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Catherine Hundleby
University of Windsor

Claudio Duran

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Androcentrism as a fallacy of argumentation

CATHERINE E. HUNDLEBY

*Department of Philosophy, cross-appointed to Women's Studies Program
University of Windsor
401 Sunset Avenue, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4
Canada
hundleby@uwindsor.ca*

ABSTRACT: The deep operation of androcentrism in scientific argumentation demands recognition as a form of fallacy. On Walton's (1995) account, fallacies are serious mistakes in argumentation that employ presumptions acceptable in other circumstances. There are only isolated cases in which androcentric presumptions are acceptable, and I argue that androcentrism affects an overarching theme of generalization in science rather than an isolated scheme. Androcentrism is related to other ways of treating privileged people as exemplary humans, whose negative impact on processes of argumentation can be described as the fallacy of "appeal to the standard."

KEYWORDS: androcentrism, argument, fallacy, feminist, Grice, provincialism, science, standard, values, Walton

1. INTRODUCTION

Decades of feminist science studies reveal various forms of sexism operating in science, not only in the evaluation of women's scientific work and aptitudes but in the content of scientific claims. For instance, scientific views that the hunting done primarily by men originated tool use or that men are more intelligent than women are not justifiable (Harding 1991; Fausto-Sterling 1992). Their persistence indicates a form of sexism in scientific thinking attributable in part to androcentrism: assuming that the male or masculine is representative. The problem of androcentric reasoning in science is not only broad, extending throughout the social and life sciences, but deep, saturating at least one area of science: all twenty-one available evolutionary theories of the female orgasm involve androcentric assumptions, as Elisabeth Lloyd shows in *The case of the female orgasm: Bias in the science of evolution* (2005). Thus the problem of androcentrism in science can no longer be dismissed as idiosyncratic and extrinsic to the usual operation of science or the norms of scientific reasoning.

I will argue that the contribution of androcentric assumptions to error in scientific argumentation constitutes a fallacy. A fallacy of argumentation is a serious misstep in argumentation, on Doug Walton's (1995) account; and, as Ralph Johnson (1987) argues, it must be a common error to deserve baptism. From Walton's view I derive a method for diagnosing new patterns of error, proceed to apply this procedure, and suggest that androcentrism operates in science at the thematic level. The political content of this fallacy provides reason to name and study it in addition to the regular criteria that it meets.

The case I make for androcentrism as a fallacy of argumentation also holds significantly for ethnocentrism and other forms of "centrism." Centrism is treating members of a privileged group of people as standard or ideal; it takes the forms of racism, hetero-

sexism, and ableism, as well as other types of discrimination (Plumwood 1996). The structural parallels and mutual reinforcement among forms of centrism are significant, although the forms will also differ from each other in some ways. In the context of argumentation, centrism functions in argumentation schemes as an appeal to *the standard*, assuming an idealized social norm. The reference of this title for the fallacy to symbolism and hierarchy has heuristic value that will help identify instances of it, which is useful for a fallacy label.

2. IDENTIFYING A NEW FALLACY

The fallacies approach to argument evaluation evolves over time to reflect changing practices and contexts of argumentation, and so it can help to address new problems in argumentation as they arise or become recognized (Hundleby 2009). Given that scientific discourse evinces an androcentrism that infects practices of argumentation, there emerges the problem of identifying what type of fallacy results. It might be accounted for by a recognized form of fallacy, or constitute a need to add to the typology, to baptize a new form of fallacy. Walton does not provide a method by which to recognize a new type of fallacy but he does claim that his account has that potential, one that fails to emerge from other accounts, including the pragma-dialectics on which he draws (1995: 14).

As do most contemporary argumentation theorists, Walton rejects the view that fallacies are distinct types of argument, that all arguments sharing fallacious forms—such as appeals to authority or emotion—are cases of fallacy (p. xiii). Instead, a fallacy is a *mistake* in argumentation, for Walton, following Johnson (1987). Walton adds and stresses that it is a mistake *in a form of argumentation that can be otherwise acceptable*, and it is more than a mere blunder. It has to be a *serious* misstep in argumentation because the allegation that a fallacy has been committed is a strong condemnation (pp. xii-xv).

Walton says that we recognize a fallacy by the way it interferes with presumptive reasoning, with schemes of argumentation that depend on shared standards of inference, assuming the relevance of certain expertise or emotions, for instance. A fallacy is a misstep that “fouls up the right sequence of questions and answers appropriate for that stage of dialogue” (p. 22). Instead of using his language of schemes in *argumentation*, I accept Tony Blair’s (2001) view that argumentation schemes reflect *inference* schemes that operate in individual reasoning as well as in more social argumentation. Yet, problems in the operation of inference schemes regularly depend on the dialectical argumentative context in which goals of reasoning manifest as a normative pattern of questions and answers. Thus, retaining the focus on argumentation is useful when discussing fallacies.¹

The most general and comprehensive among conversational goals are Grice’s rules, “collaborative maxims of politeness that enable a conversation to go ahead in a productive manner” (Walton 1995: 99). When an arguer fails to fulfill the burden of proof defined by these maxims and by more specific dialogue goals, the normative procedures of argumentation become balled up (p. 10). The dialogical process is vulnerable to inter-

¹ Blair’s (2001) account of the significance of critical questions seems to recognize the significance of social context in revealing fallacies. Not only inquiry dialogues designated for improving understanding, but also persuasion dialogues serve a maieutic purpose according to Walton (1995).

ference, such as when either one form of dialogue shifts illicitly to another, or when speakers violate the rules that govern particular inference schemes.

To diagnose a particular example of a serious problem in argumentation, Walton argues that we must first determine the goals of that discourse. Then we apply the normative model for that type of discourse, and consider the particulars of the text in order to provide an interpretation (p. 31). Producing an interpretation can be assisted by working through the fallacy or scheme names as heuristics, which is part of the pedagogical value of the fallacies approach to argument evaluation (Blair 1995).

A different but related question is how to diagnose a pattern that may or may not fit the existing typology of fallacies. In order to identify androcentrism as a fallacy of argumentation, we must show the presence of regular errors that violate Grice's (1991) conversational maxims. We may then proceed by considering specific violations of inference *schemes* and then protracted argumentation *themes*. Walton proceeds this way in his exposition of different types of fallacy, although without explanation of the method. For our purposes, this procedure serves to rule out the finite possibilities among more specific cases before considering the more general and vague level. Likewise, when we consider problematic argumentation themes we will begin with possible illicit shifts between specific forms of dialogue before considering other sources for the problem.

3. HOW ANDROCENTRISM VIOLATES CONVERSATIONAL MAXIMS

The preliminary concern in diagnosing a fallacy is to look at the evidence of androcentrism in light of Grice's maxims. The general cooperative principle of conversation requires that one "make ... conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange..." (Grice 1991: 26). This principle gives rise to four maxims demanding: (1) an appropriate *quantity* of information; (2) adherence to norms of *truth*; (3) *relevance*; and (4) efficient *manner*. To demonstrate that each maxim is violated by androcentrism we need look no further than Lloyd's study of the case of the female orgasm.

First, all accounts of the female orgasm assume that female sexuality is like male sexuality (Lloyd 2005: 225), which means that they fail to address the *quantity* of available evidence about female sexuality. Neglect of evidence is especially apparent in the universal assumption that women orgasm only in intercourse, an act that is highly conducive to male orgasm (p. 224). Another common assumption based on male patterns of orgasm, found in twelve of the original eighteen theories analyzed by Lloyd, is that orgasm reliably occurs with intercourse. To top it off, ten accounts ignore how their hypotheses directly conflict with the available research on female sexuality such as in the famous studies by Alfred Kinsey and Shere Hite.

Second, androcentrism is a question of neglecting the norms of *truth*. Even when evolutionary biologists cite the sexology research, they ignore the overwhelming evidence it provides that women are unlikely to orgasm during unassisted intercourse, a fact that Lloyd describes as "the orgasm-intercourse discrepancy" (p. 259). This approach to evidence is contrary to accepted norms of research that these scientists themselves employ (p. 241). They use the evidence selectively when they do draw on the sex research, and they misinterpret it especially by presenting as general in regard to humans evidence

that is drawn exclusively from men (pp. 43, 224-6). In this way both, third, *irrelevance* and, fourth, inefficient *manner* of expression interfere with the progress of the discourse.

The violation of multiple rules of discourse need not indicate that multiple fallacies are at play. Many fallacies break more than one rule (Walton 1995: 228 f.), as we have found with androcentrism. However, we need to consider whether androcentric reasoning and appeals to the standard are subspecies of recognized fallacy forms.

4. INFERENCE SCHEMES

Androcentrism in science might be tied to a particular inference scheme, one of the common types of inference used in presumptive reasoning to support conclusions. In addressing how androcentrism can violate accepted inference schemes I will consider whether androcentrism constitutes an inference scheme itself. That will lead us into considering whether androcentrism typically involves any recognized fallacy of presumption, say that appeal to tradition, or to vague language – as in equivocation, or that use poor sampling methods drawing hasty conclusions – these seem to account for the likely recognized candidates but not for the distinctly political character of the error. One recognized fallacy that does address the influence of group politics is Howard Kahane’s account of the fallacy of “provincialism,” but that proves to be not just inadequate but problematic (1971; 1984, 1995; Kahane and Cavender 2005).

I suggest that we cannot generalize about the inference situations that warrant attention exclusively to men, or other positions of social privilege. No acceptable presumption accounts for androcentric argumentation, although we can *vaguely* identify a common form of androcentric defeasible inference:

- (1) Men are ideal-or-normal.
- (2) X applies to men.
- (3) Therefore, X.

For a the general appeal to the standard, substitute “the dominant social group” for “men.” Premise (1), which tends to be implicit, is defensible in some contexts but is problematic in any generality, *unacceptable* as a principle of reasoning, even to operate as a defeasible starting point. (Based on Walton’s description of schemes as acceptable—if only in particular contexts, I take a “scheme” to be a normative concept, although we might choose to use the word in a more descriptive fashion (Blair 2001: 368).) The acceptability that would qualify it as inference *scheme* is lacking from androcentric reasoning.

The androcentric form of inference might have presumptive weight in patriarchal dialogues, such as in some theologies or certain political regimes, and a reason to support it could be an appeal to tradition. Yet, the *reason* for medical research to exclude women subjects (Rosser 1994), or—to take a non-scientific example—a mother’s argument about men for the purpose of aiding her son, is not typically traditional. Tradition may be a social or psychological cause behind the preponderance of such reasoning, but those causes are not the same as the aesthetic value that makes it deceptive. Its attractiveness is better recognized in speakers’ intentions, in their actual attraction to it, even though individual subjective perception is only a sign of attractiveness.

Likewise, the popularity of androcentric beliefs may be a cause of androcentric reasoning, but it is not the reason for it. So, androcentrism is not typically a case of *ad populum*.

Is there another argumentation scheme that will account for the presumption of androcentrism, for premise (1)? Ambiguity or vagueness surrounding what is “ideal-or-normal” is not the question because such abstract language is rarely part of androcentric reasoning. (This is another reason that the form above does not qualify as a scheme.) More specific ideals such as beauty or intelligence, or norms in the sense of the averages, are the concern, without ambiguity among them. Certainly, some androcentric reasoning ambiguously refers to “men” as if that included women. Innovations in practices of the English language are helping to eliminate that problem, although it is behind at least one example of androcentrism in Lloyd’s analysis. That is, some evolutionary biologists reason about the female orgasm based on evidence that concerns “individuals” who were in fact only males.

The appeal to a masculine ideal or norm more typically takes the form of sampling. The cases of androcentrism in scientific argumentation might be characterized as hasty generalizations, if they are based on too small a sample (Walton 1995: 54). Yet, the sample is not merely too small, but biased towards males. The source of bias remains the question.

We might consider androcentrism as a case of inappropriate appeal to sociopolitical values. One existing fallacy label that attends to the problem that privileging one group over another poses for reasoning is “provincialism,” defined by Kahane as preference for members of one’s own group. Examples include a historical bias towards one’s own time, such as treating late twentieth century fertility rates as representative, as we find in the case of the female orgasm (Lloyd 2005: 91).

Unfortunately, the matter of social *dominance* that is crucial to centrism as a general form of bias and to appeals to the standard in the context of argumentation is denied by “provincialism.” Kahane claims that provincialism applies equally to all groups, including marginalized groups, such as women. “Blacks are more likely to notice injustices perpetrated against blacks, Jews against Jews, and women against women,” says Kahane. The claim that blacks, Jews, and women are more likely to notice injustices against the groups to which they belong than against whites, gentiles, and men, respectively, is unrealistic given how much attention the society at large gives to whites, gentiles, and men. (It is defensible that blacks, Jews, and women notice injustices against their own group more than whites, gentiles, and men notice those injustices, but that does not seem to be Kahane’s meaning.) Consider how difficult it is to live in most parts of the world and not have some awareness of exclusively male sports leagues, and yet to be completely ignorant of women’s sports even if one is a woman. This biased awareness includes attention to every small inconvenience faced by the male athletes, and contrasts with ignorance of systematic atrocities in African-Canadian life even for those who are African-Canadian. Further, evidence from psychology shows that membership in a group only affects marginally how one views members of that group (Jost, Mahzarin and Nosek 2004); and, notably, in the case of the female orgasm women are regularly authors of androcentric theories.

The systematic nature of social injustice is part of the difficulty in recognizing it, even when one experiences it: individual experience of discrimination does not reveal the *general* nature of racism, sexism, ableism, etc. Moreover, people who live under oppression internalize stereotypes and so often do not recognize when they receive inequitable treatment.

Because of its broad social influence, androcentrism mucks up many different inference schemes. In addition to those already mentioned, in the case of the female orgasm Lloyd names special pleading (p. 119) and red herring (p. 172). The straw figure

fallacy also accounts for some of her examples of how scientists mischaracterize their opponents in order to support androcentric views (pp. 139, 159).

4. THE THEME OF ANDROCENTRISM

Because androcentrism messes up various inference schemes in the progress of argumentation, it seems to operate at the thematic level, at least in science where its general form should carry no weight. For Walton, an argumentation theme is a “sequence of connected arguments, questions and replies,” arising from an inference scheme and longer than a scheme but usually shorter than a single dialogue (1995: 202). The dialogue in question, that of evolutionary biology, takes as its goal to explain how the female orgasm evolved, and is based on the very general scheme of generalization, reasoning from a sample.²

As a thematic problem, androcentrism might be analogous to the *ad baculum* fallacy, in which threats are made to sway an interlocutor’s commitments. Such tactics can be quite appropriate for negotiations, but not for persuasion or inquiry. Interestingly enough, some scientific debates did fall back on the possibility of a duel (Nye 1997), but despite vestigial scientific machismo violent exchange is no longer accepted as a way to settle a scientific disagreement.

No valuable form of dialogue, scientific or otherwise, appeals to broad social standards. The social hierarchy of centrism is distinct from military hierarchies that underpin orders. Military orders properly only appeal to those hierarchies, and they are not so easily confused with other social status that they could be the reason androcentrism infects science.

Less formal hierarchies constitute the problem of centrism, and they explain the persistence of centrist background beliefs in science. Such presumptions affect the formulation of the subject of inquiry, and they play different roles relative to different hypotheses, even providing different types of support for one hypothesis. Most importantly, background assumptions qualify “data” as “evidence” (Lloyd 2005: 241 f.; Nelson 1993; Longino 1990), which is to say that they determine relevance and they influence what gets credit as sufficient reason in science.

Because they originate in general background beliefs, appeals to the standard are therefore more analogous to linguistic fallacies, notably equivocation. Admittedly, equivocation does not take any general inferential form (Walton: 291-293) even of the loose type we have identified above for androcentrism and appeals to the standard. However, the idiosyncrasy of equivocation is at least partly due to the fact that ambiguous forms of language that cause such errors become problematized and eliminated. Twenty years ago we might have cited the use of masculine pronouns as neutral in English, as unwarranted centrism. It caused problematic patterns in reasoning, and for this reason has become unacceptable in the academy, although popular culture is slow to catch up.

5. CONCLUSION: THE SERIOUSNESS OF ERRORS

We should hope for the same reduction in appeals to the standard that we achieved in equivocation. It is telling that androcentric equivocation was quickly targeted once rec-

² Walton suggests that science in a case of a specific form of dialogue, the inquiry, but addressing that is beyond the scope of this paper.

ognized, even if we are still waiting for reform in more popular forums. The demands for changes in linguistic practice cited its political and moral as well as rational implications. The same attention is needed for centrism, through recognizing the fallacy of appeals to the standard as a very serious problem.

The seriousness of an error in argumentation that qualifies it as a fallacy is cashed out in regard to being frequent, for Johnson, or being beyond repair, for Walton. Their standards are much higher than typical of textbook accounts of fallacies (Walton 1995: 262), but met by androcentrism – alone, even without taking into account other forms of centrism. More evidence of the problematic thinking based on a male norm can be found in feminist science studies than we have available for other recognized fallacies. At the same time, androcentrism in evolutionary biology makes most accounts of the female orgasm wholly untenable and unrepairable given the currently available evidence.

Appeals to the standard not only meet the highest established criteria to count as a fallacy because such appeals are serious errors in argumentation, they indicate a further way that an error in reasoning can be serious and deserve baptism as a fallacy. Involvement with systematic moral problems or political injustices makes a form of inference worthy of extra scrutiny, of red-flagging, if it is a possible source of error. Therefore the fallacy of appeal to the standard deserves priority recognition from textbook authors and argumentation theorists.

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Commentary on “ANDROCENTRISM AS A FALLACY OF ARGUMENTATION” by Catherine Hundleby

CLAUDIO DURAN

*Philosophy Department, Senior Scholar
York University
4700 Keele Street, Toronto Ontario M3J 2T1
Canada
claudioduran@rogers.com*

1. INTRODUCTION

In working on this commentary, I have read as well Catherine Hundleby’s (2009) paper presented in the 2009 OSSA conference, and the commentary of that paper prepared by Daniel Boone (2009). Regretfully, I was unable to read other works of Hundleby, such as a paper that appeared in a special issue of the journal *Informal Logic*, of which she was a second editor. I know as well that she is working on a book about fallacies of argumentation that will engage both feminist epistemology and science studies. This is indeed welcome news.

2. AUTHOR’S LOGICAL ARGUMENTATION

Catherine Hundleby’s argumentation in this paper relates closely to her 2009 OSSA paper “Fallacy Forward: Situating fallacy theory” in which she suggests that there is a need to revise fallacy analysis within the perspective of situating it as a kind of theory of fallacies. Furthermore, she introduced androcentrism as a ubiquitous problem with reasoning that has been exposed in the twentieth century by feminists. In the present paper, she undertakes a substantial, creative and thought-provoking examination of androcentrism as a fallacy of argumentation. In her approach, she works from a firm logical ground basing her analysis on authors such as P. Grice, D. Walton, R. H. Johnson, J. A. Blair, and H. Kahane. First, I present the definitions that the author provides of the most relevant concepts in her analysis. Androcentrism is defined as “assuming that the male or masculine is representative”. She claims that the contribution of androcentric assumptions to error in scientific argumentation constitutes a fallacy. Hundleby claims as well that what holds for androcentrism also holds for other forms of centrism. This latter concept is defined as treating members of a privileged group as standard or ideal, and this may take the form of racism, heterosexism, and ableism as well as other types of discrimination. Also, she says that centrism functions as an appeal to the standard, referring to an idealized social norm. Fallacy itself is understood in terms of Doug Walton’s account, as a serious misstep in argumentation, and Ralph Johnson’s view that in order to call such misstep a fallacy it must be a common error.

Catherine Hundleby is mostly concerned with the profound interference of androcentrism in scientific reasoning, and specifically in the field of evolutionary theories of the female orgasm. Based on the work of Elizabeth Lloyd, Hundleby says that all the evolutionary theories mentioned above involve androcentric assumptions. It is in this

sense that she claims that the contribution of those assumptions to error in scientific argumentation constitutes a fallacy. I discuss several important topics concerning this matter, in parts three and four of the commentary, for now, it is important to analyze the way in which the author intends to establish androcentrism as a fallacy.

While there seems to be a fair degree of agreement concerning a number of traditional fallacies, the field is also open to the emergence of many new fallacies. Indeed a colleague of mine at York University, about 15 years ago, traced several hundred fallacies as he found them in informal logic texts used in universities in North America. My personal sense is that we ought not to impede this development, and if my overall interpretation of Catherine Hundleby's proposal concerning situating fallacy theory is correct, then we seem to need some kind of movement towards a solid and foundational theory of fallacies. Of course, such theory should allow for a profound examination of the field as it is today, and be open to the many developments that have been taking place. However, it is fair to say, as Hundleby proposes, that we need a rather systematic way of identifying new fallacies.

In this sense, the author indicates that she has been able to derive a method for diagnosing new errors that lend themselves to be evaluated as fallacious. Such method is based on Walton's work, and in essence, it is described by Catherine Hundleby in the following way, as it relates to the identification of androcentrism as a fallacy

In order to identify androcentrism as a fallacy of argumentation, we must show the presence of regular errors that violate Grice's (1991) conversational maxims. We may then proceed by considering specific violations of inference *schemes* and then protracted argumentation *themes*.

Indeed Catherine Hundleby proceeds thoroughly and systematically through each of the three stages indicated in the above quotation. Grice's maxims, related to his general cooperative principle of conversation, are shown to be violated in the case of androcentrism. With regards to inference schemes, there are no grounds for accepting that androcentrism constitutes an inference scheme itself, and moreover, androcentrism "mucks up different inference schemes", as the author says. Finally, since that happens with inference schemes, androcentrism seems to operate at the thematic level.

3. SOME COMMENTS ON THE LOGICAL ARGUMENTATION OF THE AUTHOR

One main concern is the delimitation of the role of argumentation, as it is being developed by argumentation theorists, within scientific reasoning. Also, given the areas that Catherine Hundleby mentions as well in her work, we need to do that in relation to dialogue and discourse as they happen in ordinary language. In this sense, we may want to inquire into the ways in which teaching argumentation may help in improving logical reasoning in all those activities. With regards to the fallacy of androcentrism, it is possible to argue that even the most rigorous scientists are in the same chance as everybody else in contemporary culture. I mean that fallacy seems to operate at the same level in scientific fora as in any other human endeavor. Indeed what applies to argumentation in general, applies as well to fallacy analysis in particular.

Now, the central argumentation issue of Catherine Hundleby's paper is that androcentrism needs to be recognized as a form of fallacy. I personally agree with her in this respect, and I believe it represents a deep contribution to equity studies as well as to the field of argumentation. However, I would prefer to situate this issue in a related albeit

different way. Androcentrism, as well as other forms of centrism, may be understood as a complex set of subjective and objective operations whose center, as the author says, is the belief that men are the standard of human beings, and as such, it is possible to claim, they are presented as superior to, and even dominant over, women. Conceived in this way, this complex set expresses itself in fallacious ways in argumentation. I could develop this point in another, perhaps more technical, way. Androcentrism may be related to a sort of ‘matrix’ of fallacious reasoning which could be evaluated in terms of specific fallacies. Furthermore, this ‘matrix’ could be classified as a case of a higher level ‘matrix’ that refers to all other cases of centrism: this latter matrix would be the one concerning appeals to the standard in general. The fallacies stemming from androcentrism as a matrix could then be called equivocation, hasty generalization, appeals to authority, appeals to fear, etc, depending on the specified cases. In this sense, we could be referring to the list of accepted fallacies in textbooks and theoretical work. I realize that these ideas are conceived intuitively at this stage, and of course, require much more work, but they have appeared in the context of reflecting upon Catherine Hundleby’s paper.

Another relevant point about this line of thinking is the following: Assuming that my understanding may be acceptable, at least in principle, is it still possible to think of cases in which androcentrism may appear, so to speak, itself, as such and not in the shape of particular fallacies? I can imagine an example of reasoning that expresses androcentrism directly such as somebody claiming that because men are superior to women then they should be given priority in academic appointments. Indeed this is not likely to happen today in many universities around the world, but it was an argument held not long ago. In any event, in cases such as this, it seems possible to speak of a fallacy of androcentrism.

4. ANDROCENTRISM, ALL FORMS OF CENTRISM, AND EMOTIONAL ARGUMENTS

In this part, I discuss the topic of Catherine Hundleby’s paper from the perspective of my own work in argumentation theory and equity studies. The paper has been thought-provoking and inspiring; indeed I have been able to map some areas for future work. What follows is a brief discussion of a few important issues. I would like to introduce them by reference to the role and status of emotions in argumentation.

A core belief of my work is that androcentrism, as well as all forms of centrism, is a complex set of subjective and objective operations, as mentioned above. In terms of the inner aspects, all sorts of emotions are at stake, and if I present a case for my position as against centrism in general and androcentrism in particular, I would have to say that fundamentally my commitment is emotional, an emotional commitment to justice in human and social life. This does not mean that I do not take logic and other modes of argumentation into account. Thus, in order to make myself clearer, I introduce some of the basic aspects of Michael Gilbert’s (1997) theory of Multi-Modal Argumentation.

Gilbert says that in order to understand arguments in full, we need to realize that there are four modes of argumentation, at least. They are the logical mode; the emotional mode; the physical mode; and the intuitive mode. Now, one of these modes may be more prevalent depending on the kind of argumentation at stake, but most probably in life they all intertwine in different proportions depending on the case. So far in history, the logical mode has been dominant, and Gilbert says that this takes us to attempt to reduce the other

three modes to the logical one. Indeed we may see here another, less recognized centrism, that is, logocentrism. Therefore, Gilbert proposes to explore the other modes of argumentation in full, and at the same time, examine their interrelations and their relations to the logical mode. In my case in this commentary, I address the emotional mode, and specifically, emotional arguments.

Emotional arguments, according to Michael Gilbert, are arguments that rely more or less heavily on the use and expression of emotion. Language is used to express them, but it is only ancillary to the emotions that are being expressed. We must not reduce them to a purely logical evaluation. Moreover, emotional arguments are central to human disputation, among other reasons because they communicate aspects involved in the dispute that logical arguments do not. In focusing upon emotional arguments, we may be able to ascertain the degrees of commitment, depth, and extent of feeling, sincerity and degrees of resistance involved by the arguers in the argumentation.

On this basis, it is possible to claim that understanding androcentrism and all forms of centrism, would require the study of emotions and emotional arguments as well. Hundleby has provided a profound way of understanding centrism and androcentrism from a logical perspective. The task for me, as I see it, would be to relate her insightful work to emotions and emotional argumentation involved by centrisms.

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