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 289.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 292.



Peter T. Manicas, a logician writing for rhetoricians, grants Toulmin his problem but not his solution.

. . . I suspect that (Toulmin's distaste for formal logic) stems from his absolutely correct observations that the larger class of arguments with which we are concerned in ordinary life are simply not deductions subject to the standards of formal validity. But indeed, if this is his main objection, then the solution is not to rename validity to cover correct non-deductive arguments, but to look more carefully into those field-dependent features of correct non-deductive arguments which make them correct.<sup>122</sup>

Manicas admits that the deductive standards for analytic argument cover only a narrow range of all arguments, but he doesn't see Toulmin's model or layout as a viable substitute. In fact, he argues that the model seems to contradict the main thrust of Toulmin's argument as it hints at situational indeterminateness and permanence. The layout of arguments chapter seemingly contradicts the thrust of the rest of the argument of The Uses of Argument.<sup>123</sup> Manicas summarizes with an appropos statement: "Toulmin seems to me to be mistaken in the way in which he wishes to bring logic into practice, but he is clearly right in insisting that logic must be brought into practice."<sup>124</sup>

To review, logicians argue that Toulmin: (1) attacks a false logic when he attacks the analytic syllogism forgetting the enthymeme and new logics of various sorts, (2) fails to clearly distinguish

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<sup>122</sup>Peter T. Manicas, "On Toulmin's Contribution to Logic and Argumentation," 165.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 170.

between the various elements of his own model, (3) seems extremely ambiguous as regards to the problem of field-dependency, (4) fails to recognize the function of logic as an organizational schemata rather than as a justificatory system, and (5) probably promotes a model which contradicts some of his own philosophic presuppositions concerning the nature of argument. It is only natural that those who see their profession assaulted with the charge of irrelevance should react with some vigor, relevance having the financial overtones that it does these days. Thus, it is little wonder that the logicians have rallied to battle against Toulmin. And, indeed, they have pointed to several legitimate problem areas in Toulmin's efforts. However, as Manicas admits, logicians do have a problem with regard to the majority of everyday arguments, and Toulmin does point to some ways out of this difficulty even if he has failed to come up with "the way" out of the problem.

Any number of rhetoricians have adopted some part of the Toulmin system or model or made some intended or unintended extension upon that system. The purpose of this chapter is not to review the work of all these men but to present, analyze, and criticize a few of the key argumentative notions of Stephen Toulmin. Therefore, as with the logicians, a few representative rhetoricians will be noted for a sampling of their views. Because of their relative prominence, the author has chosen the work of Brockriede and Ehninger,<sup>125</sup> James McCroskey,<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Brockriede and Ehninger, "Toulmin on Argument: An Interpretation and Application," and Decision by Debate.

<sup>126</sup>James McCroskey, "Toulmin and the Basic Course," and An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication.

and Windes and Hastings<sup>127</sup> for summary review. In each case it will be argued that these gentlemen have in some way extended Toulmin to their own purposes, sometimes contributing interesting ideas to rhetoric and to argumentation theory but sometimes distorting Toulmin's ideas.

Brockriede and Ehninger sing Toulmin's praises, claiming that he "has provided a structural model which promises to be of greater use in laying out rhetorical argument for dissection and testing than the methods of traditional logic."<sup>128</sup> Specifically, they claim the Toulmin model is superior to the traditional syllogism<sup>129</sup> for seven reasons:

1. Whereas traditional logic is characteristically concerned with warrant-using arguments (i.e. arguments in which the validity of the assumption underlying the inference "leap" is uncontested), Toulmin's model specifically provides for warrant-establishing arguments (i.e., arguments in which the validity of the assumption underlying the inference must be established--through backing--as part of the proof pattern itself).
2. Whereas traditional logic, based as it is upon the general principle of implication, always treats proof more or less as a matter of classification or compartmentalization, Toulmin's analysis stresses the inferential and relational nature of argument, providing a context within which all factors--both formal and material--bearing upon a disputed claim may be organized into a series of discrete steps.
3. Whereas in traditional logic arguments are specifically designed to produce universal propositions, Toulmin's second triad of backing, rebuttal, and qualifier provide, within the framework of his basic structural model, for the establishment of claims which are no more than probable. The model directs attention to the ways in which each of these additional elements may operate to limit or condition a claim.

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<sup>127</sup>Russell Windes and Arthur Hastings, Argumentation and Advocacy (N. Y.: Random House, 1965).

<sup>128</sup>Brockriede and Ehninger, "Toulmin on Argument: An Interpretation and Application," 47.

<sup>129</sup>Brockriede and Ehninger compare Toulmin to the traditional syllogism but not to the enthymeme. They mention the epicheirema but also fail to make a comparison there. Intentionally or unintentionally, they compare Toulmin to a very narrow conceptualization of what constitutes logic.

4. Whereas traditional logic, with its governing principles of implication, necessarily results in an essentially static conception of argument, Toulmin by emphasizing movement from data, through warrant, to claim produces a conception of argument as dynamic . . .

5. Whereas the modes based on the traditional analysis--enthymeme, example, and the like--often suppress a step in proof, Toulmin's model lays an argument out in such a way that each step may be examined critically.

6. Whereas in the traditional analysis the division of arguments into premises and conclusions . . . often tends to obscure deficiencies in proof, Toulmin's model assigns each part of an argument, a specific geographical or spatial position in relation to the others, thus rendering it more likely that weak points will be detected.

7. Whereas traditional logic is imperfectly equipped to deal with the problem of material validity, Toulmin makes such validity an integral part of his system, indicating clearly the role which factual elements play in producing acceptable claims.<sup>130</sup>

Basically, these seven reasons can be reduced to the claims that Toulmin is clearer and more sophisticated with his model than is the traditional analytic syllogism. Brockriede and Ehniger may just be a bit effusive about the clarity of the Toulmin system but objections at this point in their argument would be simple nit-picking.

However, they then present the "application" portion of their position and extend upon Toulmin to such a degree that he well might not recognize his own system at the end. Brockriede and Ehniger employ their cookie-cutter to force Toulmin's system into a traditional debate text format based on Aristotle.<sup>131</sup> They apply Toulmin's layout

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<sup>130</sup> Brockriede and Ehniger, "Toulmin on Argument: An Interpretation and Application," 46-47.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 48-51.

successively to causal arguments, analogies, generalizations, and even to motivational analyses. Backing loses all semblance of field-dependency. The layout system becomes generalized and simplified to apply to all arguments for all audiences. Brockriede and Ehninger admit that they have attempted to reduce all types of argument "to a single invariant pattern."<sup>132</sup> It almost seems as if they have failed to read the rest of Toulmin's The Uses of Argument and have concentrated their attention solely on chapter three. The Americanization of Toulmin via Brockriede and Ehninger smacks of timelessness and universality even in its particularity.<sup>133</sup> It is an interesting interpretation but as for its application, Toulmin would be appalled.

McCroskey utilizes the Toulmin model almost solely for the purpose of audience analysis.<sup>134</sup> He claims that the Toulmin system brings the processes of invention and disposition together once again through audience analysis.

Using the approach to invention and audience analysis based on the Toulmin construct should certainly aid any student to attain increased ability to analyze and adapt to audiences. If the student speaker can learn to evaluate his resources by beginning with his claim and then proceeding to find the data and warrant needed to establish that claim with his particular audience, he will determine what he needs to know about that audience.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>Brockriede and Ehninger, "Toulmin on Argument: An Interpretation and Application," 52.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 48-51.

<sup>134</sup>McCroskey applies the Toulmin model to analysis and organization of arguments too but his main use is for audience analysis.

<sup>135</sup>McCroskey, "Toulmin and the Basic Course," 96.

McCroskey's is a "psychological model of argument."<sup>136</sup> He too "fits" the Toulmin schemata to traditional divisions of argument,<sup>137</sup> but his chief concern is that "the warrant . . . be believed by the audience."<sup>138</sup> This, too, is a generalization and extension upon the Toulmin system which, while it might fit rhetoric, doesn't necessarily represent Toulmin's thought. Toulmin constructed his model to be emphatically field-dependent. He did not want his warrants universalized but particularized to fields through backing. McCroskey insists on retreating to the more generalized form to apply to the diversified audience rather than the particular audience. Leaving out the second triad of Toulmin's system, McCroskey makes the first triad a psychological syllogism.<sup>139</sup> In taking this step, McCroskey negates the clarification and sophistication of the Toulmin model and ignores the critical contribution of Toulmin, the idea of field-dependency.

Windes and Hastings absorb the Toulmin model and treat it as their own.<sup>140</sup> This makes their analysis relatively uninteresting in comparison with the original with one exception. Windes and Hastings declare that warrants "will always consist of criteria"<sup>141</sup> of various sorts. Many

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<sup>136</sup>McCroskey, An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication, p. 77.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 78-81.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>140</sup>Windes and Hastings, Argumentation and Advocacy.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., p. 164.

times these criteria will consist of various value hierarchies "grounded in the immediate field of the argument."<sup>142</sup> These hierarchies will interlock and overlap, sometimes consistently, sometimes inconsistently, so that any single issue may be viewed from the vantage point of more than one set of values or from more than one field. Windes and Hastings also point to some criteria which seem to be relatively independent of any single field which they call cultural or social values. This addition to the Toulmin system simultaneously points to a potential strength for rhetorical analysis and to a key weakness in Toulmin's system as presented by Toulmin. Viewing argument from different fields could lead to a more sophisticated analysis than viewing argument from one perspective only. However, Toulmin never declares himself vis-a-vis arguments that cross fields. He seems to imply that such is an impossibility with each argument in its field and each field with its arguments. However, it is relatively easy to see how one subject, e.g. birth control, could be viewed from a medical perspective, a religious perspective, etc., with differing criteria for evaluation of the same argument in each instance. Windes and Hastings add this fascinating conception to the Toulmin system, pointing out its interesting possibilities but failing to point out the critical problem it might create for Toulmin's sophisticated but still more simple analysis.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>Windes and Hastings, Argumentation and Advocacy, p. 165.

<sup>143</sup>Others have pointed out that if Toulmin can extend the syllogism, as the traditional analytic pattern for argument, from three to six elements why can't one just go on to seven or eight elements or even more. Perhaps some of these elements could account for cultural variants above and beyond field dependent elements or for multiple field backing etc.

Rhetoricians have extended Toulmin beyond the basic ideas he himself presents. They have turned to him for an "audience-centered, situational, field-dependent"<sup>144</sup> rhetorical logic, and have found their particular variants in his works whether they exist there or not. Brockriede and Ehninger Americanize Toulmin by forcing him into a Neo-Aristotelian rather timeless and universalized model of argument. McCroskey makes Toulmin generally psychological through his interpretation of Toulmin on Audience analysis. Windes and Hastings extend Toulmin to supra-disciplinary criteria and to cross-disciplinary problems. All these innovations may be helpful to rhetoric, but there is serious doubt as to whether or not Toulmin would sanction them.

#### Toulmin: Retrospect and Prospect

Toulmin presents an even more acute analysis of the problem with analytic argument than did Perelman. He shows the ultimate degree to which the misinterpretation of Aristotle can lead the formal logician. He proves, rather conclusively, that most practical, everyday arguments just can't be properly laid out and analyzed using the analytic syllogism. It is also pretty clear that arguments are more complicated than the syllogism would lead one to believe and that some new standards are needed for the evaluation of substantive argument.

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<sup>144</sup>Lewis, "Stephen Toulmin: A Reappraisal," 53.



Toulmin approaches but does not complete a solution to the problems he presents. His layout of argument potentially can clarify the functional aspects of the hidden elements of a proposition. However, Toulmin's lack of clarity in the differentiation between warrant, backing, and data make it difficult to apply his model. His ideas concerning field dependency and intellectual ecology potentially establish a new set of criteria for the evaluation of argument. However, once again, his lack of specificity makes for some difficulties in applying these standards. This is especially the case with those fields Toulmin bans from strict rationality: the behavioral sciences as would-be disciplines, the humanities as non-disciplines, and ethics and philosophy as sort of supra-disciplines.

Toulmin has been viciously attacked by logicians as unfair and inflexible, as unaware of the new logics, and as inconsistent in his own speculations. On the other hand, he has been welcomed by rhetoricians seeking a situation, audience and context bound new logic. They have even extended Toulmin beyond his own propositions to facilitate their rhetorical interpretations. Perhaps something can be taken from both of these groups for our summary in the next chapter. From the logicians one can look for the new logics and practical applications that Toulmin supposedly missed. From the rhetoricians, one can take the idea of extending upon Toulmin's ideas to come up with an even more complex and sophisticated, and maybe more accurate, model of argument and tools for its interpretation.

## CHAPTER V

### VISIONS FOR A NEW ARGUMENT

The argument which will follow concludes not simply that the ordinary sense of rationality ought to be called into question but that it ought to be discarded as unsupportable.<sup>1</sup>

. . . our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing and the connections they have found worth making in the lifetimes of many generations; these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon . . .<sup>2</sup>

Philosophy is not an esoteric profession. It is imminent in any conversation which resorts to definitions and analysis instead of to experience; it is incumbent upon any mind which enters into discourse to understand rather than to believe. Philosophy, it seems to me, is nothing more or less than dialectic. It is a method and an intellectual attitude, not special subject-matter or a system.<sup>3</sup>

In recent years many writers have attacked the formal systems of argument which have been relied upon by rhetoricians in the past. However, no fully adequate countertheories seem to have emerged. Symbolic interaction theory would seem to strongly support any move against objectively imposed formal systems of argument.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," Speech Teacher, XVII (March, 1968), 135.

<sup>2</sup>J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup>Mortimer Adler, Dialectic (N. Y.: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927), p. vi.

<sup>4</sup>Jackson Harrell, "Symbolic Interaction as the Basis for Rhetorical Theory," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1972), p. 225.

The actual operation of the mental processes, then, seems to bear little relation to abstract logical form. From the standpoint of the logic fallacy of traditional rhetoric, the only question that remains is whether the 'non-logical' form of human thought can be considered to be rational. And here, clearly, it would seem, the reasoning pattern employed by ordinary men should be called rational.<sup>5</sup>

#### An Introduction of Purpose

Chapter one of this study posed two questions, "What constitutes a rational argument and therefore an argument worthy of having an effect on a decision?" and "How ought one to go about evaluating rational argument?"<sup>6</sup> Thus far we have posited a reinterpretation of the Aristotelian tradition and analyses of two new theories of argument-- as introduced by Chaim Perelman and Stephen Toulmin. The three previous chapters suggest many partial answers to the two questions posed by this study. This chapter suggests additional answers from tangential studies having a direct bearing on the theory of argumentation.

Ordinary language philosophers, dialecticians, symbolic interactionists, and psycho-logicians have been working on theories directly related to the study of argument for many years. Their theoretical contributions buttress, supplement, and, at times, extend the theories of Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin. This chapter will highlight the theories of ordinary language, dialectic, symbolic interaction, and psychologic as alternatives to the more traditional argumentation studies. Though there is bound to be some conceptual slippage involved in any such review, it is hoped that natural language philosophy, dialectic,

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<sup>5</sup>Jesse Delia, "The Logical Fallacy, Cognitive Theory, and the Enthymeme: A Search for the Foundations of Reasoned Discourse," Q.J.S., LVI (April, 1970), 141-142.

<sup>6</sup>See chapter one, page #8.

symbolic interaction, and psychologic can be directly related to the study of argumentation, to logic, and to the idea of the rational. This chapter attempts a synthesis of key theories related to argument. In a way, this chapter will be composed of "ballons d'essai, trial balloons designed to draw the fire"<sup>7</sup> but also the consideration, furtherance, and improvement of others.

Structurally, this chapter will begin with a final consideration of the problem of logic and rationality as related to argument. Second, it will proceed to a synthetic focused review in turn of ordinary language, dialectic, symbolic interaction, and psychologic. Finally, there will be a summary of the various visions for a new argument as seen through the eyes of Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin and as tentatively explored in the four interrelated sets of theories concerned with argument.

#### Toward an Expanded Vision of the Rational

The problem in contemporary argumentation theory is that there is a fundamental dispute between those who maintain that the propositions of formal logic are the substance of reasoned discourse and, further, that such logic can be applied as the basic evaluative rubric for rhetoric, and those who argue that the standards of formal logic cannot and should not be applied to "everyday" "marketplace" argumentation. This problem was the focus of considerable discussion in the intro-

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<sup>7</sup>Stephen Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 1.

ductory remarks in chapter one and has played a fundamental role in each of the succeeding chapters. A reinterpretation of the Aristotelian tradition is not needed if Aristotle is to be viewed solely as the father of the analytic, "that syllogistic gentleman with a category for every emergency."<sup>8</sup> Ch. Perelman's assault on a narrowed vision of rationality is superfluous if argument can be equated with demonstration. And, finally, Toulmin's quest for the foundations of substantive discourse is unnecessary if the foundations are to be found in the rules for the syllogism.

However, the problem is so pervasive and has such ancient standing that one final review of its ramifications seems essential. A final review also seems necessary because of the incredible conceptual slippage manifested on both sides in the controversy and because the position this writer is maintaining has, until recently, been so obviously and distinctly the minority view. This inquiry will start with a synthesis of the argumentation problem as already manifested in the interpretations of Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin and proceed to a clarification of the problem through consideration of a recent running argument in the journals between Hugh Petrie and Glenn Mills, representing the traditionalists, and David Shepard and Mortenson and Anderson, directly, and Robert Scott and Jesse Delia, indirectly, representing various expanded visions of the rational.

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<sup>8</sup>Lawrence Rosefield, Aristotle and Information Theory (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton & Co., Printers, 1971), p. 23.

The traditional Aristotle is the father of science, narrowly conceived, and the techniques of demonstration. Apodeixsis, or "real proof," proceeds, in this view, from univocal concepts by way of cause, hoti and dioti, to demonstration or to Truth. Arguments are correct or incorrect, valid or invalid according to their form; i.e. the rules of syllogistic. The reinterpreted Aristotle applies this analysis only to pure theory or to the empirical world. In the realm of decision and action or of values, in the human realm, natural, informal language is used in dialectic and rhetoric for endoxa or phronesis. Arguments are strong or weak, probable or improbable, as determined by their audiences, the time, and the circumstances. Perelman blasts the analytic, logical positivists' view of rationality which proceeds from self-evident truths through deduction via formal logic, a priori, to Truth. He prefers a rhetoric or dialectic based on a jurisprudential model which is weighed according to its presence for various types of audience and according to an abstract ideal of justice. Toulmin, too, opposes logical positivism and analytic philosophy. He forwards the idea that the analytic paradigm based on field-independent, universal, timeless, prescriptive forms is a false ideal. He supports an analysis of ordinary, everyday argument which looks for field-dependent warrants. He evaluates arguments functionally through the concept of intellectual ecology which basically maintains that those argument surviving the jungles of the intellectual marketplace are basically "good," that is to say, sound arguments.

Of course, it has become so common to call a good argument a valid argument, a bad argument irrational, an ambiguous argument illogical, an expedient argument a necessary argument, ad infinitum, that there is

considerable conceptual slippage on both sides of the argumentation problem and a considerable amount of seeming paradox. Delia admits that "the logic fallacy" afflicts even those who would fight against it as they confuse even themselves when using rational, logical, and valid in senses different from the traditional.<sup>9</sup> Scott, in "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," admits to a seeming paradox in that "the degree to which an attempt to build a rational case against rationalism is successful, to that degree the case refutes itself."<sup>10</sup> On the other side, Hugh Petrie contends that rhetorical arguments can indeed be put into a logical framework. To deny this, he argues, would be preposterous because "it would seem to be a general rule that concepts denying that something meets certain standards presupposes the possibility of meeting those standards or else one would not know what it means to fail to meet those standards."<sup>11</sup>

Rather than bogging down in further examples of conceptual slippage, however, it should be more productive to turn to the attacks on logic as applied to rhetoric from David Shepard,<sup>12</sup> Mortenson and

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<sup>9</sup>Delia, "The Logic Fallacy," 141-142.

<sup>10</sup>Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," 137.

<sup>11</sup>Hugh G. Petrie, "Does Logic Have Any Relevance to Argumentation?," J.A.F.A., VI (Spring, 1969), 59.

<sup>12</sup>David W. Shepard, "Rhetoric and Formal Argument," Western Speech, XXX (Fall, 1966), 241-247 and "The Role of Logic?," Q.J.S., LV (Oct., 1969), 310-312.

Anderson,<sup>13</sup> Robert Scott,<sup>14</sup> and Jesse Delia<sup>15</sup> and to the defense as supplied by Glenn Mills and Hugh Petrie.<sup>16</sup> Let the reader beware as he reads this section that different operational interpretations of logic, rhetoric, argument, valid, and rational may be employed by the different writers. Indeed, the reader should note that these very variations are at the heart of the argumentation problem.

Scott provides some of the strategic background to the argumentation problem. In two articles in 1967 and 1968, he concentrates on the difficulties implicit in the theory of man considered as a "rational" animal as related to "logic" as the key persuasive or argumentative device. Scott argues that the stress on rationality and upon logic which supposedly appeals to that rationality has been a false speech communication idol.<sup>17</sup> First, man is not totally "rational" in an objective, automatic fashion. This has always been known, but the assaults of the Freudians and the behaviorists should make it even more manifestly clear.<sup>18</sup> Second, Godel's Theorem in mathematics has proven that a self-consistent and inclusive system of axioms is a logical impossibility.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, if "rationality" were to be defined as

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<sup>13</sup>Ray Lynn Anderson and C. David Mortenson, "The Limits of Logic," J.A.F.A., VII (Spring, 1970), 71-78 and "Logic and Marketplace Argumentation," Q.J.S., LIII (April, 1967), 143-151.

<sup>14</sup>Robert Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," 134-139 and "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," Central States Speech Journal, XVIII (Feb., 1967), 9-17.

<sup>15</sup>Delia, "The Logic Fallacy," 140-148.

<sup>16</sup>Glen E. Mills and Hugh G. Petrie, "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," Q.J.S., LIV (Octo., 1968), 260-267 and Hugh G. Petrie, "Does Logic Have Any Relevance to Argumentation?," 55-60.

<sup>17</sup>Scott, "A Fresh Attitude Toward Rationalism," 134-137.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 135-136.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 137.



self-consistent and inclusive human action modeled after say, geometry, that idol has now been attacked and crushed. Besides, Scott contends the consequences of clinging to the rational man theory were never as pleasant as they were made out to be. First, "accepting the notion that truth exists, may be known, and communicated leads logically to the position that there should be only two modes of discourse; a neutral presenting of data among equals and a persuasive leading of inferiors by the capable."<sup>20</sup> Second, argument has no epistemological implications if, in analytic fashion, it merely ties something known to something else which is also known. No conclusions which "are somehow fresh, new, unknown or unaccepted"<sup>21</sup> can be derived from such a system. The inevitable consequence of equating rationality with formal logic, according to Scott, is a diminution of choice, the consequent rise of determinism, and the decline of democracy. Thus, Scott prefers the relative ambiguity of argument to the dull surety of logic.<sup>22</sup>

Delia also chooses to assault the intimate link between rationality, logic, and argument, at least as he thinks it has been traditionally defined and interpreted. Delia calls the assumption that the laws of logical form correspond to the operation of the thinking or

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<sup>20</sup>Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," 10.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. This fits Scott's view that argument must do something substantive. An analytic argument, by definition, doesn't do anything substantive but merely connects one known to another. Scott states that such verbal shifting may not be argument at all.

or reasoning processes "the logic fallacy,"<sup>23</sup> which he describes thus:

Now if the rules of logical form correspond with the operation of the mental processes and if the form of the discourse corresponds with the rules of logical form, 'reasoned discourse' results and 'reason' is conveyed directly to the mind of the listener. Since form conveys reason directly to the mind of the receiver, an argument cogently laid down according to the rules of logical form inherently has the power to direct the human cognitive process, i.e., to persuade. The effectiveness of the reasoned argument is thus dependent on the form in which it is expressed--the nearer it comes to meeting the rules of logic, the more persuasive it will be.<sup>24</sup>

Delia himself refused to equate "rational" with "logical."<sup>25</sup> The very existence of fallacies would seem to deny this equation. Contemporary philosophers will not accept that deductive logic is the essence of rationality. More importantly, to Delia's mind, contemporary empirical investigations by psychologists also refute the point. "Much of human reasoning is supported by a kind of thematic process rather than by an abstract logic."<sup>26</sup> Thus, Delia suggests further examination of human cognitive organization in relation to argumentation in substitution for learning about the abstraction of formal logic.

While Scott and Delia remain more on a strategic, philosophic plane, Shepard to some extent, and Mortenson and Anderson, to an even greater extent, make actual tactical attacks on the "logical-positivistic-rationalistic-traditional argumentation theory." Their objections are

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<sup>23</sup>Delia, "The Logic Fallacy," 141.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 140-141.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>26</sup>Jerome S. Bruner, Jacqueline J. Goodnow, and George A. Austin, A Study of Thinking (New York, 1956), p. 104. Quoted in Delia, "The Logic Fallacy," 141.

very similar to those of Toulmin already reviewed,<sup>27</sup> and, in fact, to some extent were inspired by The Uses of Argument. Their objections are also quite similar to one another but for practical purposes we will proceed first to Shepard's earlier forays, then to the more detailed thrusts of Scott's students, Mortenson and Anderson.<sup>28</sup>

Shepard notes two gaps between formal philosophers and rhetoricians. The first concerns the nature of a proposition. Shepard contends that for the logically inclined philosopher:

A logical proposition has these characteristics; it is a declarative sentence; the verb is tenseless; the pattern is noun + linking verb + predicate nominative; it is true or false by virtue of its form; the truth or falsity is independent of any state of affairs; it is true or false for all possible worlds; it is trivial, tautological, and imparts no factual information; and the relation between the subject and the predicate is definitional.<sup>29</sup>

Obviously, propositions of value and policy are precluded from this definition. Also precluded is the concern of the college debater for material as well as for formal validity. As Shepard puts it ". . . except in an imprecise sense, one cannot speak of a debate as being logical when the case is organized around a resolution, a subjective, which is neither true nor false but advisable or inadvisable."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Chapter IV of this study, pp. 103-112.

<sup>28</sup>It is noteworthy that both Mortenson and Anderson were at Minnesota working on their doctorates at the same time Scott was interested in logical themes and was working on his two articles.

<sup>29</sup>Shepard, "Rhetoric and Formal Argument," 243.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 244.

The second gap Shepard identifies concerns different orientations between the two positions with regard to probability. The logical philosopher tends toward a mathematical calculation of the odds whereas the rhetorician is concerned with probability as a basis for choice.<sup>31</sup> The calculating of odds for a roll of the dice is very different from the contemplating of various choices for human action in Shepard's mind. Therefore, he recommends a step away from formal logic and an approach to ethical and emotional proof.

Mortenson and Anderson would agree with each of Shepard's contentions. They themselves characterize formal logic using Toulmin's terminology as "context-invariant"<sup>32</sup> argument. They warn that:

The critic should remember that the invariant connectives of formal logic are workable only under certain conditions. Logics utilizing context-invariant connectives are capable of elucidating only the relationships inherent within those deductive arguments containing premises and conclusions that are reducible to true or false claims. This means, then, that arguments containing evaluative premises as well as non-analytic (i.e. inductive) arguments are beyond the scope of logics using context-invariant connectives.<sup>33</sup>

Specifically, they point to the impossibility of "translating" rhetorical argument into formally logical argument.

The point here is simply that the critic may be able to supply equivalent connectives from the syllogistic only when arguments exhibit a minimum of linguistic sophistication. The belief that one can cast the relations of less tractable arguments into context-free form without distortion denies the fact that the connective terms in marketplace discourse derive

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<sup>31</sup>Shepard, "Rhetoric and Formal Argument," 245-246.

<sup>32</sup>Mortenson and Anderson, "Logic and Marketplace Argumentation," 144.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 145.

their meaning, and thus their powers of inference, from the phrases, sentences, and paragraphs in which they function. Ultimately, it is incorrect to hold that the terms of connection in conventional discourse are content-free and topic neutral.<sup>34</sup>

Arguments based on "moral imperatives, metaphors, similes, evaluative claims, etc."<sup>35</sup> are not within the province of a mechanistic evaluation via formal logic. Rather, "everyday marketplace" arguments must evolve and be evaluated via content-variant, contextual criteria. According to Mortenson and Anderson, most arguments are rational but within the province of rhetoric which must by no means be equated with the province of logic. The borders of the two overlap but the subject matter of one is often not the subject matter of the other.

Mills and Petrie, in defense of the interlocking concepts of argument, rhetoric, logic, validity, and rationality, naturally disagree with the conclusions of Scott, Delia, Shepard, and Mortenson and Anderson. Indeed, Mills and Petrie are appalled by Scott, Delia, Shepard, Mortenson, and Anderson's conclusions. In writing "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," Mills and Petrie state that "the authors hope herein to restate the relevance of logic to verbal communication and thereby prevent the debasement of rhetoric into sophistry."<sup>36</sup> Their first argument amounts to something of a concession; . . . "while defending logical argument as one means of persuasion and as one of the legitimate tools for the analysis of rhetorical argument, we feel no obligation to assume that man is only, or even essentially, rational."<sup>37</sup> Mills and

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<sup>34</sup>Mortenson and Anderson, "The Limits of Logic," 76.

<sup>35</sup>Mortenson and Anderson, "Logic and Marketplace Argumentation," 147.

<sup>36</sup>Mills and Petrie, "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," 267.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 260.

Petrie argue that man can be rational and, resting on the presumption of the status quo, demand that opponents of logic not emphasize its lack of efficacy but prove that it fails to function in any fashion in every case.<sup>38</sup> Mills and Petrie's second argument concerns what they think is an unnecessary diminution of the range of logic. They argue that it is unfair to equate and attack formal deductive logic as "logic." Induction and new "logics"<sup>39</sup> function where deductive formal argument cannot go. Mills and Petrie argue that the critics of "logic" must criticize deductive logic, induction, and "the new logics" together to fairly attack "logic" as inapplicable to argument.

Mills and Petrie then respond to some of the specific charges in the attacks on logic. First, concerning propositions, it may be true that formal logic doesn't handle value and policy propositions quite as conveniently as it does purely formal propositions but Toulmin, Hare, Baier, and Stevenson seem to regard formal relations as somewhat applicable.<sup>40</sup> Second, regarding translation difficulties, it is true that the "risk of distortion is always present. However, it does not follow that such translation must distort."<sup>41</sup> As previously noted, to assume distortion assumes some ideal of correctness lest one would have

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<sup>38</sup>Mills and Petrie, "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," 260.

<sup>39</sup>Petrie, "Does Logic Have Any Relevance to Argumentation?," 55.

<sup>40</sup>Mills and Petrie, "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," 262.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 264.

no concept of why distortion occurred.<sup>42</sup> Third, they argue that if formal logic, broadly conceived, can't do the job there is no viable substitute and man is thrown into chaos and subjected to the trials of a new sophistic.<sup>43</sup> Where there is no truth, some men will create it.

Mills and Petrie obviously missed the point on some arguments. Scott, Delia, Shepard, and Mortenson and Anderson never claimed logic was totally inapplicable just that it was rarely totally relevant to everyday argumentation. As concerns Mills and Petrie's claims for induction, anything but complete induction lacks the conclusiveness that traditionalists seek. Shepard points out that probability cannot substitute for certainty. Formal logicians proclaim the efficacy of induction but rarely use it. The complete enumeration of all members of a category is sometimes impossible and many times extremely difficult. Induction simply does not fill the gaps that Mills and Petrie claim it does. New logics are proclaimed by many but applied by few. As with so many others, Mills and Petrie claim new logics function where traditional logic fails but give no examples. Their claims that several contemporary philosophers, including of all possible examples, Toulmin, use formal methods as applied to ethics and propositions of policy and value misses the point entirely that they do so in many cases to show the very inapplicability of deductive methodology to ethics. Situational ethics, a broad generic term for the type of ethical philosophy associated with those whom Mills and Petrie name, is timebound and emphasizes context in

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<sup>42</sup>Page 145 of this chapter.

<sup>43</sup>Mills and Petrie, "The Role of Logic in Rhetoric," 267.

opposition to form. Mills and Petrie supposedly have the critics at bay with their last implied argument, namely, that if there is no black and white in the world all is chaos; if argument isn't "logical" it just isn't argument. Again, however, Mills and Petrie are foiled because there are substitutes for strict logic for argument and, though they don't develop them extensively themselves, Scott, Delia, Shepard, and Mortenson and Anderson by implication or direct reference point to ordinary language philosophy, dialectic, symbolic interaction, and/or psychologic as substitutes for logic in an expanded vision of the rational.

Before examining these, however, an acute problem in argumentation theory today should be discussed. The traditional association of rhetoric and formal logic is being assaulted on all fronts. Aristotle is being reinterpreted as somewhat more humanistic and somewhat less as an analytic philosopher. Ch. Perelman and Stephen Toulmin are ripping apart the very fabric of the argumentation-demonstration linkage. The meaning of rhetoric, dialectic, logic, validity, proof, argument, and even rationality is shifting in consequence of the battle. Some implications of the struggle and some idea of the use of the terminology can be gleaned in the debate between Mills and Petrie versus Shepard, Mortenson and Anderson, Delia, and Scott in the current speech communication journals. The judgment of this study has been that the traditionalists have lost. The question which remains is, "What is to replace the system now torn asunder?" Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin contribute some answers to that question but so also do the ideas of ordinary language philosophy, dialectic, symbolic interaction, and psychologic which immediately follow.



Argumentation and Ordinary Language Philosophy

Ordinary language philosophy is a reaction against logical positivism and specifically a reaction against the attempts of Wittgenstein in his Tractatus<sup>44</sup> and Russell and Whitehead in their Principia Mathematica<sup>45</sup> to derive a systematic, axiomatic artificial language. Caton states that ordinary language philosophy is generally used to refer to work which is influenced by . . . "similar to, or reminiscent of the later work of G. E. Moore, John Wisdom, and Ludwig Wittgenstein at Cambridge and of the work of Gilbert Ryle and J. L. Austin at Oxford."<sup>46</sup> To this distinguished list of names can be added the names of Max Black, P. F. Strawson, Hubert Alexander, and, as Holt Spicer pointed out many years ago, Stephen Toulmin.<sup>47</sup> Ordinary language philosophy seeks to derive a common logic or logics from the "ordinary" use of words. The feeling is, as J. L. Austin states at the beginning of this chapter ". . . our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing and the connections they have found worth making in the lifetimes of many generations . . ."<sup>48</sup> The study of the distinctions and connections of "ordinary" words, to ordinary language

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<sup>44</sup>Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, translated and edited by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961).

<sup>45</sup>Bertrand Russell and A. N. Whitehead, Principia Mathematica, three volumes (Cambridge: The University Press, 1913).

<sup>46</sup>Charles E. Caton, editor, Philosophy and Ordinary Language (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963), pp. v-vi.

<sup>47</sup>Holt Spicer, "Stephen Toulmin's Functional Analysis of Logic and Ethics and Its Relation to Rhetoric," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1964). Spicer's dissertation is the first synthetic analysis of ordinary language I can find in the speech communication field.

<sup>48</sup>J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers, p. 130.

philosophers, is and will always be much more productive than the artificial generation of new symbolic systematizations.

Having proceeded this far we need to ask what ordinary language philosophers mean by ordinary language and what kinds of linguistic analysis techniques are available through ordinary language philosophy. The first question happens to be the more easily answered as it can be approached through an analysis of some of the better works of ordinary language philosophy as described in the dissertations of Charles E. Caton in philosophy<sup>49</sup> and John Steward in speech communication.<sup>50</sup> Thus, the definition of ordinary language will be approached first. The second question requires more depth and is probably best approached through an analysis of some of the work of ordinary language philosophers. For this purpose, the works of Wittgenstein,<sup>51</sup> Austin,<sup>52</sup> Ryle,<sup>53</sup> and Strawson<sup>54</sup> have been chosen as models.

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<sup>49</sup>Charles E. Caton, "A Description and Evaluation of the Method of the Ordinary-Language Philosophers and Its Doctrinal Basis," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956).

<sup>50</sup>John Steward, "Rhetoricians on Language and Meaning: An Ordinary Language Philosophy Critique," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Calif., 1970).

<sup>51</sup>Wittgenstein made a complete reversal in his philosophy and only his later works fit the ordinary language tradition. Those works that are most significant in regards to natural language are: Philosophical Investigations, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), The Blue and Brown Books, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).

<sup>52</sup>Austin's most important works include: Philosophical Papers, and How to do Things with Words (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

<sup>53</sup>Ryle has written prolifically not always on concerns having anything to do with natural language. His most relevant works are: Dilemmas (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), and The Concept of Mind (N. Y.: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1949) in which is developed the famous "ghost in the machine doctrine."

<sup>54</sup>P. F. Strawson, Introduction to Logical Theory (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1952).

Ordinary language is most frequently defined in contrast to the symbolic systems of formal logic. Passmore states "in contrast with the formalized writing of symbolic logicians, ordinary language philosophers discuss logical issues in an informal way, without recourse to specialized invented languages, and secondly they believe that a consideration of 'what we ordinarily say' is at least a useful preliminary to the discussion of philosophic problems."<sup>55</sup> Caton argues that ordinary language ". . . may now be explained as the language defined by the set of all rules for the ordinary (standard) use of expressions."<sup>56</sup> He goes on to proclaim that the major difference between formal logicians and ordinary language philosophers "is that ordinary language philosophers are concerned with the logic of language as it is actually used, with no attempt . . . to improve upon it."<sup>57</sup> Ordinary language is the language of the people. It is the language of "speech acts"<sup>58</sup> or of common "language games."<sup>59</sup> It is the emotion laden and shifting parlance of politics, ethics, religion, of propositions of value and policy. It is the language of "command, reproaches, questions,

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<sup>55</sup>John Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy (Baltimore: Penquin Books, 1957), p. 488.

<sup>56</sup>Caton, "A Description and Evaluation of Ordinary Language Philosophy," p. 148.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>58</sup>This term is esp. associated with John Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969) but is used by many ordinary language philosophers.

<sup>59</sup>Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p. 11.

laments, exhortations, and plaudits . . ."60 as well as the language of declarative sentences. Ordinary language is common, colloquial, natural, vernacular as opposed to the technical or artificial symbol systems of specialists.

Ordinary language is also sometimes defined in opposition to the linguistic interpretations of general semanticists and other linguistic scholars. Steward opposes ordinary language to the general semantics concept that ultimately a word must "refer" to something.<sup>61</sup> In fact, Steward argues that the ordinary language philosopher does not really deal with individual words. What has meaning is the sentence, the paragraph, the larger structure in context.<sup>62</sup> As Ryle explains, "our characteristic questions are not questions in the logical statics of insulated and single concepts, but questions in the logical dynamics of apparently interfering systems of concepts."<sup>63</sup> Ordinary language is the dynamic interaction of linguistic concepts as they evolve and are utilized in common discourse. As Ryle says:

We are interested in the informal logic of the employment of expressions, the nature of the logical howlers that people do or might commit if they strung their words together in certain ways, or, more positively in the logical force that expressions have as components of theories and as pivots of concrete arguments.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Ryle, "If, So, and Because," in Philosophical Analysis, ed. Max Black (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell U. Press, 1950), p. 325.

<sup>61</sup>Steward, "Rhetoricians on Language and Meaning," p. 2.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>63</sup>Ryle, Dilemmas, p. 125.

<sup>64</sup>Ryle in Caton, Philosophy and Ordinary Language, p. 127.

Ordinary language philosophy is concerned with words in patterns, patterns that repeat themselves and form the basis of the functioning of language in society. Ordinary language is concerned with meaning, but functional as opposed to referential meaning.

Ordinary language is also positively defined. In its positive guise it much parallels the Whorfian hypothesis. A. M. Quinton states:

. . . there is a theory of meaning in direct opposition to the logical atomism of the Tractatus, a theory which lacks for the meaning of a word in its use in public acts of communication between the users of language, and not in any objects for which it may be used to stand, whether these are understood to be in the world outside us or to be within our minds.<sup>65</sup>

Waisman, in Flew's excellent collection of ordinary language philosophy essays, says ". . . we have to interpret reality. The elements of such an interpretation, without our being aware of it, are already present in language--for instance, in such moulds as the notion of thinghood, of causality, of number, or again in the way we render colour, etc."<sup>66</sup> Like Burke, ordinary language philosophers see language as effecting action and as a type of action at one and the same time.<sup>67</sup> Language is a type of behavior but effects many other types of behavior. As such, ordinary language represents an intrinsic expression of man's ordinary rationality. According to these philosophers, ordinary language, the key artifact of civilized man, directly reflects in its many arguments that rationality which man possesses.

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<sup>65</sup> Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by George Pitcher (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> A. G. N. Flew, editor, Logic and Language, First Series (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), p. 141.

<sup>67</sup> Ryle in Caton, Philosophy and Ordinary Language, p. 127.

It should be obvious by this point from its definition that ordinary language is one of the substitutes for formal logic. Ordinary language is not restricted to the declarative sentence. Ordinary language can successfully encompass emotional statements. It stresses context and analyzes meanings in patterns and by functional use rather than through reference. Ordinary language allows for type and temporal shifts. In other words, it fills many of the gaps in rhetorical analysis created by dependence on formal logic. The question then becomes how ordinary language philosophy techniques might be utilized in an analysis of argument.

Steward examines one possible technique taken from John Wilson's Thinking with Concepts:

First, the philosopher focuses on some philosophically interesting concept or language use.

Second, he examines, in as much detail as possible, instances of the use of expressions relevant to the concept he is studying . . . The philosopher is thus engaged in 'analysis of informal logic' of the expressions that define the concept.

His third step is to indicate what important insights he has gained from his analysis.<sup>68</sup>

Waisman mentions another pattern which is nothing more nor less than comparing the ordinary language technique to that of a trial judge, a comparison that ought to be familiar as mentioned by Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin.

Coming to a decision, though a rational process, is very unlike drawing conclusions from given premises, just as it is very unlike doing sums. A judge has to judge, we say, implying that he has to use discernment in contrast to applying, machinelike, a set of mechanical rules . . . what

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<sup>68</sup>Steward, "Rhetoricians on Language and Meaning," pp. 155-157.

is required is insight, judgment. Now in arriving at a verdict, you are like a judge in this that you are not carrying out a number of formal logical steps; you have to use discernment, e.g. to descry the pivotal point.<sup>69</sup>

Such generalized patterns are exemplified by the analyses of Wittgenstein, Austin, Ryle, and Strawson,

Wittgenstein is one of the acknowledged fathers of ordinary language philosophy. His ordinary language techniques are explained in the Blue and Brown Books and in Philosophical Investigations. Unfortunately for the would be interpreter of Wittgenstein, these books are patchworks published posthumously. In addition there is the difficulty that Wittgenstein, by his own admission, could not write.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, as Burke would say, we shall persevere in an attempt to describe Wittgenstein's vision for the functioning of natural language analysis. Wittgenstein thought that what the philosopher must do is simply describe language about its everyday work, "assemble reminders so that the actual pattern of uses is made clear to us. Everything in the pattern is perfectly familiar to us already, what the philosopher has to do is make us aware of it as a pattern."<sup>71</sup> Wittgenstein's most famous example of this process concerns games.

Consider for example the proceedings which we call 'games.' I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games and so on. What is common to them all?--Don't say: 'There must be something common or they would not be called 'games'; but look and see whether there is anything common to all--for if you look at them you will not see something that is in common

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<sup>69</sup>F. Waismann, "How I See Philosophy," in Contemporary British Philosophy, edited by H. D. Lewis (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1956), pp. 480-481.

<sup>70</sup>Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, p. viii.

<sup>71</sup>A. M. Quinton, "Excerpt from 'Contemporary British Philosophy,'" in Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Investigations: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by George Pitcher, p. 15.

to all, but similarities, relationships and a whole series of them at that . . . And the result of this examination is; we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing . . . I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than 'family-resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colours of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc., overlap and criss-cross in the same way--And I shall say: 'games' form a family.<sup>72</sup>

Games are very much like one another yet different. They form a pattern, but one which is not perfectly clear. Ordinary language discourse, according to Wittgenstein, is similar to games in this fashion. Ordinary discourse forms patterns of similarity and difference which are like one another but not crystal clear.

Within the pattern formed by various language games, Wittgenstein insisted on something he called "depth grammar."<sup>73</sup> On the surface the pattern of words might appear to perform the same functions as some other pattern whereas at a depth they performed very differently. One could usually tell upon close inspection just exactly what the case was because every set of words acts according to the informal rules of some language game. These rules are not precise like those of formal logic nor can they be applied in cookie-cutter fashion. Wittgenstein insisted on the rules being bent to fit the situation rather than the situation being compressed to meet the rules.<sup>74</sup> But once we understand that discourse functions like a game and begin comprehending the informal rules of depth grammar, Wittgenstein argues we will have clarified

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<sup>72</sup>Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, pp. 32-33.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-ad infinitum-

<sup>74</sup>The idea that there can be rules which are purposely broken disturbs some people but Wittgenstein had a very flexible mind.



meaning and accomplished the task of philosophy which is "to clear the ground a little, removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge."<sup>75</sup>

J. L. Austin's ordinary language techniques are not dissimilar to those of Wittgenstein. Austin too believes in clearing away the rubbish of linguistic confusion in order to further philosophic knowledge. Austin's method for clearing away such rubbish is what he calls the examination of "speech-acts."<sup>76</sup> Speech acts are sentences or longer pieces of discourse filled with "performatives," exclamations, commands, wishes, etc. in opposition to the mere "constatives," descriptions, of formal logic.<sup>77</sup> Speech acts reflect their social milieu and particular circumstances. They are perceptual sets much like the "associational clusters" of Kenneth Burke.<sup>78</sup> As Austin puts it:

When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking not merely at words but also at the realities we use the words to talk about; we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as a final arbiter of, phenomena of various sorts.<sup>79</sup>

Speech acts are examined through a process of "linguistic phenomenology."<sup>80</sup>  
A group of interested philosophers gets together and thoroughly explore

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<sup>75</sup>Wittgenstein quoting John Locke's Epistle to the Reader from An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. (No other citation given)

<sup>76</sup>J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers, p. 197.

<sup>77</sup>J. L. Austin, How to Do Things with Words, pp. 3-4.

<sup>78</sup>Austin's main purpose in How to Do Things with Words is to explain the functioning of performatives. For the comparison to Burke see The Philosophy of Literary Form (N. Y.: Random House, 1957), p. 18.

<sup>79</sup>Austin, Philosophical Papers, p. 130.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

what they know to be the various uses of some one set of ordinary words. Some have called this process "group introspection."<sup>81</sup> Through this process of analysis, whether it is to be called group introspection or something else, all the common meanings, uses, distinctions, connections, and even the distortions of the group of words will supposedly become clear. This is important because Austin contends in a by now familiar quotation at last given in toto:

First, words are our tools, and, as a minimum, we should use clean tools; we should know what we mean and what we do not, and we must forearm ourselves against the traps that language sets us. Secondly, words are not facts or things; we need therefore to prise them off the world, to hold them apart from and against it, so that we can realize their inadequacies and arbitrariness, and can relook at the world without blinkers. Thirdly, and more hopefully, our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth making, in the lifetimes of many generations; these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs of an afternoon. They are to be neglected at our peril; if not the end-all, they are certainly the 'begin-all' of philosophy.<sup>82</sup>

A thorough examination by a group of philosophers of the functioning of a group or set of words will reveal the many "meanings" or "functions" of those words under particular circumstances and at particular times. According to Austin, this contextual analysis is the essence of true philosophy for it reveals man and his artifacts as he actually is not as he supposedly ought to be.

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<sup>81</sup>K. T. Fann, editor, Symposium on J. L. Austin, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 87.

<sup>82</sup>Austin, Philosophical Papers, pp. 129-130.

Gilbert Ryle is perhaps the most readable and understanding of the ordinary language philosophers and, for this reason, probably the best known. In Dilemmas, The Concept of Mind, and in a series of essays over the years including "If, So, and Because,"<sup>83</sup> "Systematically Misleading Expressions,"<sup>84</sup> and "Ordinary Language,"<sup>85</sup> he describes his technique of ordinary language analysis, the reductio ad absurdum.<sup>86</sup> For Ryle ". . . the only proper business of philosophy is the detection of the sources in linguistic idiom of recurrent misconception and absurd theories."<sup>87</sup> The method of doing this is through the reductio ab absurdum. "By deducing from a proposition or complex of propositions consequences which are inconsistent with each other or with the original proposition the philosopher demonstrates the 'absurdity' of the proposition or complex of propositions in question."<sup>88</sup> In other words, Ryle's technique is the constant examination of ramifications and consequences in argument for the finding of inevitable inconsistencies.

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<sup>83</sup>Ryle, "If, So, and Because," in Philosophical Analysis, ed. by Max Black, pp. 323-340.

<sup>84</sup>Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expression," in Logic and Language, 1st Series, edited by A. G. N. Flew, pp. 11-36.

<sup>85</sup>Ryle, "Ordinary Language," in Philosophy and Ordinary Language, ed. by Charles E. Caton, pp. 108-127.

<sup>86</sup>This is not Ryle's only technique but he does employ it most frequently. The idea is similar to the ad hominem argument of Henry Johnstone, and Johnstone may well, in fact, have taken many of his ideas from Ryle.

<sup>87</sup>Ryle, "Systematically Misleading Expressions," p. 36.

<sup>88</sup>Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 444.

Ryle argues that this technique is a valid one because "questions which can be decided by calculation are different, toto caelo different, from the problems that perplex."<sup>89</sup> Problems that can be calculated concern topic-neutral logical constants while problems that perplex are concerned with topic-variant concepts such as "pleasure or perception or moral responsibility."<sup>90</sup> Problems of calculation are the subject of logic while problems that perplex are the raw material for philosophy. Logic calculates. Philosophy argues. In fact, "philosophy is simply argumentation."<sup>91</sup> Establishing boundaries, changing definitions, exploring for understanding is the constant task of philosophy. The business of philosophy is not answers but the methodology for finding answers. As Howard says of "Ryle's Idea of Philosophy,"

What strikes us in Ryle's procedure is that he takes his initial datum as it appears in language. He does this because the philosopher's task is a conceptual one and because it is in language that concepts both reveal themselves and become manageable. Success for Ryle practically always consists in establishing the boundaries of related concepts.<sup>92</sup>

According to Ryle, one shouldn't look to philosophy for answers but rather for the techniques by which problems are clarified. Philosophers through the tool of reductio ad absurdum clarify problems. They do not answer problems.

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<sup>89</sup>Ryle, Dilemmas, p. 114.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>91</sup>R. J. Howard, "Ryle's Idea of Philosophy," New Scholasticism, XXXVII (April, 1963), 148.

<sup>92</sup>Howard, "Ryle's Idea of Philosophy," 161.

Ryle realizes that his stance is going to disappoint or even enrage a great many. He responds to the formalists charges of "'muddler through,' 'romantic,' 'anti-scientist,' 'hunch-rider,' and 'literateur'"<sup>93</sup> with arguments already developed in this study. First, "the hope that philosophical problems can be, by some stereotyped separation, rendered to standard problems in Formal Logic is a baseless dream."<sup>94</sup> Second, philosophical argument must not be evaluated on the basis of validity or invalidity but rather as to "the question of whether the argument has much, little, or no force."<sup>95</sup> Ryle argues that only those seeking the simple comfort of a world of truth, a static world, only those seeking simple stereotypes and final answers, will see the reductio ad absurdum as sheerly a negative methodology. Those who can revise their logical stereotypes and step away from their preconceived linguistic mouldings will see that the method is the basis for a positive philosophy in those areas where final, single answers are not only fallacious but invidious: religion, ethics, politics, and philosophy.

P. F. Strawson in Introduction to Logical Theory and "On Referring"<sup>96</sup> argues that "side by side with the study of formal logic, and overlapping it, we have another study; the study of the logical features of ordinary speech."<sup>97</sup> Strawson has no objection to the construction of

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<sup>93</sup>Ryle, Dilemmas, p. 114.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>96</sup>P. F. Strawson, "On Referring," in Philosophy and Ordinary Language, edited by Charles E. Caton, pp. 162-193.

<sup>97</sup>Strawson, Introduction to Logical Theory, p. 231.

formal systems as such. Formal systems, he thinks, are useful in appraising "context-free" discourse, as exemplified, say, in mathematics and physics. A formal logic, however, needs to be supplemented by a logic of everyday discourse, for formal logic is incapable of coping with the complexities of ordinary speech.<sup>98</sup> Formal logic deals with discourse through "entailment rules," that is, rules which make an utterance true "at any time, at any place, by any speaker."<sup>99</sup> Ordinary language deals with discourse through "referring rules." "A referring rule lays down a contextual requirement for the correct employment of an expression."<sup>100</sup> Strawson argues that it can make a difference as to where a sentence is uttered, by whom, and at what time. Ordinary language logic considers context where formal logic does not. Strawson admits that following referring rules instead of entailment rules leads only to general classifications and diffuse standards as opposed to the elegance and system which belongs to the construction of formal logic. "It is none the less true," he argues, "that the logic of ordinary speech provides a field of intellectual study unsurpassed in richness, complexity, and the power to absorb."<sup>101</sup> What ordinary language gives up in elegance it makes up in utility.

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<sup>98</sup>Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 462.

<sup>99</sup>Strawson, Introduction to Logical Theory, p. 213.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

To summarize briefly, ordinary language philosophy arose in opposition to the attempts by Wittgenstein, Russell and Whitehead, and others at the beginnings of the twentieth century to systematize and, supposedly, purify language. Ordinary language philosophy is defined in opposition to formal logic and to general semantics. Ordinary language philosophy deals explicitly with the informal logic that applies to the slippery discourse of ethics, politics, religion, and the law. Ordinary language is concerned with discourse in context rather than with single arguments in abstraction. Ordinary language philosophers examine discourse by establishing patterns of depth grammar, by looking for the similarities in the "performatives" of various "speech acts," by reductio ad absurdum, and through "referring contextual rules." Ordinary language philosophy fills a big gap left by formal logic for the rhetorical critic. Aristotle pointed to the importance of the speech of the ordinary man.<sup>102</sup> Perelman specifically noted how the language of questions of "a moral, social, political, philosophic, or religious order"<sup>103</sup> eluded the formal logician. Toulmin, an ordinary language philosopher himself, is constantly referring to everyday discourse and ordinary usage as opposed to analytic demonstration.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>As noted previously, Aristotle was the father of several types of metaphysical and ethical speculation as well as of analytic philosophy. It is unfair to stress either of his concerns to the exclusion of the other.

<sup>103</sup>Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, translated by John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 512.

<sup>104</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 1-8.

Argumentation and Dialectic

There is no univocal notion of dialectic<sup>105</sup> yet everyone who has ever written about it claims that dialectic has some important part to play in relation to argument. Nicholas Abbagnano found four common interpretations for dialectic when he examined the subject in 1958: dialectic as a method of division, dialectic as the logic of the probable, dialectic as logic, and dialectic as the synthesis of opposites.<sup>106</sup> The Encyclopedia of Philosophy lists eight definitions of dialectic, noting that among the more important meanings of the term have been:

- (1) the method of refutation by examining logical consequences,
- (2) sophisticated reasoning,
- (3) the method of division or repeated logical analysis of genera into species,
- (4) an investigation of the supremely general abstract notions by some process of reasoning leading up to them from particular cases or hypotheses,
- (5) logical reasoning or debate using premises that are merely probable or generally accepted,
- (6) formal logic,
- (7) the criticism of the logic of illusion, showing the contradictions into which reason falls in trying to go beyond experience to deal with transcendental objects,
- and (8) the logical development of thought or reality through thesis and antithesis to a synthesis of these opposites.<sup>107</sup>

In addition to the many meanings for dialectic, two associated terms, discourse and dialogue, are also fraught with multiple interpretations. Dialectic is an important but thorny subject.

This short section seeks to examine dialectic only as it relates directly to argument. As in the section on ordinary language philosophy, the hints as to the points to be covered come from Aristotle, Perelman, and Toulmin. Aristotle pointed to dialectic "as the logic of the opinion,

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<sup>105</sup>Nicholas Abbagnano, "Four Kinds of Dialectics," Revista di Filosofia, XLIX (April, 1958), 123.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>"Dialectic," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 1967, 385.



of the probable.<sup>108</sup> He argued that dialectic permitted reasoning in a field "which, in a certain sense, is intermediate between that which is certainly true (apodeictic reasoning) and that which is certainly false (sophistic reasoning).<sup>109</sup> Dialectic is really a logic "juridico"; it is modelled on the techniques of rationality and of decision proper to Greek juridical practice."<sup>110</sup> As previously noted, Perelman would have called The New Rhetoric the new dialectic had not Hegelian historical connotations been added to the term.<sup>111</sup> Toulmin's insistence on dealing with "practical arguments" as opposed to the issues of formal logic, puts him squarely within the dialectical tradition as practical problems are the very essence of the concern of dialectic.<sup>112</sup>

As with the section on ordinary language philosophy, the primary concern of this portion of the paper is with various techniques of dialectic as applied or as potentially applicable to arguments. As was the case in that instance, so too here the best method for an analysis of such techniques is a quick examination of the practice of those involved with dialectic; in this case, Kenneth Burke,<sup>113</sup> Henry W.

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<sup>108</sup>Alessandro Giuliani, "The Aristotelian Theory of the Dialectical Definition," Philosophy and Rhetoric, V (Summer, 1972), 129.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>111</sup>Chapter III, p. 77.

<sup>112</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 2. Toulmin doesn't like to deal with the term dialectic but admits the sorts of problems he deals with would traditionally have been called dialectical difficulties.

<sup>113</sup>All Burke's works directly or indirectly have something to do with dialectic. We shall be particularly concerned here, however, with Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1969) and Kenneth Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1970).

Johnstone, Jr.,<sup>114</sup> and Mortimer Adler.<sup>115</sup> Kenneth Burke's work with dialectic is peculiarly related to his involvement with language and will only be briefly mentioned here as Burke is also a symbolic interactionist and more concerning his theories will be of concern in the next section of the dissertation. Henry Johnstone's concern for dialectic is related to his concern for what he calls the essential philosophic argument, the argumentum ad hominem.<sup>116</sup> Adler's pre-occupation with dialectic is more far reaching and encompassing and centers on dialectic as at "once being the technique of ordinary conversation when it is confronted by the conflict of opinion, and as being the essential form of philosophical thought."<sup>117</sup>

Kenneth Burke notes that "by dialectics in the most general sense we mean the employment of the possibilities of linguistic transformation."<sup>118</sup> Dialectic, for Burke, is the essential mechanism for merger and division. Quoting Socrates in Plato's Phaedrus, Burke proclaims:

I am a great lover of these processes of division and generalization; they help me to speak and think. If I find any man who is able to see unity and plurality in nature, I follow him, walking in his steps as if he were a god. And those who have this art, I usually call dialecticians.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup>The idea of the argumentum ad hominem is the major theme of much of Johnstone's work. We shall be particularly concerned here with Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Philosophy and Argument (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1959).

<sup>115</sup>Mortimer Adler, Dialectic (N. Y.: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927).

<sup>116</sup>Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., Philosophy and Argument, p. 76.

<sup>117</sup>Adler, Dialectic, p. vi.

<sup>118</sup>Burke, Grammar of Motives, pp. 403-404.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

Merger and division, in turn, are related to the whole strategic process of dramatism, Burke's overarching mechanism for linguistic analysis. Burke explains that dramatism functions through the construction and destruction of linguistic hierarchies centered about various key functional terms or "god terms."

As regards the analysis of particular forms; one looks for key terms, one seeks to decide which terms are ancestral and which derivative; and one expects to find terms possessing ambiguities that will bridge the gulf between other terms or otherwise serve as developmental functions.<sup>120</sup>

Dialectic or dramatism, in Burke's scheme of things, is a method for "an ever closer approximation to truth by successive redefinition."<sup>121</sup>

Burke's Rhetoric of Religion is probably the best example of the methodology of dramatism or of dialectic in process. In this work Burke works out a "cycle of terms" implicit in the idea of order.<sup>122</sup> Through logological analysis, or "studies-in words-about-words,"<sup>123</sup> Burke analyzes the intermeshing of God, order, covenant, sin, guilt, victamage, transcendence, and redemption, the religious paradigm for the pattern of all persuasion.<sup>124</sup> What is important to note about this analysis is Burke's unique blending of literary and rhetorical criticism through dialectic analysis. The key is in the revelation of the hierarchies of the cycles of change. Words flow from words, imply other words, and are inherently contrasted with still other words. The patterns of language are fixed, then broken, then created anew. This

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<sup>120</sup>Burke, Grammar of Motives, p. 402

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 403.

<sup>122</sup>Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion, see esp. p. 184.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. vi.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid.

is the cycle of change, and the essence of the dialectical method is the intense observation of linguistic hierarchies, the noting of their structure, and the analysis of their destruction and renewal.<sup>125</sup> The war of words is the war for Burke and that war is "dialectical."

Henry W. Johnstone, Jr., works out quite a different interpretation of dialectic yet one which can also be used in opposition to the methods of formal logic. Johnstone's perpetual thesis has been that true philosophic argument is essentially ad hominem argument. Lest there be any confusion, Johnstone means something quite different by ad hominem argumentation than personal insult or attack. Essentially, ad hominem argumentation is the systematic working out of the consequences of maintaining some single perspective on the world.<sup>126</sup> Johnstone points conveniently to (1) how an ad hominem argument is to be worked out in his system and (2) to how much arguments are to be evaluated.

For Johnstone, an ad hominem argument takes place when two philosophic systems come into conflict. Such a conflict is "not fundamentally logical."<sup>127</sup> It is dialogical.<sup>128</sup> In dialogic argument

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<sup>125</sup>Burke is interested in patterns of words which relate to one another. Ultimately, I think, he thinks all language is interrelated, but some patterns are stronger and more important than others. Burke thinks that "rectilinearity" or "cyclical" analysis does a better job of criticism than "narrative" or "linear" analysis. Narrative or linear analysis is not strictly logical analysis but shares most attributes with the type of analysis we have been calling "formal logic." See Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion, p. 217.

<sup>126</sup>Johnstone, Philosophy and Argument, p. 73.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., pp. 15 and 81.

conflicting value systems are at issue.<sup>129</sup> Unlike propositions of fact which can be individually reviewed, value systems must be reviewed in systematic context.<sup>130</sup> The involved philosophers are not searching for truth but for a relative comparison of their systems. Philosophic arguments are not true or false but strong or weak "relative to the arguments through which they are established."<sup>131</sup> The ad hominem argument proceeds bilaterally from mutually accepted propositions to an examination of the ramifications of those propositions.<sup>132</sup> The quest is to see how systematically everything fits together and how the propositions effect one another with the goal of establishing the acceptability of a philosophy once its consequences are perfectly clear.

Johnstone evaluates an ad hominem argument according to its relevance and its force.<sup>133</sup> An argument is relevant to the extent that it truly takes into consideration the originally agreed upon propositions. An argument is forceful to the extent it shows that some inherent ramification of these propositions lead to conclusions unacceptable to their original proponents. Johnstone explains how these evaluative rubrics apply to seven types of ad hominem argumentation: (1) Through the Charge of Unintelligibility if the argument is ambiguous or inconsistent, (2) Through the Charge of Dogmatism if the argument fails to

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<sup>129</sup>Johnstone, Philosophy and Argument, p. 32.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid.

<sup>132</sup>This parallels Aristotle's interpretation and Ryle's reductio ad absurdum.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

meet its own criteria or if there is no evidence, (3) Through the Charge of Tu Quoque if the argument commits the same error it aims to abolish, (4) Through the Charge of Ineffectiveness if the statement of the argument fails to do justice to its propositions, (5) Through the Charge of Denying Presuppositions when the argument turns on its own foundations, (6) Through the Charge of Self-Disqualification when the argument "defeats its own purpose . . . by advocacy of content . . . which could not, by its own account, be genuine knowledge,"<sup>134</sup> and (7) Through the Charge of Self-Denial if the argument denies its own worth.<sup>135</sup> Some would argue that what Johnstone has done is merely to describe a method for the evaluation of systematic philosophies which are based on logic.<sup>136</sup> However, because he believes that no philosophy is ever really complete, what Johnstone has really done is to describe the perpetual process whereby partial systems of values enter into the marketplace of ideas and are tested, disassembled, reconstructed, and tried once again.<sup>137</sup>

Mortimer J. Adler defines dialectic in opposition to empiricism or scientific thought and to symbolism or logical thought. Scientific thought checks on facts. Logical thought deals with the self-consistency of symbol systems. Dialectic deals with opinions and values.<sup>138</sup> Adler argues that the study of dialectic "as a method of argument, of controversy,

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<sup>134</sup>This parallels Aristotle's interpretation and Ryle's reductio ad absurdum, p. 91.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-92.

<sup>136</sup>B. L. Ware, Jr., "Argument, Dialectic, and Philosophy: A Study in Conceptual Slippage" (unpublished paper, University of Kansas, 1973), p. 2.

<sup>137</sup>Johnstone, Philosophy and Argument, p. 15.

<sup>138</sup>Adler, Dialectic, p. 23.

and disputation"<sup>139</sup> used to be valued as an intrinsic part of the education of a gentleman but "in so far as investigation, experiment, and demonstration have been the dominant intellectual concerns of the era introduced by Galileo and Newton, dialectic has been ignored, its value underestimated or condemned, its form misunderstood."<sup>140</sup>

Properly understood:

Dialectic is a convenient technical name for the kind of thinking which takes place when human beings enter into dispute, or when they carry on in reflection the polemical consideration of some theory or idea. . . It is an intellectual process in which all men engage in so far as they undertake to be critical of their own opinions, or the opinions of others, and are willing to face the difficulties that arise in communication because of the opposition and conflict of diverse insights. . . It is not only a method of dealing with disagreement, but an attitude to be taken toward agreement which interprets it as merely relative to the situation in which it is achieved.<sup>141</sup>

Adler vociferously advocates that a study of dialectic as the method for the impassioned yet impartial review of values and opinion as related to religion, law, politics, and ethics be studied once again.

Adler buttresses his contentions with a review of what he considers to be the values of the dialectical process as opposed to the processes of empiricism and logic. First, as concerns language, Adler argues that a dialectical consideration of language has many advantages over the traditional empirical or logical considerations of language. Dialectic recognizes connotative as well as denotative meanings.<sup>142</sup> Dialectic can deal with indicative and subjunctive sentences as well as with imperative and interrogative sentences.<sup>143</sup> Dialectic can take argumentative

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<sup>139</sup>Adler, Dialectic, p. 7.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., p. v.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., pp. 85-86.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

notice of the functioning metaphor.<sup>144</sup> Dialectic takes advantage of the "vast network of definitions, implied classifications and distinctions,"<sup>145</sup> of common discourse. Second, as concerns method, dialectic is in process as opposed to the static of logic. Adler explains that dialectic is the process of actualizing the implicit relationships in language "by definition, analysis, synthesis, systematization, and hierarchical ordering."<sup>146</sup> Dialectic "always deals with systems rather than isolated propositions."<sup>147</sup> It considers context: time, place, and circumstance as an inherent part of its method. Third and finally, dialectic, as Adler conceives it, looks at the rationality of man in a sophisticated manner. The dialectician recognizes that men are emotional beings. Partisanship is therefore built into the dialectical process but so too are demands for an explicit revelation of partisanship<sup>148</sup> and for an ultimate attitude of philosophic impartiality towards any given set of beliefs. The dialectician seeks not truth but understanding. He recognizes that the dialectical process will never completely resolve any value conflict.<sup>149</sup> Dialectic begins in "the negative implied in any definition."<sup>150</sup> It continues in analysis whereby the implicit ramifications of opposition are explored. It ends in synthesis, "the finding of a whole that implies and includes the systems in conflict as its parts."<sup>151</sup> Then the process or cycle begins again.

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<sup>144</sup> Adler, Dialectic, p. 94.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., pp. 168-170.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 166.



Dialectic, for Burke, Johnstone, and Adler is the proper process for any examination of ethics, politics, religion, law, or philosophy. Dialecticians recognize the whole man through recognition of the logical and psychological components of argument. Dialectic plans for the whole man. Partisanship is built into the bilateral dialectic process. Because of the very nature of that process, however, partisanship is checked; it is checked by the ultimate philosophic attitude of impartiality towards any given set of beliefs and by the antagonists mutual uncovering of each other's biases, prejudices, or fundamental beliefs through intense scrutiny of philosophic or epistemic beginnings. Dialecticians recognize all the many possibilities of language. Dialectic plans for the use of all language. Only a few terms function univocally. Most of language consists of ambiguous, shifting terminology. Dialecticians recognize the possibility of univocality but are far more interested in the vast linguistic hierarchies which phase in and out as various terms gain prominence and acquire subtle connotations then recede to the linguistic background once again. Last, and probably most importantly, dialecticians seek to understand and to know rather than to find truth. The very nature of dialectic as a process requires an incomplete resolution to any particular linguistic dilemma. What is agreed to by some will not be agreed to by others. What were "truths" for one generation will be the "shibboleths" of another. The dialectician looks upon this never-ending process as inevitable and right, an inherent part of the ongoing functioning of dialectic.

Argumentation and Symbolic Interaction

In keeping with the pattern established in the last two sections, this section of the study will briefly define symbolic interaction and then explore some applications of symbolic interaction theory to argument. In this particular case the definition of symbolic interaction will be rather far ranging but the exploration of technique will be confined to the writings of but one man, Kenneth Burke. This pattern of arrangement is chosen because many persons can be classified as symbolic interactionists<sup>152</sup> but few have applied symbolic interaction theories to the actual criticism of argument<sup>153</sup> and none as fully, as consistently, or as successfully as the bourbon drinking "professor."

Finding the parameters of symbolic interaction is no easy task. First, symbolic interactionism is itself an ambiguous concept utilized by different scholars to cover a host of differing perspectives on social psychology. Second, symbolic interactionism, like most critical conceptions, is an amalgam of other, also ambiguous, associated sub-conceptions. To define and analyze symbolic interaction is to find and

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<sup>152</sup>Jackson Harrell in his dissertation, "Symbolic Interaction as the Basis for Rhetorical Theory" at one time or another classifies all of the following as symbolic interactionists: George Herbert Mead, Kenneth Burke, Herbert Blumer, Arnold Rose, Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Herbert Simons, and, to a limited extent, also classifies most of the "new" rhetoricians as having, at least, some symbolic interactionist perspectives.

<sup>153</sup>In addition to Burke perhaps only Griffin, Campbell, and maybe Brock have done major work that would be recognized as symbolic interactionist criticism in the speech communication field. However, anyone claiming to do "Burkeian" criticism of any sort might also be encompassed within the symbolic interactionist field.

reveal the different emphases of the most important authors utilizing the term and to cull from their works the relevant subconceptions which cluster about symbolic interaction. Nevertheless, we shall make the attempt using Burke's own suggested technique of looking at a subject in the macrocosm, then at its constituent parts, then putting it all back together again.

Symbolic Interaction: The Macrocosm

Herbert Blumer states that symbolic interaction rests on three simple premises:

The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them . . . The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arise out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.<sup>154</sup>

He states that "human beings interpret and define each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions."<sup>155</sup> The human animal interacts with and is defined by society. To be human is to be a social being. The human animal is self-reflexive. He interprets reality based upon past meanings under present conditions looking toward anticipated future consequences. The human animal is a symbol user. Symbols mutually created by the individual being and his society define

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<sup>154</sup>Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 2.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

reality in construct sets. As Arnold Rose puts it "man lives in a symbolic environment which mediates the relation of the physical environment to him."<sup>156</sup> Man acts with his fellows in a world of objects that he and society have mutually symbolized or given meaning, and as he acts or makes gestures and takes roles man defines himself and renews the social order.

Symbolic interaction then involves a complex of concepts which continually intertwine and mutually imply one another. These concepts include: 1) Process, emergent evolution, or becoming, 2) act and interaction, 3) objects or constructs, 4) gesture, 5) symbol and significant symbol, 6) role-taking, 7) self, 8), mind, and 9) society. To know the meanings of these terms is to know symbolic interaction for they are the cluster that surrounds the concept.

The Microcosm Part I: Process, Emergent Evolution, or Becoming

Delia maintains that the "metaphysical underpinning of communication in Mead's system can be comprehended in terms of a single idea-- the concept of process."<sup>157</sup> For Mead, mind, self, society, everything is in the constant process of becoming. "That is to say that the processes within nature are conditioned by the past, take place in the present, and are directed and controlled by the future."<sup>158</sup> Things or

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<sup>156</sup>Arnold Rose, Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), p. 2.

<sup>157</sup>Jesse Delia, "Emergent Evolution and Symbolic Interaction: George Herbert Mead's Theory of Human Communication," (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1968), p. 32.

<sup>158</sup>Paul E. Pfuetez, Self, Society, and Existence (N. Y.: Harper & Brothers, 1954), p. 52.

objects, ideas, or human beings are all new in process. All life, all existence, is continually changing. Objects and beings cannot be separated from one another because they all exist in the flux of time and space, and any one has some small influence on all the rest. Structures are artificial creations and relationships are tenuous at best because of flux. Therefore, to separate perception from feeling, thinking, and acting is fallacious as all are interrêlated. To call a human being a stimulus-response mechanism is fallacious because the very being changes as any action takes place.

The Microcosm Part II: The Act

Since existence is becoming, Mead and his followers define things in process or in acts rather than in structures. "Action is seen as conduct which is constructed by the actor instead of response elicited from some kind of performed organization in him."<sup>159</sup> Acts may be short term affairs such as the shining of one's shoes or long term considerations such as the desire to create a career. "Within the act, all the separated categories of the traditional, orthodox psychologies find a place. Attention, perception, imagination, reasoning, emotion and so forth, are seen as parts of the act--rather than as more or less extrinsic influences upon it. Human behavior presents itself in the form of acts, rather than of concatenation of of minute responses."<sup>160</sup> Thus, symbolic

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<sup>159</sup>Gregory P. Stone and Harvey A. Farberman, eds., Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970), p. 285.

<sup>160</sup>Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer, Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 17.

interactionists stress meaning in situations or context. The act is an evolving process. To view an act is to view man in relationships both to objects and to other men in both time and space.

Furthermore, acts are purposeful. Man is a reflexive creature and does things with intent. As Manis and Meltzer note, "behavior is constructed as it goes along, for decision must be made at several points."<sup>161</sup> The process of act is the process of choice making. From an original problem situation or felt want, the individual proceeds toward desired goals. As he wends his way, the individual is influenced by and influences his environment. Past meanings help the individual to interpret present reality and guess as future consequences. Man does not merely react, he takes considered action.

#### The Microcosm Part III: Objects in the Construct System of Man

When man considers his actions, he does so by considering objects. Objects are similar to George Kelly's constructs.<sup>162</sup> They are "Anything that can be designated or referred to--a cloud, a book, a legislator, a banker, a religious doctrine, a ghost, and so forth."<sup>163</sup> An object or construct can be physical, social, or abstract. Anything which can be

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<sup>161</sup>Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer, Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 17.

<sup>162</sup>The idea of the construct involves a more or less permanent conceptualization about something. The something may be concrete or abstract. The construct is not inherent to the thing but is given to it by the individual involved. Constructs arrange themselves in patterns or hierarchies whereby one implies others. For more information see George A. Kelly, A Theory of Personality (N. Y.: W. W. Norton & Co., 1963).

<sup>163</sup>Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method, p. 10.

extricated from its setting, held apart, given meaning, can be an object. The importance of this construct lies in the fact that the meaning of an object does not lie in its intrinsic nature but in how it is conceptualized in the human mind. The physical world exists somewhere out there but it can only be viewed through the "terministic screens"<sup>164</sup> of each individual.

#### The Microcosm Part IV: Gesture

An act can be subdivided into parts both in a time sense and in terms of a sequence of happenings. A significant act will involve gesture, significant symbols, and role-taking. Gestures come first within the act and are also significant happenings themselves and ought therefore to be explained in both senses. First, not all events are acts. Not all acts are significant. Some actions are merely reactions or rote, ritualistic, learned responses. To Mead and the symbolic interactionists, such responses "below the human level . . . not conscious, that is, not self-conscious"<sup>165</sup> are gestures. Gestures are instinctive, non-reflexive acts or the beginnings of some larger action. At the one level, the gesture is the act of an animal or a non-thinking human being. At the second level, the "gesture signalizes or stands for the whole on-

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<sup>164</sup>The term is Kenneth Burke's.

<sup>165</sup>George Herbert Mead, Mind, Self, and Society, edited by Charles Morris (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 81.

coming overt act, and in this sense is regarded as a truncated act."<sup>166</sup>  
The example of gesture that Mead was most fond of employing is the dog fight. One dog assumes a certain position and the other responds, instinctively, with a counter. This is a gesture, a simple non-reflexive act which also signalizes the whole action of the fight.

The Microcosm Part V: Symbol and Significant Symbol

Mead wastes very little time in consideration of the gesture, swiftly moving on to the more important part of the act, the symbol, particularly the significant symbol. "A symbol is defined as a stimulus that has a learned meaning and value for people, and man's response to a symbol is in terms of its meaning and value rather than in terms of its physical stimulation of his sense organs."<sup>167</sup> A significant symbol differs from a gesture in that the gesture is made without interpretation while symbolic interaction always involves interpretation of its action. As Stone and Farberman put it:

There is a fundamental distinction between the 'nonsignificant' gestures of dogs engaged in the 'conversation of a dog fight' and the significant gesture of socialized persons engaged in mutual talk. The later envisions futures and takes one another's future conduct into account in their present actions.<sup>168</sup>

In other words, symbolic interaction or action is considered action based on past learning in anticipation of future consequences.

How do significant symbols acquire meaning? How do they become "significant?" Mead states that:

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<sup>166</sup>Pfuetze, Self, Society, and Existence, p. 69.

<sup>167</sup>Rose, Human Behavior and Social Processes, p. 5.

<sup>168</sup>Stone and Farberman, Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, p. 17.



The significant gesture or symbol always presupposes for its significance the social process of experience and behavior in which it arises; or as the logicians say, a universe of discourse is always implied as the context in terms of which, or as the field within which, significant gestures or symbols do in fact have significance.<sup>169</sup>

What Mead is stating is that meaning is arbitrary, created by human beings and attributed to objects. However, Mead is unclear as to whether the individual determines this meaning or whether society does. In some sense meaning comes from the individual's learned experiences and behavior patterns. In other senses meaning comes from society, for to be significant, meaning must be shared. Society sets the parameters for fields of experience or social contexts within which meanings are assigned. Mead does not provide the exact meaning of the significant symbol, but in some ways it involves both the individual and society in its creation and has meaning because both the individual and society insist that it be significant.

#### The Microcosm Part VI: Role-taking

The significant act has as its precursor the gesture. The significant act has as its substance significant symbols, symbols assigned meaning in context by individual and society. Last, but not least, the significant act has as its process role-taking. As Manis and Meltzer state "the imaginative completion of an act . . . necessarily takes place through role-taking."<sup>170</sup> Role-taking is involved in all

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<sup>169</sup> Mead, Mind, Self, and Society, p. 89.

<sup>170</sup> Manis and Meltzer, Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, p. 8.

communication by means of significant symbols; it means that the individual communicator imagines--evokes within himself how the recipient of his communication understands that communication."<sup>171</sup> Some have called this process empathy, others getting inside the other person's shoes, but, in either case, it is that process through which the individual simultaneously thinks what the other person is thinking and reacts to that thought with his own.

According to Mead and later symbolic interactionists, the process of role-taking is learned through imitation, play, and games. In the beginning the child mindlessly imitates others actions, for example, slavish imitation of his mother. Then, in play, the child begins to consciously play other individual roles such as that of father, mother, fireman, doctor, cowboy, etc. Finally, in games the child has to consider many others' roles simultaneously. At this point, the child is beginning to transcend individual roles and to adopt the role of the generalized other. Desmonde calls the generalized other "the importation of the social organization within the individual."<sup>172</sup> Pfuetze states that the generalized other is the group's or society's norms, attitudes, and values inculcated within the individual.<sup>173</sup> At the level of the generalized other, the individual knows not only what a specific other is thinking in relation to him and his probable response to his actions,

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<sup>171</sup>Rose, Human Behavior and Social Processes, p. 8.

<sup>172</sup>William Desmond, "The Position of George Herbert Mead," in Social Psychology through Symbolic Interaction, edited by Stone and Farberman, p. 61.

<sup>173</sup>Pfuetze, Self, Society, and Existence, p. 76.

but what society is thinking and its probable reactions to his actions. It is at this point, according to the symbolic interactionists, that the individual truly attains his selfhood and becomes a member of society.

The Microcosm Part VII: The Mind and the Self

The mind and the self arise through human interaction. They result from the overall process of role-taking. Not only are mind and self formed through process, however, they are processes. It is critical to symbolic interactionism to consider mind and self processes rather than structural entities in order for symbolic interactionists to explain how society and the individual both have independent existences yet are inextricably intermeshed. If they did not consider both as processes, they could not explain the seeming paradox that mind and self are prerequisite to symbolic interaction yet formed through symbolic interaction. As it is, they can explain the paradox by intertwining the two processes. The overlap takes place at the level of "I" and "me" as explained by Stone and Farberman:

One cannot engage in symbolic communication until he has formed a conception of self. He must conceive that he is different from but related to others. This conception emerges as one takes over other's reactions toward himself in the form of a 'me.' The 'me' is given full expression when one takes over the attitudes of the 'generalized other,' the community, or a social world, and regulates his own conduct in terms of such organized expectations. One becomes something. Yet, there is always process. One acts against, or in dialogue with, these other attitudes. Because these attitudes have been incorporated, the 'I' is engaged in constant conversation between the 'I' and the 'me' between experience and conceptualization.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup>Stone and Farberman, editors, Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, p. 17.

The I of the self and the me of society both expand and develop as the individual grows. The self and society are dependent conceptions and mind is the product of them both.

Blumer states that selfhood is the ability to treat oneself as an object.<sup>175</sup> Manis and Meltzer describe mind as a process "which manifests itself whenever the individual is interacting with himself by using significant symbols."<sup>176</sup> They go on to state that:

Minded behavior arises around problems. It represents, to repeat an important point, a temporary inhibition of action wherein the individual is attempting to provision the future. It consists of presenting to oneself, tentatively and in advance of overt behavior, the different possibilities or alternatives of future action with reference to a given situation . . . This implies that the individual constructs his act, rather than responding in predetermined ways.<sup>177</sup>

In other words, the mind and the self are products of interaction within the individual and of the individual within society. The "I" and the "me" represent the instinctive reactions of the animal within the being and the trained patterns of society respectively. The individual has a mind and a self when he can treat himself as an object and reflexively utilize the symbols of society to construct acts in situations rather than reacting to situations.

#### The Microcosm Part VIII: Society

The last concept of significance to symbolic interactionists is society. Some comments concerning society have already been made in

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<sup>175</sup>Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism, p. 181.

<sup>176</sup>Manis and Meltzer, Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology, p. 13.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

previous sections on significant symbols and on mind and self. Obviously society consists of all beings who use significant symbols, yet it is something more than this mere aggregation of individuals. Like Gestalt psychologists, symbolic interactionist sociologists see society as more than the sum of its parts. Society is the great consensus which gives symbols meaning. Society is organization, structure, community. Society is a complex system of mores and values which combine to form culture. There is something permanent and enduring about society. It is the mortar of civilization. It is the essence of man. For symbolic interactionists, the finest product of mankind is not his great cities or renowned works of art, it is the growing, expanding organism which is society.<sup>178</sup>

#### The Macrocosm II

Putting the cluster of terms which surrounds symbolic interaction (process, act, objects, gesture, significant symbol, role-taking, mind, self, and society) back together again, one can once more look at symbolic interaction in the macrocosm. Fundamentally, symbolic interactionism is concerned with the flux of existence as made meaningful by human beings. The human animal is unique for the symbolic interactionists, because, through gesture, role-taking, and symbolization,

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<sup>178</sup>See Mead in Mind, Self, and Society, pp. 253-336, for more specific references. Mead treats society as a metaphor for a number of conceptualizations. Society precedes the individual yet is composed of all individuals. Society is always changing yet it is what unifies man and what makes meaning permanent. Like many other of Mead's concepts, society is fascinating and frustrating, an insightful concept yet most difficult to understand.

he reflects on his existence. Rather than reacting to the present, the human constructs action utilizing the past and looking to the future. The individual reflexively creates a self and mankind creates a society. Thus, the stress of symbolic interaction is upon 1) human 2) intentional 3) symbolic 4) interaction as it creates and expresses 5) self and 6) society.

Burke and Dramatism:  
Symbolic Interaction Approaches Rhetoric and Argument

Kenneth Burke criticizes human intentional symbolic interaction in an almost endless but profound stream of books and essays.<sup>179</sup> As mentioned in the section on dialectics, Burke calls his method of criticism "dramatism."<sup>180</sup> This section of the study will concentrate a bit more on dramatism as a possible technique for the analysis of argument. The analysis this time will be based on the background of symbolic interaction rather than upon dialectic though Burke, in his

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<sup>179</sup> Each person who has studied Burke has his own list of favorites as regards any subject. In my own opinion the most important books and articles by Burke with regards to "dramatism" as related to symbolic interaction are: Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form (N. Y.: Random House, 1957), Kenneth Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), Kenneth Burke, "Definition of Man," Hudson Review, XVI (Winter 1963-64), Kenneth Burke, "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language," Q.J.S., XXXVIII (Oct., Dec., 1952) and XXXIX (Feb., Apr., 1963). For Burke's method in actual operation the best articles or books are The Rhetoric of Religion and "The Rhetoric of Hitler's 'Battle'" and "Antony in Behalf of the Play" in The Philosophy of Literary Form.

<sup>180</sup> Burke, Grammar of Motives, p. xxii.

typical encompassing and inclusive as opposed to exclusive fashion, often equates "dramatism" and "dialectic."<sup>181</sup>

Jackson Harrell argues that dramatism as a critical method shifts the emphasis of critical analysis "from the rather heavy emphasis upon 'logical argument' in traditional rhetoric to 'psychological argument' in the newer theory."<sup>182</sup> This is hardly surprising based on the background of symbolic interaction theory which establishes that argument is relative, societally created and maintained, and temporarily cradled in tenuous linguistic hierarchies. It is also not surprising that Burke should seek a new god term for the act of persuasion which he calls "identification." Identification "ranges from the bluntest question of advantage . . . to a 'pure' form that delights in the process of appeal for itself alone."<sup>183</sup> Identification takes place in context, which is revealed in language: the "symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols."<sup>184</sup>

Now it is often pointed out that Burke expands upon logical analysis and that his god term for the act of persuasion is identification and that identification is revealed in language. What is not often pointed out is that the interaction of these factors constitutes the essence of Burkeian dramatism which might also be called contextual

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<sup>181</sup>Burke, Grammar of Motives, p. 33.

<sup>182</sup>Jackson Harrell, "Symbolic Interaction as the Basis for Rhetorical Theory," p. 161.

<sup>183</sup>Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, p. xiv.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

analysis of the rhetorical situation. This factor is so important that I want to emphasize it here. For Burke, "critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situations in which they arose."<sup>185</sup> Such critical and imaginative works, which we might call rhetoric or argument, "are strategic answers, stylized answers"<sup>186</sup> to the exigencies posed by a particular situation. In a much more sophisticated fashion than Bitzer and long before him,<sup>187</sup> Burke established rhetorical situations composed of various genre of identification strategies. These strategies "size up the situations, name their structure and outstanding ingredients, and name them in a way that contains an attitude toward them."<sup>188</sup> In dramatism Burke has created a new and more sophisticated definition for argument, a definition which might well partially meet the pleas of Perelman and Toulmin who constantly lamented with regards to the logical analysis of discourse that there just had to be more to argument than that.<sup>189</sup>

Burke believes there is more to argument than "logic chopping" analysis. His own technique, "dramatism," seeks for a gradual unfolding of the argumentative structure. Burke believes that by getting beneath

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<sup>185</sup>Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 3.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid.

<sup>187</sup>Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (1968), 1-14. The same criticism applies here as it did previously as regards Bitzer. Once again he claims to have found a concept that no one before him had ever developed. Once again I think he is dead wrong about this.

<sup>188</sup>Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 3.

<sup>189</sup>Chapter III, p.70; and Chapter IV, pp. 103-104.



the key terms of the argument and noting the logological hierarchies, or what Perelman called the associations and disassociations of words, the critic can break through the superficial "terministic screens"<sup>190</sup> of discourse to get to the essence of the strategic response to the rhetorical situation. Each rhetorical situation is different and each analysis must be unique, but Burke suggests there is just enough similarity that criticism is possible. Burke particularly argues that the use of the pentad, Scene, Act, Agent, Agency, and Purpose,<sup>191</sup> can aid the critic in his task. Somewhat similar to the Latin notion of stasis,<sup>192</sup> the terms of the pentad can be translated into the questions: (1) when and where did the argument take place?; (2) what was the argument?; (3) who gave the argument?; (4) how was the argument presented?; and (5) why was the argument given?<sup>193</sup> Burke contends that the answers to these questions, "using all there is to use,"<sup>194</sup> will result in a fuller, more productive analysis than the typical rectilinear critique of formal logic.

To summarize, symbolic interaction theory expands upon the definitions of man and of the potential uses of language and in so doing

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<sup>190</sup>Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 18.

<sup>191</sup>Burke, A Grammar of Motives, p. xv.

<sup>192</sup>Someone could probably do an excellent paper on this comparison. Materials are available from Burke's Grammar of Motives and from resources as footnoted in Otto Dieter, "Stasis," Speech Monographs, XVII (Nov., 1950), 345-369.

<sup>193</sup>Burke, Grammar of Motives, p. xv.

<sup>194</sup>Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 21.

expands the definition of argument and causes the creation of a new method for the analysis of argument. Man is the symbol using animal and the social animal for symbolic interactionists. Man only becomes "human" through a sharing of gestures and the creation of mind in society. Man's "rationality" is socially determined. Language is composed of a vast set of mutually interrelated and ever shifting significant symbols. Language filters the perceptions of men. Man discovers himself in language through language. Argument is created by men in society in strategic response to the exigencies of varying rhetorical situations. Arguments consist of shifting symbol sets in response to changing needs. Argument can only be evaluated in the context of the needs of the situation as revealed in an analysis of the shifts in god terms and verbal hierarchies revealed in its structure. Burke argues that the methods of "dramatism" allow for a proper evaluation of symbol using man and for a thorough consideration of the various changing attitudes revealed in linguistic and social symbolically interactive context.

#### Retrospect and Prospect: The Genre of Rational Argument

Finally the last alternative to formal logic has been considered. Thus, it is finally time to synthesize the positive results of the study vis-a-vis its two fundamental questions. It may be remembered that these questions are: (1) What constitutes a rational argument, and (2) How ought one to go about evaluating rational argument? This last section will attempt to answer these questions in retrospect to the results of the study and in prospect of what others may do with these results in future analyses. First, the author will provide a few paragraphs on the nature and expression of argument. Next, several pages will concern the

evaluation of the argumentation process.

The study of argument is much more complex than the study of logic, because an argument is a much more complex mechanism than is a piece of logical demonstration. Argumentation is more complex than logic both as to its substance and as to its form. It is more substantively complex in the nature of the subject matter about which it is concerned. It is more dispositionally complex in the nature of the patterns by which it encompasses these subject matters. It is impossible to talk about substance and form without mixing remarks, but in the next few paragraphs the effort is made to discuss first the substance of argument and then its form.

Aristotle noted that there were two sorts of things in the universe, those which change or are in process and those which do not change but remain fairly static.<sup>195</sup> The study of those things which do not change is the study of the sciences. The method of the sciences is demonstration. The study of those things which do change is the study of dialectic and rhetoric. The method of dialectic and rhetoric is argument. Therefore, according to Aristotle, the substance of argument is process.<sup>196</sup> Perelman would seem to agree with Aristotle's contention with regards to process as the substance of argument when he stresses the interaction of words.<sup>197</sup> Toulmin also falls into line for one of his key contentions is

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<sup>195</sup>Aristotle, Ethics, trans. by J. A. K. Thomson (N. Y.: Penquin Books, 1953), 1139b.

<sup>196</sup>Ibid.

<sup>197</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, pp. 186-190.

that argument must apply to concepts as they shift meaning through time.<sup>198</sup> And, of course, the thrust of ordinary language philosophy, dialectic, and symbolic interaction is that language is in process. To the extent that the merger and division of linguistic hierarchies is the essence of argument, to that extent argument is process for ordinary language philosophers, dialecticians, and symbolic interactionists. The substance of argument is process.

If the substance of argument is process, what is in process? Ultimately, everything is in process but some things much more so than others. The particular concern of Aristotle, Perelman, Toulmin, the ordinary language philosophers, dialecticians, and symbolic interactionists is that values are in process. For Aristotle, the realm of the contingent is the realm of values. Perelman notes that one does not argue about necessary propositions or about the facts, one argues about the contingent or the probable; one argues about values.<sup>199</sup> Toulmin is very much concerned with the realm of human decision and action. For him, demonstration and calculation are used for facts, argument for values. Ordinary language philosophers, dialecticians, and symbolic interactionists are concerned about the values too. One doesn't much find such persons dealing with science or math but with politics, ethics, law, religion, and philosophy. The substance of argument is process, process related to changing human values.

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<sup>198</sup>Substantive argument can account for temporal shifts whereas analytic argument must remain universal and timeless in Toulmin's system.

<sup>199</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 3.

These changing human values are not studied in isolation but as related to one another in hierarchical order. Perelman, for example, discusses the concept of a hierarchy of values. He notes that values are inherently meaningless except in comparison and contrast to other values. Kenneth Burke analyzes values in "associational clusters." He believes that there is a sort of "interanimation" between value concepts.<sup>200</sup> Adler argues that dialectic, as a method, always deals with systems, never with isolated propositions. The very idea of value implies prioritization and hierarchical order. Thus, the substance of argument is changing human values as they appear in value hierarchies.

Since an argument is a linguistic response to a practical problem or set of problems,<sup>201</sup> an argument is more complexly stated than a comparable demonstration. This is because an argument must deal with a significant piece of discourse rather than with concepts artificially abstracted from reality and viewed in isolation. Aristotle's "enthymeme" proceeds from the basis of the priorly accepted social value system and is only meaningful as an extension of that value system. Perelman notes that an argument is nearly always more complicated than a demonstration. Whereas a demonstration can "prove" something on the basis of if "X" then "Y," an argument can only provide reasons, and not even compelling reasons, for the adoption of an opinion or the making of a decision.<sup>202</sup> Toulmin shows his appreciation for the complex form

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<sup>200</sup>Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, p. 18. Burke does not use the specific term interanimation but it applies.

<sup>201</sup>Aristotle would not agree to this definition but it fits the work of Perelman, Toulmin, the ordinary language philosophers, dialecticians, and symbolic interactionists.

<sup>202</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 120.

of argument in two ways. First, he argues that a substantive argument as opposed to an analytic syllogism must be viewed in organic totality as well as in physiological detail. The critic has to see the whole thrust of an argument as well as the many particular contentions of an argument. Competing policy systems must be weighed in toto.<sup>203</sup> Second, Toulmin adds backing, qualifier, and rebuttal to the "layout" of argument. His hope is that the addition of these factors will add sophistication to argumentative structure. Ordinary language philosophers and symbolic interactionists stress the examination of "speech acts." Arguments are called "speech acts" not only to stress their process orientation but to force a more complex examination of the structuring and restructuring of value hierarchies.

The second key factor to note about the form of argument is its expression in ordinary language. For Aristotle, there was some question as to whether or not an argument should be relayed in symbolic form or through ordinary language. This was because the two modes were still conjoined and confused. In our own time, however, it is clear that there is a split between logic as expressed in strictly classified symbols and argument as expressed in ordinary language. Perelman argues that the use of ordinary language allows for the possibility of argument through utilization of the many associations and dissociations of words, value hierarchies, and metaphors implicit in ordinary expression. He states that ordinary language provides for a middle way between individual subjectivity and universal arbitrariness since ordinary

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<sup>203</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, pp. 94-96. This is the discussion of the distinction in chapter IV, p.112.

language is the expression, not of one man but of many men organized in society.<sup>204</sup> Toulmin blasts the univocality assumed by the analytic and reflects on the many criteria of various fields mirrored in common terms. Ordinary language philosophy and symbolic interaction, of course, concentrate on the study of ordinary language as the key artifact of man. Argument concentrates on the structuring and restructuring of man's value hierarchies as expressed in the complex forms of discourse and through ordinary language.

In sum, Aristotle, Perelman, Toulmin, ordinary language philosophers, dialecticians, and symbolic interactionists present a complex view of argument. The substance of argument is the study of human value hierarchies in complex interaction. Argument primarily concerns value and policy propositions. Its substance is the study of ethics, politics, religion, law, and philosophy. Argument also takes complex form. Arguments are expressed in significant pieces of discourse from Aristotle's "enthymeme" to Toulmin's "layout" of argument. And arguments are expressed in ordinary language with all that implies. In terms of traditional theory, argument is rhetoric.<sup>205</sup> Rhetorical scholars are or should be, must be, students of argument. Students of argument, conversely, cannot help but be rhetorical scholars.

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<sup>204</sup>Perelman, The New Rhetoric, p. 510. See the discussion of this in chapter III, pp. 72-74.

<sup>205</sup>Wayne Brockriede, "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument," (unpublished paper presented to the annual conference on rhetorical criticism at California State College at Hayward, May, 1972).

Now how does one evaluate argument or rhetoric? First, it ought to be clear that argument must be evaluated in rhetorical context. Aristotle pointed out that it was important who said what to whom at what time and under what conditions. Toulmin added backing, qualifiers, and rebuttal to data, warrants, and conclusions in a pointed attempt to more clearly manifest a concern for argument in context. Ordinary language philosophers note that the same thing said under different circumstances may very well mean something quite different and that different things said under the same circumstances may very well mean much the same thing. Dialectic is a constant working out of the patterns implicit in language, of the development and destruction of verbal hierarchies, of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Symbolic interaction depends on interaction. Burke's methodology of "dramatism" demands the identification of and the descriptions of the interrelations between Scene, Act, Agent, Agency, and Purpose. Argument is evaluated in context.

Second, argument should be evaluated as to its strength or weakness, relevance or irrelevance, force or lack of force not according to whether or not it is correct or incorrect, valid or invalid, Aristotle said that an argument was forceful when many men or the best of men found it so. Perelman states that an argument has "presence" and a potential for justice. Presence concerns the strength or weakness of an argument as similar arguments are treated in similar fashions under like circumstances according to the dictates of just precedent. Toulmin argues for the simultaneous consideration of the force of an argument and for its evaluation according to field-independent criteria. Extending upon the ideas of Aristotle, Toulmin has placed the "best" of



men in particular substantive disciplines. These "experts" evaluate an argument according to how it meets the needs of their field.<sup>206</sup> For ordinary language philosophers a good argument is a consistent argument, not necessarily a formally consistent argument but an argument which meets the predispositions of society and maximally utilizes the full implicit potentialities of language. Argument must not only be evaluated in context but relatively.

Third, it is important to argument to know who will judge. Perelman and Toulmin establish jurisprudential models of argument and the example of the court frequently appears in argumentation theory. In jurisprudence a case must first have standing then it is evaluated according to its merits. In some instances ordinary language philosophers, symbolic interactionists, and dialecticians insist, all men will judge. Perelman's ideas concerning the universal audience would also apply in this regard. In other instances, the field of an argument having been relatively clearly established, those who are expert in the standards of the field will judge. Perelman and Toulmin both establish that the best judges in some cases are the expert members of a field.<sup>207</sup> Wittgenstein establishes that only the members of a particular language game can really judge that particular game. Johnstone and Adler establish only the two members of

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<sup>206</sup>See the discussion of field-dependency as related to disciplines in chapter IV, pp. 119-126.

<sup>207</sup>The exact constituents of a field, unfortunately, are unclear in both cases as discussed in the chapters on Perelman and Toulmin.

the dialectical process as judge for only the two intimately involved are committed to the presuppositions of their inquiry and to the implicit ramifications of those epistemic starting points. Most men or the best men, the majority or the expert, it is important to know who will judge. Audience is a critical concept in argumentation. Whether an argument is strong or weak as evaluated in context very much depends on who the judges are.

Fourth, argument must be evaluated according to some rules. The rules may be flexible and ambiguous, but there must be rules. Perelman established the rule of justice. Toulmin insists on field-dependent criteria. Ordinary language philosophers insist on a full examination of the ramifications of the "ordinary" use of a term. Symbolic interactionists want to know what terms were used in what fashion in an argument, how those terms fit together in verbal hierarchies, and how they merge and divide, what in other words, the exact interaction amounted to. Argument is evaluated in context as relevant or irrelevant and as strong or weak by a given set of critics according to some rules.

Fifth, argument is evaluated in process over a period of time. Aristotle thought that the truth would prevail but only if given time and an active advocacy process. Toulmin insists on standards of intellectual ecology. "A sound argument, a well-grounded or firmly-backed claim, is one which will stand up to criticism."<sup>208</sup> A good argument is that argument which survives in the intellectual jungles. The "ordinary" use of a term isn't established till the term is given

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<sup>208</sup>Toulmin, The Uses of Argument, p. 8.

some time. Dialectic, according to Johnstone, demands an open, honest evaluation of presuppositions and a thorough working out of the ramifications of linguistic terms. Adler argues that the essence of the dialectical process is the continual clash of partial systems of values. Argument needs to be evaluated over time. Only when time is available can the social nature of argument manifest itself through the advocacy process. Argument is evaluated in context, by degree, by a given set of judges, according to rules, and over time.

There are many ways of evaluating argument. This study has briefly examined a revised Aristotelian model, models by Perelman and Toulmin, and some of the methods of ordinary language, dialectic, and symbolic interaction. It remains for others to thoroughly explore the details of the functioning of these models and to critically apply these models to actual specimens of argument. However, in accord with the analysis of this study just summarized as to the nature of argument and as to the rubrics of how argument should be evaluated, some comments can be made on how argument could be evaluated.

First, it is obvious that the Scene or rhetorical situation ought to be thoroughly detailed. The Scene provides background information but also provides information on the availability of choices for the act of rhetoric. Next, the value hierarchies chosen to meet the problems of the rhetorical situation as reflected in the associated clusters of concepts ought to be exhaustingly examined. The methods of "enthymematic analysis," "reductio ad absurdum," "ad hominem," and logology could be combined here. It is clear that the emphasis of the new argument is on the effects of language. As Mortenson and Anderson state it has gradually become plain that the student of argument "must

above all else be a student of language."<sup>209</sup> Having set the scene and examined the symbolic interaction, the critic would then be prepared to make two sets of judgments. The first set of judgments concerns the ethics of the situation. Since the essence of rhetoric or arguments concerns values, the critic should explicitly evaluate the choices of the protagonist. The second set of judgments concerns language choice. The critic should make a judgment of the particular associational clusters chosen by the advocate vis-a-vis the potential range of all such choices which were available. Value judgments about value hierarchies and criticism in language about language; this is the essence of the complexity of argumentative or rhetorical criticism. It is not easy criticism nor simple criticism nor even thoroughly rule bound criticism. As Scott writes, however:

Once free of the false notion that man can make what he thinks fully rational, that he can if he simply presents his thoughts in proper form win the assent of all worthy listeners, perhaps speech teachers can find ways to enable man to take more nearly complete advantage of these powers of reason that he does possess.<sup>210</sup>

It may not be simple or easy criticism, but, if it is those perplexing problems which attract the interest and involvement of the good critic, then the genre of rational argument should maintain its interest.

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<sup>209</sup>Anderson and Mortenson, "Logic and Marketplace Argumentation," p. 150.

<sup>210</sup>Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," p. 12.

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