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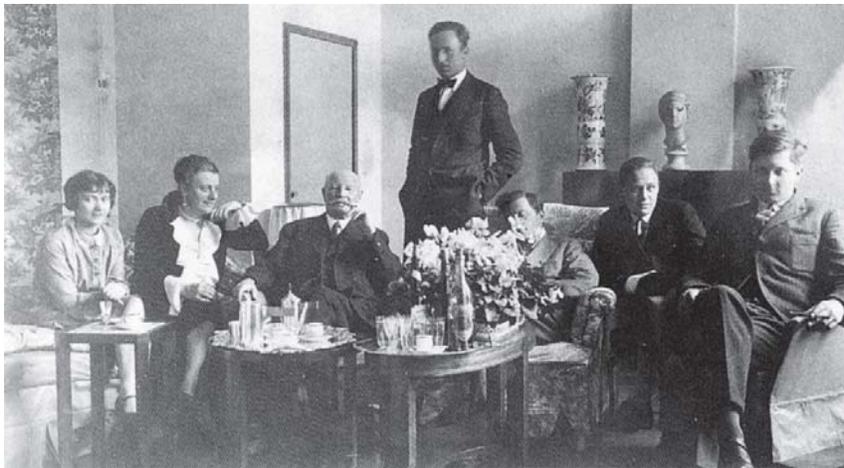
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Editorial

Ludwig Wittgenstein... again and again

The following picture captures part of what I would like to comment on in this special issue on Ludwig Wittgenstein:¹



The picture not only shows what is well known about Wittgenstein, namely his limited social skills (he sleeps while dear friends are chatting away)² but it symbolizes characteristic elements of his philosophy. We find his thought centrally located in the midst of many of the most important issues in twen-

¹ The picture has been taken from the book "Ludwig Wittgenstein. Architect" by Paul Wijdeveld (2000, Amsterdam), p. 39. According to the information, this photograph shows the interior of Margaret Stonborough's private salon, 1931. Seated on the bed to the left are Marguerite Respinger and Margaret Stonborough; sleeping in the chair behind the table is Ludwig Wittgenstein; to his left Count Schönborn and Arvid Sjögren.

² A couple of Malcolm's memories could illustrate this picture of Wittgenstein as well. First in the biographical sketch introducing Malcolm's Wittgenstein Memoir, Georg Henrik von Wright pointed out: "Wittgenstein avoided publicity. He withdrew from every contact

tieth and twenty-first century philosophy, though it is often obscured by short and confusing sentences puzzlingly juxtaposed with other precise and illuminating remarks. This presents an obstacle to those who would understand his messages just as the flowers partially conceal his face in this photograph. The photograph also seems to show another very theme associated with the Austrian: an interest in solipsism both philosophical and lived. In the photo he distances himself from his immediate environment, his figure thus presents the idea of a constant solitude even in the midst of activity.³

But this interpretation can only be fruitful if now I say something about the reasons why *Cogency* opens its space to this special philosophical character. *Cogency* attempts to contribute to the arena of argumentation theory and reasoning not only by publishing papers with new ideas and reflections, but also by offering a scenario for discussions about people, theories, and con-

with his surroundings which he thought undesirable. Outside the circle of his family and personal friends, very little was known about his life and character. His inaccessibility contributed to absurd legends about his personality and to widespread misunderstandings of his teaching.” (Malcolm, 1962: 2) Malcolm gives a more explicit demonstration of Wittgenstein’s uncommon manners: “My wife once gave him some Swiss cheese and rye bread for lunch, which he greatly liked. Thereafter he would more or less insist on eating bread and cheese at all meals, largely ignoring the various dishes that my wife prepared. Wittgenstein declared that it did not much matter to him what he ate, so long as it was always the same. When a dish that looked especially appetizing was brought to the table, I sometimes exclaimed ‘Hot Ziggety’-a slang phrase that I learned as a boy in Kansas. Wittgenstein picked up this expression from me. It was inconceivably droll to hear him exclaim ‘Hot Ziggety’ when my wife put the bread and cheese before him. During the first part of his visit Wittgenstein insisted on helping to wash the dishes after meals, and he was as before very fussy about the amount of soap and hot water that ought to be used and whether there was the right sort of dish mop. Once he rebuked me sternly for not rinsing properly. Before long, however, he left the dishes alone, and indeed his bodily strength so declined that he was not equal to that exertion.” (Malcolm, 1962: 85)

³ Though he uses rather an unfriendly tone towards Wittgenstein, Ernest Gellner (1999) nevertheless suggests ideas that help us to better understand the position of Wittgenstein in the mainstream of Western philosophy. For example, commenting upon his self-exile combined with an evaluation of the *Tractatus*, Gellner says: “Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) is a poem to solitude. It is also an expression of the individualistic- universalistic, atomic vision of knowledge, thought, language and the world. That vision logically engenders solitude –though the sense of solitude may well also have had other roots... The poem is all the more effective for its dogmatic, oracular style: the ideas are presented not as an opinion, which is to be argued against some possible alternative vision, or against mere doubt, as one case among others; but rather as an unquestionable, self-evident set of verities; which do not permit legitimate questioning and whose status is somehow far beyond that of mere earthly affirmation. The dogmatism is brazen. This was ever Wittgenstein’s style. Contingent truths did not interest him much: he was eager to reach the very limits of conceptual choice.” (1999: 46).

cepts that have become touchstones for understanding our natural capacities for scrutinizing the opinions and points of view of others as well as ourselves. Wittgenstein's philosophy is perhaps paradigmatic of these capacities.

Certainly, as our authors wisely discuss in their papers, Wittgenstein's work contemplates some of the most important and problematic issues in philosophy: the problem of language and logical form, the problem of perception, the problem of the relationship between mental states, representation and thought, of language and community and the idea of a private language, of the relationship between sensations and language, of the problem of certainty, the problem of meaning and many others. Add to this his explorations in the philosophy of mathematics, and the philosophy of psychology, and it is easy to see that his substantial and various contributions well enough justify the dedication of many special issues to him. Apart from his body of work, however, Wittgenstein also presents us with a genuine example of the spirit of constant self-criticism, revising his first, second and often third ideas! He is a definitively critical and self-critical thinker.

It is not a cliché to talk about the first, second, and nowadays, the third Wittgenstein, although Rhees (2003) would reject such a division. Among the scholars who have clarified this way of understanding Wittgenstein we find Moyal-Sharrock (2004, 2005, 2007) who situates *On Certainty* in the context of Wittgenstein's work.⁴ These sequential—but not necessarily linear—steps in Wittgenstein's philosophical development present an example

⁴ In this discussion Coliva (2010), Forster (2004), Pritchard (2007; forthcoming), Stroll (2007), Williams (2007), Wright (2004), among others, should perhaps be mentioned. Of course, the importance of *On Certainty* has been stressed before, such as in Malcolm (1986), Stroll (1994), and von Wright (1982). At the same time, it is not immediately accepted by all that *On Certainty* presented a crucial turn in Wittgenstein's thought, because other authors do not pay any attention to this line of investigation. Such an omission is made by Soames (2003), for example. His highly regarded book summarizing the thought of each philosopher who has contributed to the development of analytical philosophy does not devote much time to *On Certainty* (OC) in the section on Wittgenstein. Although it is not the goal here to write an essay on the issue, it is necessary to doubt whether the three "movements" of Wittgenstein's philosophy (*Tractatus*, *Philosophical Investigations*, *On Certainty*) really contain progressive revisions from one work to the next. Certainly there are many revisions and contra arguments in PI that respond to the *Tractatus*, but the case with PI and OC is not clear. Instead what is found in OC is, as Moyal-Sharrock puts it, a new dimension not touched by Wittgenstein before: the role of hinge propositions in our 'animal' behavioral competence. For some scholars, it is in OC that we find the most evident proximity to a pragmatic view, but this was rejected by Wittgenstein (1992, § 266). See Brandom (2002) for a well informed discussion about the topic.

of the sort of intellectual openness and critical spirit that *Cogency* precisely wishes to promote. Though the interpretation of the picture given above is suggestive of a sort of solipsism, it is not out of the Wittgensteinian spirit to observe that perhaps the only way to have this openness is by participating deeply in the social and cultural environment. If we are to reach understanding then we must listen to, read and discuss ideas with others, in whatever settings in which we may find those ideas on offer. Certainly Wittgenstein himself was enmeshed within the social world of Cambridge philosophy. Malcolm (1962: 33) demonstrates what has been said here showing the genesis of *On Certainty* and Wittgenstein's deep concern with others' opinions:⁵

“In 1939, G. E. Moore read a paper to the Moral Science Club on an evening when Wittgenstein did not attend. Moore was attempting to prove in his paper that a person can know that he has such and such a sensation, e.g. pain. This was in opposition to the view, originating with Wittgenstein, that the concepts of knowledge and certainty have no application to one's sensations (see *Philosophical Investigations*, § 246). Wittgenstein subsequently heard about Moore's paper and reacted like a war-horse. He came to Moore's at-home, on the following Tuesday. G. H. von Wright, C. Lewy, Smythies and myself were there, and perhaps one or two others. Moore re-read his paper and Wittgenstein immediately attacked it. He was more excited than I ever knew him to be in a discussion. He was full of fire and spoke rapidly and forcefully. He put questions to Moore but frequently did not give Moore a chance to answer. This went on for at least two hours, with Wittgenstein talking almost continuously, Moore getting in a very few remarks, and scarcely a word said by anyone else. Wittgenstein's brilliance and power were impressive and even frightening.”

Despite Malcolm's overenthusiastic narrative, what is clear is that Wittgenstein was entrenched with his colleagues, friends and Cambridge's intellectual rhythm. If he influenced others within his community, as he most certainly

⁵ It could be said that *On Certainty* is that epistemological essay Wittgenstein's that partially responds to Moore's conception of knowledge, the existence of an external world and the idea of argument.

did, then it is fair to ask how others might have influenced Wittgenstein. For instance, I always have been surprised by the huge similarity between Fritz Mauthner and Wittgenstein. Mauthner was a very famous intellectual in Vienna when Wittgenstein was a child, a friend of his father and obliged reading at home. The idea that “language is its use”, the image of the stair as a metaphor for language, and even the idea of the language game—the idea that language is an activity through which we learn the analysis of some verbs, “understand” for example, through context and usage and not through definitions or “essential meanings”—all these ideas were already coined by Mauthner before Wittgenstein made them famous. Wittgenstein, in fact, mentions Mauthner obliquely in § 4.0031 of the *Tractatus*.

Another influence on Wittgenstein, at least potentially, was F.P. Ramsey. Koethe (1996) speculates that the only figure “who might have pushed him to attempt a clearer and more explicit formulation of the philosophical themes that inform his later writings” (p.165) was Ramsey. Koethe supports this notion by continuously quoting others, “In his introduction to Ramsey’s *Philosophical Papers*, D. H. Mellor suggests that Ramsey’s untimely death had a deleterious effect on the development of philosophy at Cambridge, as well as on Wittgenstein’s philosophical development... Ramsey may have been the one philosopher at Cambridge who not only was Wittgenstein’s intellectual peer but also possessed the ability and inclination to engage him in a sympathetic and yet critical way.” (p. 165). It was Ramsey who was actively involved in the first translation of the *Tractatus* from German into English, at the age of 18.⁶ Although Wittgenstein went to Cambridge to learn from Russell, he rapidly distanced himself from him not long after. Wittgenstein’s ideas were thus developed in the context of an ongoing conversation with his colleagues and peers—precisely the kind of conversation studied by argumentation theorists. But what of his influence on argumentation theory itself?

In the studies of argumentation theory, Toulmin is regularly mentioned as one of those influenced by Wittgenstein. Certainly Wittgenstein’s influence is felt in Toulmin’s *The Uses of Argument*, a text familiar to nearly all argumentation scholars. It is also felt, however, in Toulmin’s first book, his doctoral dissertation, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics*,

⁶ In *Culture and Value*, §89, Wittgenstein nevertheless is very acid towards Ramsey.

published in 1950, one year before Wittgenstein's death. There are a few quotes from Wittgenstein in this text in some of its more important parts. The ideas that Toulmin discusses in these parts are written in a fashion that would be familiar to those with experience of Wittgenstein's writings. Interestingly, Toulmin even anticipates some discussions that appear in Wittgenstein's posthumously published writings. For example, when Toulmin challenges the correspondence theory of truth applied to ethical problems and reflects on "reasoning and its uses", his formulations resemble very much those of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*:

In the case of descriptive sentences, the problem why one particular criterion of truth is appropriate was solved when we examined the purposes for which description are used. The same intimate connection, between the logic of a mode of reasoning and the activities in which the reasoning plays its primary part, can be strikingly illustrated with the help of an especially simple (though artificial) example –that of an activity in which the reasoning operates as near as may be functionlessly (Toulmin, 1950: 81).

Another example foreshadows remarks of Wittgenstein in *On Certainty*. Here Toulmin justifies the 'elimination' of the bad habit of putting forward "limiting questions" in much the same way and for the same reasons that Wittgenstein warns us about the nonsense of questioning hinge propositions—simply because there are some questions that can not play any role in the structure of reasoning:

In the everyday sense, the question, 'What holds the earth up?', is a 'limiting question', having all the peculiarities I have referred to:

(i) If someone does ask it, it is not at all clear what he wants to know, in the way it is if he asks, 'What holds your peach-tree up? In ordinary cases, the form of the question and the nature of the situation between them determine the meaning of the question: here they cannot do so, and one can only guess at what is prompting it... (Toulmin, 1950: 206-207).

In this short editorial text, I have been limited myself to a triumvirate of the *Tractatus*, *Philosophical Investigations* and *On Certainty*. But it would

be an oversight not to mention that in the some of the more personal works of Wittgenstein, for example *Culture and Value*, we can also be amazed by his powerful, and beautifully expressed ideas (see §52); in all those more intimate books, the volume of links with collective and familiar concepts that do not pertain exclusively to Wittgenstein becomes clear, and one can even get a sense of just how wide and diverse the world in which Wittgenstein was enmeshed truly was. Musicians, for example, were among those who influenced Wittgenstein's thinking. A connection could also be made between Wittgenstein's preoccupations and political thoughts; Pitkin (1973) is one of the few scholars to argue for this connection.⁷

It is clear that this game of linking texts, notions, and protagonists could continue—as indeed it could for most any philosopher. That we can see philosophers and their ideas in this way, from the perspective of their place in a communal web of influences as well as from the perspective of their own individual thought, is perhaps something we owe in part to Wittgenstein's influence. Certainly, as argumentation theorists we too are enmeshed in a web of intellectual and cultural influences. Whatever the direction of these influences might be, the majority of them are reciprocal in the end. Thus it is that regardless of where one finds oneself within the argumentation theory community, Ludwig Wittgenstein speaks directly and with much significance to what many of us would like to say and think.

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Santiago / Amsterdam, November 2010

⁷ I strongly suggest visiting the most up-to-date web site on Wittgenstein, where the most recent books and studies on his work can be found: <http://www.editor.net/BWS/>. Here one can see all the connections that have been made across the different dimensions of his work.

⁸ The English of the editorial text was improved by Steve Patterson whom I thank very much. Also I would like to thank Frank Zenker for his very critical remarks and, specially, for his skepticism about the importance of Wittgenstein, which is the spirit that Cogency precisely promotes.

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Introduction: Wittgenstein's role in the development of informal logic and argumentation theory

Introducción: El rol de Wittgenstein en el desarrollo de la lógica informal y la teoría de la argumentación

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This special issue of *Cogency* is devoted to Wittgenstein's role in the development of informal logic and argumentation theory. The papers here illustrate how Wittgenstein's ideas have been applied and have aided research in these inquiries.

Ralph H. Johnson's paper – Wittgenstein's Influence on the Development of Informal Logic – focuses on the perception that W played an important role in the development of informal logic. In this paper, Johnson discusses Wittgenstein's influence on Toulmin, Hamblin, and Scriven—all of whose views about logic and argument have been important in the development of informal logic. He also discusses direct application of idea in *On Certainty*, stemming from Fogelin's 1985 paper "The Logic of Deep Disagreements." The conclusion that he comes to is that Wittgenstein's influence on the development of informal logic has been indirect rather than direct, more a matter of "the spirit" behind informal logic than direct influence on any of its seminal thinkers.

In "You Can't Step Into the Same Argument Twice: Wittgenstein on Philosophical Arguments," Daniel H. Cohen and George H. Miller focus on the role of argument in Wittgenstein's own work. They begin by identifying the nature and role of argumentation in philosophy *according to the Tractatus*, followed by a case study of an argument *from the Tractatus*. Then they turn to Wittgenstein's transitional and later works, paying par-

ticular attention to the interpretive challenge posed by his provocative *and deliberate* evolution away from definite assertions in philosophical matters and towards creating interpretive tensions in his readers in order to achieve greater clarity in the long run – albeit with less dogmatic confidence. They argue that this challenge can be met only after achieving the perspective that comes from having worked through the *Tractatus*. While their conclusions are largely negative concerning the place for arguments in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, conceptual space is created for a more positive account of argument both in philosophy and in general.

In “‘A Picture Held us Captive’: The Later Wittgenstein on Visual Arguments” Steven Patterson shows how the views of the later Wittgenstein, particularly his views on images and the notion of “picturing,” can be brought to bear on the question of whether there are such things as “purely visual” arguments. He draws on Wittgenstein’s remarks in the *Blue* and *Brown Books* and in *Philosophical Investigations* in order to argue that although visual images may occur as elements of argumentation, broadly conceived, it is a mistake to think that there are purely visual arguments, in the sense of illative moves from premises to conclusions that are conveyed by images alone, without the support or framing of words.

One issue that evolved from *On Certainty* is the question of deep disagreements. In “The Logic of Deep Disagreements” (*Informal Logic*, 1985), Fogelin claimed that there was a kind of disagreement – deep disagreement – which is, by its very nature, impervious to rational resolution. He further claimed that these two views are attributable to Wittgenstein. In their paper, David Godden and William Brenner focus on this issue. Following an exposition and discussion of that claim, we review and draw some lessons from existing responses in the literature to Fogelin’s claims. In the final two sections (6 and 7) they explore the role reason can, and sometimes does, play in the resolution of deep disagreements. In doing this they discuss a series of cases, mainly drawn from Wittgenstein, which they take to illustrate the resolution of deep disagreements through the use of what we call “rational persuasion.” They conclude that, while the role of argumentation in “normal” versus “deep” disagreements is characteristically different, it plays a crucial role in the resolution of both.

Although in this introduction I have commented on the papers in a thematic order, in this special issue the papers have been arranged in alphabetic order.

You can't step into the same Argument twice: Wittgenstein on philosophical arguments¹

No puedes tropezarte con el mismo argumento dos veces: Wittgenstein y los argumentos filosóficos

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Abstract: Arguments are everywhere in philosophy, but almost nowhere do they actually succeed in demonstrating conclusions, resolving differences, or any of the other things arguments are supposed to do. For Wittgenstein, arguing about philosophical matters was pointless. This conclusion follows immediately from his views on the nature of argument, the nature of philosophy, and argument's place in philosophy. Even as his views on those subjects changed significantly, the conclusion appeared unchanged. However, since arguments partially define their conclusions, seemingly identical conclusions from different arguments may differ greatly, especially when the arguments are of entirely different kinds. The arguments in the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* are rarely explicit, and sometimes hard even to recognize as arguments. Both works attempt in different ways to help the reader to a deeper understanding of language by way of "more perspicuous representations." We argue that in both works, these "more perspicuous representations" imply that arguing about philosophical matters is pointless. However, given the significant differences in style and strategy manifested in the two texts, it means very different things to say that a representation is "more perspicuous". As a consequence, to say that philosophical argumentation is pointless means one thing when said in the context of the *Tractatus*, and something

¹ The authors wish to thank Ralph Johnson for very helpful comments on an earlier draft.

different when placed in the context of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In this paper, we will support this view.

Keywords: argument, argumentation, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein.

Resumen: En la filosofía en todas partes hay argumentos, pero casi en ninguna parte ellos realmente tienen éxito en demostrar conclusiones, resolver diferencias, o cualquiera de las otras cosas que supuestamente los argumentos hacen. Para Wittgenstein, discutir sobre materias filosóficas fue un desperdicio. Esta conclusión se sigue inmediatamente desde sus perspectivas sobre la naturaleza de un argumento, la naturaleza de la filosofía, y el lugar de los argumentos en la filosofía. Aunque que sus ángulos en estos temas cambiaron significativamente, la conclusión aparece de la misma forma. Sin embargo, dado que los argumentos parcialmente definen sus conclusiones, conclusiones aparentemente idénticas de argumentos diferentes pueden diferir bastante especialmente cuando los argumentos son de distintos tipos. Los argumentos en el *Tractatus* y las *Investigaciones* están raramente explícitos y a veces es incluso difícil reconocerlos como argumentos. Ambos trabajos, de diferentes maneras, intentan ayudar al lector a profundizar su entendimiento del lenguaje a través de una “representación más perspicua”. Nosotros señalamos que ambos trabajos estas “representaciones más perspicuas” implican que argüir sobre materias filosóficas no tiene sentido. No obstante, dadas las diferencias significativas en estilo y estrategias manifestadas en estos dos textos, resulta en que se dicen diferentes cosas con la idea de que una representación es “más perspicua”. Como consecuencia, decir que una argumentación filosófica es un desperdicio significa una cosa cuando se dice en el contexto del *Tractatus*, y algo totalmente diferente cuando aparece en el contexto de las *Investigaciones Filosóficas*. En este trabajo fundamentaremos esta posición.

Palabras clave: argumento, argumentación, *Tractatus Lógico Filosófico*, *Investigaciones filosóficas*, Wittgenstein.

1. Introduction

When it comes to Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, the only things more important than their differences are their similarities. The differences are obvious and striking; their similarities are often subtle, coming into focus only after repeated inspection. In this paper, we would like to bring one of those similarities – a thesis about the nature of specifically philosophical argumentation – out of the shadows cast by the looming differences.

The thesis is this: arguing about philosophical matters is fundamentally

incoherent.² This is an immediate consequence of Wittgenstein's views on the nature of argument, the nature of philosophy, and the place for argument in philosophy. Moreover, even as his views on each of those three subjects were undergoing significant changes, the thesis and the reasoning leading to it remained substantially the same. But not exactly the same.

There is something very puzzling about arguments in philosophy. They are almost everywhere, but almost nowhere do they actually succeed in demonstrating a conclusion, resolving a difference, or any of the other things we like to claim arguments are supposed to do. Philosophical argumentation appears to be especially futile. Moreover, unlike arguments in personal matters, politics, or theology, the motivation for arguing about metaphysical differences is not at all obvious: Why, for example, should a "reliabilist" virtue epistemologist care whether her colleague virtue epistemologist is a "responsibilist" theorist? What motivates us to argue about philosophical differences? Philosophical arguments can appear pointless, too, given what difference they make. For all that, they can also be serious and passionate, as well as productive and satisfying. Wittgenstein's writings bring these oddities of philosophical argumentation into focus.

Briefly, the practice of the *Tractatus* identifies argumentation with inference: he simply presents us with inferences rather than engages us with dialectical arguments. Specifically philosophical argumentation, if at all possible, would have to be an *a priori* matter. Thus, it would be a matter for deduction and logical analysis. Consequently, it would be sterile and pointless as a knowledge-generating process. Philosophy qua argumentation disappears. Therefore, "the proper method in [post-Tractarian] philosophy" should be simply the artful selection and assertion of scientific facts, without any supporting or subsequent argumentation (*Tractatus* 6.53).³

Setting aside the question of whether its own propositions (or pseudo-propositions) actually have any sense, Wittgenstein's practice in the *Tractatus* is actually largely consonant with that description: the text is a sequence of

² We are siding with Kenny 2004 against Hacker 1990 on whether Wittgenstein recognizes a legitimate place for argumentation in philosophy, but we regard that apparent constant in Wittgensteinian thought as a moving target.

³ There are, of course, many other ways of reading the *Tractatus*. We are following the interpretation of *Tractarian* semantics elaborated in Cohen 1990.

abstract and even disembodied propositions. Any conceptual connections needed to make them coherent have to be supplied by the reader. It is as if we are given a series of conclusions without the arguments. Wittgenstein does not make it easy for the reader!

In the *Investigations*, the situation is partly mirrored and partly reversed: we find many arguments, but not many conclusions. Befitting the move to a more dialogically-oriented conception of philosophy, the arguments in the *Investigations* are themselves less logical and more dialogical insofar as they include all the moves of ordinary conversation rather than just inferences. They are also more specifically dialectical insofar as they proceed through objections and replies. They do not follow a beeline to a well-marked terminus. However, their place in philosophy is no less tenuous in the *Investigations* than in the *Tractatus*. The arguments that appear in the *Investigations* are made up of questions and assertions that apparently come from different voices in genuine engagement, albeit without the closure provided by definite conclusions, but also without the normal clues available to readers to identify and distinguish the protagonists and antagonists. It appears almost as if Wittgenstein were trying *not* to get his point across. Once again, Wittgenstein does not make it easy for the reader! And yet the arguments he puts before us are strangely effective. They are presented as arguments Wittgenstein is having with himself or colleagues, rather than with the reader, which is to say they are presented less as arguments to persuade, convince, or engage us, and more as “spectacles” to affect us.

In the discussion that follows, we will first, identify the nature and role of argumentation in philosophy *according to* the *Tractatus*, followed by a case study of an argument *from* the *Tractatus*. We will then turn to Wittgenstein’s transitional and later works, paying particular attention to the interpretive challenge posed by his provocative *and deliberate* evolution away from definite assertions in philosophical matters and towards creating interpretive tensions in his readers in order to achieve greater clarity in the long run – albeit with less dogmatic confidence. We think this challenge can be met only after achieving the perspective that comes from having worked through the *Tractatus*. While our conclusions are largely negative concerning the place for arguments in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, conceptual space is created for a more positive account of argument both in philosophy and in general.

2. Arguments in the *Tractatus*

The first difficulty in extracting a *Tractarian* position about the interplay between philosophy and argumentation is that while Wittgenstein is bold and unequivocal when it comes to the nature of philosophy, he is entirely silent about the nature of the non-inferential aspects of argumentation. Of course, when it comes to the *Tractatus*, silence speaks volumes.

Wittgenstein ends the *Tractatus* with his infamous counsel to pass over those areas about which we cannot speak in silence. Those areas include such non-factual discourse as ethics and aesthetics (6.42-6.421), God and theology (6.4312-6.432), the soul (5.62), the limits of the world (6.4), and the meaning of life (6.52-6.521).⁴ However, to say that there are no ethical propositions is as much a comment on proposition as it is on ethics. These are all areas of great importance, but they are not areas in which we can picture or describe, i.e., we cannot actually say anything literally true. The most important "truth" in the *Tractatus* is that truth *per se* is not all that important: "How things are in the world is of complete indifference for what is higher" (*Tractatus* 6.4321)

Any attempt at saying something sensible in any of these areas will fail miserably. The result is always something nonsensical (*unsinnig*): a confused pseudo-proposition.

However, there is another family of areas in which we also cannot say anything sensible or truthful, including everything that can be *shown* (4.1212). This covers much of logic (6.12), mathematics (6.22), logical and pictorial form (2.172, 4.126), and the formal properties of objects and the world (4.126, 6.22). The problem here is different. The theorems of logic and the equations of mathematics have a curious status. Because the technical Tractarian sense of *saying* that is operative here identifies sense with presenting a picture of the world, i.e., something that can be true or false, neither tautologies, which cannot be false, nor contradictions, which cannot be true, make any *sense*. They do not *say* anything; they do not present us with a picture of the world; they are, therefore, literally without sense: senseless (*sinnlos*).

⁴ All references to Wittgenstein's works will be to the proposition numbering in the *Tractatus*, the paragraphs and sections in the *Investigations*, and page numbers in the *Blue and Brown Books* and *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*.

The assertion that it is either raining or not, tells us nothing about the weather. However, tautologies are *not* nonsensical (*unsinnig*) because they show us the logic of the world. They make manifest what cannot be *said* about logical form and the pictorial relation (4.461-4.462, 6.12).

Our thesis with respect to the Tractarian view of specifically philosophical argumentation is that nothing can be said about it (in the technical sense of *saying*). First, there is nothing to argue about. There are no genuine philosophical propositions, so there is no subject matter for philosophy. Second, even if there were something for philosophers to argue about, the “correct method” in philosophy would not include arguing about it. Finally, even if there were a subject matter to philosophy and a role for arguments in philosophy, there would still be nothing philosophical that could be said about the general nature of arguments.

The claim that philosophy does not result in philosophical propositions (4.112) is an immediate consequence of the picture theory of meaning and the contrastive accounts of science and philosophy. Propositions are symbols with sense (3.3), propositions are true or false (4.1, 4.123), the totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science (4.11), but philosophy is not a science (4.111). Philosophy, therefore, does not traffic in truths. Consequently, the only subjects left for possible philosophical scrutiny would be those about which there are no genuine propositions: philosophy would be the discourse of ineffable subjects. However, in contrast to those alleged beetles sealed inside *Investigations*’ boxes, an ineffable subject may indeed be better than no subject at all, at least for interpretive, explanatory purposes, if not for factual, scientific purposes. Since the ineffable includes ethics, metaphysics, logic, and other important and traditional areas of philosophy, what has to change is what philosophers *do* with their subject. The goal can no longer be the production or discovery of truths, so it has to involve something else. What Wittgenstein offers us instead is making things clear: clarifications (4.112) and elucidations (6.54).

The second part of the thesis concerns the “correct method” in philosophy. Wittgenstein tells us at 6.53 that this would involve nothing more than the simple assertions of scientific (non-philosophical) truths about the world in order to disabuse others of their tendencies towards meaningless metaphysical pseudo-propositions. Engaging them in argument about metaphysics is precisely what must be avoided because it would only serve to rein-

force their confusion in regards to what can and cannot be meaningfully said. In the same way that arguing with others implicitly dignifies them by acknowledging their status as reasons-responsive beings, so too arguing about something implicitly dignifies that topic as something that is arguable and worthy of argument. The subjects of arguments need to be both sufficiently *meaningful*, in the sense of having literal sense, to sustain sensible discourse, as well as sufficiently *meaningful*, in the sense of having some importance, to deserve argument. We cannot argue about nonsense and we do not argue about trivial truisms. We can ask whether the good is more or less identical than the beautiful or whether $2 + 3$ is really 5, but none of those makes for a good argument. One is nonsense, the other is senseless, but those and their ilk are largely what philosophers have been arguing about (3.324, 4.003), which goes a long way towards explaining why Wittgenstein would think that arguments have no place in philosophy proper.

What does this semantics entail and how does it work? Take the case of logic and logical form. Logic does not fall under the purview of any of the sciences, so if it qualified as a subject, it would be a philosophical one. The logic of the world is shown in each sensible proposition – as well in every senseless tautology. That is all a philosopher (or anyone else with respect for the boundaries of sense) has to work with. Wittgenstein admits that we can talk about these things “in a certain sense” because even though there can be no propositions about them directly, there are propositions that “make manifest” how these things work (4.122). The key here is that to we can clear up confusion about, say, the logic and status of internal and external relations not by talking about those relations themselves, but by talking about the objects that are in those logical relations. We do not have to talk *about* these ineffable topics to clear up confusions; we can deploy them deftly. Put another way, we have no problem talking sensibly about things or, more narrowly, *objects*, despite the fact that we cannot say anything intelligible about what it is to be an *object* or about the formal, pseudo-concept of an *object*. Wittgenstein's claim is that as long as we manage to do the former well, there is no need for the latter.⁵

⁵ The very striking similarities that this account of *things* has with what Wittgenstein says, in a very different context, about *games*, is no mere coincidence.

There is one very conspicuous omission from Wittgenstein's characterization of the "correct method" in philosophy as the artful assertion of sensible, scientific propositions (6.53): tautologies. Shouldn't they have a role in philosophy? Earlier in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein had declared that the propositions of science are completely irrelevant for philosophy (4.1121-4.1122) and he repeats that point here. If what factual propositions *say* does not matter, it must be what they *show* that matters, but that implies that tautologies, which also show, should serve just as well.

This brings us to the third part of our thesis about Tractarian argumentation, viz., that there is nothing to say about argumentation generally. There are three pieces to be put together in order to reach this conclusion. First, the arguments of the *Tractatus* are presented as essentially sequences of propositions with a certain sort of logical-inferential structure; second, that logical structure is deductive; and third, deductively valid inferences are expressible as tautological conditionals (5.132ff). In combination with the earlier thesis that tautologies are senseless, these preclude any interesting, i.e., meaningful and informative, arguments, as well as any interesting, i.e., meaningful and informative, commentary on arguments.

Nonetheless, the *Tractatus* does indeed include some interesting arguments, despite its denial that there can be such, just as it includes some very interesting propositions about logic, ethics, and metaphysics, despite their "official" impossibility, too.⁶

Our characterization of the *Tractatus* can be summed up, in what is admittedly a bit of a caricature as follows: Wittgenstein describes philosophy as consisting of sensible but irrelevant propositions and patent but pointless arguments, while the philosophy that he himself practices uses nonsense pseudo-propositions and unvoiced arguments – which somehow manages to be successfully enlightening anyway. How can nonsense and senselessness combine with irrelevance, pointlessness, and silence to produce such great effect?

⁶ The argument beginning at 2.02 is used as a case study below, but among our favorites are the wonderfully intriguing arguments regarding the independence of philosophy from facts (4.1-4.1122), the groundlessness of causality and induction (5.135-5.1363), and the nonexistence of the soul (5.54ff).

3. A Case Study

The sequence of propositions from 2.02 through 2.0212 in the *Tractatus* is characteristic of Tractarian argumentation. It consists of bold assertions that are obviously related, although it is not immediately apparent how they are related. For that matter, it is not clear that these propositions even constitute an argument. They might be read as an explanation or a clarification or an articulation “for someone who has himself already had [these] thoughts” (*Preface*, p. 3). Here is the passage:

- 2.02 Objects are simple.⁷
- 2.0201 Every statement about complexes can be resolved into a statement about their constituents and into the propositions that describe the complexes completely.
- 2.021 Objects make up the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite.
- 2.0211 If the world had no substance, then whether a proposition had sense would depend on whether another proposition was true.
- 2.0212 In that case we could not sketch any picture of the world (true or false).

The conclusion is stated clearly and unequivocally right at the beginning, 2.02. There are some indicators that it should be read as argumentation, including a reasons-indicator (“*That is why...*” in 2.021) and inference-indicators (the conditional subjunctive in 2.0211 followed by a categorical subjunctive). The structure of the supporting reasoning is relatively unproblematic, so an argument can be easily extracted. The inferential core is naturally reconstructed as a *reductio ad absurdum* line of reasoning or a series of *modus tollens* inferences:

- (1) If there were no simples, there would be no substance to the world.

⁷ Only later, at 4.1272, is the concept of an object revealed as a pseudo-concept.

- (2) If there were no substance, it would be impossible to say anything sensible (true-or-false).
 - (3) It is possible to make sense (to say things about the world).
- \\ Therefore, there must be ultimate simples.

The third premise is assumed rather than explicitly stated, but since it is pragmatically impossible to argue with, we will pass over it in silence. The other two premises can be challenged so they need support. We need a connection between simples and substance for the first premise and a connection between substance and sense for the second. Propositions 2.0201 and 2.021 are apparently meant to provide the former; propositions 2.0211 and 2.0212 are apparently meant to provide the latter.

While the logical structure of the argument is straightforward, the conceptual architecture is not. The lines connecting simples to substance, and substance to sense are dotted lines at best. Connecting the dots takes effort.

Wittgenstein *explains* what simples are (the end-products of complete analyses of complexes) and then *states* that they are the substance of the world. The second part of 2.021 is the grounds: complexes cannot be substances. The missing warrant has to be something to the effect that substances must exist independently of one another while complexes are dependent on their constituents. Wittgenstein's discussion of (atomic) facts provides the context: they have independent existence, relative to one another (1.21). However, facts have an internal complexity, so they are also dependent, relative to their constituents (2, 2.01). At this stage, it would be possible that those constituents could also be complex (2.0201 does not rule that out). Genuine objects cannot have any kind of complexity that would entail dependence and still be the "substance" of the world. One immediate consequence is that an object's own logical form cannot be conceived as an internal structure determining its range of combinatorial possibilities (2.0141). There cannot be any internal *complexity*. Rather, logical form must be an unanalyzable given (and 2.0233 does suggest a sort of brute-fact aspect to the *thisness* of objects). Analysis of a complex into its constituents must be possible (2.0201) and it must come to an end (3.25). The final miss-

ing piece is a link between a regress and sense, and that is exactly what 2.0211 provides: an infinite analytic regress would make sense impossible, contradicting the third premise. Propositions involving complexes (e.g., "The present king of France is bald") either presuppose the existence of those complexes for sense (the Meinongian analysis) or else must be analyzable into propositions about simples (Russell's tack taken to its atomist conclusion). The possibility of an infinite regress is the possibility that it would be *impossible* for language to connect to the world, i.e., to make sense.

The point we want to take from this exercise concerns neither the metaphysics of substances and objects nor the semantics of names, reference, and truth-conditions. Rather, it is about philosophical argumentation. Even our quick sketch of Wittgenstein's argument contradicts the claim that philosophical argumentation is merely analytic, and as rough as our reconstruction may be, the result, i.e., the effect on the reader, is neither senseless nor pointless. The inferences are non-trivial, and the premises and conclusions are "substantial" whose meanings can be recovered only with appreciable interpretive efforts. Even if the reconstructions were to eventuate in a fully rigorous and deductive presentation, the analogies (e.g., between atomic facts and simple objects as substances, and between facts and propositions as complexes for analysis) are more than explanations and clarifications of meanings: they are *constitutive* of those meanings. Put bluntly: what *object*, *substance*, and *simple* mean in proposition 2.02 is determined by the propositions that follow within the parameters and context established by the preceding propositions.

Any reader who has successfully negotiated her way through the sentences in this argument has taken a big step towards the ultimate Tractarian goal: "seeing them as nonsensical." The sentences do not picture the world. They invoke such pseudo-concepts as *substance*, *object* and *fact*, so they cannot express genuine propositions. That is the real point of the argument. There is, in John Wisdom's memorable phrase, a "divergence of point and content."

4. Philosophical Investigations

The form of argumentation in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*

is diametrically opposed to the form of argumentation in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, but there is the same divergence of point and content, even as the respective points and contents remain in complete agreement.

In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein famously tells us, “If one tried to advance *theses* in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, because everyone would agree to them” (§128). It is the business of philosophy, he says, to establish a “perspicuous representation,” *to get a clear view of things as they were prior to our getting tangled up in our own rules*. True philosophy does not try to imitate the natural sciences by appealing to evidence and argument to uncover new truths. (This much is consonant with the *Tractatus*, especially *Tractatus* 6.53 and 4.112.) Nor does it begin with the truths of science and work from them: “In philosophy we do not draw conclusions” (599). Once again, the content of the propositions and arguments that philosophers have offered is not the point.

In other words, Wittgenstein does not particularly care whether he has convinced his readers that some proposition is true or false. In the *Investigations*, he wants instead to help his readers disengage from the linguistic confusion – the “bewitchment of the intelligence by means of language” (109) – that is the source of philosophical discourse. All of this also applies, more or less, to the *Tractatus*. The difference is that in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein believed he could eliminate confusion by presenting a perspicuous representation of the pure forms underlying ordinary discourse. In the *Investigations*, he has come to believe that no such pure form is privileged, and the perspicuous representation he would like us to achieve is of ordinary discourse itself. Tractarian proposition 5.5563, the claim that the propositions of everyday language are in perfect logical order just as they are, which seemed a bit out of place in the *Tractatus*, is fully realized in the *Investigations*.

This change in Wittgenstein’s understanding of the logic of language affects both what he says about philosophical method and how he actually practices philosophy in the *Investigations*. On the theoretical side, he introduces some imaginary “language games” as thought-experiments to reveal certain features of language and to locate the sources of our confusion. This represents a radical departure from thinking of language as essentially a pictorial-representational system. The artist’s palette is replaced by an eclectically stocked tool-box.

The change in his own practice is no less dramatic. He refrains from the

sort of categorical assertions that abound in the *Tractatus* for more *indirect* styles of writing; and he abandons the conclusions-without-proofs presentation for more dialectical arguments, complete with multiple voices articulating distinct standpoints that evolve in response to one another. These new arguments present his readers with a very different set of interpretive challenges, forced them to engage with the text in entirely new ways.

The contrasting styles of writing in the *Tractatus* and Wittgenstein's later works make for one of those obvious and striking differences referred to above. As noted, his writing is much more dialectical in the *Investigations*, but to appreciate the full extent and significance of this change, it is important not to lose sight of its continuities with the *Tractatus* and to see it as resulting from a series of evolutionary changes, rather than a single revolutionary paradigm shift. The evolution is evident in all aspects of Wittgenstein's writing, everything from the metaphors and tropes he uses to the kinds of arguments he offers, and even to such matters as sentence length, paragraphing, section breaks, and even punctuation – especially with regards to dashes (and parenthetical remarks).

One telling measure of the development of Wittgenstein's dialectical style of writing from the *Blue Book* and *Brown Book* to the *Investigations* is in his increasing use of questions. There were virtually no questions in the *Tractatus* – less than two dozen all told – all of which are either rhetorical questions that the reader naturally answers (e.g., 5.555), questions to which Wittgenstein himself provides the answers (e.g., 5.511), or questions that are mentioned rather than asked (e.g., 6.211). In contrast, the very first sentence in the *Blue Book* is a question, and it is followed by some remarks on questions. Wittgenstein occasionally adopts the form of an internal dialogue, with passages of external dialogue, including questions, serving a variety of heuristic, explanatory, and argumentative purposes. The *Brown Book* follows suit, with more of the same. Wittgenstein raises questions, puzzles about them, proposes answers, raises objections to the answers, responds to the objections, and raises more questions, usually in his own voice, although on occasion he will use quotation marks as clear markers that there is a different voice behind asking the questions. The use of questions explodes in the *Investigations*.

Wittgenstein's use of questions and dialogue in the *Investigations* are noteworthy in several ways. First, there are simply a lot more questions than

ever before. Rather than being an occasional device, questions are a staple of the text's literary style. As in the *Blue and Brown Books*, Wittgenstein introduces other voices that are distinct but generally unidentified. However, sometimes there appear to be several different voices in a dialogue at once, turning it into a conversation. Most intriguing, however, is the fact that Wittgenstein goes out of his way to blur the identities and standpoints of his interlocutors in these multi-voice discussions. The editorial changes from earlier versions provide unmistakable evidence that these are deliberate modifications for a purpose. Were it not anachronistic, it would be tempting to read these as conscious attempts at Austinian perlocutionary acts or Gricean implicatures; instead, it seems more advisable to interpret them in something like Kierkegaardian terms (and we know that Kierkegaard is one of the select group of philosophers that Wittgenstein read and appreciated), and say that Wittgenstein was engaging in his own version of "indirect" communication: an attempt to communicate something to the reader by saying things which have a certain kind of effect, rather than just telling things to the reader.

Wittgenstein's heavy reliance on questions in the *Investigations* is justified by his goal: helping his readers free themselves from their own linguistic-conceptual confusion. Unlike the Socratic Method, which is a *pedagogical tactic* designed to elicit knowledge from its target, Wittgenstein's rhetoric is a *therapeutic strategy* for bringing about a different sort of cognitive change in his readers. When Socrates asks questions, they are directed at his interlocutor; the questions in the *Investigations* are directed at Wittgenstein himself – but it is not always Wittgenstein who is asking them, and that makes all the difference. The ambiguity of not knowing whose voice is asking a question may be unsettling to the reader, but it is a large part of what makes them effective. A question without a speaker seems to hang in midair, without the mooring provided by an agent with an agenda or by the context of a standpoint. When it is unclear who is asking it, a question has to be taken on its own terms rather than as a move in a larger scheme of things. A question without an identifiable speaker is more likely to be taken as the reader's own question, since it is less likely to be read as merely rhetorical, as part of the defense of some position, or as an attack on some other position. When the question is part of an inconclusive, multi-party argument, all of the above points are exacerbated!

Because the *Investigations* is more concerned with unsettling accepted philosophical positions than establishing one of its own, it snipes at them from a number of different standpoints rather than arguing from or for a single standpoint. Consequently, it would be a mistake to take a single passage out of the larger context and read it as a self-contained argument to serve as a case study as we did above for the *Tractatus*. Nevertheless, the *Investigations'* questions and critiques can have a cumulative effect comparable to a successful argument, viz., rationally persuading the reader to reconsider her standpoint. Instead of trying to isolate a discrete argument, we will look at how Wittgenstein's use of the "Slab!" language example evolves across several texts in order to trace the development of his philosophical methodology.

Wittgenstein opens both the *Brown Book* and the *Investigations* by considering a passage on language from Augustine in which learning a language is described as learning names for things. He then introduces the simple "slab language" as one for which Augustine's description initially appears to be correct (but appearances can be deceiving!). There are several conclusions that can be drawn from his discussion, including a complete rejection of the Tractarian argument we just analyzed that there must be ultimate simples and that there is one and only one complete analysis of a proposition (*Tractatus* 2.02, 3.25). Wittgenstein no longer thinks that it is a matter to be decided by a logical grammar whether "Brick!" is to be translated by one word or four. There is no "fact of the matter" when it comes to that kind of analysis. This is a complete reversal of the earlier position, but the larger point we are trying to make concerns the point, not the content, of the argument, and that becomes visible on inspection of its form (admittedly a painstaking and perhaps overly pedantic exercise, but justified, we believe, by the interpretive insights it yields).

The presentation of the slab language in the *Brown Book* is followed by a page-long parenthetical note in the form of an internal dialogue beginning with these words:

Note. Objection: The word "brick" in language 1) has not the meaning which it has in *our* language.—This is true if it means that in our language there are uses of the word "brick" different from our usages of this word in language 1). But don't we sometimes use the word "brick!" in

just this way? Or should we say that when we use it, it is an elliptical sentence, a shorthand for “Bring me a brick”?

Wittgenstein introduces the question of the meaning of the expression “Brick!” as it occurs in the simplified language and as it occurs in our own language, but it is not Wittgenstein’s voice that raises the question of meaning. The last two questions in this excerpt are just the beginning of a run of 8 consecutive questions, peppering the voice articulating the Augustinian model from many different directions. There may be different voices asking questions, but there is a single voice that is expected to answer them. Augustine, or Wittgenstein as his stand-in, is being *interrogated*.

The *Investigations* also begins with Augustine’s account of language as essentially a system of names and language-acquisition as beginning with (if not consisting entirely of) learning names. Two simple languages and situations are then considered, the builders’ slab language from the *Brown Book* and a shopper’s language, elements from which are later merged. The builders’ example is again introduced right away, in §2, and it is the focus of sections 6-10, and particularly 19-20, where the interrogation in the *Brown Book* undergoes a metamorphosis into a critical discussion.

The stage is set for this transformation in the very first section when Wittgenstein bids us think of the way a shopkeeper uses language in order to fill a customer’s shopping list. A labeled drawer locates the kind of items that are on the list, a color-chart provides the information as which instances of that kind are satisfactory, and reciting the memorized sequence of counting numbers tells the shopkeeper when enough of the indicated items have been selected. This story is immediately followed by a dialogue:

–It is in this and similar ways that one operates with words.–“But how does he know where and how he is to look up the word ‘red’ and what he is to do with the word ‘five’?”–Well, I assume that he acts as I have described. Explanations have to come to an end somewhere.–But what is the meaning of the word “five”?”–No such thing was in question here, only how the word “five” is used. (§1)

Notice that in the *Investigations* passage, quotation marks are used to indicate the new voice when it initially appears (“*But how do you know...?*”),

but there are no quotation marks for the second question (*But what is the meaning of the word "five"?*), so even though the question sounds like it should be coming from the same voice's standpoint there is some uncertainty about it. It could well be the same interlocutor but it could also be a new speaker, or Wittgenstein himself raising the question, or a question that a reader might – or perhaps even should – ask. There is something dissonant about the second question. It does not address the shopkeeper's behavior at all, turning instead to meanings and the words themselves. It is, in a word, *philosophical*, and that makes it stand apart as much as if it were written in a different color or font. But the question also stands out because its ownership is ambiguous. It could even be the reader's question – but only because the reader has not yet been freed from asking questions like that!

In the *Investigations*, Wittgenstein often uses quotation marks for things said by imaginary or arbitrary people who present ideas which are then critiqued or used as springboards for internal dialogue. For example "It is as if someone were to say: 'A game consists in moving objects...'" (§3) or "Imagine someone's saying: 'All tools serve to modify something...'" (§14). But his internal dialogue is often as not carried out without those quotation marks, and there are often sentences which seem to belong to a different voice, or where the voicing is unclear. This passage from *Investigations* §6 is typical:

This ostensive teaching of words can be said to establish an association between the word and the thing. But what does this mean? Well, it may mean various things; but one very likely thinks first of all that a picture of the object comes before the child's mind when it hears the word. But now, if this does happen—is it the purpose of the word? –Yes, it *may* be the purpose.—I can imagine such a use of words (or series of sounds). (Uttering a word is like striking a note on the keyboard of the imagination.

In this passage, the words "Yes, it *may* be the purpose" can be read as coming from a different voice but it does not have to be read that way, nor does any other passage in the text. Some passages stretch the limits of single voice narration more than others. Consider this passage:

–And now at some point he continues the series independently–or he does not.–But why do you say that? *so* much is obvious!–Of course; I only wished to say: the effect of any further *explanation* depends on his *reaction*. (§145)

We can imagine Wittgenstein putting on a funny hat in order to speak to himself in this way, or we can imagine that there are several voices, or we can accept the voicing as irreducibly ambiguous.

The ambiguity seems deliberate because there are also passages in the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein uses quotation marks carefully and clearly to mark a second voice, as in §186 and subsequent passages: in that passage, the interlocutor says “What you are saying then, comes to this: a new insight–intuition–is needed at every step...” There are parts of the text where the voicing is unequivocal, as well as places where things are blurred. In the *Blue Book* and *Brown Book*, by contrast, there does not appear to be any of this blurring. In the internal dialogues in the earlier texts, it is never that unclear who is speaking. It is either Wittgenstein or a challenger, and if it is a challenger, the challenge is in quotation marks. Wittgenstein also challenges himself in his own voice, but when he does so he explicitly introduces the challenge with a phrase like “Now one may be tempted to say...” (*Blue Book* 22) or even with both explicit framing in addition to quotation marks, e.g., “you may be inclined to say, “But why...”” (*Brown Book* 17).

We have mentioned one reason why Wittgenstein blurs the speakers’ identities in *Investigations* – because it is easier for the reader to take ownership of ambiguously voiced questions. This would be useful in many contexts, but it is especially important in the context of Wittgenstein’s project and absolutely crucial for Wittgenstein’s target audience: philosophers.

Philosophers who read the *Investigations* can hardly resist trying to discern Wittgenstein’s own position on what they take to be the key issues, like the nature of linguistic meaning, puzzles about reference, the metaphysical status of propositions, what truth is, and so on. Those sections of the text with discussions bearing on these issues will prompt philosophical readers to extract a theory that can then be attributed to Wittgenstein. Theorists will then seek – and, therefore, find – arguments in support of their favored interpretations. This is an effective interpretive approach for many texts.

To the extent that a text is open to it and the resulting interpretation is fruitful for the reader, all is well. However, it is a particularly dangerous trap for reading this text by this author. That sort of overly theoretical – over-intellectualized – reading may succeed putting Wittgenstein into more or less appropriate theoretical pigeonholes, but is almost guaranteed to miss the forest for the trees, i.e., the point for the content.

Wittgenstein repeatedly claims in his post-Tractarian texts that there need be no constants of any sort on the use of a word or sentence. He warns us in the *Blue Book* about being misled by our “craving for generality”, and in *Investigations* 133 he says that “The real discovery is the one that makes me capable of stopping doing philosophy when I want to.–The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.” Wittgenstein’s goal in the *Investigations* is to help his readers stop philosophizing when they want to by helping them to see that there does not need to be one single, true, and all-encompassing system of categories. To achieve this objective, he needs to get his readers to engage with his questions and arguments in a way that will let words affect how they think, *as causes* rather than as the *premises* behind Wittgenstein’s own positions. Of course, there is no single essence to the many different language games that philosophers play, so perhaps it would be better to say that in showing us the way out of our particular fly bottle, he is primarily freeing us from philosophizing in an argumentative key.

The blurring of identities in the *Investigations* makes it difficult to read the text in a purely intellectual way. It is one way that Wittgenstein tries to get us to pay attention to how he uses his words rather than exclusively at what they say. We are put in the position of having to decide for ourselves what to think – and *how* to think – about the issue at hand, rather than simply figuring out Wittgenstein’s take.

Wittgenstein’s philosophy uses words not for argumentation, but as part of a strategy to reject argumentation as an adequate mode of engagement with the issues he wants us to confront. Chief among those issues is how language leads us – *misleads us* – into thinking that things are more precise than they really are, simpler than they really are, and less ambiguous than they really are.

5. Conclusion

Despite the revolutionary changes that distinguish Wittgenstein's early philosophy from his later philosophy, and for all the evolutionary changes from the *Tractatus* through the transitional works to the *Investigations* in his style of argument (and also despite his own reputation for being personally argumentative), there is one constant in Wittgenstein's metaphilosophy: argumentation is *not* an essential part of philosophy. Depending on the context, argumentation may even be antithetical to the goals of philosophy. Even so, argumentation can be a valuable tool for philosophers because its real value is sometimes found in its point rather than its content, its consequences rather than its conclusions. This is especially true of philosophical argumentation precisely because philosophy is not a body of knowledge. It is not a *discipline*.

Arguments can be conceptualized in many ways, but most of the prominent models for argumentation do not fit into the Wittgensteinian understanding of philosophy. Arguments can be understood as proofs, demonstrations of knowledge, but there is no philosophical knowledge, so that kind of argumentation has no place in philosophy. Alternatively, arguments can be seen as attempts at rational persuasion, but even if there were something in philosophy to persuade others of, there would be no reason for doing so, so once again argumentation seems out of place in philosophy. And if we prefer to think of argumentation as a procedure for dispute resolution, the situation is the same: philosophical differences are not *genuine* differences, so consensus and agreement are beside the point. What we need to eliminate is confusion, not difference of opinions or beliefs – and for that philosophical goal, argumentation is still an inappropriate tool.

In sum, there is nothing in the standard logical, rhetorical, and dialectical conceptions of argumentation to recommend it to a Wittgensteinian philosopher.

What emerges is an altogether different appreciation for what arguments can do. In his *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Wittgenstein connects the sense of a proposition in mathematics with its proof. Proofs establish the connections which serve to define the concepts involved. Otherwise, there would be no point in offering different proofs for established theorems. As a corollary, any formula that we end up proving always has a

different sense than the typographically identical formula that we set out to prove! Regardless of how well this characterization fits proofs and propositions in mathematics, it certainly captures an important feature of arguments and their conclusions very well. For example, we learn a lot about a person's social and political positions when we hear her say that she is against the death penalty, but we learn all that and a good deal more when we hear what her arguments are for that stance. And that is exactly what has happened here: the author of the *Tractatus* and the author of the *Investigations* offer the same conclusion – argumentation *per se* is not the right tool for philosophers – but they reach that conclusion by different arguments, which mean that it is not exactly the same conclusion after all.

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Wittgenstein and the Logic of Deep Disagreement

Wittgenstein y la lógica del desacuerdo profundo

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Abstract: In “The logic of deep disagreements” (*Informal Logic*, 1985), Robert Fogelin claimed that there is a kind of disagreement – deep disagreement – which is, by its very nature, impervious to rational resolution. He further claimed that these two views are attributable to Wittgenstein. Following an exposition and discussion of that claim, we review and draw some lessons from existing responses in the literature to Fogelin’s claims. In the final two sections (6 and 7) we explore the role reason can, and sometimes does, play in the resolution of deep disagreements. In doing this we discuss a series of cases, mainly drawn from Wittgenstein, which we take to illustrate the resolution of deep disagreements through the use of what we call “rational persuasion.” We conclude that, while the role of argumentation in “normal” versus “deep” disagreements is characteristically different, it plays a crucial role in the resolution of both.

Keywords: deep disagreement, Robert Fogelin, form of life, reason, *Weltbild*, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Resumen: En “The logic of deep disagreements” (*Informal Logic*, 1985), Robert Fogelin sostuvo que hay un tipo de desacuerdo –el desacuerdo profundo– que es, por su misma naturaleza, impermeable a la resolución racional. Sostiene además que estas dos perspectivas son atribuidas a Wittgenstein. Siguiendo una exposición y discusión de esta perspectiva, reseñamos y obtenemos algunos aprendizajes de las respuestas existentes en la literatura a la perspectiva de Fogelin. En las dos últimas secciones (6 y 7) exploramos el rol que la razón puede, y a veces en efecto lo hace, jugar en la resolución de desacuerdos profundos. Para realizar esto discutimos una serie de ca-

esos, principalmente obtenidos de Wittgenstein, que tomamos para ilustrar la resolución de un desacuerdo profundo a través del uso de lo que llamamos “persuasión racional”. Concluimos que, mientras el papel de la argumentación en desacuerdos “normales” y “profundos” es característicamente diferente, juega un rol crucial en la resolución de ambos.

Palabras clave: desacuerdo profundo, Robert Fogelin, forma de vida, razón, *Weltbild*, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

The belief as formulated on the evidence can only be the last result – in which a number of ways of thinking and acting crystallize and come together. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *LC*, p. 56).

1. Introduction

In “The logic of deep disagreements” (*Informal Logic*, 1985), Robert Fogelin described a kind of disagreement – deep disagreement – which, he claimed, is by its very nature impervious to rational resolution (p. 7). He further claimed that the conception of some disagreements as deep and the claim that these are irresolvable by rational means is attributable to Wittgenstein. “My thesis, or rather Wittgenstein’s thesis,” Fogelin wrote (p. 5), “is that deep disagreements cannot be resolved through the use of argument, for they undercut the conditions essential to arguing.”

This paper explores a Wittgenstenian perspective on deep disagreements. We begin (in Sections 2 and 3) by considering Fogelin’s account and noting some of its overtly Wittgenstenian components. Section 4 clarifies the nature and scope of deep disagreements and their relation to understanding, in order to specify the role that reason can be expected to play in their resolution. Section 5 summarizes and critically evaluates the existing optimistic claims concerning the prospects for a rational resolution of deep disagreements. We argue that the optimists largely misconstrue the nature of deep disagreement, or of reason itself, and thereby misrepresent the role reason can play in their resolution. Finally (in Section 6) we analyse a variety of cases, taken mainly from Wittgenstein, in an effort to gain some insight into the actual operation of reason in disagreements having depth. We conclude (Section 7) with some remarks about the relationship between agreement and reason in the resolution of disagreements both deep and normal.

2. The Nature of Deep Disagreement

Highly elliptical conversation, planning and highly enthymematic reasoning and argument, Fogelin (1985: 3) observed, is made possible only by the great many beliefs and preferences shared by the participants. Fogelin (p. 3) described their role in argument as follows:

They guide the discussion, but they are not themselves the subject of it. ... They provide the framework or the structure within which reasons can be marshaled, where marshaling reasons is typically a matter of citing facts in a way that their significance becomes clear.

Recognizing the role of this “rich background of agreement” (p. 4), Fogelin distinguished between normal (or near-normal) argumentative exchanges and deep disagreements. Normal arguments (p. 3) share two characteristic features: (i) they occur within this background context of broadly shared beliefs and preferences and (ii) there exist shared procedures for resolving them. While Fogelin does not explicitly state this, it seems reasonable to suppose that these resolution-procedures are at least grounded in, if not articulated among, these shared background commitments (cf. Adams 2005: 69).

Deep disagreements, by contrast, are not indicated by their rhetorical or emotional intensity or by their resolvability. Normal disagreements can be irresolvable due, for example, to the ignorance or intransigence of their participants. That said, disagreements which are deep are characteristically and abnormally resolution-resistant in that they “are immune to appeals to facts” and tend to “persist even when normal criticisms have been answered” (Fogelin, 1985: 5).

According to Fogelin, deep disagreements are instead distinguished by an absence of any relevant shared background commitments. Fogelin (p. 5) described this as a clash of “underlying principles” or “framework propositions.” Rather than involving differences of opinion on isolated issues, Fogelin (pp. 5-6) described them as follows:

when we inquire into the root of a deep disagreement, we do not simply find isolated propositions ... but instead a whole system of mutually supporting propositions (and paradigms, models, styles of acting and thinking) that constitute, if I may use the phrase, a form of life.

Deep disagreements, then, are not *inter-framework* disagreements occurring within a framework, language game or form of life, but rather are defined as *intra-framework* disagreements occurring across different frameworks, language games or forms of life.

So far, it might seem as though deep disagreements are wide as well, involving whole systems of claims. Yet Fogelin's examples (the abortion debate and the issue of affirmative action quotas) indicate that the depth of a disagreement may not be due to its breadth. Davson-Galle (1992: 153) concluded that deep disagreements might be isolated to a single claim (an ultimate premise, methodological principle or primitive rule of inference), just so long as that claim is genuinely basic or primary.¹ Similarly, Adams (2005: 69) gave an example of a seemingly narrow but deep disagreement, claiming that so long as "there exists no decision-procedure or other method for resolving [an] inconsistency [of opinions or judgments], the disagreement between the two disputants is deep."²

On Fogelin's picture, background or framework commitments provide the fixed context in which argument can occur, and in which differences of opinion can be articulated and settled. As such, Fogelin treats them as argumentatively basic, or primitive – while they guide the activity of reasoning, they are not subject to it. Instead, Fogelin claimed that "the significance of all of our argumentative devices is internal to normal (or near normal) argumentative contexts" (p. 4).

Since the marshaling of reasons is an inter-framework procedure, this means of resolution is unavailable in the situation of deep disagreement. As a consequence, "to the extent that the argumentative context becomes less normal, argument, to that extent, becomes impossible," and genuinely deep (intra-framework) disagreements are "by their nature, not subject to rational resolution" (Fogelin, 1985: 4-7).

¹ Such a basic difference might clearly have repercussions across the system(s), but any other differences would be traceable to this single difference, and shallow in relation to it. In this way, each party might agree that, were the difference on this one point settled, their other differences would also be settled as a consequence.

² Davson-Galle (p. 153) observes that the existence of a shared decision procedure does not, in and of itself, provide sufficient resources for the resolution of disagreements – so long as the decision procedure itself is not decisive or can be properly applied in several incompatible ways.

3. Wittgenstenian Elements of Fogelin's Picture: Preliminary Observations

To what extent is Fogelin's picture genuinely Wittgenstenian? What are its Wittgenstenian elements?

First, Wittgenstein (*PI* p. 225) accepted that there is a kind of disagreement (e.g., over the correct result of a calculation) which Fogelin would later call "highly normal." These disagreements, Wittgenstein claimed, can be decided 'with certainty;' yet he also claimed that disputes of this kind are essentially "rare and of short duration" and thus not normally characteristic of ordinary argumentative situations. Highly normal disagreements are a-typical and, for the most part, straightforwardly uninteresting both philosophically and argumentatively.

Fogelin further claimed that deep disagreements arise from, and amount to, differences in forms of life. If this is so, then it would seem that they are genuinely basic, or fundamental differences, for Wittgenstein (*PI*, p. 226) held that "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – forms of life." What is basic, for Wittgenstein – what lies at the end of all paths of justification and reason-giving are ways of doing – sets of practices learned through training (*OC* § 110; cf. §§ 204, 559; *PI* § 217).

A second Wittgensteinian element of Fogelin's picture is the idea that argumentative words have their meaning only within some roughly fixed and established framework of linguistic and other normative practices. Indeed, the very evidentiary and semantic relationships drawn upon in argument, and used to identify and evaluate reasons, are inter-framework relationships (*OC* §§ 105, 82; *AWL*, p. 26).

These two ideas – that forms of life are basic and that reason-giving argument can only occur within a system – come together in Wittgenstein's notion of a *Weltbild* ("world-picture").

Roughly, for Wittgenstein, in learning our mother tongue we become enculturated into a form of life which is comprised of a rich set of ways-of-doing and an attendant *Weltbild*. This, in turn, amounts to learning a vast set of beliefs about the world (*OC* §§ 83, 141). The *Weltbild* and the way of life are connected through the very grammar of language (*OC* § 140). While providing a certain description of the world (if you will), the *Weltbild* we learn is not something which we rationally accept by a process of reasoning,

experiment or argumentation (*OC* § 94). Rather it is simply acquired in the process of learning a language – through practice, imitation, training and instruction (*OC* § 144). To learn a language is, to use Austin’s phrase, to learn how to do things with words, and this involves not only, e.g., expressing feelings, asking questions, giving instructions and telling stories, but making judgments and inferences as well. For example, we learn concepts by learning to apply them in certain ways (rather than others), and this typically involves making and accepting certain judgments, and not making, or rejecting, others (*OC* §§ 81, 82). It not only within this set of practices, but against this background *Weltbild*, that our actual inquiry, discovery, debate and argumentation occurs (*OC* §§ 162, 167).

If deep disagreements are really intra-framework disagreements arising from different forms of life and world-pictures, then they seem well beyond the scope rational mediation. It would seem, then, that there are pronouncedly Wittgensteinian elements to the picture Fogelin presents, and that, initially, these elements support the thesis that no rational resolution to deep disagreements is possible.

4. The Nature of Deep Disagreement Revisited: A Partly Corrosive Clarification of the Problem

To use Campolo’s (2007: 1) apt phrase, then, Fogelin’s thesis is that “there is a kind of disagreement which will always turn our spade” – which is constitutively impervious to rational resolution. Yet, why call this disagreement at all? What makes disagreement possible, if resolution – indeed the conditions essential to the marshaling of reasons – is impossible?

4.1. Fathoming the Depths of Deep Disagreement

Not all differences are disagreements. Disagreement is the contrary of agreement. Thus, it would seem that disagreement is only possible where agreement is also possible. Yet, agreement is only possible where understanding is possible, and understanding, being the result of successful communica-

tion, is only possible where communication is possible. So, it would seem that there are a number of important preconditions to what might be called *meaningful disagreement*.

Whatever other differences can occur, I cannot disagree with a lion (*PI*, p. 223). I can ‘differ’ (if you will) with him. I can be ‘opposed’ by him; he can obstruct me or hinder me. But when I ‘differ’ with a lion it is because I cannot ‘find my feet’ with him. I cannot communicate with him at all; we do not share a form of life. Because of this, I cannot reason with him either. But nor can I ask him questions, give him instructions, or tell him a story. Now there may be people with whom we cannot ‘find our feet.’ Yet, it is no failure of rational argumentation that it cannot resolve differences between parties incapable of communicating with each other.

Rational disagreements (and their attendant failures), then, can only occur within the context of meaningful disagreements. The ability to meaningfully disagree with one another is partly rooted in our ability to understand one another. And understanding, like other linguistic abilities, is, according to Wittgenstein, rooted in a common set of activities and practices. “The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language” (*PI* § 205; cf. *PI* §§ 23, 99). Thus, in order for meaningful disagreement to occur, a significant amount of mutual understanding and shared behaviour must already exist and operate in the background to provide the framework in which communication can occur.

This seems to place a lower limit on the extent to which disagreement can occur. People whose forms of life, and their attendant *Weltbild*, do not sufficiently intersect cannot disagree – not even deeply. As such, as much as such differences cannot rationally be repaired, it is no failure of rationality or rational argumentation that it cannot span a gulf which language itself cannot traverse. As Lugg (1986: 47) rightly points out, “the interesting case is the one in which individuals are able to argue yet unable to settle their differences, i.e., the case in which there exists a framework for disagreement but not one for bringing about its resolution.” Meaningful deep disagreements seem to occur either at the intersection of two different but overlapping forms of life, or within a single but heterogenous *Weltbild*, where different, similar but incompatible language games are in play.

4.2 Disagreement and Understanding

If someone doubted whether the earth had existed a hundred years ago, I should not understand, for *this* reason: I would not know what such a person would still allow to be counted as evidence and what not. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *OC* § 231)

Suppose, then, that there were two peoples, otherwise alike in practices, each of whom had the homophonic utterance “blah.” Suppose further that in one culture utterances of this sort prompted ‘affirming behaviour,’ whatever that might turn out to be, say, nodding the head and smiling. But in the other culture, suppose that this same utterance prompted ‘rejecting behaviour,’ say, shaking the head and frowning. (Notice that the very *detectability* of any disagreement, deep or otherwise, presupposes some shared practices including asserting and denying, accepting and rejecting.) What reason have we for saying that the two peoples *disagree* about the acceptability of the *same* claim, assertion or proposition? First we require some evidence that the two homophonic utterances *have the same meaning* in the two different language games.

Consider now that a variety of other utterances employed by each of the two peoples were considered in series, yet for each of these there was absolutely no accord as to whether the newly considered expression was positively relevant, negatively relevant, or irrelevant to the original target expression. At some point, we will reach the conclusion not that these peoples disagree deeply about the acceptability of some claim, but instead that they mean two completely different things by this homophonic expression. The very same evidence that points to the conclusion that they disagree deeply about something, also points to the conclusion that they are doing different things with that expression.

Considerations such as these might lead one to the Davidsonian ([1974] 2001) conclusion that radically different conceptual schemes are either *a priori* impossible (since translatability is a condition of truth specification) or methodologically precluded (since attempts at understanding demand hermeneutic charity). Against this, Hacker (1996) claims that pronounced differences in conceptual schemes are not only conceivable but are distinct from differences of opinions. A disagreement in concepts, Hacker (pp. 302-303) writes:

is akin to a disagreement in measures, whereas a disagreement in judgments is akin to a disagreement in measurements. [But] Is it intelligible to claim that we can *never* allocate an apparent difference in judgement to a difference in the measure used, as opposed to a disagreement in the measurement executed? That is tantamount to the claim that we cannot distinguish between the determination of a sense and the application of a sense.

While such classifications cannot always be made with confidence in problematic cases, it turns out that this distinction becomes crucial to appreciating the nature and depth of deep disagreements. Normal disagreements are like disagreements about measurements (the application of concepts), while deep disagreements arise from differences in measures (the determination or adoption of concepts).

If deep disagreements involve differences in the determination of concepts, can they be meaningful? On Wittgenstein's transitional account of meaning, propositions belonging to different *Satzsysteme* cannot have the same meaning.³ For example, suppose that "[t]he meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification" (Schlick, 1936: 341; cf. p. 351; cf. Wittgenstein *PR* § 43; *WWK* pp. 243 ff.). On this picture, just as there are no meaningful problems (questions) which are in principle insoluble; nor are there any meaningful disagreements which are in principle irresolvable. Here there is no possibility for meaningful, deep disagreement.

One might be tempted to think, then, that when expressions belong to different language games there is similarly no prospect for meaningful deep disagreement. This would be a mistake. The mature Wittgenstein held that, while language use is a rule-governed activity, the meaning of an expression is "not everywhere circumscribed by rules" (*PI* §§ 68 ff.) and using language is not "operating a calculus according to definite rules" (*PI* § 81). Deep disagreements occur when there is a partial but incomplete accord in the disputants' use of an expression as well as a partial but significant variation. The depth of a disagreement is due to fact that some aspects of the use of an

³ For an overview of Wittgenstein's "*Satzsysteme* conception of language" and its relationship to a verificationist account of meaning see Shanker (1987: 40 ff.) and Medina (2001). We take *Satzsysteme* to be the conceptual ancestors of language games (cf. Shanker 1987: 9 and *passim*).

expression are either indeterminate or incongruous (e.g., disputants might disagree about what should count as evidence for the claim). The meaningfulness of a disagreement is due to the similarities in the use of an expression (e.g., disputants might agree about the consequences of the acceptability of the claim). Thus, deep disagreements tend to occur on the fringes of understanding. Importantly, these are the very features that make deep disagreements impervious to the normal operations of reasons and evidence.

To illustrate this type of case, consider an example Wittgenstein (*LC*, pp. 55-56) contemplated during his *Lectures on Religious Belief* (c. 1938) about a religious person who believes in Judgement Day and a person who does not.

If you ask me whether or not I believe in a Judgement Day, in the sense in which religious people have belief in it, I wouldn't say "No. I don't believe there will be such a thing." It would seem to me utterly crazy to say this. And then I give an explanation: "I don't believe in ...", but then the religious person never believes what I describe. I can't say. I can't contradict that person. In one sense, I understand all he says – the English words "God", "separate", etc. I understand. I could say: "I don't believe in this," and this would be true, meaning I haven't got these thoughts or anything that hangs together with them. But not that I could contradict the thing. You might say "Well, if you can't contradict him, that means you don't understand him. If you did understand him, then you might [contradict him, or agree with him]." That again is Greek to me. My normal technique of language leaves me. I don't know whether to say they understand one another or not. These controversies look quite different from any normal controversies. Reasons look entirely different from normal reasons. They are, in a way, quite inconclusive. The point is that if there were evidence, this would in fact destroy the business. Anything that I normally call evidence wouldn't in the slightest influence me.

While normal controversies might be settled by the evidence, this controversy would require being persuaded to acknowledge the determination of a new concept of evidence. Yet, Wittgenstein does not say that such a disagreement is impervious to the operations of reason; rather he claims that reasons function differently in such cases.

In Section 6 we consider some cases Wittgenstein offered as illustrations of the way reasons actually function in the resolution of disagreements

which might be called “deep.” Before doing this, though, we review and, from a Wittgensteinian perspective, critically evaluate the existing accounts of the role of reasons in resolving deep disagreements.

5. Prospects for the Rational Resolution of Deep Disagreements

Fogelin’s respondents can be divided into optimists and pessimists according to whether they find there to be good prospects for the rational resolution of deep disagreements.

5.1. Theoretical and Methodological Reasons for Optimism

Fogelin’s initial respondent, Lugg (1986) argued that even in cases of deep disagreement, non-rational persuasion is not the only means available to the disputants. Instead, he offers an account, ably described by Turner and Wright (2005: 31), whereby “interlocutors can build to a common understanding by retreating to neutral ground, untangling, coordinating and synthesizing ideas, examining assumptions reviewing alternative proposals and negotiating conflicting demands.” Further, Lugg reminds us that in many cases the rational resolution to a disagreement may be suspension of judgment (and perhaps an accompanying resumption of inquiry) rather than the endorsement or rejection of the claim(s) at issue.

Ultimately, Lugg (p. 50) seeks to wrest us of Fogelin’s picture that “argumentative exchanges must be always normal (and hence rational) or nonrational (because abnormal).” To this end, Lugg recommends that we take a new perspective on the role of agreement in argumentation. “What we happen to agree upon is important because it provides a starting point for discussion between us, not because it dictates what the outcome of our discussion should be” (Lugg, p. 49). Agreement, for Lugg, is best conceived of as a goal or accomplishment of argumentation, rather than a necessary starting place or precondition of argumentation.

Taking a rationalist, epistemic approach Feldman (2005: 19) construes deep disagreements as “disagreement[s] about a framework proposition.” The kernel of Feldman’s argument is his denial of the claim that “framework propositions are somehow beyond rational assessment” (p. 21) which

he sees as being at the root of Fogelin's thesis that no rational resolution is available for deep disagreements. Normal disagreements are rationally resolvable, and deep disagreements differ from normal ones only in that they are about framework propositions. Yet, Feldman argues (p. 20) that any account of the difference between framework propositions and ordinary ones is either implausible or fails to place framework propositions beyond rational assessment.

Finally, Memedi (2007) argued that another resource available might be to introduce a "third party" to the discursive situation of the deep disagreement, in such a way that this third party might serve as the genuine audience of the disputants, and a rational arbiter thereby 'normalizing' the dispute.

5.2. Prudential Reasons for Optimism

Adams (2005: 67) argues that, from the point of view of the participant arguers, there is an epistemic problem about "knowing when a disagreement is deep," and that in this context "the parties to ... [such disputes] have strong reasons to commit to the idea that they can be rationally resolved in spite of the possibility that such disagreements might ultimately turn out to be deep in Fogelin's sense."

In support of this view, Adams claims that parties to a dispute ought not to be satisfied with a consensus achieved through non-rational persuasion. Such a resolution, he claims (p. 74), is both substantively and procedurally problematic. "Consensus' is not simply the name of an outcome but an achievement – something produced by a form of collective ... reflection and deliberation, a process of being mutually convinced by reasons" (p. 73). Further, since the only distinguishing feature of deep disagreement is "exhausting [all] the possible resources of normal discourse" (p. 76), there is no *a priori* way of determining whether a disagreement is genuinely deep. "The only way, in other words, to come to know whether discourse is normal is to proceed as if it is" (p. 76), and to do otherwise is to abandon reason. Because of this, Adams argues that even when a disagreement *appears* to be deep, by being intractable and resolution-resistant, disputants ought to continue to treat it as though it were normal.

5.3. A Wittgenstenian Pessimism?

Given that deep disagreements are disagreements across language games, our position is that the optimism of Fogelin's respondents is largely misplaced – at least, on a Wittgenstenian view of the issue – because each variously mischaracterizes the nature of deep disagreement or the nature of reason, thereby misrepresenting reason's role and potential in resolving such disputes.

To begin, consider Memedi's proposal to normalize deep disagreements by introducing a "third party" rational arbiter.⁴ Recall though, that by definition deep disagreements are ones whose irresolvability is not due to the ignorance or intransigence of their disputants. As such, adding an impartial interlocutor cannot provide resolution-resources not already available to the initial disputants. At best, the third-party might be conversant in the different language-games involved in the deep disagreement, thereby possibly adding a degree of understanding not initially present. Yet since the irresolvability of disagreements is due to the language-games in which they occur and not the language-users engaged in them, this added understanding could only help to clarify the nature of the disagreement, rather than indicate or prescribe its resolution.

Similarly, there is a problem with Feldman's construal of deep disagreements as differences of opinion about framework propositions which treats a difference in measure (concept determination) as though it were a disagreement in measurement (concept application) when in fact their logical, and therefore rational, character is of a different order. On Feldman's view, in "turning our spade" we loose some single stone – the framework proposition at issue – from the "sedimentary layer of the unchallenged" and displace it into the shifting sands or even "the river of thought" itself, realizing that it is not "intrinsically" fixed (cf. *OC* §§ 96, 97, 99). (For Wittgenstein no proposition is beyond assessment intrinsically, but only insofar as it is functioning foundationally.) While surely this 'loosing of some single stone of the logical grammar' occurs, and is part of the ordinary development of

⁴ For a further commentary on Memedi's proposal see Campolo (2007).

language, in treating this circumstance as though some “rational resolution” were available, Feldman’s presentation assumes that the evidentiary relations which determine where the stone eventually lands already exist—as though there was already some “proper” measure for their evaluation which determines the “rational response” to the question of the stone’s final placement. (For Feldman (p. 16; emphasis added) rational resolution follows the “*proper* evaluation” of arguments and evidence, and is available when “there is some way of presenting arguments and evidence to which *the rational response* is a resolution of the disagreement.”) Yet, given the nature of the situation – one in which the language-game(s) in play do not specify a resolution to the issue – such evidentiary relations do not yet exist; and they do not yet exist because *we* have not determined them. We have not stipulated the use of the concept (in this circumstance).

Further, Feldman’s (p. 19) ‘expansion’ of the concept of evidence to include the sorts of activities and practices that at one time held the stone in place obscures and misconstrues the relationship of those activities to the concept. They do not provide reasons or evidence for the application of a concept in one way rather than another. Rather they provide the very semantic content of the concept by stipulating the norms of its application. Thus, Fogelin is quite right to say that such practices precede reasons and instead provide the very conceptual context in which reason-giving occurs. Finally, Feldman’s construal of the situation ignores the fact that it will not have been merely one stone that is loosed into the stream. Such a stone was embedded in a way of doing (thinking and acting) (*OC* § 144). Once loosed, all the connected ways of doing will similarly be affected by the stone’s displacement. Thus, what is at issue is not merely the acceptability of some claim but an entire way of doing.

Lugg attempts to supplement the supply of rational resources available to deep disagreeers in such a way that the reach of their reasonings is not limited by their initial agreements. Yet, in a mistake similar to Feldman’s (above), Lugg seems to misconstrue the nature of those agreements that prescribe the reach of our reasoning. As Wittgenstein tells us, “It is not agreement in opinions but in form of life” (*PI* § 241). Thus, while the results of argumentation (whether deep or normal) are not limited or determined by

the opinions disputants share at the outset, they are limited by the shared framework (*Weltbild*) in which those opinions have meaning.

To elaborate, Campolo (2005: 41) observes that reasoning, and therefore reasoning together, is an *activity* whose function is inherently reflective, reparative or remedial. The activity of reasoning is invoked when some other activity in which we are otherwise smoothly engaged is somehow interrupted. Like any other activity, reasoning is based in training. “[T]he path to expertise, competence, and intersubjectivity is paved with training, practice, study, apprenticeship, immersion in a tradition or way of doing something. Reasoning together, on its own, cannot bring about any of this – it first gets its foothold once all of this is already in place” (Campolo 2005: 45). Thus, our ability to reason together successfully is dependent on our shared training – our enculturation into a form of life and attendant *Weltbild*. “[R]easoning together is not some sort of magically creative act that always produces efficacious results. It is rather a way of drawing on shared resources, and as those resources get thinner, reasoning loses traction” (Campolo 2005: 41). Deep disagreements differ from normal disagreements in that they are characterized by a divergence, incongruity or other difference in the forms of life of the disputants. This difference limits both the availability and traction of rational resources in the resolution of deep disagreements, and thereby dictates that the operation of reason in deep disagreement will be characteristically different than in normal ones where there is no such limitation on the *relevant* rational resources.

Lugg’s optimism fails to recognize the role played by the shared background commitments in determining the ‘resolution space’ of a disagreement, and because of this, as Turner and Wright (2005: 31) point out, it fails to recognize that two very different sorts of things are going on in normal as compared with deep disagreements.

Fogelin’s point is not that what goes on in such dialectical free-for-alls cannot involve argument, or even that the resulting resolution cannot sometimes be represented as accomplished through nothing but serial arguments. It is that everything rests on how much is shared to begin with. And when that is not enough to resolve the conflict through the

simple giving of reasons against a stable background of understanding and competence, it will require *altering this background in non-incremental ways*, which is *another sort of thing entirely*. [Our italics.]⁵

In view of considerations like these, Campolo (2005: 46) further recommends a prudential attitude of caution when approaching resolution-resistant disagreements. To *naively* treat a deep disagreement as though it were shallow is to *unwittingly* employ reasoning ungrounded in practice *as though* it were so grounded. Failure here is often the best outcome, since apparent successes will be due to luck, which the reasoner will mistakenly attribute to skill. Thus, it is far better to rightly recognize reason's limits than to rely on it in circumstances where it has no purchase.⁶

To summarize the argument thus far: (i) Fogelin, following Wittgenstein, highlights a kind of disagreement that he calls “deep;” (ii) he ascribes to reason a stereotypically different role in deep versus normal disagreements; and (iii) because of this, “deep disagreements” thus defined allow only for nonrational persuasion in their resolution. We proceeded to argue that (iii) neither follows from (i) and (ii) nor represents Wittgenstein's position. The following section illustrates, through a series of examples, mostly inspired by Wittgenstein, various ways that “rational persuasion” (as we call it) can operate in disagreements having depth.

⁵ We suggest connecting “another sort of thing entirely” with *OC*§ 300: “Not all corrections of our views are on the same level” and “altering this background in non-incremental ways” with *RFM*, p 237: “The limit of the empirical—is *concept-formation*.” The preceding sentence is explained on the same page: “... When I say: ‘If these derivations are then same, then it *must* be that ...’, I am ... Recasting my concept of identity.// But we *do not seem* [our emphasis] ... to alter the form of our thinking, so as to alter *what we call ‘thinking*.’ We seem always to be fitting our thinking to experience [cf. Quine].” For more on this, see *LFM*, pp. 73, 166, 174, 273-74, 289, 290, 292 and *OC* 126-31.

⁶ As should be evident, in general we find the approach taken by Turner and Wright (2005) and Campolo (2005, 2007) to be both broadly representative of a Wittgenstein attitude, and correct in its pessimism – or at least its scepticism of misplaced optimism – concerning the normal rational resolvability of deep disagreement. Our thoughts here owe much to their welcome influence.

6. Wittgenstein, Rationality and Deep Disagreements

At the end of reasons comes persuasion. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *OC*§612)

Wittgenstein speaks of ‘persuasion’ where what is put forward has the power to induce one’s interlocutor to accept a new concept-formation, whether doing so involves a change in the person, as in moral and religious conversion, or does not do so, as in the case of new mathematical proofs. (Dilman, p. 17)⁷

6.1. Training & Persuasion

Logically as well as temporally, enculturation into a *Weltbild* is prior to being able to give reasons to justify or explain something; logically as well as chronologically, being able to give and understand reasons is prior to what Wittgenstein called “persuasion,” namely a sort of rhetoric in the service of concept-formation.⁸ As with the sort of training or pre-linguistic instruction he talks about early in the *Investigations*, persuasion has to do not with the (correct or incorrect, justified or unjustified) use of terms but with “preparation for their use” (*PI* §§ 26, 49).

Persuasion and training have to do with introduction of new concepts, and therefore with induction into new language games of judgment and an expanded conception of what might count as a reasons or justification for a judgment.

In giving reasons as premises of an argument we’re applying (or presupposing) acknowledged concepts. Giving reasons in that sense is seeking to justify a knowledge-claim.

Both training and persuasion are preparations for a (new) language game. But while training is entirely pre-rational (pre-explanatory, pre-justificatory), persuasion can involve reasoning of a kind – analogical and “dialectical,” rather than demonstrative reasoning from commonly acknowledged principles and matters of fact, or experimental (inductive) reasoning from “hard data.”

⁷ This section owes much to the collection of essays from which this passage is quoted. A member of “the Swansea school,” the late Ilham Dilman was an outstanding philosopher and Wittgenstein scholar.

⁸ Here we use “rhetoric” to mean “persuasive discourse” without any pejorative connotation.

Is a *mobile* a kind of sculpture? ... the *square root of 2* a kind of number? These are questions about whether to enlarge one's store concepts, whether to add a new instrument to one's "toolbox of language." Refusing to do so might deserve the criticism: "rigid" "impractical," "unimaginative"—but not "mistaken." It would be a mistake in language (a conceptual mistake) to wonder whether paradigm examples of what we all learned to call "sculptures" and "numbers" really *are* numbers and sculptures.

"World-Picture"

1

Imagine a small child asking his grandparents whether the earth really existed before they were born. "Yes, of course!," they respond, "all the while conscious that ... one cannot answer [his question] by way of one particular piece of instruction, but only by gradually imparting to him a picture of our world" (*LWPP- II*, p. 53).⁹

"The earth is enormously old;" "We all have a mother and a father;" "Humans, like other animals, have internal organs;" "Water eventually boils when heated." These are a few of the propositions descriptive of the "river bed channeling our stream of thought," which Wittgenstein refers to as our world-picture: "I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for [our] research and as such also goes unmentioned" (*OC* § 167).

To give someone our picture of the world would be to bring him into harmony with our ways of making true or false judgments about the world. If that someone is a small child learning his native language, this would happen by way of training. If asked, "But is it really true that the earth is as old as you say?" we might say "yes;" and if reasons are demanded, we might say "We can't give you any, but if you learn more you'll think the same." If that doesn't come about, that would mean that our interlocutor will not, for example, be able to learn history.

⁹ The quoted passage is preceded by the following intriguing remark: "We say 'Undoubtedly it is so', and don't know how very much this certainty [*Sicherheit*, sureness] determines our concepts."

Could an adult believe that the earth came into existence 50 years ago?
We would have to imagine that he has

grown up in quite special circumstances and been taught that the earth came into being 50 years ago, and therefore believed this. We might instruct him: the earth has long ... etc.—We should be trying to give him our picture of the world.// This would happen through a kind of persuasion. (OC§ 262)

For example, we might convince him of the greater simplicity or symmetry of our picture, whereupon he might say something like “*That’s* how it must be.”¹⁰

2

Is it wrong for me to be guided in my actions by the propositions of physics? ... Isn’t precisely this what we call ‘a good ground’?... // [But] supposing we meet people who did not regard that as a telling reason. Instead of the physicist, they consult an oracle. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, OC§§ 608-09)

Oracles do not fit into our modern scientific world-picture: where we consult a scientifically-trained professional for guidance, those people consult an oracle. But as fellow human beings, they’re surely no strangers to practical, inductive reasoning, and so we should be able, in principle, to prove to them the practical advantage of our approach.

Suppose they acknowledge the ‘advantage’ but give it little weight. That might strike us as unjustified. But can we justify what *we* do, save by reference to something else that we don’t question? Can we give those people a sufficient reason why they should act *this way* rather than *that*, except that by doing so they bring about such-and-such a situation, which again has to be an aim they *accept*?¹¹

¹⁰ A rough paraphrase of OC§92b.

¹¹ A paraphrase of CV, p. 16 c, 1931. Cf. OC§378: “Knowledge is in the end based on acknowledgment.” And cf. PPO, p. 363, where Rush Rhees recalls the following comment by Wittgenstein on a presentation by Benjamin Farrington:

[W]hen there is a change in the conditions in which people live, we may call it progress because it opens up new opportunities. But in the course of this change, opportuni-

It would be only reasonable to reject a practice proven to be based on beliefs that are simply erroneous. Think of how Semmelweis disproved the old theories of contagion and revolutionized our medical practice.¹² But is the practice in question really like that, i.e., really based on beliefs (theories, correct or mistaken propositions)? Wittgenstein argued (plausibly, we think) that a people will give up a practice after recognizing an error on which it was based only when calling their attention to it is enough to turn them from their way of behaving. “But this is not the case with the religious practices of a people and therefore there is no question of an error” (*PO*, p. 121).¹³ And the practice of oracle consulting in question *may* be much more akin to the religious practices of a people than to hygienic practices based on a theory.¹⁴

Of course there are all sorts of slogans that have been used to support our practices and to combat¹⁵ those of ‘primitive peoples’ – slogans such as

ties which were there before may be lost. In one way it was progress, in another it was decline. A historical change may be progress and also ruin. There is no method of weighing one against the other to justify ... speaking of “progress on the whole.”

“[When Farrington responded] that even ‘with all the ugly sides of our civilization, I am sure I would rather live as we do now than live as the caveman did,’ Wittgenstein replied: ‘Yes of course you would. But would the caveman?’” (Cf. *CV*, p. 60 h.)

¹² See Hempel (1966: 3-8).

¹³ From “Remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough*.” Wilde (1976: 86) explains that, for Wittgenstein, the rituals described by Frazer “are not based on beliefs such as that there are ghosts, so that if this belief is shown to be false, then the practices are shown to be without foundation; rather, both the belief and the practice are the natural expression of responses which are neither true nor false.”

¹⁴ Cf. *LRPP*- II, p. 86: “There is a ‘why’ to which the answer permits no prediction. That’s the way it is with animistic explanations, for instance. Many of Freud’s explanations, or those of Goethe in his theory of colors, are of this kind. The explanation gives us an analogy. And now the phenomenon no longer stands alone; it is connected with others, and we feel reassured.” Compare *CV*, p. 83, c. 1949:

It’s true that we can compare a picture that is firmly rooted in us to a superstition; but it’s equally true that we always eventually have to reach some firm ground, either a picture or something else, so that a picture which is at the root of all our thinking is to be respected and not treated as a superstition.

On distinguishing a “respectable” from a “superstitious” use of a picture, see *LC* (p. 59) and “Remarks on Frazer’s *Golden Bough*,” (*PO*, pp. 125, 153). So “a picture firmly rooted in us” is *not beyond rational criticism*. For it may be positively harmful if it “holds us captive” (*PI* §115) and blinds us to possibilities of sense (*CV*, p. 60 h) or “important aspects of things” (*PI* § 129).

¹⁵ According to Wilde (p. 85) “Wittgenstein contrasts ‘combating’ the other with giving him ... reasons why he *must* see the facts in one connection rather than another [on pain of being to that extent unreasonable or incompetent].” Cf. Rhees (2003, p. 171): “We may think

“The White Man’s Burden.” And shouldn’t we object *on moral grounds* to that and to any other slogan smacking of an arrogant cultural imperialism? For we do not want to deny that we must sometimes either object to a practice or else forfeit our moral integrity. We might feel obliged to object to it if we come to see it as cruel and unjust – though we must admit that such charges may stem more from self-serving chauvinism than genuine moral seriousness.

Morality

Suppose I say Christian ethics is right [and Nietzsche’s wrong]. Then I am making a judgement of value. It amounts to adopting Christian ethics. It is not like saying that one of these physical theories must be the right one. The way in which some reality corresponds—or conflicts—with a physical theory has no counterpart here. (Wittgenstein as quoted in Rhees 1965: 24)

That we should not infer a relativist doctrine from preceding lines is clear, we think, from the paragraph following them: “If you say there are various systems of ethics you are not saying they are all equally right. This means nothing. Just as it would have no meaning to say that each was right from his own standpoint. That could only mean that each judges as he does.” But “each judges as he does” is a tautology and therefore says nothing.

Though we may grant that Wittgenstein has not formally committed himself to a relativist thesis, we may still be dissatisfied. For we can agree that no ethical system conforms or conflicts with how things are *in the way* a physical theory does but still want to ask whether there’s *another way*? In other words, can there be truth or falsity in the *way* someone judges?

Our short reply to these difficult questions – one we think is suggested by but not articulated in Wittgenstein’s writings – is that the “conformity to reality” of an ethical system is to be found in the meaningfulness of the con-

we can say that our scientific world-picture is right because the world is so constituted. But that adds nothing to saying that our inductive methods get the results that they do. We learn from nature, but nature does not dictate *how* we learn from it.” *Cf. RFM*: pp. 237, 379, 387 379 (on “the limits of empiricism”) and *CV*, p. 60 (“Science: enrichment and impoverishment. *One* particular method elbows all the others aside.”)

cepts it articulates, as exhibited by their use-in-practice – a “use-in-practice” not to be understood in a narrowly pragmatic sense.¹⁶ To clarify what we have in mind here, consider these remarks by Stephen Mulhall on Thrasymachus, the Sophist appearing in Book I of the *Republic*. According to Mulhall (2007: 34-35), when Thrasymachus says that justice is nothing more than whatever is in the interests of the powerful,

he is in fact doubting the reality of justice altogether. [For,] if what we talk of as ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ merely reflects the balance of power in a given social group, ... language could suffer the loss of the concept of justice altogether without losing its ability to register the reality of things in our human social world.¹⁷

When it comes to “registering reality,” the concept of justice – on that interpretation of it – is an idle wheel in the machinery of language. We take it that Socrates wanted Thrasymachus to reflect on his life, asking himself whether what is clearly an idle wheel *in theory* (in the Sophist’s cynical account of it) is also an idle wheel *in practice*. “You must look at the *practice* of language, then you will see it” (*OC* § 501, emphasis added) – then you will see the *logic* of language, its possibilities of sense.

We might say, with Socrates, that Thrasymachus needed weaning away from rhetorical speech-making and initiation into philosophical dialogue. Recall that, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates contrasted *thinking philosophically* with *thinking self-assertively*. Now, wouldn’t thinking philosophically, in that sense, be a *logically necessary condition* for ordinary, “in-practice” certainty about *moral reality* (about the authority of moral values to limit self-assertion) – though *not*, admittedly, a logically necessary condition for the commonsense certainties about *material reality* that make up our *Weltbild*?

¹⁶ Cf. *LFM*, pp. 247-49.

¹⁷ Mulhall (2007) explores the idea that the various modes of human discourse are “dialogically interconnected ways of being responsive to reality.” He draws heavily on the work of Wittgenstein’s student and friend, Rush Rhees. Compare Dilman (pp. 17-20) for an illuminating discussion of Plato’s *Gorgias*.

Religion

1

“At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.)” (OC § 612). Well, what *does* happen? The following remark from *Culture and Value* (p. 64; c. 1947) suggests one possibility:

It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it’s a belief, it’s really a way of living, or a way of assessing life. It’s passionately seizing hold of this interpretation. Instruction in a religious faith, therefore, would have to take the form of a portrayal, a description, of that system of reference, while at the same time being an appeal to conscience. And this combination would have to result in the pupil himself, of his own accord, passionately taking hold of the system of reference. It would be as though someone were first to let me see the hopelessness of my situation and then show me the means of rescue until, of my own accord, or not at any rate led to it by my instructor, I ran to it and grasped it.

Can we speak here of a *rational* means of persuasion?—It’s not of course rational in the purely objective, impersonal sense appropriate in the scientific context. Nor is it necessarily irrational either, if that implies “deserving of rebuke.”¹⁸

The missionary, or preacher, preaches the Gospel and appeals to his hearer’s conscience. We take it that this “appeal to conscience” presupposes a moral sensibility in the would-be convert. The preacher will appeal to this sensibility, trying to evoke a sense of sin, etc., and then present his message as “a means of rescue.” His rhetoric will not necessarily rely on bribes, conditioning, or sophistry. But the reasons he gives for accepting his message will be more like motives (“reasons of the heart”) than rationales (evidence in support of propositions).

¹⁸ Compare *LC*, p. 58.

Although fervent religious believers may well be “irrational” in the economic, prudential sense of the word, but they are not *necessarily* “irrational” if saying that implies either in-practice uncertainty on their part about “bedrock principles” of our common *Weltbild*, or believing things about the facts of the world in despite of scientific evidence.¹⁹

2

I believe that every human being has two human parents; but Catholics believe that Jesus only had a human mother ... and give no credence to all the contrary evidence.... // [W]e should not call anybody reasonable who believed something in despite of scientific evidence. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *OC* §§ 239, 324)²⁰

Shall we say the Catholic belief is irrational? As “reasonable people,” we don’t doubt that all human beings have two parents: it goes without saying and is part of our *Weltbild*. If asked to say what *our* belief is based on, however, we might answer: on our own experience and on everything we’ve been taught about biology. But is that really a proof? If we’ve proven a belief, then we have a right to claim that that we *know* it to be true, and that those who believe the opposite are mistaken. For “I know” relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. But if what we believe is of such a kind that the grounds that that we can give are no surer than our assertion, then we cannot say that we know what we believe.²¹

¹⁹ “[D]ogma is expressed in the *form* of an assertion, and it is unshakable, but at the same time any practical opinion *can* be made to harmonize with it; admittedly more easily in some cases than in others” (*CV*, p. 28, c. 1937; italics added).

Early and late, Wittgenstein seemed unable to make sense of ascribing “theoretical content” to theological assertions. Consider the following journal entry from 1937:

I believe: the word “believing” has wrought horrible havoc in religion. All the knotty thoughts [in Kierkegaard] about ‘the [absolute] paradox’ ... and the like. But if instead of “belief in Christ” you would say: “love of Christ,” the paradox vanishes, i.e., the irritation to the intellect ... // It’s not that now one could say: Yes, finally everything is ... intelligible. ... [I]t is just not *unintelligible*. (*PPO*, p. 247; cf. p. 225).

²⁰ Cf. *OC* §§ 218-19: “Can I believe for a moment that I have never been in the stratosphere?. No. ... There cannot be any doubt about it for me as a reasonable person—That’s it.—” Compare the following remark by Peter Winch, reminiscent of Aristotle on *phronesis*: “[T]he *reasonable person* is not defined by reference to logic; logic is defined by reference to what the kind of person we take to be ‘reasonable’ does or does not accept.” (1991: 229)

²¹ Much of the preceding paragraph is a close paraphrase of *OC* §§ 240, 243. Cf. D.Z. Phillips (1999: 54):

So, philosophical (metaphysical) sceptics will contradict commonsense philosophers who claim to know that every human being has two parents, on the grounds that they cannot justify their claim. And Catholics will contradict them as well, though for quite different (doctrinal, religious) reasons. Of course, both philosophical skeptics and Catholic believers would have trouble making sense of anyone who, out of any special (philosophical or religious) context spoke of doubting whether we all have a human mother and father. Like the rest of us, they would then look for a cause rather than a reason for such a “crazy” utterance.

The religious, biblical, reasons for believing that Jesus was born of a virgin do not, of course, have any weight in a biological investigation into the possibility of parthenogenesis. But *should* the biologist’s evidence against the possibility of human parthenogenesis oblige *reasonable* Christians to put aside the allegedly traditional belief that Jesus was, “literally,” born of a virgin? While we’re not sure what to say here, we wonder if even the most conservative believer in the supernatural nature of His paternity would entertain even the possibility that the claim of “the pregnant girl next door” to be a virgin might be true—on the grounds that, “Well, it happened once before.”

3

Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and heretic. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *OC* § 611)

We agree with Turner and Wright (2005: 34, fn. 3) that “a good illustration of this point can be seen in the current debate over evolution and intelligent design creationism (IDC). Proponents of both views tend to insult the other side as much as engage with it.” But is the IDC proponent’s opposition to modern evolutionary theory based on an arguably unreasonable disregard

We would not say ‘I know that’s a tree’ when looking at a familiar tree in our garden. For if one said that, the question would arise of *how* one knew. There is nothing more to which one could turn. But this is not because the proposition cannot be doubted but because it cannot be doubted when it holds a certain place in our practice. What is ungrounded is not a proposition but a practice.

of scientific evidence or principles of rational inquiry? Not necessarily—as the continuation of Turner and Wright quotation suggests: “Just as IDC proponents tend to use the design vocabulary to express a certain spiritual commitment, proponents of evolution often use Darwinian vocabulary to simply express a secular world-view.” If that’s the foundation of the dispute, then the IDC proponent is not *really* “believing something in despite of scientific evidence.”

Perhaps we could say that what *really* separates them is a difference in *Weltanschauung* rather than in *Weltbild*. For a *Weltbild* (as Wittgenstein uses the term in *OC*) relates to what, in a given culture, “no reasonable person would question,” whereas a *Weltanschauung* (as we understand the term) refers to an individual’s personal (though not necessarily unreasonable) attitudes and commitments vis-a-vis the common life and practice of the culture that formed and sustains her.²²

Although the difference between them is one of Faith (or religious *Weltanschauung*) rather than Reason, that doesn’t mean that rational discussion between them is pointless. Reasonable criticism could be directed at scientists (or their popularizers) who claim to deduce morally abhorrent conclusions from their science (think of Social Darwinism) or who use apparently demeaning, reductive language on the authority of their science (“Man: the Naked Ape”). And believers might be persuaded that there is no real opposition between modern science *as such* and the faith they live by.

²² In his “Lecture on Ethics,” Wittgenstein said that in making “an absolute judgment of value,” it is essential to step forth as an individual and speak in the first person.” We think same could be said to be essential in professing adherence to a certain *Weltanschauung*. Compare *CV*, p. 20, c. 1931:

It is sometimes said that a man’s philosophy is a matter of temperament, and there is something in this. A preference for certain similes could be called a matter of temperament and it underlies more disagreements than you might think.

Disagreements arising from differences in *Weltanschauung* (“a man’s philosophy”) are to be distinguished from the more impersonal disagreements over “the main problems of philosophy.” The latter problems (as Wittgenstein understands them) arise from misunderstanding “the workings of our language” (*PI*§109), and of the *Weltbild* associated with those workings. (For more on the *Weltbild* / *Weltanschauung* distinction, see Rhees (2003: 109-110).)

In the following argument Simone Weil (p. 90) provides, in effect, a particularly interesting illustration of what we have been calling *concept-formation*; as we read her, she is demonstrating the formation of a concept of divine reality:

I have not the principle of rising in me. ... It is only by directing my thoughts toward something better than myself that I am drawn upwards by this something. If I am really raised up, this something is real.//No imaginary perfection can draw me upwards ... For an imaginary perfection is automatically at the same level as I who imagine it ...

Weil's *principle of rising* acted for her as an ideal of purity and holiness—as both a standard against which she measured herself and a focus of worshipful attention and humble aspiration. But to what are the words “principle of rising” supposed to refer? Not to any physical object, of course; and if not to a subjective referent, such as an ideal in her mind—then to *what?*²³

We take it that what Weil's reasoning actually accomplishes is the fixing of a concept—a determination of what it might *mean* to believe in the *mind-independent reality* of that “principle of rising.” It might mean acknowledging it as a *divine* standard or *godly* ideal. This acknowledgement would show itself in the believer's revaluing her values and reorienting her life in light of that *godly* ideal. Nor can one acknowledge the authority of this ideal while at the same time taking it to be nothing but a product of human fancy.

Developing her argument, Simone Weil says that “what is thus brought about by directing my thought is in no way comparable to suggestion”:

If I say to myself every morning [she continues] “I am courageous ...”, I may become courageous, but not with a courage which conforms to what, in my present imperfection, I imagine under that name. ... It can only be

²³ Aquinas (and other metaphysically inclined “classical theists”) would probably suggest that Weil is referring to “a *subsistent* ideal” —something that (in the words of the “Fourth Way”) “causes in all other things their being, their goodness, and whatever other perfection they have.” As far as we can see, however, such an account would add nothing intelligible to Weil's argument.

a modification on the same plane, not a change of plane.// A sensitive person who by suggestion becomes courageous hardens himself ... [but] Grace alone can give courage while leaving the sensitivity intact. (*ibid.*)

But how does Weil know that Grace alone (i.e., divine grace) can give such “miraculous” courage? We suggest that, in spite of the “surface grammar” of what she says, she is not to be understood as proposing a causal explanation of that courage (on the model of, say, “Steroids alone could account for that athlete’s performance”). Rather, she is explaining what it might *mean* to speak of that extraordinary courage her something as “a gift of God.” In other words we are suggesting Weil’s claim that Grace alone can give such courage needs to be understood as “a grammatical remark,” rather than as what it might seem to be—an empirically falsifiable hypothesis. Not bound by the ordinary logic of “courage” her argument is a persuasion aimed at extending our concept of courage to include “*supernatural* (God-given) courage.” Her argument represents “a grammatical movement” in thought; it expresses, not “a quasi-physical phenomenon” but “a new way of looking at things” (Cf. *PI*§401).²⁴

Mathematics & Science

Wittgenstein speaks of ‘persuasion’ where what is put forward has the power to induce one’s interlocutor to accept a new concept-formation ... (Dilman, p. 17)

1

“Deep” seems an appropriate adjective to characterize disagreements that can only be resolved through the kind of persuasion Dilman takes Wittgenstein to be talking about. Resolving such a disagreement will consist, not in getting one party to reject a false or improbable opinion, but in one party being persuaded to accept a new concept-formation—i.e., to acknowledge a new rule about what it does or doesn’t make sense to say and do.

²⁴ The preceding is re-written version of Brenner (2009: 29-30).

Conversion to a new concept-formation is not something *arbitrary*, if that implies “pointless”; nor is it *irrational*, if that implies inappropriately motivated. This might be illustrated by John Wisdom’s story in *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics* of how his tutor persuaded him that 3×0 equals 0. It struck the young pupil as more “logical” to say that it equals 3. His tutor persuaded him otherwise, not by intimidation (pressing his authority as teacher), but by way of an argument by analogy:

Three multiplied by three = three threes ($3 \times 3 = 3 + 3 + 3$),

Three multiplied by two = two threes ($3 \times 2 = 3 + 3$),

Three multiplied by one = one three ($3 \times 1 = 3$),

Therefore, by analogy,

Three multiplied by zero = zero threes ($3 \times 0 = 0$).

The young Wisdom had an argument too: that if you multiply 3 x ’s by 0, that would be equivalent to *not* multiplying them at all (“multiplying them by nothing”)—not a bad argument, abstractly considered! He was led to abandon it by being given a perspicuous representation of the math he was being taught, so he could understand how – not “ $3 \times 0 = 3$ ” – but “ $3 \times 3 = 0$ ” fits into the system he was being taught. Had he not been persuaded but persisted in going his own way, his elders might have been forced to conclude that he was unteachable when it comes to arithmetic.

2

The Pythagoreans were brought up with an arithmetic in which the only numbers were integers and fractions of integers. Imagine the controversy that must have arisen when one member of the brotherhood pointed out that the hypotenuse of the 1-1 Right Triangle is neither an integer nor a fraction of integers. The controversy needn’t have consisted in one party offering non-rational inducement to the other; it consisted, one might imagine, in pointing out analogies and disanalogies between established numbers and these new candidates for the title, and in ‘weighing’ the analogies and disanalogies in the light of the place of numbers in their home context of measurement and calculation. Now, of course, we include “irrationals” among the ranks of numbers with no trace of the aversion and hesitation

which (we can imagine) led some of the Pythagoreans to call them by that name.

3

The river-bed of thoughts may shift.... [W]hat men consider reasonable or unreasonable alters. At certain periods men find reasonable what at other periods they found unreasonable. And vice versa ... (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *OC* §§ 97, 324)

Must there be a causal connection between the state of one's brain and the thought one thinks? A serious dispute over this question might well be called a "deep disagreement." Neither party might understand the difficulties of the other, while each feels that what is at stake is a radical difference about how to proceed in science.

It might be objected that no rational, well-informed investigator is likely to take the negative side of that dispute, on the grounds that everything we know today points to an exceptionalness correlation between psychological and neurological processes. Against this, Wittgenstein pointed out that it was also once widely believed that everything pointed to the idea that classical mechanics must be able to explain everything. But did it, he asks? No—just everything the scientists of the time concentrated on. Nor is it true today that everything points to the correlation you speak of. It's just that everything filling contemporary scientists' mental vision points to it.

Following Wittgenstein, we oppose the notion of some god-given, a-historical ideal of "exact science" or "adequate causal explanation." We want to say that at different times we have different such ideals, and that none of them is absolute. Nor does this commit us to the thesis that where there is conflict over fundamentals, all reasoning comes to an end. For we think that, for example, the proponent of "the contemporary scientist's mental vision" *may well* be able to give us persuasive *and appropriate* reasons why *current* research programs should be guided by the ideal they set out—"appropriate reasons" as opposed to scientifically irrelevant, irrational inducements.²⁵

²⁵ The preceding paragraph is a condensation of material from Brenner (2003: 18-23), which in turn is based on the material from Wittgenstein referenced there. Cf. *RFM*, pp.

Agreement in Judgment: Complete & Incomplete

1

Concepts : judgments :: measures : measurements. But, just as a method of measurement requires a certain uniformity in the results of measurement, so too a way of judging requires a measure of “agreement in judgments.”²⁶ *How much* agreement is required depends on the type of concept involved, as shown by the kind use a term has in the language.

Arithmetic is characterized by a virtually unanimous agreement in the results of calculations performed by people acknowledged to have mastered certain techniques (addition, subtraction, etc.) In contrast, psychological (and ethical) concepts allow far more “indeterminacy in judgment.” Learning to apply such concepts is a matter not of mastering a technique but of learning “good judgment,” by way of paradigm examples and “rules of thumb.”²⁷

2

Is fear of relativism at the back of the worry about the persistence of deep disagreements? Relativists don’t seem to respect the law of excluded middle: they appear to “want it both ways.” But Wittgensteinians aren’t enemies of reason in the sense that they want to question the law of excluded middle. They do, however, want to point out that it is not equally applicable to everything we call a judgment. For our judgments do not all have a determinate ($p \vee \sim p$) sense in every context. In some cases, our judgments are “better or worse” (plausible or implausible, insightful or “just weird”)—rather than “true or false” or “calculated correctly or incorrectly.” To highlight one important example, such indeterminacy is to be found in some of our judgments about the feelings of others.

237-38: “The limit of the empirical is—concept-formation” and *ibid.* p. 379: “The limits of empiricism [and pragmatism]—Do we live because it’s practical to live? ... think because thinking is practical?”

²⁶ Wittgenstein argues this point at *PI* §§ 142, 242 and in *PII*ixi, pp. 226 ff.

²⁷ See *PI*, pp. 227-28.

Some “neurophilosophers” claim that such indeterminacy is a *defect* in our psychological concepts – one threatening the very rationality our everyday psychological judgments.²⁸ Their claim, we suggest, is based on the dubious view that all cognitively significant judgments are propositions with determinate sense ($p \vee \sim p$), and that all results of a competently employed method of judgment *must* agree (differences being, in principle, traceable to a mistake).

Wittgenstein’s disagreement with such philosophers might be called a “deep disagreement.” He tries to persuade them to see the “raggedness” of our everyday (“folk”) psychological concepts as *appropriate and desirable* rather than as a defect. This requires getting them to “think outside the box” – the box of the only reasons they’re used to calling relevant.

Ben Tilghman (2001, pp. 248-49) provides a nice illustration of how such a persuasion might go:

That there is only better and worse judgment about the genuineness of human feeling is not a shortcoming, but is a feature of the concept of genuineness. We must remember that it is not merely a fact about mathematics that there is agreement in judgment about the results of calculation, for that agreement is a constituent of our concept of mathematics. If there were no such general agreement, then whatever it is that we are doing with columns of figures would not be what we call adding and subtracting. Similarly, if there *were* strict procedures to determine the correctness of judgments about other people, then whatever it is that we would be doing in thinking, for example, “I am sure she loves me,” is not what we would call judging the genuineness of human feeling. At the edge of materialism we reach one limit of language. Were we to venture beyond the edge our lives would be unrecognizable.²⁹

Of course, not everyone will find Tilghman’s Wittgensteinian ‘persuasion’ persuasive. But is *that* a defect? Or shall we say: “If there were a strict procedure for determining whether it’s *really* a defect, then applying it is not what we would call doing philosophy (or investigating a *deep question*).”

²⁸ For example, Paul Churchland (1988: 179-80).

²⁹ “The *limits of my language* mean the limits of my world” (*TLP* 5.6). “And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life” (*PI* § 19).

Isn't "defect" a family resemblance term? And aren't "neurophilosophers" such as Paul Churchland trying to persuade us to make *one* member of the family lord it over the others? But could we "find our feet" with people who actually used a language that was "reformed" in a way they recommend, i.e., with all the indeterminacy eliminated from our "psychological" concepts?—"Concepts with fixed limits would demand a uniformity of behavior" (*RPP-II* § 683). And do we really want that?³⁰

"Deep Disquietudes"

When we do philosophy we are like savages, primitive people, who hear the expressions of civilized men, put a false interpretation on them, and then draw the queerest conclusions from it. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *PI* § 194)

[As reported by Moore, Wittgenstein] said that what he was doing was a "new subject" ... [and] that though what he was doing was certainly different from what, e.g., Plato or Berkeley had done, yet people might feel that it "takes the place of" what they had done – might be inclined to say "This is what I really wanted." (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *PO*, p. 113)

The traditional "problems of philosophy" are often thought to generate the deepest of deep disagreements. Yet Wittgenstein would persuade philosophers to adopt a fresh conception of the 'depth' of these problems. On Wittgenstein's view, philosophical problems "have the character of depth. They are deep disquietudes; their roots are as deep in us as the forms of our language and their significance is as great as the importance of our language" (*PI* § 111).

Wittgenstein suggested that philosophical problems call for a "grammatical investigation" – one that sheds light on the problems by clearing away misunderstandings concerning the use of words, misunderstandings "caused, among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language" (*PI* § 90). An example of an analogy that appears to have captivated and mislead more than one philosopher is the comparison of certain knowledge with a building or tower resting on

³⁰ For more on this, consult *RPP-II*, *LWPP-II*, and *PI*, pp. 223-29.

unshakable foundations. In this picture we find the roots of the following idea: “‘You can’t go on having one thing resting on another; in the end there must be something resting on itself.’ (The *a priori*) Something firm in itself” (*PO*, p. 407). To this Wittgenstein gives this curt (but we think reasonable) response: “I propose to drop this mode of speech as it leads to puzzlements” (*ibid.*). Notice that Wittgenstein does not engage in a refutation of a thesis through argument, but rather proposes the changing of a conceptual picture – the very way a subject is conceived – by changing the language applied to the subject. His *reasons* (implicit in this case) are that the problems (disquietudes) arising from the first picture do not arise in the second; thus the problem is dissolved—rather than solved through the discovery and presentation of evidence.

To sketch another example: Wittgenstein recommended comparing mathematical equations to *rules*, rather than – as their surface grammar suggests – to *truth-claims*. For this, he urged, would help us escape the disquieting back-and-forth debate over what these propositions might be *about* – while at the same time highlighting their important *normative* function in practices that permeate our lives as rational animals. Here again Wittgenstein is encouraging philosophers to put aside a captivating but misleading comparison or “picture.”

Philosophical argumentation of the kind Wittgenstein practiced and recommended is inherently persuasive – its function is dialectical rather than demonstrative. It serves, not to establish a conclusion, but to reorient our thinking. Rather than proving something (e.g., a “platonic” as contrasted with a conceptualist theory of numbers), Wittgenstein offered philosophy a “means of rescue” from its metaphysical “fly-bottles.”³¹ Admittedly, the persuasions found in his writings are not rational in the sense of “certifiable within standard rules of deductive and inductive inference.” But “rational” surely has a broader sense than that. Wittgenstenians will call it a family resemblance term and argue for including their philosophical persuasions in the family. And a few of us will even suggest that some of “what happens

³¹ The “therapeutic,” *ad hoc*, and (we think) appropriately *ad hominem* character of philosophical argumentation as Wittgenstein practiced it is suggested by the following striking remark from *CV*, p. 43c, 1942: “At present we are combating a trend. But this trend will die out, superseded by others, and then the way we are arguing against it will no longer be understood; people will not see why all this needed saying.”

when missionaries convert natives” might also be included. This will be a hard sell, or course, given that philosophers tend “constantly to see the method of science before their eyes” (*BB*, p. 18), imagining that in it they can see the very essence of rationality.

“What I’m doing is also persuasion. ... I am in a sense making propaganda for one style of thinking as opposed to another. I am honestly disgusted with the other” (*LC*, pp. 27-28). It appears that Wittgenstein failed to persuade mainstream philosophers to share that disgust and adopt the style of thinking his later writings demonstrate. It looks like they have yet to lose faith in the traditional styles of thinking and methods of investigation. The depth of the disagreement dividing them is to be found, not in a difference of opinion, but in their different ways of conceiving and practicing the activity they both call “philosophy.”³²

7. Concluding Remarks

“So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?” – It is what human beings *say* that is true and false; and they agree in the *language* they use. This is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *PI* § 241)

In distinguishing deep from normal disagreements, Fogelin (p. 5) argued that deep disagreements by their very nature “cannot be solved through the use of argument, for they undercut the conditions essential to arguing”—a view which he took himself to share with Wittgenstein. In our view, Fogelin’s characterization of deep disagreements has distinctively Wittgensteinian features which make them characteristically distinct from normal disagreements. Yet, these features do not lead to the conclusion that they are rationally insoluble; instead they reveal that reasons operate differently in the resolution of deep disagreements than in normal ones.

³² “I still find my own way of philosophizing new ... – This method consists essentially in leaving aside the question of *truth* and asking about *sense* instead.” Compare that remark from a 1929 journal (*CV* rev. Ed (1998), p. 1) with the following from the 1939 *Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics*, p. 103: “I am not trying to persuade you to change your opinion. I am only trying to recommend a certain sort of investigation.” (We find it particularly evident that mainstream Anglophone philosophers of religion have not been persuaded to adopt the sort of investigation Wittgenstein recommends.)

Deep disagreements are rooted in differences in concepts (measures, understood as the determination of sense or conceptual content) rather than judgments or opinions (measurements, understood as the application of concepts). Because of this deep disagreements involve partial differences in forms of life and their attendant *Weltbild*, the extent of which determines the depth of the disagreement. Not only are such disagreements primitive or basic, but they occur on the horizon of understanding, whereby there is minimally only a partial accordance in the use of a concept and a partial discordance or indeterminacy. Because of this difference in concepts, deep disagreements are unresponsive to the operation of reason in normal disagreements (i.e., disagreements within a fixed conceptual framework).

Highly normal disagreements can be settled, in a relatively straightforward sense, on the basis of the evidence. Despite a difference of opinion about the acceptability of some claim at issue, disputants' judgments about the acceptability and relevance of reasons (premissory and consequential claims) by and large agree. Without this agreement in judgments *in paradigm cases* reasoning and argumentation could not occur. Such agreements in these *paradigms of judgment* are founded, ultimately, in the training that is preparatory to the normal application of concepts and comprise part of the very content of the concept itself – they allow us to “go on together.” Normal disagreements presuppose an established and shared system of measurement which sets in place the logical and evidentiary apparatus by which reasons are evaluated. As such, there is an important sense in which they provide the conditions necessary for the marshaling of reasons.

In deep disagreements this shared conceptual apparatus is not established. Disputants do not share a common grounding in training and they are inclined “go on differently” – to apply similar concepts in divergent and incompatible ways. These inclinations can be motivated and can strike the disputant as “natural,” “logical” or “intuitive.” Disagreements of this sort are unresponsive to the ‘evidence;’ they cannot be resolved by marshaling reasons in any ‘normal’ sense – and not merely because the disputants have different “logical inclinations.” Rather, their irresolvability and unresponsiveness to the ‘evidence’ is principally due the fact that the evidentiary apparatus does not exist; the grammar of the concept (including the relevant conceptual and inferential relations) has yet to be determined or specified.

The settling of how this is to be done needn't be either irrational or

nonrational. Instead, it involves a kind of “persuasion” which we have explained as a form of rhetoric in the service of concept-formation. While the type of reasoning and argumentation involved here is dialectical rather than demonstrative, amorphous rather than uniform, indeterminate rather than binary, it is neither fraudulent nor relativistic nor arbitrary. To be “won over” through such persuasion involves accepting a certain picture of the world; it involves learning to apply concepts in a way to which one was, perhaps, not initially inclined, and then “recognizing” (understanding, judging, appreciating) that *this* use of concepts is befitting of one’s projects – it “allows one to go on.” The resultant conceptual shift will involve a new understanding of things; it will be holistic rather than singular – commonly it will involve broad reaching changes in one’s activities (including judgments, inferences, explanations and attitudes). Similarly, it will be made for holistic rather than individual ‘reasons.’

Recall that the persuasive success of the argument by analogy offered by John Wisdom’s math instructor depended on his young pupil’s being able to recognize and appreciate the significance of the relevant similarities he pointed out. In a normal, “post-instructional” case, our ability to decisively resolve differences over the results of a calculation presupposes our being able to go on in the way we were taught. But when we are genuinely unable to go on together “in the same way,” we reach a limit not only of the meaningful “giving of reasons” but also of mutual understanding and communication.

In distinguishing deep from normal disagreements Fogelin called our collective attention to a pair of ideas at the very core of the practice of arguing: agreement and reason. Yet, if Fogelin’s views, and our Wittgenstenian interpretations of them, are correct, argumentation theorists have largely misconstrued the roles of agreement and reason in the rational resolution of disagreements, whether normal and deep. Typically, rational agreement is taken to be the outcome of reasoning properly employed. And this is so in the case of agreement in *opinions*. Yet, deep disagreements seem lie beyond the reach of this picture of the operation of reasons. Here, reasoning seems to become detached from agreement. Yet, closer inspection shows that the *activity* of reasoning itself (as a form of concept use) depends on an agreement in *ways of doing*. And it is this agreement which ultimately “grounds” and preserves the life of all our rational, conceptual endeavors— “persua-

sions in the service of concept-formation” at the frontiers of our conceptual world, as well as “normal argumentation” in the interior.

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Wittgenstein's influence on the development of informal logic¹

La influencia de Wittgenstein en el desarrollo de la lógica informal

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Abstract: The perception exists that Wittgenstein was influential in the development of informal logic. That perception is probably based on several beliefs. One is the belief that Wittgenstein influenced some of those who are associated with the development of informal logic, like Toulmin. A second basis for the perception might stem from Wittgenstein's association with what is sometimes called "ordinary language philosophy." Informal logic emerged and has sometimes presented itself as "the logic of ordinary/everyday argument." The purpose of this paper is to determine the degree to which the perception mentioned above is borne out by the facts. In the paper, I present the concept of informal logic that to be used in this paper, after which I make some comments about the task of interpreting Wittgenstein's views and indicate the approach that I adopt. Next I discuss Wittgenstein's influence on Toulmin, Hamblin, and Scriven—all of whose views about logic and argument have been important in the development of informal logic. I then turn to one direct application of his ideas, stemming from Fogelin's 1985 paper "The Logic of Deep Disagreements." The conclusion that I come to is that Wittgenstein's influence on the development of informal logic has been indirect rather than direct, more a matter of "the spirit" behind informal logic than direct influence on any of its seminal thinkers.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, informal logic, Toulmin, Hamblin, Scriven, Fogelin.

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Resumen: La percepción de que Wittgenstein influyó el desarrollo de la lógica informal existe. Que esta percepción está probablemente basada en varias creencias también. Una es la creencia que Wittgenstein influyó algunos de aquellos que estamos asociados con el desarrollo de la lógica informal, como Toulmin. Una segunda base para esta percepción podría afincarse en la asociación que se hace de Wittgenstein con lo que es llamado a veces como “filosofía del lenguaje ordinario”. La lógica informal emergió y ha sido presentada ella misma como “la lógica de la argumentación ordinaria/cotidiana”. El propósito de este trabajo es determinar hasta qué grado la percepción mencionada está respaldada por los hechos. En este artículo, presento el concepto de lógica informal, después de lo cual hago algunos comentarios respecto de la tarea de interpretar las perspectivas de Wittgenstein e indico el acercamiento que adopto. Luego, discuto la influencia de Wittgenstein en Toulmin, Hamblin, y Scriven –todos cuyos ángulos sobre lógica y argumentación han sido importantes en el desarrollo de la lógica informal. A partir de esto me concentro en una de las aplicaciones directas de sus ideas, obtenida del trabajo de Fogelin de 1985 “The Logic of Deep Disagreements”. La conclusión a la que llego es que la influencia de Wittgenstein en el desarrollo de la lógica informal ha sido indirecta más que directa, más materia de “espíritu” que una influencia directa en algunos de sus pensadores seminales.

Palabras clave: Wittgenstein, lógica informal, Toulmin, Hamblin, Scriven, Fogelin.

I. Introduction

The perception exists that Wittgenstein was influential in the development of informal logic. That perception is probably based on several beliefs. One is the belief that Wittgenstein influenced some of those who are associated with the development of informal logic. Chief among these would be Toulmin who was Wittgenstein’s student and wrote *Wittgenstein’s Vienna*. However, as we shall see, the influence of Wittgenstein on the work for which Toulmin is best known in informal logic circles—*The Uses of Argument* (1958)—appears to be negligible. In his paper, “A Social History of Informal Logic” (2009), Blair makes several references to Wittgenstein when he is explaining the origins of Informal Logic. As early figures who were important in the development, Blair names Michael Scriven, whom he identifies as having been a student of Wittgenstein. In his paper for the First International Symposium, “The Philosophical and Pragmatic Significance of Informal Logic,” Scriven makes a key reference to Wittgenstein:

In short, logic has—with the emergence of informal logic—been called to its proper task, away from the pathology. It may or may not be in time to

save philosophy. The Wittgensteinian revolution in philosophy provided an opportunity for salvation. But—generally speaking—the opportunity was missed. (1980:148)

That connection leads to what might be a second basis for the perception: Wittgenstein's association with what is sometimes called "ordinary language philosophy." In the same paper referred to above, Scriven refers to Wittgenstein as "the great philosopher of ordinary logic analysis" (148). Informal logic emerged and sometimes presented itself as "the logic of ordinary/everyday argument."

The purpose of this paper is to determine the degree to which the perception mentioned above is borne out by the facts. Immediately, however, I must acknowledge two significant challenges. First, informal logic has been understood in a number of quite different ways (Johnson (2006)), so I will need to specify how I will understand it for the purpose at hand. Second, it has become common to distinguish "the early Wittgenstein" of the *Tractatus* from "the later Wittgenstein" of the *Philosophical Investigations(PI)* (and other works). While there is little material in the *Philosophical Investigations* that deals directly with logic or argumentation, there are comments that seem to have a bearing on both. Thus in (#100) Wittgenstein refers to becoming "captivated by the ideal"—which seems to be a reference to the views that he and Russell were developing in the period from 1914-1918, where a certain ideal of logic and its role in philosophy emerged. Wittgenstein also explored thoughts about logic in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. Such ideas might have had an influence on those involved the development of informal logic.

In this paper, I deal exclusively with the contributions of the later Wittgenstein. But even with this limitation, the problem of interpretation remains. For there are a variety of interpretations of how to read the *Philosophical Investigations*. The best that I can do is acknowledge that mine is not the only interpretation, and then proceed to lay out my own views.

In the next section, I present the concept of informal logic that will be used in this paper, after which I make some comments about the task of interpreting Wittgenstein's views and indicate the approach that I adopt. Next I discuss Wittgenstein's influence on Toulmin, Hamblin, and Scriven—all of whose views about logic and argument have been important in the

development of informal logic. I then turn to one direct application of his ideas, stemming from Fogelin's 1985 paper "The Logic of Deep Disagreements" [reprinted in *Informal Logic* Vol.25, No.1 (2005): 3-11].

The conclusion that I come to is that Wittgenstein's influence on the development of informal logic has been indirect rather than direct, more a matter of "the spirit" behind informal logic than of direct influence on any of its seminal thinkers.

2. Matters Methodological: Defining "Informal Logic" and Interpreting Wittgenstein

In this section I undertake to clarify how I understand "informal logic" and the tack I take on interpreting Wittgenstein.

Informal Logic

For my understanding of informal logic, I use the Blair and Johnson (1987) definition of informal logic as "...the normative study of argument. It is the area of logic which seeks to develop standards, criteria and procedures for the interpretation, evaluation and construction of arguments and argumentation used in natural language," (p. 148).² Since the original definition, we made several modifications. In Johnson and Blair (2000) we added (i) the idea that the standards were non-formal (which we explained); (ii) we added the terms "analysis and critique"; and (iii) we changed "arguments" and "argumentation used in natural language" to "argumentation in everyday discourse." In (2002), we broadened our description to include what Weinstein calls "stylized arguments ... *within the various special disciplines*" (1990: 121). Herewith a few comments on the revised definition.

First, it should be noted that the term "informal logic" is a loose descriptor of an inquiry that been defined or understood in a variety ways (see Johnson 2006).

² I want to thank Dr. Rongdong Jin for pointing out discrepancies in the various definitions of 'informal logic' that Blair and I have proposed. I am distressed by these infelicities but of the belief that they are stylistic variations rather than substantive differences.

Second, the “in” of informal was originally conceived to signal a kind of negation of formal (deductive) logic. At the start of the initiative, there was an underlying dissatisfaction with, if not downright hostility to, formal logic.³ There were questions about its ability to illuminate natural language arguments, “arguments on the hoof” (as Woods would later refer to them), and many thought that the validity requirement was too stringent, that there could be perfectly good arguments that were not valid; viz., inductive arguments and appeals to authority, for example. Some of this antipathy towards formal logic may have been due to Wittgenstein, who has some caustic comments about mathematical logic in *Remarks*, as we shall see.

Third, an obvious point is that “informal” must take its meaning by way of contrast to “formal.” Yet this point was not made for some time, hence the nature of informal logic remained somewhat opaque, even to those involved in it. It is helpful to have recourse to Barth and Krabbe (1982: 14f.) where they distinguish three senses of the term “form.” By “form₃,” Barth and Krabbe mean to refer to “procedures which are somehow regulated or regimented, which take place according to some set of rules.” Barth and Krabbe say “we do not defend formality₃ of all kinds and under all circumstances.” Rather “we defend the thesis that verbal dialectics must have a certain form (i.e., must proceed according to certain rules) in order that one can speak of the discussion as being won or lost” (p. 19). In this third sense of “form.” informal logic can itself also be formal. That is, there is nothing in the Informal Logic initiative that stands opposed to the idea that argumentative discourse should be subject to norms, rules, criteria, standards and/or procedures. What was opposed is that the idea that the sole logical criterion for *evaluating arguments* is validity—the view that validity (understood as necessary consequence; i.e., as it being the case that the conclusion of a good argument follow necessarily from its premises) is a necessary condition for a good argument.

Interpreting Wittgenstein

I have already indicated that my focus here will be on the so-called “later Wittgenstein.” Among the interpreters I have found helpful: Pitcher (1966),

³ The source of dissatisfaction can be traced to Bar-Hillel (1969). See Johnson and Blair (1980: 27, n.10).

Kenny (1973), Hunter(1973), Hallett (1977), among others. Only recently have I learned of Oscari Kuusela's major effort: *The Struggle Against Dogmatism: Wittgenstein and the Concept of Philosophy* (2008), which, it seems to me, has significant implications for how Wittgenstein is to be understood. In Kuusela's view, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein is attempting to do philosophy without lapsing into "the dogmatism that we fall into so easily in doing philosophy" (#131). But what does Wittgenstein understand here by "dogmatism"? This is no simple matter. For starters, it seems to me that one cannot do better than understand him to be referring primarily to his own earlier views in the *Tractatus*. In (#89-131) of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein is looking back at the views he took in the *Tractatus*. For example, in #97, he writes:

Thought is surrounded by a halo.—Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world; that is, the order of possibilities which must be common to both world and thought. But this order, it seems, must be utterly simple.

In the *Tractatus* period, he believed that logic was the key to the issue of significant discourse, and to the limits of what can be said.⁴

If I am right in my conjecture, one of the principal factors that dispose us philosophers to dogmatism is deductivism. Now there are various ways to characterize deductivism (Godden, 2005). Here I take it as the idealization of deductive reasoning. In the *PI*, where he is criticizing his earlier views as having "sublimed" logic (yet to be explained), we will see that he is opposing what he calls "the hardness of the logical 'must'" (#437). The logic in question here is the logic of the *Principia Mathematica*—viz., mathematical logic.⁵ If we hypothesize a connection between this logic and the dogmatism that he sees himself as having fallen victim to in the *Tractatus*, that

⁴ (Note the occurrence in the above of "must.") According to Ambrose, "... Wittgenstein singled out as the earmark of every philosophical difficulty, the presence of the words 'cannot' or 'must' or their equivalent. These are words that *signalize* a philosophical obsession." (Fann, 1967: 266-267).

⁵ It seems to me important to distinguish the following: mathematical logic, symbolic logic, and formal deductive logic. But I cannot undertake that task here.

would suggest that one of Wittgenstein's principal contributions to informal logic might lie in his challenging deductivism, and precisely because he senses the connection between the dogmatism and deductivism (thought of here as the idealization of deductive reasoning). This view squares with that of Blair and Johnson (1980) who identify the attempt to find an alternative to formal deductive logic as one of the important projects in which informal logic is engaged. In the next section, I expand on these ideas.

3. Wittgenstein's Views about Logic

In this section, I offer an interpretation of the claim made by Wittgenstein that he (and Russell) has been guilty of, as he says, "subliming the logic of language." I take that claim to lie at the core of Wittgenstein's criticisms of the work that he and Russell were engaged in during 1912-1914 which later manifests in Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World* [(KEW)] (1915) and *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* [(PLA)] (1918) and Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921). If I am right in my interpretation of what this claim means, then Wittgenstein's indictment of those logical doctrines and *the logical ideal that undergirds them* opens the door to the claim I wish to arrive at—that is, that there is reason to believe that Wittgenstein might have been sympathetic to informal logic, for the reasons that will emerge as we proceed.

To understand the charge that he and Russell had sublimed the logic of (our) language, I will need to undertake several preliminary tasks. First, I need to explain what Wittgenstein means by "the logic of our language," and next what he means by saying they had "sublimed" it. We have good reason to believe that the results of that subliming were on offer in the *Tractatus* (and *KEW* and *PLA*) which he came to regard as wrongheaded.⁶ See the Preface of the *Philosophical Investigations*, where he refers to "grave mistakes in what I wrote in that first book."

⁶ There is no simple way to characterize how the later Wittgenstein views the *Tractatus*.

The logic of (our) language

The phrase “the logic of (our) language” occurs twice in the *PI*: in (#38), where he talks about “a queer conception which springs from a tendency to sublime the logic of our language.” In (#93), we read that “this, together with a misunderstanding of the logic of language, seduces us...” In these references, I take Wittgenstein to be referring to what we all call logic, insofar as we understand logic as, very roughly, the study of proper reasoning. He means the study that licenses us to infer from “Either Smith was the assassin, or Jones was” and “Jones was not” to “Smith was the assassin.” He means the logic referred to in this passage from *Cold Mountain*:

The logic they followed was simple. The war was as good as lost....the choices were these... [and now the writer lists three possibilities which the characters then speculate on; they eliminate two]...so by default it was the third they settled on. (345-46)

Here the author attributes to his characters the ability to draw an inference according to what we call disjunctive syllogism (a complex form of it).

Let me call this logic Natural Logic (NL).⁷ This is the logic that he himself relied on at one juncture of the so-called “Pain and Private Language Argument” when he writes at (#293) “[i]f we construe the grammar...the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.” If I am right, Wittgenstein expects us to reason in a *modus tollens* manner here. That is, he wants us to draw the conclusion that because the object does *not* drop out as irrelevant, it therefore follows that we should *not* construe the grammar ... on the model

⁷ There may be some relationship between what I am here calling “Natural Logic” and Peirce’s concept of *logica utens*. Here is one text that suggests to me such a connection: “Now a person cannot perform the least reasoning without some general ideal of good reasoning; for reasoning involves deliberate approval of one’s reasoning; and approval cannot be deliberate unless it is based upon the comparison of the thing approved with some idea of how such a thing ought to appear. Every reasoner, then, has some general idea of what good reasoning is. This constitutes a theory of logic: the scholastics called it the reasoner’s *logica utens*.” (‘Minute Logic’, CP 2.186, c. 1902). Having some idea of what good reasoning is, is what guides us in making the inferences we make without that having studied any logic. I myself would hesitate to call what the ordinary reasoner has a theory of logic. It seems to me rather to consist of some sort of tacit theoretical knowledge.

of “object” and “designation.” Here, then, Wittgenstein is making use of the logic of our language.

What is he referring to when he speaks of “a misunderstanding of the logic of language”? What does “misunderstanding” refer to here? I believe he is referring here to “the disastrous invasion of mathematics by logic” (*Remarks* 145, #24) to use a phrase from the *Remarks* (which I discuss later). I take him to be referring, among other things, to the results of the attempt by Russell and Whitehead to prove the logicist thesis—to show that mathematics was essentially logic. Wittgenstein is referring, not to the technical developments in the *Principia Mathematica* (*PM*), but the attempt to spell out their implications for philosophy (see *PI*, #108). These issues were the subject of an intense joint inquiry undertaken by Russell and Wittgenstein during the period from 1914–16 (Wittgenstein, 1961). They were not so much developments in the science of logic—the technical developments associated with *Principia Mathematica*—as about what occurred in the surrounding territory: Philosophical issues about identity, definite descriptions, the nature of number, the nature of language and conditions of meaningful discourse, about the nature of philosophical analysis, the relationship between facts and propositions, the role of names and individuals. I believe this is the area where Wittgenstein thinks “subliming of the logic of language” occurred.

To understand better what he means by “subliming,” it may be helpful to refer to some of Russell’s views during this period. The analysis Russell gave of “number” in the *Principia Mathematica* (and its counterpart in *PLA*) is important. What Russell shows is that “one,” “two,” and “three”—the nouns by which we denote cardinal numbers— are not names. They look like names, Plato and others have treated them as names, but, according to Russell, their logical behavior is much more complex. Russell takes the position “one” is not a proper name, though in ordinary language, it functions as one. In fact, “one” means, very roughly, “the class of all classes equivalent to the unit class.” The key to achieving this insight was the kind of technical work done in *Principia Mathematica*. Russell also relied on his “On Denoting” (1905), where he gave his famous analysis of the definite description—phrases like “the present King of France.” I need not recount that analysis here but rather point to the important moral Russell drew from it: *that grammatical form is misleading as to logical form*. The proposition “The King of France

is bald” looks like a normal subject-predicate proposition of the form S is P. But in fact in the analysis of it, which F.P. Ramsey termed “a paradigm of philosophy” (Ramsey, 1990: 1, n.1), it turns out that this proposition is really much more complex: it is an existential-proposition with three conjuncts. This important result comes ultimately from logic—not so much from the technical side as from the philosophical side—the attempt to understand and display logical form. The task of philosophical analysis is to “translate” proposition from its grammatical to its logical form.

Thus to understand the subliming claim, we need to distinguish three different referents for the term “logic” that we find in the *Investigations*.

Sometimes it refers to what might be called natural logic (NL)—the logic we employ in our everyday reasoning, introduced above.

Sometimes “logic” refers to mathematical logic—the system of logic that was developed in the *Principia Mathematica* to show that mathematics is reducible to logic. Call this “ML.”

Sometimes “logic” refers to the philosophical and logical views that arise out of reflection on ML, what I have called “philosophical logic: “PL” (see [P] #108). The relation between these three is crucial, if we are to understand the claim about subliming.

In my view, ML is not the sublimed logic, but the results obtained in ML made possible the set of views I have labeled PL—and *this logic is the sublimed logic*. For example, Russell’s solution to the problem of the definite description ultimately depends on the idea that there is such a thing as “the logical form of a proposition.” The notion of *logical form* is crucial to PL. Russell believed that grammatical form is misleading as to logical form and that the solution to the philosophical problems surrounding identity and the definite description requires this insight.

Let me now say more about what is meant by the term “subliming” here.

Subliming the logic of our language

In (#89), Wittgenstein asks the question: “In what sense is logic something sublime?” First, as to the term “logic” here: my conjecture is that the logic being described as “sublime” is not the logic of the *Principia Mathematica* [viz., propositional logic, set theory, predicate logics, all of which I would

abbreviate [ML], but is rather the philosophical logic [PL] that grows out of them. The text below (cited earlier) suggests this interpretation:

Thought is surrounded by a halo. Its essence—logic—presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world, that is the order ...this order must be *utterly simple*... It must be rather of the purest crystal. (#97)

Here the logic referred to cannot be ML (propositional logic or predicate logic)—for how could either of these be thought to present “the a priori order of the world”? These systems contain only logico-mathematical statements. No, the logic referred to here has to be a kind of natural language extrapolation from those logics, i.e., “philosophical logic” [PL]. This proposition above [that the a priori order of the world must be simple] is not a logical one, nor yet does it seem to be an empirical one.

Here are some other examples of claims made in the *Tractatus* that belong to what I am calling philosophical logic—PL:

A proposition has one and only one complete analysis (3.25)

If we know on purely logical grounds that there must be elementary propositions, then everyone who knows propositions in their unanalyzed form must know it. (5.5562)

Second, “sublime”⁸ has two distinct meanings, at least in English. The first is meaning is “exalted,” something that is sublime—a piece of poetry—is said to be exalted, held in high esteem, e.g., Longinus’ essay *On the Sublime*. To be sure, if logic is the essence of philosophy, as Russell believes, that secures for it an exalted status. A second meaning—one that Wittgenstein relies on a lot—is “pure, purified.” He writes: “It (the order dictated by PL) must be rather of the purest crystal” (#96). In this second sense, the idea of subliming also connects with being captivated by an ideal—“the tendency to regard this something as an ideal not fully attained in language” (Hallett, 1977: 114). Both senses have some application here: PL is both exalted and pure—like the ideal referred to earlier in # 100.

⁸ My colleague, Phil Rose, has suggested that Wittgenstein may be using “sublime” in a Kantian sense.

In the paragraphs of the *PI* commencing at (#89) and continuing on through (#133), Wittgenstein is providing a kind of “phenomenological account” of the confusions that he and Russell got themselves into when they sublimed the logic of our language. In (#91), he refers to the idea that there is something like a “final analysis... if there were something hidden that had to be brought to light... something that lies beneath the surface.” In (#92) the reference is to “something that lies within,” the idea that the essence of language was hidden from us by our ordinary language. Russell often made the point that the apparent logical form of a proposition was not its real logical form, and that ordinary language is often misleading as logical form.⁹ PL holds an exalted status.

In (#93), Wittgenstein is explaining how he and Russell came to view the proposition as something remarkable:

On the one hand, it was because of the enormous importance attaching to it.¹⁰ On the other hand, this, together with a misunderstanding of the logic of language seduces us into thinking that something extraordinary must be achieved by propositions.

In (#94), he says:

A proposition is a queer thing. Here we have in germ the subliming of our whole account of logic. The tendency to assume a *pure* intermediary between the propositional sign and the fact. Or even to try to *purify*, to *sublime*, the signs themselves.

What is he talking about here? The proposition as *Gedanke* (usually translated as “thought”) is the intermediary between the sentence (the propositional sign) and the fact. This *pure* intermediary, it was thought, *must be there* if there is to be philosophical analysis.¹¹ The main idea featured here is that buried beneath and obscured by our ordinary language was the real

⁹ Somewhere Russell complains that it looks as though ordinary language was designed to mislead philosophers.

¹⁰ It was at the level of the proposition that thought and language come together in the *elementarsatz*.

¹¹ See Hallett (1977: 176-78) for a fuller treatment.

logical form, which holds the key to the proper philosophical analysis of any concept.

To summarize, there is an intimate relationship between Wittgenstein's claim that he and Russell had sublimed the logic of language and Wittgenstein's views about the deleterious role that PL has had on logic. This view receives further articulation in some passages on logic from *The Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, to which I turn next.

Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics

There are many remarks in this work that pertain to logic. I have selected three that reveal something of Wittgenstein's attitude toward logic that pertain to matters just discussed.

On p.76e, #25, we read: "In this respect, the intrusion of the Russellian symbolism into the proofs has done a great deal of harm." Then on p. 145, #24, Wittgenstein refers to "the disastrous invasion of mathematics by logic"—a theme he returns to a few pages later. On p. 155, #46, Wittgenstein says this:

The curse of the invasion of mathematics by mathematical logic is that now any proposition can be presented by a mathematical symbolism, and this makes us feel obliged to understand it, although of course this method of writing is nothing but the translation of vague ordinary prose. Mathematical logic has *completely deformed the thinking of mathematicians and philosophers*, by setting up a superficial interpretation of *the forms of our everyday language* as an analysis of the structure of facts and of course in this it is only continuing to build on the Aristotelian logic. (Emphasis added.)

All three quotes are critical of PL—philosophical logic. Wittgenstein believes that Russellian intervention has harmed mathematics, though he does not say how. The last sentence of the quote strikes me as particularly important. If I understand it rightly, he is here indicting PL as deforming the thinking of philosophers by setting up a superficial interpretation of the forms of our everyday language. And he sees this very same tendency in Aristotelian logic.

The dangers he alludes to here are simplification and formalization—processes that depend on the notion of logical form. Here (#23) of the *PI* is important: He asks: “How many kinds of sentences are there?” The author of the *Tractatus* would have said one—the proposition. For both Wittgenstein and Russell, the proposition was *the essence of language* because it was by means of the proposition that the fact was represented. The author of the *PI*, on the other hand, sees a multiplicity about which he remarked (*PI*, #23):

It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language, of the way they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the *Tractatus*).

These texts, taken cumulatively, serve as an indictment of PL and create the basis for the possibility that Wittgenstein might have looked approvingly at a different kind of logic, at a different attempt to develop “the logic of our language.” In that vein, I suggest that Informal Logic might be a more helpful articulation of NL than ML. Why?

The relevant point for our purposes is that informal logic rejects the standard of validity and seeks instead to develop nonformal norms for the evaluation of arguments (Johnson, 2000: 119). The notion of logical form—which, as we have seen, was heavily implicated in the development of that I have called philosophical logic—is not normative for informal logic. Informal logic has understood itself from the start as an alternative to both deductive and inductive logic,¹² as a logic better suited to the realm of real world argumentation. That leads to a second reason that Wittgenstein might be thought to be friendly to informal logic. Informal logic takes seriously argument as used, seeing arguments in a real-life setting, as opposed to the artificiality of the examples associated with formal logic.¹³

In having set aside the notion of logical form as central to logic, in focusing on arguments as they are employed in human affairs, informal logic can perhaps be seen as tapping into and representing “the spirit of the later

¹² Both deductive and inductive seem to take themselves to be offering articulations of norms implicit in NL.

¹³ But see Goddu (2009).

Wittgenstein," which revealed itself in a jarring way in the words he wrote to Norman Malcolm in 1944, quoted in the front material of the first edition of Johnson and Blair's *Logical Self-Defense* (1977: vii):

What is the use of studying philosophy if all that it does for you is enable you to talk with some plausibility about some abstruse questions of logic, etc, & if it does not improve your thinking about the important questions of everyday life. (Malcolm, 1962: 39)

4. Wittgenstein's Influence on the Development of Informal Logic

I turn next to the issue of how Wittgenstein might have influenced several thinkers whose views were important in the development of informal logic: Toulmin, Hamblin, Fogelin and Scriven.

Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* 1958

Many are of the opinion that that Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* was influenced by Wittgenstein.¹⁴ Toulmin was Wittgenstein's student at Cambridge and he co-authored *Wittgenstein's Vienna*. However, as we shall see, the influence of Wittgenstein on *The Uses of Argument* (1958), the work for which Toulmin is best known in informal logic circles, appears negligible. Why do I say this?

The view mentioned above is based on two important propositions: (1) that Wittgenstein was Toulmin's teacher; and (2) *The Uses of Argument* has been a seminal document in the history of the development of informal logic. (2) is certainly strongly supported. That (1) is true does not, however, mean that Wittgenstein's influence and ideas are major factors in *The Uses of Argument*. And indeed, if I am right, they are not. The major ideas in that work—Toulmin's revolutionary approach to understanding the structure of

¹⁴ David Godden (2003), for example, believes that the Wittgensteinian idea of 'language-game' can be used to interpret what Toulmin means by a field. See p.370 where he discusses the perceived similarity between Wittgenstein and Toulmin.

argument; his views about warrants, and his views about the standards for evaluation of argument—these are very difficult to trace to Wittgenstein who had nothing to say in his later period about how to understand the structure of arguments. Indeed the major influences on *The Uses of Argument* appear to be come from jurisprudence (which furnished ‘the jurisprudential analogy’ (255) and epistemology (254). The core of his project, which is to provide a new model for analyzing arguments in which the concept of *warrant* looms large, seems to have no Wittgensteinian provenance, so far as I can discern.

When we look to the “Preface” and the “References” (260-61), what do we find? In the Preface, Toulmin acknowledges the influence of Wisdom, Ryle and others. In the reference at the end, he extends his recognition of influence to include Urmson, and Austin. But notice who has not been mentioned—Wittgenstein!

This impression that Wittgenstein’s influence on Toulmin in *The Uses of Argument* may be something of a misapprehension is further confirmed by what we find in the Index, where we find precisely *one* reference to Wittgenstein, on page 253 (not p. 252 as the Index in the 1958 version paperback has it) where Toulmin cites Wittgenstein’s use of an analogy that likens the reordering of our ideas to reordering books in a library:

If all were well (and clearly well) in philosophical logic, there would be no point in embarking on these investigations: our excuse lies in the conviction that a radical re-ordering of logical theory is needed in order to bring it more nearly into line with critical practice,... Clearly, then, *a re-ordering is needed.* (253)

But this idea of a reordering of logical theory to bring it in line with critical practice—an idea I myself find important and attractive—has little Wittgensteinian warrant, if I may put it that way. Wittgenstein was certainly concerned with practice, but not as a vehicle for reordering theory; rather as the rough ground to which he and others must return again and again to clarify what has been obscured or idealized.

One might argue that the contrast Toulmin draws in Chapter 3 between “working logic” and “idealized logic” shows the influence of what I have been referring to as “the Wittgensteinian spirit.” And I think there is merit to this

suggestion, but that is all it really is—a suggestion. There are no references to Wittgenstein in that important chapter, though the idea of a working logic that Toulmin is presenting here does appear to be in keeping with what I have called the spirit of the later Wittgenstein.

My conclusion, then, is that the influence of Wittgenstein on Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* is much less than often supposed. This is not to say that elsewhere in Toulmin's works, we would not find that influence. (See Godden 2003, p.370.)

Hamblin's *Fallacies* (1970)

I don't think there is much doubt that one of the formative works in the development of informal logic was Hamblin's *Fallacies*. His critique of the traditional textbook treatment of fallacy hit home for many and laid the groundwork for a new generation of scholarship on the fallacies. The research project on fallacies carried out by Woods and Walton in the 70s and 80s (Woods and Walton, 2006) can be seen as an attempt to meet the challenge laid down by Hamblin in this work.

It may be surprising to some to learn that Hamblin was quite strongly influenced by Wittgenstein; "surprising," because in *Fallacies*, there are just four references to Wittgenstein's works— to the *Tractatus* twice (p. 95, p. 301) and then the *Brown Book (BB)* and to the *PI*. I would infer from this information that Hamblin had read those works which in the 1960s was most of what had been published under Wittgenstein's name. The question of what influence the later Wittgenstein exerted on Hamblin in general and on *Fallacies* in particular is harder to answer,¹⁵ though we may tease out something of a tentative answer by looking at the references on p.242 and p.285.

On p. 242, n.1, Hamblin refers to the "well-known private language argument in *Philosophical Investigations*, 258, which can be adapted here." Hamblin is probably referring to the famous "Diary of 'S' example"—where an individual is asked to keep track of the occurrence of a sensation "S"

¹⁵J. M. Mackenzie who studied with Hamblin reports that Hamblin took himself to be a Wittgensteinian.

which, *ex hypothesi*, is private. This is not quite the same sort of situation as “a person... who constructs an argument for his own edification” of which Hamblin says that “we might follow Wittgenstein in finding something peculiar about this case.” I do not understand just what Hamblin is saying here, how exactly he believes the Diary example can be adapted here. Nor do I think Wittgenstein would find the proposed example (constructing an argument for one’s own edification) peculiar—for there is indeed just such a “language-game.”

Hamblin goes on to make a rather strong and startling claim: “The broader point here is that dialectical concepts are fundamental ones in that the “raw facts” of the dialectical situation are that participants put forward and receive various statements.” Hamblin believes that the view that “dialectical concepts are ... fundamental” is Wittgensteinian. That becomes clear when we read p. 285, where the idea of “dialectic” is clarified with this reference:

If we want to lay bare the foundations of Dialectic, we should give the dialectical rules themselves a chance to determine what is a statement, what is a question. This general idea is familiar enough from Wittgenstein in *Preliminary Studies*... [here he refers to *The Brown Book*] as having “the best examples of dialectical analysis.”

And then he goes on to say that “[t]he thesis that I shall adopt is that all properties of linguistic entities are “dialectical” in the sense of being determinable *from the broad pattern of their use*” (p. 285, emphasis mine). By “broad pattern of their use,” (which may be associated with his notion of dialectic), he may be referring to what Wittgenstein called “depth grammar” (PI, #664). His claim seems quite clearly in the spirit of #43 of the *Philosophical Investigations* where Wittgenstein writes:

For a *large* class of cases, though not for all, in which we employ the word “meaning,” it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language. And the *meaning* of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its *bearer*.

It seems to me that Hamblin was more influenced by Wittgenstein than was Toulmin,¹⁶ which conclusion I regard as something of a surprise.

Wittgenstein's Influence on Scriven

Because he played such a pivotal role in the development of informal logic, I want to take note of Scriven's references to Wittgenstein in "The Philosophical and Pragmatic Significance of Informal Logic" (1980). This paper was originally a talk delivered by Scriven at the end of that Symposium. It served as the capstone and a call to action. He said:

In short, logic has—with the emergence of informal logic—been called to its proper task, away from the pathology. It may or may not be in time to save philosophy. The Wittgensteinian revolution in philosophy provided an opportunity for salvation. But—generally speaking—the opportunity was missed. (148)

It is clear that Scriven sees some connection with what he called "the Wittgensteinian revolution in philosophy" and the emergence of informal logic, but just how he understands that revolution, how he understands the connection between that revolution and informal logic—these matters are not clear to me.

Fogelin and Deep Disagreements

In "The Logic of Deep Disagreements" (1985), Fogelin writes:

Here I wish to speak about deep disagreements. My thesis, or rather Wittgenstein's thesis is that deep disagreements cannot be resolved

¹⁶ Hanging in the balance is the question whether Hamblin's appropriation of and use of Wittgenstein's ideas qualify as legitimate interpretations—as well as the issue of what exactly Hamblin was up to. These are not matters I can discuss here.

through these of argument, for they undercut the conditions essential to arguing. (5)

To attribute this thesis to Wittgenstein strikes me as unwarranted. The most that might be argued is that there is a way of interpreting Wittgenstein's remarks in *On Certainty* that would yield this "thesis" as a possible consequence, but I am dubious that even that weakened claim can be substantiated. For this reason: what I believe Wittgenstein was attempting to sort out in *On Certainty*—from which Fogelin (and others) have drawn their material for the discussion of deep disagreements—are "confusions" he found in Moore's views. One prominent location of such confusions was Moore's "A Defense of Common Sense" in which Moore—to defend what he calls Common Sense against the attacks of the Idealist and the Skeptic—asserts that he knows with certainty to be true such propositions as that "there exists a body which is my body" and that "ever since it was born, it has either been in contact with or near the surface of the earth" (1962, p.33)

These are the sorts of propositions that Wittgenstein is attempting to get clear about in *On Certainty*. In the process of attempting to get clear about where he thinks Moore is right and where he thinks Moore is wrong, Wittgenstein tries out a number of ways of characterizing these (and other) propositions where we are inclined to express our certainty. He suggests that they are propositions belonging to our frame of reference (#83). "Everything speaks for them; nothing against them" (#119); or perhaps they "belong to the *scaffolding* of our thoughts" (#211); and "it belongs to the logic of our scientific investigations that certain theses are indeed not doubted" (#342). Still it is clear that he remains conflicted. He writes, for example: "Haven't I gone wrong and isn't Moore perfectly right?" (#397).

The intricacies of the interpretation of his views in *On Certainty* and how they have influenced other discussions in Informal Logic and Argumentation Theory are not matters I can deal with here. However, there is in my mind a real question whether Wittgenstein could endorse the view attributed to him by Fogelin. For the propositions whose status he is seeking to characterize in *On Certainty* are not the sort that Fogelin (and others) refer to as the subject of what he calls "deep disagreements." Fogelin is concerned about propositions that occur in the debate about whether or not abortion is justified, whether or not affirmative action quotas are justified.

Such propositions are very different in kind from those that Wittgenstein sought to clarify in *On Certainty*. Fogelin writes:

Works in informal logic give the impression that they possess the resources to resolve such disagreements. With Wittgenstein I am skeptical of such claims. To illustrate this, I shall consider one case of deep disagreement, the dispute over affirmative action quotas. (6)

To attribute that sort of skepticism to Wittgenstein, as Fogelin does above, seems to me a rather enormous hermeneutic leap.

My disagreement with Fogelin's position on deep disagreements is not meant to detract from the many merits of his paper, which in addition to calling attention to problem of deep disagreement, also speaks forcefully about the danger of "deductive chauvinism":

But I think the chief danger of adopting a deductive model for all reasoning—even as an ideal—is that it yields skeptical consequences... The demand that in an acceptable argument the conclusion must be entailed by exceptionless premises yields the consequence that virtually all of those everyday arguments which seem perfectly adequate are in fact no good. (1985, 2)¹⁷

The issue of deep disagreements is an important one for informal logic and Argumentation Theory, one that Fogelin's article helped to call attention to.

5. Conclusion

The findings here are perhaps somewhat surprising. I had expected that investigation would show the influence of Wittgenstein on Toulmin's work in argumentation. But that connection does not seem to be there, at least in the way that I imagined. I had little expectation regarding Hamblin and was

¹⁷ A couple of points: Fogelin does not here set forth here a definition of deductivism. Also, it would have been helpful to have an example or two of arguments that seem perfectly adequate but whose normative status is rendered precarious by a deductive model.

surprised to find that Hamblin took himself to be strongly influenced by Wittgenstein. Whether Hamblin was right would require attending to the final shape of his project, an undertaking too complex for this paper.¹⁸ Finally, I have suggested that Fogelin's discussion of deep disagreements, though Wittgensteinian in intention may have been the result of a misreading or misapplication of Wittgenstein's views. The influence of Wittgenstein on Scriven is undeniable, though its exact force is unclear.

In general, then, my conclusion is that Wittgenstein's influence on the development of informal logic is more indirect than direct, more in terms of a certain spirit than in the adoption of any particular set of ideas or beliefs that may be ascribed to the author of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

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“A picture held us Captive”: The later Wittgenstein on visual argumentation

“Una pintura nos tenía cautivos”: El Wittgenstein tardío y la argumentación visual

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Abstract: The issue of whether or not there are visual arguments has been an issue in informal logic and argumentation theory at least since 1996. In recent years, books, sections of prominent conferences and special journals issues have been devoted to it, thus significantly raising the profile of the debate. In this paper I will attempt to show how the views of the later Wittgenstein, particularly his views on images and the notion of “picturing”, can be brought to bear on the question of whether there are such things as “purely visual” arguments. I shall draw on Wittgenstein’s remarks in the *Blue* and *Brown Books* and in *Philosophical Investigations* in order to argue that although visual images may occur as elements of argumentation, broadly conceived, it is a mistake to think that there are purely visual arguments, in the sense of illative moves from premises to conclusions that are conveyed by images alone, without the support or framing of words.

Keywords: visual argument, Wittgenstein, pictures, Groarke, Slade.

Resumen: El tema de si acaso hay argumentación visual ha sido un tema en lógica informal y teoría de la argumentación que ha estado presente al menos desde 1996. En años recientes, libros, revistas, secciones en importantes conferencias y números especiales en revistas han dedicado atención especial, creciendo de esta forma significativamente el perfil del debate. En este trabajo intentaré mostrar cómo la perspectiva del Wittgenstein tardío, particularmente su visión respecto de imágenes y la noción de “pintura”, puede enmarcar la pregunta respecto de si hay tales cosas como “argumentación visual pura”. Pondré atención en los énfasis de Wittgenstein en los *Cuadernos Azul y Marrón*, y en las *Investigaciones filosóficas*, para defender que aunque los ar-

gumentos visuales pueden ser parte de elementos de una argumentación, concebido de forma amplia, es un error pensar en la existencia de argumentos visuales puros, en el sentido de movimientos ilativos desde premisas a conclusiones que son promovidos por imágenes a solas, sin apoyo o enmarque de palabras.

Palabras clave: argumentación visual, Wittgenstein, pinturas, Groarke, Slade.

1. Introduction

“Pictures” and “picturing” are among the most prevalent and re-occurring ideas in the Wittgensteinian corpus. Central to the account of meaning and understanding in the *Tractatus*, these notions become instrumental for criticism of that same theory in later works, particularly the *Notebooks* and in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Of course, in many places in these works, Wittgenstein intends to build an argument from analogy from the case with pictures to the case with words that undoes his very different analogy between the same things in the *Tractatus*. Whether we ought to accept Wittgenstein’s analogy between pictures and language in either work is a question that goes beyond the present purposes of this article. Here I will be concerned only to draw on Wittgenstein’s meditations on pictures and picturing in these latter works in an attempt to address the controversy over whether or not it is plausible to think that there exists such a thing as purely visual argumentation. As a preliminary to my answer to this question, it will be necessary to address some of the themes and passages central to the later Wittgensteinian notion of pictures and picturing. I will begin with this task. For ease of exposition in this matter I will focus on some of the more prominent of Wittgenstein’s remarks on pictures and picturing in the *Notebooks* and *Philosophical Investigations*. While these two works shall be my primary sources, those familiar with the Wittgensteinian corpus will recognize the influence of other of Wittgenstein’s later works as well. Before I proceed to the body of the paper I should offer one qualification of its purpose.

My intention here is to imagine a rough account of the nature and limits of “visual argumentation” using the motif of pictures in the later Wittgenstein’s work as a jumping-off point. I make no pretense that this thesis should be taken as definitive on this topic. My reasons for this qualification of my thesis are three. First of all, to make such a claim would be out of step with the spirit of Wittgenstein’s later works, where time and again he proceeds cau-

tiously and with attention to alternative possibilities. I believe it wise to follow his example here. Secondly, Wittgenstein, like many great philosophers, writes in a way that makes particular demands of those who would interpret his labyrinthine and at times genuinely puzzling works. Though I believe my interpretations to be sound, they are of course open to challenge and controversy. To downplay that possibility would be to assume more warrant for my conclusions than that to which they (hopefully) are entitled. Thirdly, and finally, it is salutary to bear in mind that this account is limited in that its principal considerations are drawn only from reflections on Wittgenstein's remarks. Even supposing that these reflections are accurate and my arguments about them are sound, simply because Wittgenstein says something does not make it true. That said, Wittgenstein's having said as much as he did about pictures and their relationship to language and understanding *does* make it worth our serious consideration. Few thinkers have reflected on the body of concepts his works cover with as much penetration or lasting significance. So, I proceed in the belief that if I've managed to capture what can respectably be presented as a Wittgensteinian position on the subject of visual argumentation, that it is worthy of consideration by those who take visual argumentation seriously.

2. Pictures and picturing in the *Blue and Brown Books*

Picturing, for Wittgenstein, is different from meaning, different from forming an image, and altogether different from the application of a rule or a criterion. Time and again, Wittgenstein warns us away from the error mistaking picturing for any of these things. In fact, the earliest mention of picturing in the *Blue Book* comes in the form of a negative example. In the context of telling us what does *not* happen when, in making an utterance, we *mean* something, Wittgenstein offers the example of uttering a sentence while holding in the mind a corresponding picture of what it says. While “such cases and similar ones exist”, he tells us, “they are not at all what happens as a rule when we say something and mean it, or mean something else.” (Wittgenstein, 1960) The majority of the substantive occurrences of the metaphor of pictures or picturing in the Notebooks keeps with this theme, as when, ten pages later in the same work Wittgenstein refers to the notion

that the expression of facts must conform to pictures embedded in language as a bias. Consider also this passage from the *Brown Book*:

“... we may think that when we look at our drawing and see it as a face, we compare it with some paradigm, and it agrees with it, or it fits into a mould ready for it in our mind. But no such mould or conception enters into our experience, there is only this shape, not any other to compare it with, and as it were, say “Of course” to. As when in putting together a jigsaw puzzle, somewhere a small space is left unfilled and I see a piece obviously fitting it and put it in the place saying to myself “Of course”. But here we say “Of course” because the piece fits the mould, whereas in our case of seeing the drawing as a face, we have the same attitude for no reason.” (Wittgenstein 1960: 166)¹

The notion of “fitting” here, and its phenomenological associate, the “of course” feeling, have a familiar analog in argumentation in the ready manner in which even those with no training can complete patterns of logical inference. When presented with the hoary old example of the syllogism:

1. All men are mortal.
2. Socrates is a man.
3. Therefore__.”

Almost no one has trouble drawing the conclusion as the missing piece of the “jigsaw puzzle” and with the requisite feeling: “Of course Socrates is mortal”. One need not restrict this consideration to deductive arguments either. Consider whether or not the case would not be substantially similar with this argument:

1. 98% of widgets produced at factory ABC between June and August of last year have been shown to be defective.
2. This is a widget produced at factory ABC between June and August of last year.
3. Therefore__.

¹ This passage also marks the appearance of “seeing as” in the *Blue* and *Brown Books*. I shall have more to say about this very important theme later on in the paper.

Despite the fact that the argument here is not a deductive argument, the pattern-completion task involved here will proceed in much the same way and, it is reasonable to think, with a similar margin of success. We could perhaps attempt a similar move with various argument schemes, such as appeal to authority or argument from sign.² It is perhaps the fact that they provide us with a familiar sort of pattern-completion task that makes us want to think of them as schemes at all. Like Wittgenstein's puzzle pieces, there is a way the reasons fit together that allows us to place the "final piece", the conclusion, such that it "fits" too.

The important point for our purposes here is that Wittgenstein, in the quote above, is denying that this happens with the resolution of the elements of a picture into something recognizable, like a face. The *phenomenological* aspect of recognition—which we also have when we fit the puzzle piece into its space, or see that we can do so from its shape and the shape of the gap in the nearly-completed puzzle—is present, but unlike the case with the puzzle, the recognition of the picture has, in his view, *no grounding in reason*. But then how does this recognition work? As with the understanding of musical themes, Wittgenstein's speculation is that the understanding of a picture works linguistically: "...in the same way I may say "Now I understand the expression of this face", and what happened when the understanding came was that I found the word which seemed to sum it up." (Wittgenstein 1960: 167) This statement is fascinating for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the reversal of roles it envisions in comparison to the doctrine of the *Tractatus*. It's wider significance notwithstanding, for purposes of this article the chief interest of this statement is that makes the understanding of pictures dependent upon associating them with words. To understand a picture, then, is to be able to translate it out of the realm of image and into the realm of the verbal, into language. While he may indeed depart from the picture theory of meaning, at no point does Wittgenstein abandon the thesis, first advanced in the *Tractatus*, that thinking happens in the medium of language. It is plausible that his desire to preserve this thesis in the face of the challenges presented by the intentional vocabulary (the vocabulary of wishing that, hoping that, expecting

² A thorough, if possibly not exhaustive, accounting of a great many of these schemes can be found in Walton, Reed, and Macagno (2008).

that, etc.) is a motivating factor for many of the theses of the *Notebooks* and *Philosophical Investigations*.³ I now turn to Wittgenstein's remarks in *Philosophical Investigations*.

3. Pictures and Picturing in *Philosophical Investigations*

Philosophical Investigations (hereafter PI, for brevity's sake) is riddled with references to pictures and picturing, but there are four portions of this work in particular that are of special importance for the topic of visual argumentation. These are passages 139b-140, 422-427, 300-302 and all of Part II, section xi. Because of their individual importance I will treat each of these sections individually. I will treat them in this order for the sake of clarity of exposition.

3.1. PI 139b-140

PI 139b-140, in many ways, could be seen as starting where Wittgenstein's remarks in the *Blue* and *Brown Books* leave off:

139(b). "I see a picture; it represents an old man walking up a steep path leaning on a stick.—How? Might it not have looked just the same if he had been sliding downhill in that position? Perhaps a Martian might describe the picture so. I do not need to explain why we do not describe it so."

140. Then what sort of mistake did I make; was it what we should like to express by saying: I thought the picture forced a particular use on me? How could I think that? What did I think? Is there such a thing as a picture, or something like a picture, that forces a particular application on us; so that my mistake lie in confusing one picture with another?—For we might also be inclined to express ourselves like this: we are at most under a psychological, not a logical, compulsion. [...] [T]here are other processes, besides the one we originally thought of, which we should be

³ I owe this point to the late Barbara Humphries.

prepared to call “applying the picture of a cube”. So our ‘belief that the picture forced a particular application on us’ consisted in the fact that only the one case and no other occurred to us.” (Wittgenstein 1968, 54-5)⁴

The clear linkage between these passages and the remarks from the Notebooks are their emphasis on the extra-logical, psychological or phenomenological nature of picturing. As the image of 139(b) suggests, even a simple picture can suggest multiple, equally respectable understandings of what it represents. Is the man moving up the hill or down it?⁵ Many commentators, including Fodor (1975), have taken 139(b) in the spirit of the *Brown Book* quote given in the previous section and held it to be saying that the picture must be translated into language in order for us to know whether the man is moving up or down the incline of the hill. Perhaps an obvious next step—certainly one that Wittgenstein, on some readings, would have been happy with—is to say that this is also true of words and sentences.⁶ And it is true, but only to a point, and only in certain sorts of instances. To see why we have to consider the point Wittgenstein is making in these two passages in the context of the work as a whole.

The ways in which we might interpret a sentence are bounded by the sentence’s being embedded in the rule-governed, communal activity of language. The conditions under which a sentence, uttered by a speaker, will be intelligible to an audience of the same linguistic community restrict the possible meanings of the sentence. Importantly, these conditions restrict not just the meanings that the audience is likely to “take away” from the speaker’s utterance, but the meanings that the speaker may coherently intend by what he says. That said, it must be allowed that, as Wittgenstein puts it in 140, neither words nor pictures “force a particular application” upon us. The larger

⁴ Note that the mention of “applying the picture of a cube” refers to an earlier example of the same sort of problem.

⁵ We could perhaps alleviate some of the strangeness of Wittgenstein’s image, and better appreciate his point, by imagining that there is an escalator slightly hidden from our view or by replacing the path with a staircase set into a hill in a park which the man might either be walking up or cautiously backing down.

⁶ Koethe (1996) provides one example of such a view. It is important to note that saying that Wittgenstein’s views in the *Philosophical Investigations* exhibit continuity with those in the *Tractatus* does not commit one to saying that he did not change his views substantially over time—especially about the picture theory of the latter work. This point is well argued in Ellis (1978).

point that Wittgenstein is trying to make here, and in similar places throughout the later works, is just that it is a mistake to understand the semantics of any particular word in terms of a rigid and necessitarian ontology associated with it. Were we to do so we would be, as he says, “mistaking a psychological compulsion for a logical one”.

It would be tempting to take from this the lesson that pictures and words are on a par with one another, but Wittgenstein’s remarks here and elsewhere, as we shall see, make clear that this is a mistake. Words may be like pictures in that they do not of themselves force a use, but the similarity ends there. Whereas rules and communal criteria of meaning keep us from falling into humpty-dumptyism with language, there are no such checks on picturing, or if there are, their effectiveness falls far short of those accompanying our usage of language.

3.2. PI 422-427

These passages occur in the context of Wittgenstein’s examination of the language used to talk about states of consciousness, the vocabulary he sometimes describes as “psychical” and that some commentators have called the intentional vocabulary. As we shall see, they support the view of pictures developed in 193(b) and 194. Begin by considering the text of 422-3:

422. What am I believing in when I believe that men have souls? What am I believing in, when I believe that this substance contains two carbon rings? In both cases there is the picture in the foreground, but the sense lies far in the background; that is, the application of the picture is not easy to survey.

423. Certainly, all these things happen in you.—And now all I ask is to understand the expression we use. —The picture is there, and I am not disputing its validity in any particular case. —Only I also want to understand the application of the picture. (Wittgenstein 1968: 126)

In terms of pictures, 422 continues the notion of 193-4. Pictures, unlike

words, are harder to apply owing to their not being embedded within a communal system of rules and criteria. The image can be apt, it can give us a sense of “fitting” experience or an idea—but it does not by itself tell us “how to go on”. This crucial difference between aptness and application is reinforced by Wittgenstein’s emphatic repetition of it in the first half of 424: “The picture is there; and I do not dispute its *correctness*. But *what* is its application?” The contrast in these passages is really between the intuitive apprehension of a state of affairs—*the way things appear* to one—and the sort of grasp of a state of affairs that allows us to draw conclusions from it, to know its place among the relationships that hold between other articles of knowledge or belief. The “correctness” of a picture mentioned in 424 then is a *felt* correctness, an intuitive sense of the rightness of the idea held before the mind. It is *not* a logical correctness, with which we might reasonably hope to develop a more detailed account of the phenomenon under consideration. This, I suspect, is what is puzzling to Wittgenstein about ideas of the “psychical”. They “feel” right—sometimes because they arise from familiar expressions of speech, and perhaps sometimes as a purely phenomenological matter—but we cannot justifiably *do* anything with them that we can ordinarily do with conceptions whose sense we can work out within the framework provided by language.⁷ Hence the inherent lack of application in pictures. Pictures simply confront us in a brute, or at least a non-rational way.⁸ They do not tell us the way to go forward, and in fact they may hinder us from doing so. This is why we must beware of their ability to “hold us captive” (PI 115); because it “stands in the way of our seeing the use of the word as it is” (PI 305).

⁷ The pragmatic considerations implied here ought not to be taken lightly. They run through PI 107, 202, 206, and 241 to name just a few passages. On this theme in Wittgenstein and its significance see also C. A. van Peursen (1959).

⁸ I specifically use the word ‘non-rational’ here, and not ‘irrational’, because recent developments in cognitive science suggest that human reasoning is a composite of both rational activities roughly correlated with activity in the frontal and parietal lobes of the brain, and the older, emotional system of cognition correlated prominently with the amygdala and other structures. To say therefore that something is non-rational is not to mark it off as not being reasoning of a type. It is simply to say that it is not logical reasoning as that sort of reasoning has traditionally been understood.

3.3. PI 300-302

So far the following point has emerged about Wittgenstein's notion of picturing: To picture something is for one to have an experience of a particular quality, an experience not unlike a sudden realization but of a non-logical (and perhaps in some instances potentially misleading) variety. The experience is not unlike that of the slave boy in Plato's *Meno* upon being led to the solution of the geometry puzzle by Socrates. (Plato 2002) He is struck by the impression that the solution is correct, but it would be impossible for him to explain *why* it is correct, or to apply the process by which the solution was reached to a new problem. Though he has the answer, he does not grasp it in a way that would give him, in Wittgenstein's parlance, the *application* of the answer. Without this application, the boy would be unable to tell us whether he had learned something about squares, or how to draw the diagonal of any figure, or geometry in general, or dialectic in general or about any or all of these. He would be in the same position as the interpreter of the picture in 139(b)—assured of his impression that the man is going uphill, but without any grounds for being so assured. To picture something, then, is not to experience a *recognition* of the sort that we have when we grasp a mathematical or logical rule, or the application of such a rule to a particular case. It is to fix the mind on a particular aspect of what is seen—not for reasons, but because “it just feels right” to do so. It is to have, if this is not too much of a strain on both of these words, an *epistemic feeling*.

It would be understandable if someone were to resist this conclusion, holding instead that in at least some cases, what is happening in picturing is the intuitive grasp of a concept. To give in to this temptation, however reasonable it may seem on first blush, would be mistaken. This is the point of the distinction between images and pictures that Wittgenstein draws in PI 300-302. It is highly significant that Wittgenstein draws this distinction via the relationship of each to language games. This reinforces the notion that has been emerging throughout this essay that for Wittgenstein, pictures must be put into language before they epistemic feelings they engender can ripen into understanding, or at least usability. Consider the following, from PI 300:

300. [...] It is a misunderstanding to say that the picture of pain enters into the language game with the word “pain’.” The image of pain is not a picture, and this image is not replaceable in the language-game by anything that we should call a picture.—The image of pain certainly enters into the language game in a sense; only not as a picture. (1968: 101)

In terms of the example from the *Meno*, this is to say that there is a concept the boy could grasp (let us say the concept of the diagonal) and the Socratic process he has been subjected to points him in the right direction, but be that as it may, the boy does not yet grasp the concept—he does not yet have the *image* of the diagonal before his mind. What he has is a picture, an epistemic feeling that something is the case, not a well-defined concept that he could apply to other problems in geometry. The image of the diagonal is present in the Socratic dialogue (a sort of language game) used to lead the boy to the solution of the puzzle, but it is clear that this image is more than just an epistemic feeling about the correctness of the solution to the problem. Hence Wittgenstein’s claim that the image is not replaceable by the picture in the language-game makes sense, as does what might otherwise seem to be the cryptic delivery of PI 301, “An image is not a picture, but a picture can correspond to it.” Wittgenstein’s continued insistence that we must not mistake pictures for images or for understanding of the sort we can apply, then, is a caution against taking the *feeling* that one is right for one’s *actually being* right. It isn’t that pictures are never veridical, it is that they are unevenly and unpredictably so. Sometimes our pictures do turn out to be right (in these cases they do correspond to an image), but far too often, he warns us, our feeling that we are right is just a chimera. It is this unpredictable nature which Wittgenstein has in mind in his repeated insistence that pictures do not give us application and that this makes them ill-suited to be bearers of meaning or part of the processes of cognition. In order to be either of those things there needs to be a public framework of existing patterns of interpretation, and this is precisely what pictures (unlike images or concepts) do not have. “Hence”, Wittgenstein himself writes later in Section xi of Part II of PI, “the flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought.” (1968: 197) It is to Section xi that I now turn.

3.4. “Seeing as”: PI Part II, xi

One way of thinking about what partisans of visual argumentation ask us to do is to think of it as enticing us to see visual images as argumentation, or alternatively, to notice those aspects of images that are argumentative in nature. The process by which we do this would clearly be a form of “seeing as” or “noticing an aspect”, so it will behoove us to have some idea of Wittgenstein’s treatment of this notion.

Interestingly, Wittgenstein illustratively deploys a number of images in his account of “seeing as”, perhaps most famously the Jastrow duck-rabbit image, a version of which is pictured in Figure 1.

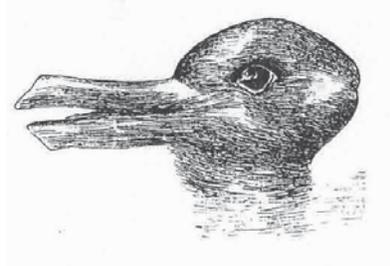


Figure 1: Duck-Rabbit Illusion (Jastrow 1899).

The phenomenon of “seeing as” is one in which a person’s visual perception undergoes a shift between two (or perhaps more) modes. In the case of the duck-rabbit the two modes are obvious. One may see the image as a duck or as a rabbit. Wittgenstein’s purpose in presenting the image is to say something about interpretation and how it differs from perception.⁹ The key point here is that interpretation is not a matter of having an “inner picture” in response to the visual image with which one is presented. The temptation to think that it is is due to the ease with which we find it satisfying to say, of illusions like the duck-rabbit, that one may interpret the figure as a duck (in which case one forms the inner picture of a duck when looking at

⁹ In my treatment of “seeing as” I follow the analysis of Seligman (1976).

the image) or that one may interpret the figure as a rabbit (in which case one forms the inner picture of a rabbit when looking at the image). Why is this problematic? Seligman, drawing on an earlier account by Aldrich, explains it this way:

All that this talk of inner pictures seems to get us is now two ‘private’ pictures—one, the ‘pure visual content’ and the other the ‘interpreted mental content’. And now we are worse off than before. Where we at least had criteria for what constitutes an interpretation, we are now faced with an image of such a mysterious sort that we cannot isolate any unique criteria for its presence or absence. The only criteria is what we say, and what we say is exactly what we would say if the object itself had actually altered. (Seligman 1976: 211)

The problem, of course, is that the object hasn’t altered in the slightest. Seligman continues:

Wittgenstein has tried to rule out in his characteristic fashion, explanations of the concept of “seeing” and “seeing as” which appeal to ‘inner pictures’ or private images. [...] The objective was to give the lie to any philosophical theories which might rest upon a notion of seeing which requires a ‘pure visual element’ and an accompanying element of ‘interpretation’. In the cases of seeing-as where such a two-element theory of seeing seems most at home it fails. And Wittgenstein’s point seems to be that if it will not work here, it will not work at all. (Seligman 1976: 212)

So “seeing as” is not a matter of interpretation. What is it then? For clearly *something* is going on when we consider the shift engendered by images like the duck-rabbit. Seligman, following Wittgenstein’s remarks about the image of a Necker cube proposes that to “see the image as” is to have the capacity to form counterfactual contexts in which to locate the various aspects it appears to take on, for example to see the cube as if from above, or as if from below. We need not do this in every case, says Seligman, it is enough for the seeing of an aspect that we could do it. This is not as puzzling a notion as it may seem, for it returns us to the *Brown Book* notion of “fit” with which we began the investigation into picturing. To see an aspect is phenomenologically similar to the “puzzle-piece” epistemic feeling gener-

ated by the aptness of an image, but unlike the puzzle piece, which we fit into a context, seeing an aspect is like understanding how to fit the other pieces around a piece that we have decided to use for an anchor. It is, as Seligman puts it, “a kind of ‘knowing one’s way about’.” The important point to take away from this notion of “seeing as,” is that to see a visual image as having a particular aspect is not to pull out a hidden signification that lies within it, the way that a creature’s DNA lies within its cells. It is to *attach* a significance to the image through the positing of counterfactuals that frame the image in such a way as to make it possible for us to explain to others the aspect we ourselves see.

This completes the sketch of Wittgenstein’s notion of picturing. Though undoubtedly there is a great deal more to say about such matters, the sketch in its present form should suffice for purposes of application to the question of whether or not there can be purely visual arguments.

4. Picturing, Visual Arguments, and Visual Argumentation

It shall be my contention in this portion of the paper to show that while no one has yet satisfactorily shown that there are visual *arguments*, this does not rule out the possibility that visual images can be elements of *argumentation*.¹⁰ The account of picturing left to us by Wittgenstein, I shall content, can shed some light as to why this is. Because visual argumentation theories are so varied I cannot address them all, so I shall here confine myself to two of the better-known accounts of recent years, the interesting and very different theories put forward by the team of David Birdsell and Leo Groarke, and that of Christina Slade.

4.1. Birdsell and Groarke

Perhaps the best known view of visual argument is that provided by Birdsell and Groarke (1996, 2002). As is well known Birdsell and Groarke quite ex-

¹⁰ In this I am siding, I believe, with Blair (1996), though perhaps in a different way and for different reasons.

plicitly contend that theirs is a theory of visual argument “in the traditional premise and conclusion sense”. (Birdsell and Groarke 2007: 106) Though their theory is well worked out and contains a number of components, I wish here primarily to focus on their contention that there are such things as “visual propositions”. The reason for this is that it seems to me this contention is necessary for a theory of visual argument that takes those arguments to be of the traditional sort.

Birdsell and Groarke tell us that “a visual demonstration is inherently propositional because a visual image is used to convey information that is purportedly true”. They defend this assertion by calling up the example of a map which “purports to be an accurate (“true”) representation of the arrangement of places in space”. (2007: 106) The example is clear enough and the view they advocate is initially plausible, as it seems intuitive to read at least some visual demonstrations as declarative in their intent, or as assertives under the theory of speech acts. Certainly the intent of a map is to assert that “the territory described here is thus and such”. Notice, however, that the example of the map is one with properties that may not generalize to all examples—indeed not even to the other examples of visual argumentation in Groarke and Birdsell’s paper. The conventions around maps and their use are stable and shared in a way that the conventions around other sorts of images are not. But this is a minor point. The question at issue is whether or not visual demonstrations are propositional, *generally*. Let us consider this question in the light of the Wittgensteinian analysis of picturing developed in the first sections of this paper.

In order to be propositional, a visual image would clearly need to be more than a picture in Wittgenstein’s sense—a visual or imaginary display capable of eliciting an unjustified but nonetheless strong epistemic feeling. Recall the example from PI 139b—that of the image of the man half way up the incline. If visual demonstrations are to be propositional then it seems as though they should have to be capable of “forcing a use” upon us just as surely as a linguistic assertion would. They should contain within themselves an application that reveals itself in the context of a fund of shared, public conventions for interpretation, just as the grammatical pattern in a sentence or the inferential pattern in an argument form does. The feeling of “fit” we have between the image and the idea expressed should not be idiosyncratic or merely “psychological”. Can we say this about visual demon-

strations of the sort Birdsell and Groarke take to be examples of arguments?

Certainly Birdsell and Groarke appreciate the importance of context, so it will be no answer to the question to apply the Wittgensteinian critique to an image excerpted from the conventions one would use to understand it. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, context and conventions of interpretation are necessary to understand any utterance of language. If we are to be fair to Birdsell and Groarke, then we should not stack the deck against visual propositions by imagining that there aren't shared funds of symbols and visual conventions we need to be cognizant of when interpreting images. So are there visual propositions? Even if we grant the existence of the kind of context Birdsell and Groarke claim, I think the answer has to be no. The principal reason for this is that the context and the conventions against which we interpret images are nowhere near as stable as those involved in linguistic interpretation. To see this, consider the example of the political cartoon Birdsell and Groarke use as an example of visual argumentation (Figure 2):

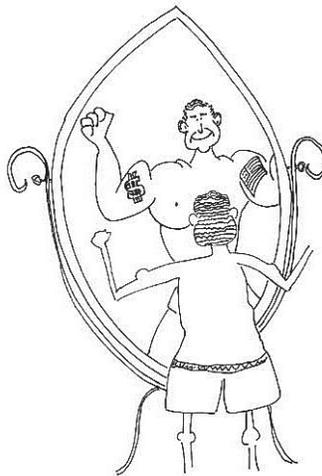


Figure 2: Cartoon from Birdsell and Groarke (2007: 108).

It is not insignificant that they give a caption for the image. The caption they give is “The economy reflected in the White House Press Office’s Magic

Mirror”. That they give the image a caption is in some ways a cheat.¹¹ The caption expresses the proposition that the image is supposed to contain itself, it contributes a sort of linguistic framing for the interpretation of the image the importance of which should not be underestimated. Just as we must not imagine ourselves as visual dunces, we cannot let the language do the work that the picture is supposed to do if we are to test Birdsell and Groarke’s theory fairly. Could we work this proposition out simply from the image itself, absent the caption? It doesn’t seem that we could. A whole host of problems similar to those in PI 139b would prevent us from doing so. Even if we were to see this image in its right context, with the knowledge that it is a newspaper editorial and that the figure in the picture is George Bush, without the caption a multiplicity of possible interpretations spring forward. Importantly, the purportedly negative tone of the editorial dissolves in a bevy of alternative readings of the image. Perhaps Bush, like the frail boy of the old Charles Atlas bodybuilding ads, is imagining success, and the image in the mirror reflects not a deluded self-image but a goal towards which he intends to work with dedication and perseverance. Perhaps he doesn’t look through a mirror at all, but through a portal at a figure who represents the body politic—an interpretation supported by the flag on the figure’s bicep, the dollar sign representing our common goal of prosperity—which Bush sees himself leading as its metaphorical head, and the two figures raise their arms in the gesture of boxers emerging victorious from a hard-fought match. Interpreted in this way the image could seem to say, “I, one man, am weak, but together we as a nation are strong and shall triumph over our common challenges.”

Now one could say to these alternative interpretations, “But that’s preposterous!” But why would it be preposterous? As Wittgenstein says of the image in 139b, it does not matter if no one ever really does draw such interpretations. What matters is that one can do so, and that there seems to be no rational barrier to doing so that emerges from within the image itself or the conventions of interpreting images we share. Of course one might draw the interpretation of the image that Birdsell and Groarke intend, even without the caption, but if one did not then Birdsell and Groarke need to be able to supply an account of why one would be wrong, or perhaps display a sort

¹¹ Ralph Johnson (2003) makes a similar point against Birdsell and Groarke’s view.

of incompetence were he to draw a different interpretation than theirs from the visual image. By Wittgensteinian lights, they need an account of what it is to misunderstand an image that compares perspicuously with what it is to misunderstand a linguistic utterance. If there is no such account to be found, as I suspect there is not, then visual images are like Wittgenstein's pictures. By themselves images may spur cognitive feelings or associations—and so may be persuasive—but they lack an internal pattern, the recognition of which would allow them to be the presentation of an illative move from premises to conclusion. Hence they do not seem to carry propositional content other than that which is assigned to them or framed by the caption (and what is a caption, but set of directions for how to interpret the image).¹² And if images on their own are not propositional, then visual images cannot be arguments of the sort that Birdsell and Groarke contend.

Smith (2007) has suggested a path that seems as if it might avoid this objection. According to Smith, the ability to draw at least one possible reading of the image that qualifies as an argument is enough to say that the image contains an argument. Quoting Birdsell and Groarke's (1996: 8) example of holding cake under a dieter's nose as a way of arguing that he should eat it she says: "This example illustrates enthymematic argument as I conceive it. Multiple interpretations are possible, some of which can be considered arguments for the dieter to consider." (Smith 2007: 119) Birdsell and Groarke might wish to say something like this as well. As long as one interpretation of the image reads it as a proposition then they are safe. However, this move does not succeed. For, Birdsell and Groarke must now hold that every picture admits of a set of interpretations some one of which is propositional in the way required for their to be an argument. The 139b problem remains: which interpretation is it and why should we treat with it rather than any of the others at any given instance. Why would we be wrong if we did not do so? And if, as I suggest in the next section, the propositional

¹² An appreciation of the significance of this problem of relating the sign to the signified in Wittgenstein's works in both its logical and phenomenological dimensions can be found in Munson (1962).

interpretation will be as much the product of the way we frame the image in language as the product of the elements of the image, then how are we justified in saying that the *image* contains the argument we construct out of it? A similar line of objection applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to Smith’s contention that images are enthymematic arguments.

But perhaps that’s not so bad. Why imagine that visual argumentation is propositional in the first place? Why not imagine visual argumentation as a complex semiotic phenomenon in which symbols and associations, but not propositions, are leveraged to produce a belief in the mind of the onlooker? Other parts of Birdsell and Groarke’s theory gesture in this direction. Christina Slade’s account of the argumentation contained in advertising is fundamentally of this variety. It is to her account that I now turn.

4.2. Slade

Christina Slade’s account (2003) of visual argumentation focuses on advertising. She contends that at least some ads contain argumentation that is “purely visual”. Her leading example in this paper is a television ad for “Bond’s Cottontails”, a sort of women’s undergarments. The ad itself, as Slade describes it, is not a purely visual ad but contains elements of text, both spoken and written. In her case for the “purely visual” argumentation in the ad, however, Slade goes out of her way to deal only with the images at work. Whether or not this strategy can evade the same sort of problem Birdsell and Groarke have with captions is an open question. The original television ad, one assumes, occurred in a relatively brief interval of time and with a blending of textual, visual, and musical elements that would make it difficult to pull any one element out of the overall gestalt and say that *it* functions separably from any or all of the others. Not having seen the ad myself I will not pursue this question further, but simply note it for those who have and move on. For purposes of what follows I shall simply accept Slade’s implicit assumption that the visuals are separable from the whole to a degree that makes the drawing of argumentation from them alone a plausible analytical enterprise.

Whereas Birdsell and Groarke contend that there are visual arguments of the premise-conclusion variety, Slade's overall view of visual argumentation is a blend of different elements. This makes her claim that there are visual arguments importantly different from theirs. Orienting the reader to her view of argumentation, Slade says the following:

Fleming and Blair are correct to maintain that the paradigm of argumentation is verbal. Indeed, there would and could not be argumentation in a society without language. Argumentation is essentially dialogical, and hence is based on verbal disputation. However it does not follow that analogical forms of argumentation may not exist in visual images – particularly when the conventions surrounding the meaning of visual images of a certain type mean that the images are read as arguments. Advertisements are the prime example of visual argumentation precisely because they are conventionally read as persuasive images. (Slade 2003: 148)

From this quote we may gather that Slade's concept of visual argumentation centers on the idea of the persuasive image. The persuasive image is not held to be an argument in Birdsell and Groarke's "classic premise and conclusion sense", but only analogically in comparison with dialogical notions of argumentation, the key ground of similarity apparently being the convention-based nature of our ability to read something as an argument. When we are presented with advertising, Slade contends, we expect argumentation so it stands to reason that in visual media we expect visual argumentation. If Slade's argument from analogy holds up, and if her account of the conventions within which meaning is garnered from visual images holds up, then she will have what Birdsell and Groarke don't have—a way of telling us, reliably, when visual argumentation is present and how to read it correctly. The whole case turns on Slade's account of the conventions involved.

Slade draws her analytical conventions for images from Kress and Van Leeuwen's system of "visual metafunctions". Their framework for image analysis, as adapted by Slade and applied to her central example, runs along the lines indicated in Table 1.

Kress and Van Leeuwen Metafunction Name	Analytical Significance	Application to Slade’s Cottontails Ad Example
Narrative Ideational	Explains the story told by the image.	The image tells the story of the girl’s transition from more to less conservative attitudes about sexuality and womanhood.
Conceptual Ideational	Explains the analysis given by the image.	The image analyzes womanhood as being more complex than just apparent conformity to social norms.
Textual	Gives the meaning of the compositional elements of the image.	The movement of the image suggests movement towards the future.
Interpersonal	Explains the position in which the image places the viewer.	The viewer is put in the position of covetous spectator who looks on as the woman undergoes her transformation, and desires a similar transformation herself.

Table 1: Application of Slade’s Image Analysis Rubric to the Cottontails Advertisement.

From the analysis of the image thus generated, Slade extracts the following argument:

1. People who wear cottontails look to the future. (from the narrative ideational element, textual element, and the context of the ad as an ad for cottontails)
2. If you want to move into the future, you should wear Bond’s cottontails. (from premise 1)
3. You want to move into the future. (implied by the interpersonal element)
4. It follows that You should wear Bond’s cottontails. (from premises 2 & 3, by modus ponens)
5. It further follows that, if you do not wear Bond’s cottontails, and they can be bought, you should buy Bond’s cottontails. (practical implications of premise 4) (Slade 2003: 150)¹³

¹³ I have elided some of Slade’s inter-premise text and added the parenthetical elements to allow the logic of Slade’s extracted and reconstructed argument to stand out.

This is a very impressive analysis, and one that seems to provide us with criteria from getting from the image to the proposition in a fairly stable way. Given Slade's contention that Blair and Fleming operate on too narrow a conception of argumentation it is striking that Slade produces as her demonstration of an argument embedded in a purely visual medium an argument that would satisfy the conception of argumentation they use. As a response to Blair and Fleming, it is a sound strategy in that it shows that visual argumentation can be found that meets even their (on her view, overly) strict conception of the argumentation involved. What is striking about it is that she generates this argument by the application of semiotic principles of interpretation that are supposed to be operative at the level of argumentation seen not as premise-conclusion argumentation, but as a dynamical interchange involving more than just that sort of argument. Regardless of what the Wittgensteinian perspective says about the possibility of visual argumentation of the sort Slade suggests, the connection her view displays between the wider and narrower senses of argumentation, I think, retains its force and its interest.

Despite the appearance presented by her key example, Slade makes no claim that images can be propositional. Were she to say that, all the same points that count against the Birdsell and Groarke analysis would count against hers as well. Since she does not explicitly make that claim, let us simply leave the matter at that. The Wittgensteinian notion of "seeing as" will prove to be far more relevant to the evaluation of her case for purely visual arguments. To return to this purpose let us now ask, does Slade's view fare any better than Birdsell and Groarke's on Wittgensteinian criteria?

Recall that "seeing as" was not a process of extracting a hidden meaning in an image. It was not a matter of interpretation, of revealing what the image says. Rather, "seeing as" is a matter of adopting a particular attitude towards an image, expressible in terms of counterfactual statements, that permits the person seeing the image to see it in a certain way (e.g. now as a duck, now as a rabbit). The question of whether the attitude thus taken provides access to something unequivocally communicated by the image itself is moot. The connection between this perspective of "seeing as" and the indeterminacy of interpretation suggested by PI 139b should be clear. What an image "says" is largely going to be a matter of what the viewer brings to it in terms of contextual knowledge and cultural or linguistic framing. This,

however, should not make us think that we need to be relativists about the meaning of images. On this point Gill’s recommendation is apt:

The only alternative to the “cult of objectivity” is not relativistic subjectivism. A more viable line of approach is to recognize that we live in a conversation among the personal, the social, and the physical dimensions of reality, and that each of these dimensions exerts its pull upon us in a specific historical context. As human beings we struggle to maintain our balance in this constantly fluctuating situation, and because of individual and cultural differences we do this in somewhat different ways. We find different models or metaphors by means of which to chart our courses. Nevertheless, there are certain commonalities which comprise the human form of life and which may be thought of as forming the bed-rock or touchstone for evaluating the overall worth of our chosen models. (Gill 1979: 283)

The objection being made to Slade’s analysis here, then, is not that it is just her subjective reading of the images in question. She might have very good reasons, after all, for thinking that the image says what she says it does. Rather, the objection is simply that Slade’s account takes images to do something that *they* cannot do, to be something they cannot be, on their own, that is, be bearers of hidden interpretations that viewers must unlock correctly if they are to grasp the “one true meaning” of the image. If we need such a complicated conceptual or semiotic apparatus to extract the argumentation from an advertisement, then the argumentation we find within it cannot be, as she claims, “purely visual”. The presence of the argumentation in the Bond’s Cottontails ad, then, is less a matter of the visuals themselves than it is of the framework of analysis we bring to it. Can *we* see the visuals in the ad as an argument? Absolutely we can. Is the argument *really there within the image*? This is a question which Wittgenstein would likely have regarded as unanswerable, perhaps malformed. It is like asking, of the Jastrow duck-rabbit, “Which is it, duck or rabbit?” and demanding a final answer. It is like asserting that seeing the Necker cube “from above” is the way in which the image calls upon us to see it, not “from below”.

The upshot of all this is that the argumentation of an image is constructed around it, not implicit with in it somehow. Drawing a conclusion from an image, then is unlike drawing a conclusion from linguistic premises in that

there is no implicit pattern of reasoning that the recipient of the argumentation recognizes and completes. This would be a case of genuinely completing a puzzle by fitting the last piece in. With “visual arguments” the case is different; the argumentation is constructed around the image to make use of its rhetorical impact. The important difference here is that the process in a visual argument involves not the recognition of a pattern of reasoning but a stipulation of the reading that the arguer wants the audience to draw from the image. This is part of the reason why Wittgenstein calls the recognition of a face a psychological, not a rational event and why, on his view, we can at most only experience an epistemic feeling of correctness with respect to visual images, but never a sense of *logical* correctness. This is also why no argument in favor of visual arguments will ever be given in images alone without any accompanying text. The textual accompaniment is a *sine qua non*. Either it will point us directly to the arguer’s intended proposition, as the caption on Birdsell and Groarke’s cartoon does, or it will close off alternative interpretations by stipulating a method by which the image must be understood if the argumentation is to be revealed, as Slade’s analysis does. Whichever method is chosen, the result is the same: the arguer directs the audience to that reading of the image (of the many that there are) that she wishes to use in her argumentation. For those who wish to make use of the indisputable power of visual elements in their argumentation, this restriction of readings is absolutely necessary owing to the open-textured nature of visual meaning. The image then functions not as a piece of argumentation itself—indeed it cannot—but as a kind of locus of argumentation.

5. Conclusion: Of Apples and Arguments

Slade, and Birdsell and Groarke, are partially right: *images are persuasive*. But not everything that persuades is an argument, and that applies to visual images. When one is persuaded by argumentation that contains images, like Slade’s cottontails ad or Birdsell and Groarke’s political cartoon, what persuades is not an argument that lurks within the image in such a way as to subconsciously or otherwise register with one’s rational faculties. What persuades is the “total package” of argumentation (argumentation in Slade’s wide sense) within which the visual image is nestled. It is the surrounding

argumentation that frames the image in such a way that one can see it as a part of the argumentation too. The work that that the visual image does therein may vary, but it can do work. The mistake, by Wittgensteinian lights, simply lies in thinking that because an image does some work in argumentation it thereby becomes an argument. Whatever else it can do, the visual image cannot do this. This is largely owing to three reasons: 1) images, though they are productive of epistemic feelings in us, do not lead us to conclusions by rational means, 2) even if we allow for contextual influences on interpretation, images always allow the drawing of multiple valid readings between which there is no a priori method of adjudication, and 3) the business of “seeing an image as___” is more a business of erecting a conceptual scaffolding around it for the purpose of arriving at a particular reading of it than it is of unlocking a fixed but hidden meaning lying within it. This is why, for Wittgenstein, it is a bad thing if “a picture holds us captive” with respect to our efforts to determine the meaning of a word or expression, and why we need a community of language users playing the same (or similar enough) language games by the same (or a similar enough) system of rules in order to speak meaningfully of the meaning of a word or expression.

It would be easy for someone to take the remark that pictures are less bound by rules of interpretation than words as a sort of slur, as what George Roque (2009) has called “linguistic imperialism”. If this is an implication of Wittgenstein’s view, the anti-linguistic-imperialist might say, then so much the worse for Wittgenstein. But I think this would be a mistake, for in Wittgenstein’s view is a tacit acknowledgement of the power of images that the visual argumentation theorist should find salutary. Images may not contain arguments on this view, but this does not mean that images are inferior to words. In fact, I would argue that it is the other way ‘round. It is the semantic polyvalence of images, their ability to carry multiple meanings and interpretations; the different ways in which we may see them that gives images their power. And, I would hasten to add, it is not as though there are no boundaries to the interpretation of images, that some ways of seeing (as with some ways of speaking) are not perhaps more accurate than others. The quotation from Gill to the effect that the open-textured nature of images need not collapse into a relativism about them given in the last section of the paper is one worth keeping in mind.

Consider, for example, a still life painting by Cézanne (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Cézanne, “Still Life with Apples, Pears, and a Gray Jug” 1893-1894.

Looked at in a certain way, this painting is rather mundane. It is a simple representation of ordinary objects in an ordinary setting. Looked at in another way, Cézanne’s apples are a call to revolution in painting. In order to see them in this way, however, one must first understand painting as it was practiced at the time Cézanne was painting. One must also understand the fundamentals of painting and, more generally, of two-dimensional design. Cézanne’s apples certainly say something to those who understand these things, and they say it elegantly and forcefully. However, it is not *mistaken* to see the painting as a pleasant, if somewhat oddly executed, picture of fruit in a bowl. It is not *mistaken* to see the painting as a call to painters in specific and to people in general to attend to the subjectivity of the act of seeing itself. Similarly, it is not *mistaken* to see the argument as a political comment on the role of farmers in French political life, or a religious medi-

tation on temptation (Cézanne was, until the time of his death a devout Roman Catholic). One need not assume that any such statement is being made at all. The painting may sensibly be interpreted as an exercise in composition or color theory and appreciated as such, without any sort of connection to "deeper" or more hidden meanings. Who knows that this isn't what Cézanne intended in the first place, and that he wouldn't chuckle at highly intellectual attempts to infuse his works with meanings that reach beyond what the images themselves portray by nestling them within a highly complicated semiotic architecture? Maybe he just painted for the challenge of developing his technique, without thinking very deeply about subject matter at all (though I feel compelled to say that that seems highly doubtful to me). Sadly, he is no longer with us, and we cannot know for certain what meaning he intended to communicate in the vast majority of his works. All of those mentioned are latent possibilities and it is impossible to say that Cézanne would have been unhappy with any of them or that he would have intended some and not others, even if his primary purpose *was* to say something about painting to other painters.

Visual images are such that the agent who makes them can intend multiple understandings, or simply intend that viewers reach *some* reading of the images she presents. This open-textured nature is the power of images, not their handicap.¹⁴ An argument over what Cézanne's painting means would thus have to be open-textured too. An argument over the meaning of the sentence 'The cat is on the mat.', by contrast, is far less open to alternative readings that do not do violence to communally held standards of interpretation and meaning. One has to leverage the context of the utterance to extract non-standard accounts of what the statement means, i.e. to assume that the context of the utterance was in the course of a long poem in which 'cat' and 'mat' were being used metaphorically. It is not so with the painting.

¹⁴ Though the Wittgensteinian diagnosis of the failure of pictures to be arguments on offer here bears some similarities to that offered in Fleming (1996), it is at the point of asking what pictures actually do where I suspect the two analyses would cease altogether running in parallel directions. Fleming spends considerable time on the question of what pictures actually can and cannot do. In keeping with the notion that images are open-textured, or semantically polyvalent, I wish simply to say that this fact about them prevents us from pinning down any one function they might have, *sui generis*. Though they cannot be arguments on the analysis given here, the roles that images play in argumentation or persuasion may be many and varied indeed.

The picture provides us with a richness of simultaneous, alternative interpretations of which the word can only dream. But this power comes at a price, and it is that the semantic polyvalence of images makes them unsuitable instruments for tasks requiring more communicative precision. The image stands on its own. *It* argues nothing. It is the *user of the image* who argues, using it to make or illustrate or emphasize a particular point. In order to do so, the power of the image has to be diminished. Its expansiveness must be closed off and one particular reading privileged over all others, at least temporarily, so that it may serve the purposes of the arguer. Because even when it is so restricted the image has power, this is sometimes acceptable to do in the service of a conclusion that calls for a particularly powerful presentation.

It is also reasonable to think that artists, at least sometimes, create works of art for the purpose of use in arguments. This way of reading what Birdsell and Groarke's political cartoonist does, what David intended with "The Death of Marat" and with him Goya and Picasso (and numerous others) in their politically inspired works does not force us into treating the visual images as arguments *themselves*.¹⁵ Even artists who have explicitly political purposes in mind when they make art, however, must bear in mind that it is not the *artwork* that argues. It is *the person* who deploys the artwork in his or her argumentation who does so. And the person will always need to use language in addition to artwork—not because the word is more powerful than the image, but precisely because the image is more powerful than the word, and must be reined in if it is to serve the arguer's purpose.

Wittgenstein himself hints at this in PI, II, iv, when in reference to religious imagery of the soul he says: And haven't pictures of these things been painted? And why should such a picture be only an imperfect rendering of the spoken doctrine? Why should it not do the same service as the words? And it is the service which is the point." Were he to have stopped there, the thesis of this paper would have been untenable. But he did not stop there, for a few lines down from this quote, the final paragraph of this section

¹⁵ Blair's (1996) treatment of these examples is particularly good, but does not to my mind establish that these images are arguments, only that they play, or can play, a supporting role in a person's overall campaign of argumentation.

reads (the emphasis on the last sentence is mine): “And how about such an expression as: “In my heart I understood when you said that” pointing to one’s heart? Does one, perhaps, not *mean* this gesture? Of course one means it. Or is one conscious of using a mere figure? Indeed not.—It is *not a figure* that we choose, not a simile, yet it is a *figurative expression*.” (Wittgenstein 1968) It is the words, then, that we use to draw the image into the service of the argumentation that do the real work in the argument. As I have argued in this paper, however, Wittgenstein gives us reason to think that things do not move in the other direction. We can build an argument *around* an image, but the image itself cannot be said to argue.

Though I have argued here that Wittgenstein gives us reason to think that visual images cannot be arguments, I do not think he shows that visual images have no role to play in argumentation more broadly conceived. Nor do I think that it means that images are somehow “irrational”. I am willing to go even further than this and say that I think it should be a bad thing if arguers stopped using visual images as elements of argumentation. Discourse would be highly impoverished without them, and some points would be very difficult indeed to make. Wittgenstein himself uses visual images in his argumentation throughout his works. I have used visual images to make my points in this paper. And there is nothing hypocritical in either of these usages of images. The rhetorical power that images wield generally, and the fact that many people more easily process visual information than textual information makes them indispensable tools of argumentation (and more broadly, of communication). It simply does not make them *arguments*.

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1. Introduction

Readers of a journal devoted to reasoning and argumentation should find a book discussing Alasdair MacIntyre's theories on moral reasoning and arguments very interesting. For over 30 years MacIntyre has been developing a sophisticated yet controversial theory of moral reasoning and argument. It is based on a combination of Aristotle, Thomism and post-modern critiques of liberal individualism and of the secular, moral theories undergirding it. In his many writings over that period, he primarily addresses secular philosophers and social scientists interested in these matters. In this book, he addresses his fellow Catholic scholars but includes updated critiques of the major Western secular moral philosophies of the Enlightenment and modernity: Utilitarianism, Kantianism and Social Contract theories. The main difference between this book and his writings from the 1980s (1984, 1988) is that he now seems open to including natural rights under the medieval Catholic theory of natural law. The book resulted from a request from Cardinal Ratzinger¹ that the University of Notre Dame study the complex is-

¹ Cardinal Ratzinger is now Pope Benedict XVI (as I suspect most, if not all, readers of this journal know). Since almost all the contributors, including MacIntyre, refer to him by

sues in discussions about natural law and natural rights, which MacIntyre dismissed as fictions in *After Virtue* (hereafter AV).

The book has ten chapters. The first and final chapters were written by MacIntyre. Chapter 1, “Intractable Moral Disagreements” introduces the two major themes of the book: why do contemporary moral debates seem so intractable? Can Natural Law resolve these disagreements more rationally than post-Enlightenment modernist moral theories seem able to? The first chapter is followed by articles from eight different scholars from different disciplines united by their commitment to Catholic Christianity who wish to be involved in inter-religious dialogue as well as dialogue with secular philosophers, especially those of Kantian, Utilitarian and Social Contract persuasion. Finally they intend to confront, albeit indirectly, problems posed by moral scepticism raised by the moral disagreements that religious and secular thinkers have engaged in for several centuries. In the final chapter, MacIntyre responds to the eight critics.

2. Overview

I start with chapter one, discuss three of MacIntyre’s critics and his responses to these critics in chapter ten. In chapter one, MacIntyre summarizes the Thomist-Aristotelian theory of moral reasoning, explaining why moral disagreement renders it problematic but does not refute it. Natural law claims to be binding on all humans and accessible by reason. Such claims seem to imply that there should be near universal agreement about ethical claims. However, massive historical and empirical evidence indicate that no such agreement exists. MacIntyre uses Aquinas’s theories regarding practical rationality to explain why this situation does not undermine natural law: failures to arrive at agreement occur, because of a variety of failures in practical rationality.

Practical rationality is based on the first principles of natural law which entails “that good is to be done and evil to be avoided” (p. 5). While this may seem to be a miserable tautology, the list of goods is not. These goods are of

the title and name he had when he proposed the idea behind the book before he became the present Pope, I will follow their example.

three types: goods relevant to our *physical* nature (life, health), our *animal* nature (sex, caring for children) and our *rational* nature (knowledge and social goods). He makes a distinction to explain why there are apparently intractable moral disputes and why such disputes do not refute natural law claims. This distinction is between the primary and secondary precepts of natural law.

MacIntyre makes two points concerning primary precepts. They should not be identified, or confused with, the first principles of natural law (such as the example above: “good is to be done and evil...avoided”). Like first principles, they are known non-inferentially. Secondary precepts are those that help us apply primary precepts to concrete situations. If we agree that promoting peace, mitigating or eliminating poverty, racism, sexism and diseases from the human race are morally virtuous, we still face questions of how best to achieve these goals. This permits, in fact requires, that we reject relativism at the level of primary precepts but recognize its necessity at the secondary level. Primary precepts remain the same in every society, but the forms through which they receive expression do not, and in this sense they can be called “relative” to a society’s needs, resources and its citizens’ abilities.

MacIntyre recognizes, as did Aquinas, that not all humans acknowledge the rational cogency of natural law. For Aquinas this is due to mental defects or disorders in some persons, and in others it is due to selfishness, passion, and bad habits or dispositions. These, however, are rare exceptions. So it would seem that agreement with natural law should be widespread with dissent from it being exceptional. MacIntyre says that facts concerning moral disagreement do not bear out this explanation. He then proceeds to the major types of moral disagreement in the early 21st century.

He defines five types of such seemingly intractable moral disagreements: the inviolability of innocent human life; the relationship of ends and means; human sexuality; honour and loyalty; and Social Justice. He concludes this survey of intractable disputes with a key meta-theoretical point: the contending parties in these disputes appeal to first principles that provide them with justification for their moral claims concerning taking of human life, sexuality and economic justice. Then, however, rational argument gives way to “shrill assertion and counterassertion of incompatible first principles” (p. 11). This leads to one of his most frequently asserted principles, the need

for rational shared deliberation between contending parties to resolve these issues, both theoretical and practical.

After this, MacIntyre outlines some practical precepts of natural law (concerning the wrongness of murder, theft, *inter alia.*) and explains the obstacles to practical rationality as well as the theory of human nature presupposed by natural law. Since the obstacles are mostly due to the latter I will start with it. MacIntyre follows Catholic tradition in describing human nature as being both good (created in the *imago dei*) and bad (the divine image is corrupted by original sin). Because of the former we are able to know good and evil, but because of the latter we are either unable or unwilling to recognize and/or follow natural law. There are three major obstacles to correct reasoning in moral matters: psychological, ideological and logical. The first is due to defects in human nature primarily our egoism and egotism. The former is our propensity (emphasized repeatedly by MacIntyre) to prefer the pursuit of power, pleasure and money to the precepts of natural law. The latter is due to our pride or arrogance. We think that we are right and are unwilling to engage in a genuine dialogue based on shared deliberation in which we do not begin with the assumption that our group's beliefs or ideology is the one true correct view.

MacIntyre is critical of the major ideologies of modernity: liberalism, conservatism, socialism, communism, libertarianism and communitarianism. While there are significant differences between them, all are guilty of uncritically sharing the agenda of modernity and the post-enlightenment world. The purely logical problems he says surprisingly little about, especially the two major ones: the is-ought distinction and the infinite regress problem².

MacIntyre then goes on to provide a critique of two of the dominant secular moral theories of modernity: utilitarianism and Kant's Categorical Imperatives. His major criticism of utility concerns its defective theory of happiness, as compared to Aristotle's *eudaimonia* (usually translated as "happiness"). He does recognize that there is a version of utilitarianism called negative utilitarianism.³ Kant's Categorical Imperative is criticized on

² Since MacIntyre wrote about the is/ought and fact/value distinction in AV, and since his views on first principles are the Aristotelian solution to the infinite regress problem I do not comment on this apparent neglect of a key issue in moral philosophy.

³ Negative Utilitarianism argues for an asymmetry between the moral connotations of pleasure and/or happiness and pain. Only the latter, on this view, has any moral claims on

grounds that it cannot provide the rational justification of morality by its *reductio ad absurdum* method.

Now despite his rejection of Kant and negative utility, Macintyre's deduction of the practical precepts of natural law involve respect for the Lockean triad of rights: life, liberty and property; consequently they forbid us ever to take innocent life, or to inflict bodily harm on the innocent, and enjoins respect for the legitimate property of others. These precepts also have characteristics that they share with Kant's Categorical Imperative: they are universal, exceptionless, the same for all persons and are presuppositions of rational enquiry not inferences from other judgments. He concludes his summary of Thomist natural law theory with the claim that Aquinas's account of the precepts of natural law is not inconsistent with the facts of moral disagreement. "It provides the best starting point for the explanation of these facts" (p. 26).

In chapter two, Jean Porter's answer to the question in the title, "Does Natural Law Provide a Universally Valid Morality?" is 'No'. The two main problems are: (1) while the claims of natural law are allegedly binding on all humans and demonstrably rational, not all humans recognize their universality or their rational cogency. (2) These claims are too indeterminate to define right and wrong, since "murder" and "theft" do not cover all cases of taking human life or human property, so when are they wrong and when right? For example, some people think abortion is always murder, some that it never is and others that it depends on the reasons and timing. Some people think that taxation is theft or that it is above a certain threshold. Many question whether copying music, movies and computer programs that you own is theft.

Chapter eight, authored by John Coughlin, "The Foundations of Human Rights and Canon law", raises interesting questions from historical and philosophical perspectives. What is the logical relation of Natural Law, Natural Rights and theories of Human nature? Coughlin's answer is based on an ambitious attempt to link (pre-Thomist) canon law to later more secular attempts at promoting and proving human rights. He contrasts natural law

individuals or governments, i.e. the avoidance of inflicting pain and suffering and its mitigation or reduction where possible is obligatory but no similar obligation exists to increase anyone's happiness or pleasure.

with positive law, arguing that human rights depend on an objective truth grounded in a universal human nature. He argues that, without such an objective moral foundation, human rights laws will fail. A contrast with a well-known and influential modernist basis may help clarify this. The US Declaration of independence says that it is a self-evident truth that all humans are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights; life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Later (in the US constitution) these become the Lockean triad of life, liberty and property. The same triad re-appeared in the French Revolution in its early stages, (Aug. 1789). As Donald Sutherland points out, these rights owe their origin to Montesquieu and Locke and hence “to the whole European tradition of natural law” (p. 72).

What Coughlin’s argument comes down to is that canon law is *consistent with*, but not that it *logically implies*, natural rights. Its methodology contributed to human rights theory by calling for reflection on human nature. It also provides the best foundation for such theories. Coughlin seems ambiguous on the issue of a theological foundation for human rights. He rejects the claim that only a theological foundation can provide such a basis. Like MacIntyre, he holds that natural law arguments are based on practical reason with a universal appeal and do not depend on faith. Nonetheless, in his conclusion he says that the anthropology of the canon law with its combination of natural law, theology, and historical circumstances afford an objective standard for human rights law.

Chapter six by Gerald McKenny, “Moral Disagreement and the Limits of Reason”, discusses differences in argument strategies between those (such as MacIntyre) whose prime concern is “how can moral claims be rationally justified” and those (such as Ratzinger) whose prime concern is: “how can the truths of moral claims become effectively persuasive?” (p. 216). McKenny reiterates the problem defined by MacIntyre in chapter one. He outlines moral problems similar to those posed in chapter one that seem intractable. He stresses the apparent contradiction between the claims of reason and the facts of moral disagreement. If, as St. Paul and the Church’s catechism imply, natural law is “present in the heart of each man and established by reason” (p. 197),⁴ then we should find more widespread agreement on the requirements of this law than actually exists.

⁴ Paul uses the Greek word usually translated as “conscience” not “reason”.

McKenny outlines three possible strategies for dealing with this anomalous situation. The first is to deny that moral disagreement is as deep or persistent as many people assume. The second and third solutions are divided into two versions of each. The second is “to deny that reason gives us the kind or degree of knowledge of what is morally good” (p. 199). The third view is divided into two versions one of which is attributed to MacIntyre, the other to Ratzinger. Both make use of an “error theory” (p. 200). In MacIntyre’s view, the error is what led to the unsolved and insoluble Enlightenment Problem.⁵ In Ratzinger’s view, the error is the Enlightenment’s reduction of the role of reason “to empirical and technological rationality” (p. 215). This results in moral values being relegated to the subjective realm.

McKenny argues that it is futile for Christians simply to appeal to reason in the face of moral disagreement, since the natural law tradition shares the fate of the enlightenment project, which proved unable to ground moral and political value in reason alone. This argument applies to both MacIntyre and Ratzinger. They are both unable to show how the natural law tradition can effectively overcome moral disagreement today.

Chapter ten, the final chapter contains MacIntyre’s response to the previous eight critics. In my opinion it is much less well argued than chapter one, so I begin my critical assessment of the book as part of my exposition. In chapter ten, he singles out two critics as presenting the most searching criticisms requiring response: Porter and McKenny. I added Coughlin because of the natural law-natural rights connection.

Contra Porter, MacIntyre argues that practical rationality, if rightly understood, provides everything required for moral life independently of any theological ethics and this includes “how to apply it” (p. 315). On the practical level this entails that natural law can resolve “intractable disputes”. Before turning to one of the most intractable of such disputes, abortion, MacIntyre shifts to the meta-theoretical level, to issues involving first principles. His reply to Porter raises a key point about noninferential truths: such truths can be known noninferentially without being *per se notum* truths (i.e. self-evident truths).⁶ However, MacIntyre says nothing to clarify either the

⁵ The Enlightenment project as explained by MacIntyre is the attempt to rationally justify morality on grounds of reason not religion or tradition.

⁶ *Per se nota* truths are “known through themselves” and so can be either tautologies

differences between these types of “truths” or how such noninferential truths are known. To Porter’s objection that the precepts of natural law are not specific enough regarding the meaning of key moral concepts of murder, theft and adultery, MacIntyre replies by arguing that “murder” is not that open textured or indeterminate and proceeds to use abortion as an example. The main argument is a principle of ontological individualism: the infant at three months after birth “is the same human individual as the embryo at three or six or eight months before birth” (p. 339). He does not discuss the question of whether taking innocent human life might be justified in some situations such as those of the medieval just war theory.

3. Natural Law, Human Rights, and Human Nature

Since many of my criticisms of MacIntyre involve the charge of using *tu quoque* arguments, I will briefly explain what it is, and why it is involved here. The principle here is that, if you criticize my theory because it implies p, and p is indefensible, self-contradictory or we both agree it is wrong-headed, but I can show that your theory also implies p, then your theory faces the same problem you pose for mine.

My comments and criticisms involve several crucial terms, not all of which appear in the text. The first is “shared deliberation”; there appear to be two serious problems with MacIntyre’s views on “shared deliberation”. The first is pragmatic. Just how is such deliberation supposed to take place? The 21st century may seem the ideal time for implementing it since, in theory, we could have all six billion plus people in the world linked to the internet contributing to discussions on “Intractable Moral Disputes”. However, internet discussion groups are not the most encouraging evidence for the possibility of rational, unbiased deliberation. The second point is more serious. It seems that the conditions MacIntyre lays down for such shared deliberation are remarkably similar to Rawls’s conditions for the Social Contract under his contentious “Veil of ignorance”. This is one of several problems for MacIntyre’s arguments of a *tu quoque* nature.

(All circles are round.) or self-evident axioms or assumptions or common notions as in Euclid (Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.)

In addition, such deliberation seems to assume what MacIntyre rejects as a typical modernist fiction, e.g. Adam Smith's moral sentiments theory and his impartial spectator. It seems clear that Smith's impartial spectator is remarkably similar to a Gods-eye point of view. Now one advantage of MacIntyre's view of natural law is that it circumvents the Euthyphro problem: does God arbitrarily decide that murder, theft and lying are wrong, or does She merely recognize these acts as wrong? According to MacIntyre, natural law is prior to both positive law and also divine law. A parallel with the laws of mathematical logic and physics would help. God does not arbitrarily decide that $7 + 5 = 12$ or that the number pi is non-finite. Nonetheless, God recognizes these truths.

The law of gravity, on the other hand, could be the result of the arbitrary will of God. It does not seem contradictory to deny it, and it is hard to see why She should prefer the gravitational constant to be two rather than an indefinitely large number of other possibilities. It also seems to be difficult to see why God (or the gods) should prefer one person to another so God does (or the gods do) seem to be the ultimate impartial spectator(s).⁷

Most of the text ignores the Golden Rule. This point is not an *ad hominem*: I am not asking why spokespersons for the (alleged) religion of Jesus ignore one of his most prominent teachings. Before I explain my criticism, I will outline two distinct versions of such a rule. The first is the negative version: "Do not do to others what you would not want done to you"; the second, positive version is "Do to others what you would want others to do to you".

There is a two-fold point here. MacIntyre and critics can reply that the Golden Rule is one of the first principles of natural law. It is also relevant to the two major issues addressed in this book: apparent lack of consent to these first principles and the intractable disputes we face today. Almost all of the major (and minor) religions have versions of the Golden Rule.⁸ Yet, they cannot agree on how it applies to real life moral dilemmas: abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, just war theory, homosexuality, justice and so on. In addition, MacIntyre is highly critical of rules-based ethics as op-

⁷ Unless we wish to introduce ideas of either a chosen race or predestination, neither of which are open to MacIntyre.

⁸ I use "minor" in a non-pejorative sense, i.e. to mean "less numerous" (and perhaps "less influential") so as to include Judaism as a major rather than minor religion.

posed to virtue based ones. However, he never distinguishes between rules and principles, which is an extremely important distinction relevant to recent ethical scandals.⁹

The next point deals with his superficial treatment of negative utilitarianism. I will concede that he has sound criticisms of the Utilitarian concept of happiness, pleasure and utility in general. But he says far too little about the negative side: do we really have such conceptual difficulties with pain, harm and suffering as we do with pleasure, happiness and utility? A great advantage of this view is that it enables us to make what should be an obvious distinction: hedonism versus humanitarianism. It is difficult to see how the increase of anyone's happiness or pleasure can be a duty or obligation. However, a similar claim about avoiding inflicting pain or suffering, and/or reducing and/or mitigating it does not seem absurd or unreasonable. Further, while human rights are discussed as well as other intractable disputes, animal rights issues are conspicuously missing. If there are issues with the taking of innocent human life, are there no issues with taking innocent non-human lives? If not, why not?

The Prisoners' Dilemma is also conspicuous in its absence in this book. This absence fits in with another theme from AV, repeated in the 3rd edition, that modernity is mistaken in seeing the need for morality as due to the natural preference for egoism over altruism. MacIntyre emphasizes this problem whenever he mentions our propensity to prefer power, pleasure, and profit over virtue. I make two other points which are relevant: (1) we can neither reduce the Prisoners' Dilemma to an egoism versus altruism issue, nor (2) can we treat it as another invention of modernity. The pre-Aristotelian equivalent was Gyges' Ring, used by Plato (*Republic*, Ch. 2) to raise the quintessential rational egoist question: "Why be Just?" Another issue seemingly ignored by MacIntyre and critics in this book involve evolutionary explanations of virtue, altruism and co-operation. The Prisoners' Dilemma is not a pure self-interest issue but also a justice/fairness problem. One can play the non-cooperative option for two reasons: to gain an unfair advantage or to compensate for the fact that others are opting to cheat

⁹ The classic case is the Enron scandal. The perpetrators of this fraud mostly followed the rules governing accounting in the USA but used them to disguise the huge debts and to exaggerate their profits thus violating the principles of honesty and integrity.

and thus put you at an unfair disadvantage. For example, if athletes who know that others are using illegal performance enhancing substances, or if honest students know that other students are cheating, but refuse to do so, they put themselves at a disadvantage. Similarly, those who cheat on their tax returns keep more money than those who do not. MacIntyre would definitely say this is not just, (despite not having a clear, coherent concept of justice).

My final points relate to McKenny's critiques and MacIntyre's response. They focus on the main strength and major lacunae in his overall theory of moral reasoning and argument. The strongest points in the book are (1) MacIntyre's theory of practical rationality, (2) MacIntyre's ability to switch back and forth between practical moral issues, moral theories and meta-theoretical level and (3) the critics ability to force MacIntyre to clarify his position and arguments. The last point leads the major lacunae in the form of far too many promissory notes. These concern especially the key ideas of practical rationality, first principles and human rights.

MacIntyre does not see the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights as a reason for optimism. He states that his primary concern is "how far certain moral disagreements are intractable" (p. 330) even when the parties to disputes "are rational and have good will" (p. 330). He rejects the claim that his position leads to relativism in practice and somewhat surprisingly asserts that there is no disagreement between his views and the Enlightenment's championing of free thought, equality and other democratic values. Rather the deepest divide is meta-theoretical, that is: "two rival conceptions of reason" (p. 332). This involves the pre-modern Thomist reliance on tradition and a teleological view of human nature to supplement reason.

MacIntyre's attempt to rehabilitate tradition leads his rationalist, modernist, secular critics accuse him of being anti-modernist and anti-rational. But he is neither.¹⁰ He has a much more sophisticated theory of rational argument in ethics than most of his critics. This is because he combines

¹⁰ MacIntyre is almost impossible to categorize in terms of the key labels of modern post French Revolution ideologies: left, right, liberal, conservative, modern, post-modern and so forth. His critique of liberal individualism combines the criticisms made by both conservative and left wing critics.

Aristotelian demonstrative argument theory with what he calls elsewhere “dialectical justification”, which is labelled by McKenny as “dialectical testing” a procedure with parallels to old-fashioned eliminative induction, Karl Popper’s theory of conjectures and refutation, and pragma-dialectics. The best example of how this fits the Popperian model is provided by McKenny. A tradition can be rationally vindicated in a contest with another tradition, if it can resolve problems that other traditions cannot do. Appropriate examples of this appear in the final section of chapter one: (1) “Thomist Aristotelianism provides us all a well-founded and rationally justified moral philosophy”; (2) “the best defence of natural law will consist in radical, philosophical, moral, and cultural critiques of rival standpoints” (pp. 51-52).

MacIntyre defends the power of reason and cites the great “tradition of rational inquiry” (p. 334) from Plato to Aquinas but strangely omits one of the greatest proponents of this tradition, Euclid. MacIntyre refers to the debate between Plato and Aristotle and their followers about first principles. He re-asserts the priority of natural law to divine law and human law and adds an interesting quasi-Kantian argument (without recognizing its origin) in associating Paul with natural law theory to the effect that we could not be held responsible for violations of God’s law if we were not aware of it. This only makes sense given an “ought implies can” principle, since he argues that “we could not be rightly held responsible for violations ... if we were not aware of God’s law *qua* human beings” (p. 344). He claims that this is what Paul is writing about in Romans 2:15. If this does not presuppose “ought implies can”, then why do we need to be aware of it? MacIntyre used similar arguments to dismiss natural rights in AV (69 ff.)

Another problem with MacIntyre’s arguments is pointed out by McKenny: “modern democratic arrangements have themselves come to constitute a historical tradition” (pp. 222-223). This can be combined with the criticism that his views about the enlightenment project, modernity and tradition create a false dichotomy. Again, to cite AV, MacIntyre recognizes a clear difference between the Scottish and French Enlightenments. The details of this are less relevant than the following point: the former was not only much less anti-clerical, it was also not based on pure reason. The predominant theory was the moral sense (or sentiment) theories of Adam Smith and Hume. MacIntyre may see problems with these theories if he wishes to, but then, would he not also have a problem with Paul (Romans 2:14-15) and so

with the Church's use of this to support Natural Law theory as something available to all persons?

Other *tu quoque*-problems with the coherence of many of MacIntyre's arguments arise in his comments on Ratzinger and in his response to Coughlin on human rights and canon law, where he gives no indication of seeing a tension between natural rights and natural law. In AV he stated that "Rights are fictions" (1984, Ch. 6). This is restated in the 3rd edition. But, if natural rights are fictions, then could not natural law be also fiction, since it clearly seems to be a major source of natural rights? His main argument against the latter is that we have no more reason to believe in them than in witches, ghosts, or unicorns (p. 69). This argument claims that it is self-evident that all humans are equal and endowed with inalienable rights. In AV MacIntyre replies to this type of claim by stating "we know there are no self-evident truths" (p. 69) and he categorically rejects appeals to intuition as sufficient to support such alleged truths. This is re-affirmed in the recent 3rd edition. This leads to the most fundamental of all meta-theoretical problems. What is the status of what he calls "non-inferential", or '*per se nota*', truths of natural law? Since MacIntyre rejects self-evident truths and intuition without providing any clues regarding another epistemological alternative, he continues to owe us a substitute account of how we might know these non-inferential truths.

4. Conclusion

Overall, the book is a good effort at clarifying MacIntyre's alternative to modern moral theories and applying it to some of the 'intractable problems' we face. However, at all three levels, practical issues, moral theories and meta-ethical problems, especially that of first principles, the arguments are either exposed to problems raised by critics or insufficiently argued. He is stronger at producing criticisms than justifying his alternative, yet many of his criticisms are subject to *tu quoque*-objections.

I finish with a logical point about the relation of human nature to natural law. While I agree that one cannot deduce a valid moral theory from facts or true theories about human beings, a moral theory must be consistent with human nature. In this area I think that MacIntyre's theory suc-

ceeds. The Thomist Aristotelian uses a theory of human nature that is essentialist, descriptive and normative all at the same time. It is also, arguably, very realistic in being both optimistic and pessimistic. I will defend only the negative aspect in my final paragraph.

Secular critics who dislike the negative aspect involved in the connotations of a “sinful human nature” may wish to substitute “the selfish gene” and get a modern, ‘scientific’ equivalent. What I mean by this is that human beings seem obviously to be mostly (but not entirely) motivated by self-interest and also capable of “limited altruism” so, given the “ought implies can” principle, we should not expect too much from our fellow humans nor too little either. Natural law theory does not violate either of these desiderata. What its modern defenders, whether religious or secular, need to do is to argue that its theory of human nature, first principles and practical rationality are preferable to all the alternatives. I finish with a hypothetical rather than categorical criticism or problem: If MacIntyre and/or his critics can cash in their promissory notes, they will score a major philosophical victory, but if they cannot, we still face all those intractable moral disputes.

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Frans H. van Eemeren (ed.). *Examining Argumentation in Context: Fifteen studies on strategic maneuvering*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2009, 305 pp., (hb.), ISBN 9789027211187, EUR 95.00.

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Argumentation theorists will welcome Frans H. van Eemeren's collection of fifteen essays on strategic maneuvering, dedicated to Peter Houtlosser with whom the editor worked for a decade to develop the theory as an extension of pragma dialectics. This collection brings together European and North American scholars whose work on strategic maneuvering enhances both its breadth of applications and its depth potential for argumentation analysis. The contents of this edited volume certify that the evolving theory of strategic maneuvering evokes interest from scholars of informal logic, rhetoric, linguistics, politics, law, and marketing. My review highlights the content of a few of these essays in order to identify promising new directions for this theory.

Chapter 1 explicates the main concepts and principles of strategic maneuvering drawn from several previously published essays by van Eemeren and Houtlosser. The essay evolves sequentially showing how the elements of this theory developed over time. (1) Grounded in pragma dialectics, the goal of the theory is to integrate the "artful effectiveness" of rhetoric with the "critical reasonableness" of dialectics. (2) The chapter explains how the topical potential, audience directed adjustments, and rhetorical stylistics intersect within an argumentative discourse during the confrontation, open-

ing, argumentation, and concluding phases of a critical discussion. (3) This theory defines the strategic elements of the maneuvering within the discourse as results achieved, routes taken, constraints imposed, and commitments made through definitions. (4) Expansions to this theory explain fallacies, such as false appeals to authority, as derailments of strategic maneuvering. (5) The aforementioned features of argument occur as part of the activity types of adjudication, mediation, negotiation, and public debate. The chapter emphasizes that understanding the context is key to the reconstruction and explication of the strategic design of argumentative discourse. Clearly this chapter's replication of previous theorizing on strategic maneuvering will assist readers in understanding how the fifteen essays of the collection relate to and elaborate existing theory.

In chapter 3, Christopher Tindale makes a useful critique and elaboration. He claims that rhetoric deserves a prominent place in strategic maneuvering because the audience participates in argument and reasonableness is a co-construction of the arguer, audience, and argument. He emphasizes the prominent role audiences play in the arguers' design of their arguments as well as in the effects they produce. Tindale distinguishes his rhetorical focus from van Eemeren and Houtlosser, claiming that rhetoric gives issues interest and prominence and it also calls attention to how audiences' experiences are relevant to arguers' intent and message design. Audiences do not just respond to arguments strategically designed by the arguers, but they aid the construction of arguments through their active participation with the arguer and their implied presence in the content. By referencing Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, Tindale notes the importance of the audience to the arguer for identifying the topical potential and for using presentational devices. Moreover, argumentation does not depend only on dialectic for its rational component. Rather rhetoric creates intersubjective reasonableness between arguer and audience without requiring compliance with a set of dialectical rules. Effectiveness, he says, is measured by the adherence of audiences to claims, which allows the audience to "bridge the divide between what is the case for me and what ought to be the case for others." Tindale's emphasis on the audience and rhetorical features as significant forces in creating reasonableness adds depth to strategic maneuvering theory.

By stressing the importance of institutional logic to argumentation pro-

cesses, C. Thomas Goodnight (chapter 5) adds breadth to strategic maneuvering. Specifically, he defines institutional logic as “symbolic and material structures that offer codes of conduct, regulatory norms, standards of research, programs of coordination, and goals for reasonable practices.” Institutional logic establishes standards that differ from dialectical and logical rules. Goodnight claims that institutional logic is not regulated by conversational norms nor effects on opinion but by the logic of the institution that embraces “state of the art standards,” and “best practices” that determine “burden of proof, presumption, and local of decision making between practitioner and client.” In this way, institutional logic illuminates the complex dialectical process of strategic maneuvering between professionals and clients in contexts that previously have received little theoretical consideration in strategic maneuvering. Accounting for institutional logic gives argumentation analysts another means of understanding both the surface and the deep structure of argumentative discourse. In addition to the provider-client interaction with health advertisements featured by Goodnight, institutional logic likely affects the strategic maneuvering in business transactions, counseling interactions, contract disputes, and policy discussions as much as it does in the general activity types described by van Eemeren and Houtlosser.

David Zarefsky (chapter 7) and Isabela Ie_cu-Fairclough (chapter 8) examine argumentation in political contexts. Both authors emphasize the role of power in political argumentation, a concept not directly addressed in strategic maneuvering. Zarefsky emphasizes the unique features of political controversies as arguments, noting that these controversies lack identifiable disputants and often involve large groups of advocates and audiences arguing about diverse political issues over long expanses of time and without obvious resolution of the disputes. Zarefsky identifies additional salient features to strategic maneuvering of political arguments, such as changing the subject, reframing arguments, and appealing to liberal and conservative presumptions. These features complicate political argumentation in ways not previously addressed by strategic maneuvering theory, by showing how political arguments deviate from the reasoning in the argument types and in the phases of critical discussion.

Ie_cu-Fairclough also focuses on power and political argument, but she examines the dilemmas arguers face when they exert power and try to le-

gitimize their argumentation for diverse audience interests. She concentrates on a single argument episode (the President of Romania defending himself against accusations from his Parliament), describes this argumentative interaction as adjudication, and identifies fallacies used by President Băsescu in defending himself from the attacks of members of the Romanian Parliament. This case study suggests theoretical extensions to strategic maneuvering. By appropriating Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of "political game" as "a double game," for example, the author claims that politicians simultaneously play a political game with adversaries at the same time they play a social game with constituents. In other words, political arguers often find themselves in a difficult position because they cannot easily represent their own political power to opposing adversaries at the same time they support the power positions and wishes of their constituents. This dilemma makes it difficult for political arguers to achieve the kind of legitimacy that Habermas views as central to public deliberation and consensus making or the kind of reasonableness associated with the dialectical rules usually connected to strategic maneuvering.

Both essays make clear how strategic maneuvering in political contexts differs from what occurs in many other types of interactions. Both Goodnight and Ieșcu-Fairclough add concepts to strategic maneuvering so that this theory can account for the complexities and power relationships between political arguers and audiences that currently fall outside of current theorizing.

For readers interested less in theory development and more in using strategic maneuvering for argumentation analysis, several chapters take one concept of strategic maneuvering and systematically apply it to examples of argumentation discourse. For example, Manfred Kienpointner emphasizes the plausible but fallacious strategies arguers sometimes use to silence their opponents in historical and contemporary national controversies. Corina Andone examines inconsistencies that take place in the confrontation stage of a critical discussion between an interviewer and a politician. Other authors suggest new concepts that refine strategic maneuvering theory, such as topic shifting, polyphonic framing, rhetorical stylistics, and persuasive effects. By embellishing and applying strategic maneuvering theory to understand incidents of argumentation, these chapters offer useful case studies for teaching this theory to students and to other argumentation theorists.

The strength of this collection is its focus on strategic maneuvering for use in argumentation analysis. Readers of this collection will learn about the evolution, complexities, extensions, and applications of this theory. This volume is so focused that even readers with little or no background in strategic maneuvering theory or in pragma dialectics can understand a great deal about this theory and its relevance to the study of argumentation. Since several of the chapters have been published separately in journals, it would be helpful for readers to know where these articles appeared prior to this publication, a statement that could be added as a pre-note or endnote to each of the articles. The late Peter Houtlosser, to whom this book is dedicated, surely would be pleased to see so many provocative essays that his work with van Eemeren has inspired from a wide range of disciplinary interests and from many European and North American authors.

David Hitchcock and Bart Verheij (eds.), *Arguing on the Toulmin Model: New Essays in Argument Analysis and Evaluation*, New York: Springer, Argumentation Library, Vol. 10, 2006, 439pp., ISBN-10 1-4020-4937-4 (HB), ISBN-10 1-4020-4938-2 (e-book), \$219.

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1. Introduction

This fine collection of articles is based on responses to calls for papers for a special issue of the journal *Argumentation* (19: 3, 2005) on ‘The Toulmin model today’ and the 2005 OSSA conference ‘Uses of Argument’ held in Windsor, Canada. As the editors Hitchcock and Verheij contend, it “attempts to bring together the best current reflection on the Toulmin model and its current appropriation.”

The Toulmin model is a model for analyzing real-life argumentation, presented in a book called *The Uses of Argument*, published in 1958. In this book, Toulmin urged us to study real-life argumentation, *the practice of logic*. He argued that this study differs substantially from the formal study of logic and proposed we study real-life arguments based on the jurisprudential model of case-making. In order to understand arguments as case-making, he put forth a model for analyzing real-life arguments. In this model, arguments are seen as vehicles for rational justification of a *claim* (C) against a challenger. In order to justify a claim, the proponent of the argument presents premises, called the *data* (D). The data can be viewed as a response to a challenge the opponent may put forth, famously formulated as ‘What have

you got to go on?’ The challenge by the opponent need not, and often does not, end in a formulation of premises. For example, the opponent may ask for further elaboration of the data’s inferential relevance to the claim. This move can be viewed as a response to the question “How do you get there?” The answer brings forth the proposition referred to as *warrant* (W). This is a claim of the form “Data such as D entitle one to draw conclusions, or make claims, such as C.” Depending on the case, the nature of the evidence, and the nature of the reasoning, this move from data to claim may be preceded by a *qualifier* (Q), such as ‘probably’, ‘necessarily’ etc. Naturally, the questioning need not, and – again – often does not, stop there. Especially two further moves are emphasized. First, the opponent may challenge the warrant. If so, the proponent should defend the warrant by presenting a *backing* (B) that justifies the use of the warrant in general. Second, even if the opponent were to accept the warrant in general, s/he may question whether there are any *rebuttals* (R) that devalue the force of the inference *in this case*. The following diagrams this use of argument:

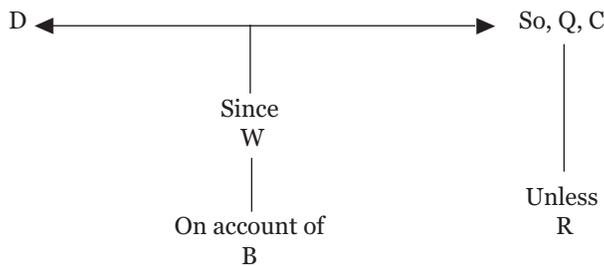


Fig. 1: The Toulmin Model.

This model of argument was supposed to be a general frame to which any use of argument in the process of rational justification was to be fitted, and it became a popular tool for analyzing arguments. But this format of analysis in itself was not what made the biggest waves. As the editors of “Arguing on the Toulmin Model” stress, Toulmin emphasized a number of theses:

1. Reasoning and argument involve not only support for points of view, but also attack against them.
2. Reasoning can have qualified conclusions.
3. There are other good types of argument than those of standard formal logic.
4. Unstated assumptions linking premises to a conclusion are better thought of as inference licenses than as implicit premisses.
5. Standards of reasoning can be field-dependent, and can be themselves the subject of argumentation. (p. 3)¹

Theses three and five met the largest opposition. In addition, Toulmin's treatment of qualifiers, of 'probably' in particular, was not greeted with enthusiasm. (See e.g. *Fundamentals of Argumentation Theory*, van Eemeren et al (eds.), ch. 5, fn. 3. for references to this literature). The relinquishing of the deductive standard, the difficult term of 'field-dependence', its relation to the aforementioned (field-independent) model of analysis, and the perceived relativistic implications of the field-dependence drew wide criticism. Though the majority of philosophers remained critical of Toulmin, his approach became influential in other disciplines, especially communication studies, and these areas took its lessons to heart and put the model, and its guiding principles, to good use. Since 1958, developments in epistemology and logic have also made philosophers more receptive to Toulmin's ideas. By the beginning of the new century, the time had come to reassess Toulmin's value and influence to studies of argument and argumentation from a variety of perspectives. It is this worthy cause that the current title serves through providing a selection of interesting, well-written papers on topics at the core of argumentation theory.

2. Articles

Given the amount of articles (twenty-four plus the introduction), it is not possible to discuss all of them at length here. Instead, I will briefly intro-

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, page numbers refer to the book reviewed.

duce the articles, present some of their central arguments, provide comments on some, and then end with general notes and a question.

After an informative introduction, where the editors present the main arguments of the articles, there is a short article by Toulmin himself. In it, he notes some of his own influences and salutes the open-ended process nature of the scholarship we are involved with here. The second article by Ronald P. Loui examines the citation counts and reports a fact that may surprise some philosophers: Toulmin is among the top ten of most cited 20th century philosophers of science and logicians.

The editors divide the material of the book into themes that are discussed with varying weights. Many of these themes overlap, and related questions are discussed in different sections, but the division helps the reader to discern the abundant material contained the book. We will now turn to them.

The specter of relativism

Toulmin's rejection of the deductive ideal and the thesis that the cogency of an argument may vary from field to field were widely criticized in the literature. So, the first theme in the book is understandably the issue of relativism in Toulmin's work: if accepting Toulmin's model implied accepting relativism, many, the present writer included, would reject the Toulmin model. In this book, the issue is treated by G. Thomas Goodnight's "Complex Cases and Legitimation: Extending the Toulmin Model to Deliberative Argument in Controversy", Mark Weinstein's "A Metamathematical Extension of the Toulmin Agenda", Lilian Bermejo-Luque's "Toulmin's Model of Argument and the Question of Relativism", and James B. Freeman's "Systematizing Toulmin's Warrants: An Epistemic Approach".

These papers argue that relativism need not follow from accepting a Toulminian framework of study. Goodnight argues that even though we accept that arguments may belong to different fields, relativism need not follow. He studies complex cases of public deliberation where there are competing grounds (that form what we may call fields) for justifying a given action, where these grounds do not have equal weights and do not point to the same action. To avoid relativism, one would have to uphold that the use of various grounds is still rational in some non-relativistic sense. Goodnight

does this by requiring that the selection of grounds must be justified, and this forms a part of the justification of the warrant for the action. Goodnight argues that we should extend the Toulmin model to include such second-order justification by “legitimation inferences” and discusses this in the context of risk-taking in a most illuminating way.

An important issue in the charge of relativism raised against Toulmin is that of a foundation: if we reject mathematical logic as providing the ultimate foundation for the cogency of argumentation, what is to put in its place? Weinstein argues that despite the rejection of deductive logic, there is an important role for metamathematics in the normative foundation of argument. This role is a metamathematical account of truth and entailment based on physical science instead of arithmetic. He then provides such an account.

Bermejo-Luque’s article aims to show that epistemological relativism is not a necessary consequence of Toulmin’s model, especially of the concept of ‘field-dependency’. The paper is quite interesting but difficult to follow at times. Her approach certainly cannot be blamed to be exegetical, for she notes that in the attempt to avoid relativism her “[...] point is just to show that fields do not actually provide standards to determine the “way we actually assess the soundness, strength and conclusiveness of arguments”” (p. 74). This seems reasonable as she later on proposes to conceive Toulmin’s warrants as “as the corresponding material conditional, which is to be valued under the argumentative conditions in which it arises” (p. 79). However, she also argues that

[...] to assign a given argument to a certain field would make possible its appraisal according to the truth-values that the audience normally addressed in that field attributes to its reason and warrant. (p. 82)

Later, she notes that

[t]his assumption does not imply that the field provides standards for appraising the argument; it only means that the matters that constitute the field are the subject matter of the argument. If we do not assign the argument to any field, or if the very field is in question (for example, if we disregard its attribution of truth-values), we will have to determine the truth-values of the propositions involved independently of the field.

In this case, we would only lack a given assignment of truth-values, not standards to appraise the argument. (p. 82)

In the first quote, the field (and the audience) seems to play an important role in the appraisal, but in the second quote its importance is denied. Normally, however, the lack of truth values is a real problem for appraising the epistemic value of arguments. On the one hand, the impression that the field *provides* the truth-values is given, but on the other hand, it is also suggested that we are able to determine them without the field. Alas, how do we determine the truth values if we do lack them?

Another problematic aspect is that on p. 80 she asks

[w]hy do we need justification for our inferences? The obvious answer is that we need it in case they are challenged, and this answer is perfectly sound. By contrast, the idea that good arguments need justified inferences is a holdover from deductivism.

And later on that same page she states:

Yet, the truth is that, in order to justify our claims, we do not need our inference claims to be necessary, or justified. We just need them to be true, or highly plausible. The inference claim enables us to pass from reason to claim; if it is true, or highly plausible, the claim will be justified because of the reason. Second-level justification may be desirable in certain cases, but it does not prevent us from falsity. (Ibid.)

In the first quote, it appears that deductivism and epistemological internalism² (called ‘second-level justification’) are somehow taken to go together (although they do not) and then rejected. Moreover, it appears that epistemological externalism – the remaining choice, given the rejection of internalism – is clearly not acceptable, since it is required that we need to

² Epistemological internalism is the doctrine that whether an epistemic agent is justified in believing, for example, the result of an inference, supervenes on factors one is in a position to know by reflection alone. A stronger form on internalism, called *access internalism*, holds that one has some special access to the justifying features. See e.g. James Pryor (2001) for discussion

be able to defend the claims we make. This implies a very strong form of internalism. Whichever position one ends up taking, one cannot at the same time hold that we need justification for our inferences and that it is just 'desirable'. Regardless, her final position in the conclusion seems reasonable:

In any case, if we agree that the value of an argument is a function of the value of its reason and warrant, it seems difficult to find room for relativism: our assignments of truth-values to the corresponding propositions can only be justified by further arguments. Indeed, whatever the field, it is both our duty and our inclination as rational beings to do so. (p. 84)

However, this seems to invite the infinite regress of justification: since any assignment of truth-values must be justified by a further argument, the assignment of truth-values to this further argument also needs to be justified by yet another argument, and so on.³ But more importantly, the mere fact that one justifies an assignment with an argument does not rule out relativism. A relativist can accept that there is justification, but hold that justification differs radically from what we standardly mean by it. It, for example, pertains only to a certain field. Bermejo-Luque seems to bypass the accusation of relativism, rather than answer it.

Freeman's article presents a systematic division of Toulmin warrants into four classes: *a priori*, empirical, institutional, and evaluative. Freeman takes warrants to be generalizations of the argument's associated conditional. The division is based on the way the warrants can be intuited, i.e. how we can ascertain their reliability. As Freeman (p. 98) notes, this seems to capture the insight of Toulmin's field-dependency without the difficult notion of field (or logical type, for that matter).

Warrants

The issue of Toulmin's perceived relativism cannot be fully treated without discussing warrants, and many of the articles in this title turn on their na-

³ Such a position is possible; Peter Klein (e.g. 1998, 1999) proposes it under the name of infinitism.

ture. The discussion started by the previous articles is continued in James F. Klumpp's "Warranting Arguments, the Virtue of Verb" and Robert C. Pinto's "Evaluating Inferences: The Nature and Role of Warrants".

Klumpp starts from what he takes to be an inherent tension in Toulmin's work: Toulmin presented the elements of an argument (data, warrant, backing, claim, qualifier, and the rebuttal) on the one hand, from the perspective of labeling the respective parts as statements. These are typically taken to express propositions. On the other hand, he presented them from the functional perspective of describing how claims are established. Klumpp argues that Toulmin's reconceptualization of argument

[...] reaches its full potential to move from an idealized to a working logic when the requirement to cast arguments into propositions is also left behind and the layout deployed as a method of portraying the underlying movement of reasoning. Thus, presenting the key term of the layout—the warrant—as a verb, the part of speech capturing movement, best actualizes the working logic. (p. 104)

Klumpp then goes through seven different characterizations of warrants and argues that, ultimately, the approach of understanding warrant as a verb, through the activity of warranting, provides pedagogically the best way to separate warrants from data. He reports that students immediately grasp new ways to approach the entitlement provided by the warrant and understand the procedural nature of real-life argumentation. While I am highly sympathetic to these concerns, and would also stress the fact that understanding different functions of arguments paves the way for better understanding of argument and its value to us, I do not see how this alters the fact that warrants *can* be expressed as propositions. It is the truth/justification/rational acceptability of these propositions, given the backings we have, that we try to assess.

In his article, Pinto views warrants as material inference rules and offers an over-arching theory of good arguments, based on the ideas that good arguments are *entitlement-preserving*, and that they legitimate the claims in proportion to the evidence provided by the argument. Pinto's approach builds on David Hitchcock's work and develops the idea that warrants are

covering generalizations by examining the epistemic virtues which the properly contextualized tokens of such generalizations should have. Pinto's claim that good arguments provide licenses, in proportion to evidence, to take certain *doxastic attitudes* towards the proposition that expresses the conclusion is certainly something over which epistemologists interested in arguments and inferences should mull. The article is interesting and wide-reaching. Pinto separates reasonable entitlement from truth-preservation and creates a view of warrants that is epistemically explicable and context-dependent in what seems to be the right way. Argumentation theory is studying the actual uses of arguments, and wants to find ways to ascertain whether some specific uses of warrants were justified. It is only reasonable to assume that the warrants, then, should be specified from the proponent's perspective. The fact that Pinto introduces the purposes the activity of arguing is meant to serve, and the doxastic attitude the argumentation is after, enables him to connect the truth-preservation objective quite nicely to his more general account of what it means to say that an argument gives one entitlement to believe its conclusion. The following quote captures a lot of what he is after:

[...] the reliability of an inferential practice — for example, of expecting a Courtland [apple] to be sweet when we know that its skin exhibits a certain color pattern — will depend on an objective likelihood. But the objective likelihood on which it depends *will not be identical with the objective likelihood that a Courtland is sweet given that its skin exhibits a certain color pattern*. Rather it will be the objective likelihood of (i) arriving at an *appropriate doxastic attitude* when (ii) relying on the practice *in the typical circumstances in which it has been or will be relied upon*.

In my opinion, Pinto (p. 143) also correctly identifies what issues his account should address in the future: the relation of occasional warrants that arguers use to standing warrants of fields (in whichever way the field is to be interpreted), the ways warrants should be scrutinized, and the examination of when the output of an objective reliable inferential practice is subjectively justified.

Qualifiers

The third theme of the book is qualifiers, consisting solely of Robert H. Ennis' paper "Probably". The editors of this title note that this paper is, as Pinto's, one to arouse us from our dogmatic slumbers, and I agree. Ennis defends Toulmin's speech act theoretic interpretation of 'probably'. This is Toulmin's famous position that

When I say 'S is probably P', I commit myself guardedly, tentatively, or with reservations to the view that S is P, and (likewise guardedly), lend my authority to that view. (Toulmin 1964: 53)

Ennis argues that an implication of this view is that one may not convert the term 'probably' into a number or a range or distribution so that mathematical means can be used to decide whether the argument using that term is good (p. 146). The standard challenge to this view comes from John Searle. In *Speech Acts*, section 6.2, called 'The Speech Act Fallacy', he argued that

[t]he general nature of the speech act fallacy can be stated as follows, using "good" as our example. *Calling* something good is characteristically praising or commending or recommending it, etc. But it is a fallacy to infer from this that the meaning of "good" is explained by saying it is used to perform the act of commendation. (Searle 1969: 139)

Searle (1969: 137) identifies Toulmin's conception of 'probably' as one example of this fallacy. Searle's point seems unavoidable. Still, his argument does not imply that *no* use of the *word* 'probably' can ever be fully explained through speech acts. This might be so when we have *further* reasons to believe, such as the ones Ennis provides that some uses should be explained speech act theoretically, and we at the same time hold that the whole meaning of all the uses of the term is not explained through speech acts. Ennis' reasons are that his interpretation is plausible, and that it survives certain tests better than the standard accounts of probability. I leave the evaluation of Ennis' thought-provoking arguments to the reader. However, I would like to draw attention to the following question posed by John Woods:

Any probability theorist who knows his onions will be aware that, after Pascal, probability *changed*. This presents us with a fundamental question: When something is a new conception of something, does it extinguish its predecessor-concept, or does it foster a new ambiguity which leaves the old concept standing? (p. 394)

When Pascal changed ‘probability’, did he change the way competent English speaker use the word ‘probably’ in their argumentation? The fact that Pascal effected a conceptual change, i.e. that we now had mathematical means to treat the concept of ‘probability’ does not imply that the way ordinary language users use that concept changed. If it did not change, it is questionable whether we are entitled to expect that the ordinary language use should be interpreted through the mathematical theory, *although* the full meaning of ‘probably’ no longer is ‘guarded commitment’. In my view, the case for the speech-act theoretic treatment of ‘probably’ in every day use seems stronger than the case for a similar treatment of ‘good’.

Rebuttals

The fourth theme of the book is rebuttals. Its treatment consists of Wouter Slob’s “The Voice of the Other: A Dialogico-Rhetorical Understanding of Opponent and Toulmin’s Rebuttal” and Bart Verheij’s “Evaluating Arguments Based on Toulmin Scheme”.

Slob argues that the role of the rebuttal has not been sufficiently appreciated and contends that Toulmin’s notion of rebuttal allows one to include counterconsiderations, the voice of the other.

This suggestion puts the understanding of what an argument is in a different light. Rather than giving support for the claim, argumentative interchange is now seen as determining the relative weight of the conclusion, for which not only supporting but also rebutting forces are important. This implies that any conclusion is always, just as Freeman maintains, a qualified conclusion, but in contrast to Freeman, it can also involve the qualification becoming negative. The range is from ‘certainly’, via ‘possibly’, to ‘unlikely’ or ‘certainly not’. (pp. 169-170)

Slob thus contrasts his account to the dialectical account of Freeman (1991) and argues that his dialogical rhetoric produces a picture that is not possible on a dialectical understanding of argumentation. I think Slob reasonably emphasizes the importance of rebuttals: our understanding of the process of argumentation, and the accrued justification/rational acceptability, is enhanced, if we properly appreciate the role rebuttals play. But from a normative point of view, the complexities of the process of argumentation should project on some end-product, the argument, which we seek to evaluate. Slob, however, contends that

dialectical approach is primarily focused upon the product of argumentation: only a clear-cut and orderly argument can be judged properly. Dialogical rhetoric, by contrast, follows the argumentative process and sees arguments as interchanges of supporting and rebutting forces. In my proposal, argument analysis does not serve evaluation, but serves the mapping of established reasons. Evaluation is no longer at stake in argument analysis, because a reason is only established when both discussants have in fact accepted it and thus have evaluated it positively. The map of established reasons forms a vector that leads up to the conclusion. Data form the basic ingredient, warrant forms the positive force of the argument and the rebuttal the negative counterpart. Argument analysis shows these two forces and display their relative contribution to the conclusion. (p. 180)

The importance of understanding the force of rebuttals is exactly the impact they make on the eventual evaluation. The results may not always be clear-cut and orderly, but at least they are there to improve our understanding of a complex situation. Yet, Slob explicitly denies the connection between analysis and evaluation. Still, the analysis *is supposed* to show how these forces are relevant to the conclusion. This is all the more difficult to understand as Slob, later on the same page, writes:

What is important is to map the established reasons and both participants are committed to these. In this way, a suitable conclusion is reached that both participants not only should, but will, accept. (Ibid.)

Again, if the analysis does not serve evaluation, how can this analysis help us understand what the participants *should* accept?

Bart Verheij extends the Toulmin model by presenting a formal reconstruction of it and developing the concept of rebuttal, the defeating of some part of Toulmin's scheme, and how such parts can be reinstated. It builds on Verheij's earlier work, and the work of others, on defeasible reasoning and dialectical logic. As Verheij (p. 183) notes, it shows that Toulmin central ideas can be described formally with modern formal logic.

Evaluation

The fifth theme of the book is evaluation. Its treatment the book consists of David Hitchcock's article "Good Reasoning on the Toulmin Model". It attends to the fact that Toulmin did not elaborate very much on how to evaluate arguments under his scheme. Although Toulmin did write a textbook with Rieke and Janik (1979) on reasoning, his views were not very specific. Hitchcock wants to correct this by proposing criteria for reasoning to a belief as part of a process of inquiry. Hence, he also extends the model for Toulmin set inquiry aside from his original treatment. Hitchcock argues that reasoning to a belief is good if and only if 1) the grounds are adequate, 2) the warrant is justified, and 3) the reasoner is justified in assuming that no defeaters apply. He then goes on to elaborate on each of these. He, for example, discusses the conditions of how and when would a direct observation be justifying on the basis of considerable empirical research.

Hitchcock (p. 216) emphasizes that the third condition does not mean that the agent should have a proof that no defeaters apply, because that would require too much from any individual agent. We should only require that the assumption is justified. This justification may depend on institutional factors. Alternatively, when there are no institutional requirements, the justification can depend on the fact that one does not know of any defeaters, on the possible consequences of being wrong, and on the fact that one's pragmatically justified search has not produced the result that some defeater is in force. This third condition seems to point to some kind of

deontological, duty-based, conception of justification. Such a conception has an internalistic component: the talk of epistemic obligations seems to imply that one has some control over one's beliefs and this is clearly internal to the epistemic agent. Hitchcock, however, has rejected internalistic requirements on data and warrants in class⁴, so the third condition, if upheld, might require him to rework his position on this issue.

Practical reasoning

The sixth theme is practical reasoning. The articles under this theme are Olaf Tans' "The Fluidity of Warrants: Using the Toulmin Model to Analyse Practical Discourse", Henry Prakken's "Artificial Intelligence and Law, Logic and Argument Schemes", Christian Kock's "Multiple Warrants in Practical Reasoning", and Txetxu Ausín's "The Quest for Rationalism without Dogmas in Leibniz and Toulmin".

Tans shows how the basic scheme of Toulmin is too limited in application to the complexities of practical reasoning. He then extends the model so that it can accommodate to the fact that warrants develop through a dialectical process, i.e. that they are 'fluid', and applies this to a case of legal reasoning by the US Supreme Court.

Prakken concentrates on the use of argument schemes and their use in research on Artificial Intelligence and Law. He provides a clear introduction into defeasible reasoning in this context. He ends with a brief discussion on how this research has taken note of some of Toulmin's central ideas: the different roles of premises, the defeasibility of everyday argumentation, and field-dependency, understood as argument schemes that have different backings that are to be evaluated differently. He also points out that these schemes can be represented in nonmonotonic logic.

Kock starts from the observation that while Toulmin distinguished many kinds of warrants, he had only one for practical reasoning: the motivational warrant. He therefore proposes to augment the situation by turning to the rhetorical tradition. This tradition provides a useful typology that can be

⁴ In the concluding session of University of Windsor 2009 Summer Institute titled "Current Issues in Argumentation Theory".

used in assessing practical reasoning and promises to increase our understanding of practical reasoning. Kock (p. 258) approvingly emphasizes that this tradition is committed to ‘multidimensionality’, i.e. the idea that practical reasoning is characterized by multiple kinds of warrants that cannot be weighed against each other on any common measure or single dimension. He notes that moral philosophers have called this ‘incommensurability’ of warrants and argues that the ancient rhetoricians knew that decisions cannot be founded on a merely rational basis (ibid.)

This is an interesting challenge for one is eager to find out what exactly are the non-rational elements that we should add to the justification of an action, given incommensurability. Kock (ibid.) argues that this is why rhetoric is needed, but this as such does not provide much elaboration. Kock defines rhetoric as the totality of resources at the disposal of arguers who wish to increase adherence to their standpoint in debates where the choices are optional. This ‘optionality’ means that in deciding what to do, there are many courses for which the individual agents may legitimately opt. These resources include, among other things, arguing that a given option is just, lawful, expedient, honorable, pleasant, and easy to accomplish. But these do not seem non-rational bases for arguments.

The unavoidable property of optionality in practical reasoning, Kock argues, implies that “philosophy ends here, because philosophy is, in its very nature, about finding solutions that hold with equal validity for all” (ibid.). We might try to reconstruct Kock’s reasoning as:

1. Some cases of practical reasoning exhibit optionality (i.e. the incommensurability of justifications for different actions).
2. Philosophy is about finding solutions that hold with equal validity for all.
3. Therefore, philosophy does not involve the study of practical reasoning in cases that exhibit optionality.

But this argument exhibits fallacious reasoning about parts and wholes. The fact that philosophy studies the general conditions and nature of rationality does not imply that it is not able to study cases where some (or all) standards of rationality seem to fail. Also, premise two is not acceptable in its current formulation, because of its vagueness. What does it mean to say that a solution holds with equal validity to all? If a solution to the mind-

body problem implies we recognize the existence of something specific only to mind, does this mean that philosophy is not able to study the mind-body problem? Taken strictly, premise three implies that philosophy can only study ontology, given that there is only one substance. We could try to re-work the second premise:

2* Philosophical study of practical reasoning involves the finding of solutions that hold with equal validity for all cases of practical reasoning.

But this argument is not sound. Premise 2* is false for the reason already explained. Philosophical study may well argue that, for example, inquiry has some property P that no other forms of reasoning have and go on to study that property. I will not try to argue for the conclusion that philosophical study of practical reasoning involves also the study of cases that exhibit optionality, and the nature of 'optionality', here. I conjecture that the correct answer is the same as why philosophy studies anything it studies, but this is beyond this review. We should also note that the following reasoning is not valid:

1. Some cases of practical reasoning exhibit optionality (i.e. the incommensurability of justifications for different actions).
2. Therefore, these cases of practical reasoning cannot be decided on a merely rationalist basis.

Incommensurability of the relevant sets of premises does not imply that the *rational* thing to do when faced with it is to turn to non-rational elements. This is not to deny that there are no situations in which some standards of rationality do not yield a decision between options. But the previous argument does not establish its conclusion. Besides, one can often still weigh arguments, try to search for new backings for warrants, try to justify the selection of some grounds (as suggested in G. Thomas Goodnight's article discussed above) and so on. In short, the lack of *conclusive* answers does not imply the lack of *rational* answers. Kock (pp. 258-259) further suggests that the reason why philosophers might refuse to accept optionality is that it seems to leave them at a dead end. Leaving aside the fact that this *ad hominem* proves nothing about the nature of practical reasoning, I would

note that, in my experience, dead ends are what make philosophers tick. In fact, Jon Elster's (1989) book *Solomonic Judgements: Studies in the Limitations of Rationality* is one example of the studies Kock deems impossible.

Ausín provides an interesting introduction to Leibniz' thought on practical reasoning. We learn that when it came to justifying contingent judgments, Leibniz did not think we could make firm demonstrations. He viewed controversy and debate as basic modes of human interaction. Justice, for example, was not possible without prudence. Ausín (p. 267) summarizes Leibniz' method for weighing to include, among other things, rules of heuristic, considerations of the epistemic reliability of the premises, and taking into account analogies and comparisons. He (p. 272) concludes that Leibniz wanted to find a balance between formal models of rationality and the lessons of practice in social context. It is probably a surprise to many philosophers (and non-philosophers) to read Leibniz putting forth these claims for he is often perceived rather stereotypically as a rationalist in search of *Characteristica Universalis*.

Applications

The seventh theme is applications. This theme is covered by an impressive array of papers that apply the Toulmin model to different areas of argument analysis, argumentation, and decision-making with good results, given some extensions and developments of the model. I will only note their topics. The paper by John Fox and Sanjay Modgil "From Arguments to Decisions: Extending the Toulmin View" shows how the Toulmin model can be extended to medical decision-making. John Zeleznikow's paper "Using Toulmin Argumentation to Support Dispute Settlement in Discretionary Domains" uses the Toulmin model to develop a support system for decision-making in legal discretionary domains. James F. Voss' article "Toulmin's Model and the Solving of Ill-Structured Problems" finds the model useful, given certain extensions, in analyzing argumentation in ill-structured problems but, perhaps somewhat expectedly, lacking in information about the problem-solving itself. Manfred Kraus, in "Arguing by Question: A Toulminian Reading of Cicero's Account of Enthymeme", shows how the model can be useful in what is problematic in some enthymemes. Andrew Aberdein's "The Uses of

Argument in Mathematics” shows the model’s applicability to arguments *about* (as opposed to *in*) mathematics.

Comparisons

The penultimate theme of the book is comparisons between the Toulmin model and other techniques for diagramming arguments. This theme consists of Chris Reed’s and Glenn Rowe’s “Translating Toulmin Diagrams: Theory Neutrality in Argument Representation” and Fabio Paglieri’s and Cristiano Castelfranchi’s “The Toulmin Test: Framing Argumentation within Belief Revision Theories”.

Reed and Rowe compare two influential ways to diagram arguments. The first is the conventional “box-and-arrow” technique, attributable to Beardsley (1950), termed the standard treatment by the authors. It recognizes four kinds of support relationships between premises and conclusions, namely serial, linked, convergent, and divergent. The second is Toulmin’s six-part model (i.e. data, warrant, claim, backing, qualifier, and rebuttal). The authors contend that the difference between the two is much more than just drawing pictures, because

[b]oth systems embody many theoretical assumptions and conclusions, and work as a way of packaging up substantial theories into practical tools that are simple and easy to understand—and produce analyses that are the products of those background theories (p. 342)

Despite these considerable theoretical difficulties, the objective of the paper is to allow diagrams of one form of the theory to be translated into the other. Reed and Rowe present mechanisms showing that the translation from one to the other is indeed possible. In their conclusion they note that:

The translation presented is consistent, deterministic and requires no user intervention. Information loss during translation is limited to those features that are only expressible in one theory or the other; such information is preserved in a deep structure and is recoverable. Such intertranslation makes possible a single piece of software that can sup-

port teaching, diagramming, storage and manipulation of argument structures in the two frameworks. But more than that, it offers a mechanism for interchange and reuse between communities. As an example, *Araucaria* has been used to develop a corpus of natural argument, comprising over 500 analysed extracts from a wide variety of sources in several languages from around the world. (pp. 357-358)

So, not only are the mechanisms translatable to each other, they are also translatable to a third mechanism. If the authors are correct, it is difficult to uphold the view that the theoretical differences involved in the two approaches about the *nature* of argument are deep and meaningful. Rather, this result seems to support the view that as long as we understand that we have premises, claims, many types of support relations (which have different reliability figures ranging from zero to one and different conditions of reliable use), and various ways to support, attack, and defend all these elements, theoretically it really does not make much of a difference which system of argument analysis you use, as long as your system can cope with these elements. This result also casts serious doubt on the contention of many authors contributing to this book that it is the Toulmin scheme in itself that allows them to effectively analyze various kinds of arguments, rebuttals, counter-considerations. To bring this suspicion to a head, we should ask whether, in analysis of real-life arguments and in theorizing about the nature of argument, a difference that makes no difference is a difference.

Pagliari and Castelfranchi compare the canonical Alchourrón-Gärdenfors-Makinson (AGM) belief revision theory with their own Data-oriented Belief Revision theory (DBR) by applying (what they call) a Toulmin test to both. This means that they try to represent Toulmin's lay-out of arguments within both these models. They conclude that AGM is not able to represent argumentation, because, first, it does not make any predictions or assumptions about how and why some propositions come to be believed and why some are held onto more steadfastly than others (p. 362). Second, AGM does not take into account other structural properties between beliefs than deducibility. The two points are obviously intimately connected. Paglieri and Castelfranchi (pp. 372-376) then further argue that the Toulmin model should be developed based on observations about the focusing of argumen-

tation to certain elements, depending on what is felt to be useful to the arguer and on the embeddedness of the premises, i.e. how plausible some statements are to the audience.

Pagliari and Castelfranchi address a very important topic: how to model argumentation in belief revision. However, to reiterate the skepticism presented in connection of the article by Reed and Rowe, it does not seem likely that these observations could have only been achieved through Toulmin's thinking. (It should be noted that Paglieri and Castelfranchi make no such claim; they (p. 361) propose to use the Toulmin model as a *litmus* test for belief revision theories.) The problems the authors note are related to the success postulate of AGM, which has received wide criticism in the literature on belief revision. According to this postulate, if new information comes in, it must be incorporated into our belief set. This is obviously too simplistic. If someone reports to me that a ghost was operating the copying machine of the philosophy department yesterday, I am prone not to accept this information. The matter is obviously not simple, but we need not apply Toulmin to grasp this. I am willing to accept some pieces of information more easily than other pieces, and this might depend on how much I have to discard in order to accommodate the new information, i.e. how many beliefs depend on the acceptance or rejection, and how important these are. Ghosts do not get in to my belief store easily, whereas ghost-like looking persons operating the copying machine on the morning after the Christmas Party might. The DBR-model wants to address such features of our reasoning and Toulmin's thinking certainly seems consistent with their line of thinking.

Reflecting on Toulmin

The final theme of the paper, reflection on Toulmin, is carried out by John Woods' "Eight Theses Reflecting on Toulmin". Woods' discusses the correctness of validity as a standard of real-life-argument and argues it is nearly always the wrong standard, the role of probability calculus in probabilistic reasoning in real-life, our scant resources for arguing and inferring, the link between theoretical progress and conceptual change, the cognitive aspects of reasoning and arguing, ideal models for normativity, the can-do prin-

ciple (i.e. whether one should typically use existing cognitive tools to solve a problem or opt for new ones), and the value of domain-specific logics. His discussion encapsulates many aspects of his own bountiful scholarship and the general developments in philosophy, logic, empirical sciences pertaining to reasoning, and the relation of Woods' thought to Toulmin's. I will not try to synthesize any of that here, but strongly recommend that anyone interested in these topics read the article.

3. Final thoughts

The authors of the articles are established scholars in this field, and this collection is surely among the most interesting that the theory of argument offers at the moment. The editors have done a thorough job; for the most part, the papers are clearly written and enjoyable to read. Some of the papers lean rather heavily on the previous work of the authors, but where this is the case, the papers still manage to give an illuminating introduction to those topics. In any case, the book is directed to scholars. The included papers should not go unnoticed by other authors interested in the respective topics. They are of interest to anyone who wants to know what is going in the interdisciplinary study of argument. Toulmin's work was revolutionary at its time, and his theses are still important, connecting many developments in this area. As this book evidences, he has been a fruitful starting point for further research. Also, for a scholar with epistemic inclinations, this book makes for good reading, especially the articles by Freeman, Hitchcock, and Pinto, to name a few of the most prominent ones. These authors are putting forth explications that put some real flesh on the epistemic bone that good arguments should justify their conclusions. It will be interesting to see how these developments will be challenged, for example, by dialectical approaches.

If one were to look for complaints, one could note that the book does not give the reader much information about the criticism Toulmin received, nor does it include papers that are critical of Toulmin's work. On the basis of this book alone, it is difficult to examine the value of this criticism and whether, if there is a need, the developments in this book answer that criticism. But as noted, this is a scholarly book consisting of articles with spe-

cific topics, so the reader can be expected to read and evaluate this by her- or himself.

In the preface (p. vii) of the updated edition of *Uses of Argument*, Toulmin notes that his aim in writing the book was philosophical:

to criticize the assumption, made by most Anglo-American academic philosophers, that any argument can be put in formal terms: not just as a *syllogism*, since for Aristotle himself any inference can be called a 'syllogism' or 'linking of statements', but a rigidly demonstrative deduction of the kind to be found in Euclidian geometry.

Nowadays, philosophers typically accept that there is good nondeductive reasoning and that the majority of good arguments do not resemble demonstrations of Euclidian Geometry. Given the assumption that Toulmin's model represents all those arguments that were not to be put in formal terms, we should point out that two authors of this title, Bart Verheij and Henry Prakken, claim that the Toulmin-styled arguments can be represented in formal logic. It is just that the logics in question may not be monotonic.

Finally, I might put forth one question not discussed in this book, which should be asked, despite its potency to lead to hopeless debates about where to draw the line. This concerns the abandonment of the deductive ideal, which I believe to be the correct move. I want to ask how far we should take this 'abandonment'. Deductive (monotonic) logic enjoys the status of the fall person in the book, and it is often equated with the 'geometrical model', which of course is more than the deductive logic-ideal. The latter contains a claim about the nature of the premises on top of the claim about the standard of good reasoning. The book contains no articles that defend the deductive ideal or present reasons why it would be reasonable to uphold that model at times. Only Ennis (p. 164) notes that formal logic is important "because of its role in appraising a stripped argument in the application of qualified soundness standards."

Clearly, there still is something to be said for the deductive ideal: it presents us with a clear model of evaluation that is applicable and reasonable in many cases. It is also a model that argumentation theorists themselves often use. Are argumentation theorists really willing to relinquish the de-

ductive ideal in the emphatic manner they do in this book in their own use of arguments? If not, why not? Are the deductive standards something that we are somehow able to use, but the poor lay person is not? (Whatever we might think, the truth of the matter is that we are not that smart). There are of course matters of scant resources and questions of urgency in real-life argumentation, but if defeasible argumentation really is the way to go, why is it still so common to see in scholarly arguments about argumentation an objection “but that just does not follow”, where ‘follow’ is to be understood on the model of a deductive consequence? Rarely do theorists continue ‘But of course, the conclusion of my dear opponent did not *need* to follow deductively from his or her premises, as Toulmin has ably shown. So, I therefore thought of it as a defeasible argument and came to the conclusion that it does give one good reason to believe the opposite of my original claim.’ Instead, we drop the argument we have shown to be deductively invalid. I do not think I have heard of a theorist giving up his or her position on account of defeasible counterarguments to their position.

For example, above I discussed Bermejo-Luque’s article, noting that she argues that epistemological relativism is not a *necessary* consequence of Toulmin’s model of argumentation. Given Woods’ (p. 379) thesis that deductive validity is nearly always the wrong evaluative standard; may we not reason that relativism does not have to be a necessary consequence of the Toulmin model for us to reject it? But, unsurprisingly perhaps, we do not take it as a sufficient reason to reject the Toulmin model that the notion of ‘field’ defeasibly supports, or perhaps coheres with, relativism. The counterargument to this purported suggestion is so obvious that we can all practically hear it coming: “Yes, but Woods thesis contained the terms ‘*nearly* always’, not ‘always’. So it is not *necessarily* the wrong model here”. And so on. So, I ask: just how prominent a role should defeasible, non-conclusive, arguments be given in our scholarly lives, given the fact that their evaluation almost unmistakably goes our way? Defeasible arguments that do not support our prior position tend to be deemed ‘not strong’, whereas the one that support our prior views tend to be deemed ‘strong’. Don’t we all actually believe that defeasibility is just fine when we reason about the color of the shirt we should wear today, but when push comes to shove and our own theoretical position is at stake, deductive logic is the way to go?

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1. Introduction: a fresco of a lively dialogue

When Raffaello Sanzio painted his well-know fresco The School of Athens (Figure 1) in the Stanza della Segnatura (Palazzi pontifici, Vatican), he was certainly unaware that his masterpiece might one day quasi-perfectly rep-



Figure 1: The School of Athens, Raffaello Sanzio, 1509¹

¹ Image reference: <http://commons.wikimedia.org>

resent the volume *Pondering on problems of argumentation*, edited by Frans van Eemeren and Bart Garssen. Raffaello in fact drew a community of scholars at work. Characteristic of this fresco as well as of the volume under review is the *ongoing dialogue* among the members of this community.

The papers collected in *Pondering on Problems of Argumentation* were selected from the Proceedings of the 6th Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (ISSA), held in Amsterdam in 2006. The ISSA conference may arguably count as a moment of dialogue and scientific exchange particularly precious for scholars of argumentation.

As the editors declare, the selection focuses on various *theoretical* issues which constitute open questions and problems arisen in the current studies of argumentation. If the selected authors are *pondering on these problems*, to stick to the title of the book, they are not doing it individualistically. Rather, they are engaged in a lively debate, which is a sign of a community in development. In this review, I will try to give as much space as possible to this debate.

First, I present the main themes of the volume, then focus on specific aspects that either have been systematically approached by different authors or that, in my opinion, deserve particular reflection. Finally, I shall point to issues on which the debate remains open.

2. Contents of the volume

As the editors explain in their introduction, the twenty contributions to this volume have been grouped into five areas (or conceptual blocks, see Figure 2) which, they believe, correspond to major open issues in contemporary research on argumentation: (I) Argumentative strategies, (II) Norms of reasonableness and fallaciousness, (III) Types of arguments and argument schemes, (IV) Structures of argumentation and (V) Rules for advocacy and discussion. These five areas are interconnected, as I try to show in Figure 2.

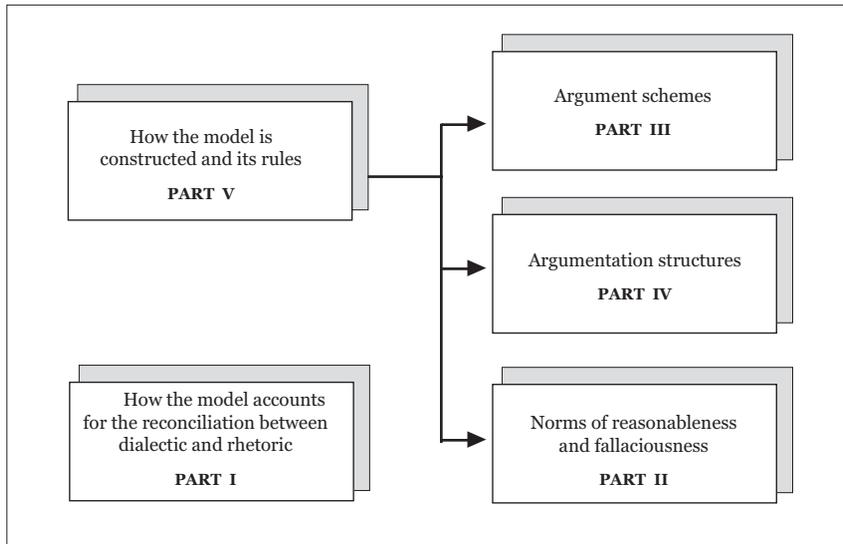


Figure 2: Parts of the volume interpreted as conceptual blocks.

Two of these areas – the first and the last one – concern general problems of argumentation theory. Let me start with the latter.

Area V is a reflection on the model(s) of argumentation that are currently available. For example, the model of a critical discussion proposed in Pragma-dialectics is discussed with the goal of refining it: Krabbe (*On how to get beyond the opening stage*, Ch. 17) reflects on the nature of the opening stage, while Goodwin (*Actually existing rules for closing arguments*, Ch. 20) focuses on the concluding stage. Gough (Ch. 18) elaborates on *acceptable premises* in a contribution that could thus be also connected to the opening stage; while Goodnight (Ch. 19) reflects on the specification of a model of argumentation in (rather frequent) cases of disparity, asymmetry or difference between the interlocutors, when an *advocate* is called to the aid of another person (p. 269).

Area I elaborates on current attempts to reconcile rhetoric and dialectic in the analysis of real-life argumentative practices. Two of the contribu-

tions in this area make use of the Pragma-dialectical notion of *strategic manoeuvring* introduced by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2002): F. Snoeck-Henkemans' *Manoeuvring strategically with rhetorical questions* (Ch. 2) and A. van Rees' analysis of *dissociation* (Ch. 3). Furthermore, van Eemeren's and Houtlosser's *Seizing the occasion: parameters for analysing ways of strategic manoeuvring* (Ch. 1) is a contribution aimed at developing the notion of strategic manoeuvring by introducing the *parameters* that must be considered in each stage of a critical discussion to analyse its strategic function (p. 4). C. Ilie's contribution (Ch. 4) on the *strategies of refutation by definition in public speech*, albeit distinct from the Pragma-dialectical account, is however in line with the effort of evaluating rhetorical strategies in argumentation.

The other three areas (II, III and IV) concern more specific aspects, which are, however, part of a model of an argumentative discussion and which are certainly linked in many respects to the reconciliation of dialectics and rhetoric.

The area addressing the inferential link between a standpoint and a supporting argument, namely *argument schemes* (III), contains very homogeneous and interconnected reflections concerning existing and new typologies of argument schemes as well as the analysis of specific argument schemes. Three of the four authors in this section deal more or less explicitly with argumentation from *comparison* or *analogy*: B. Garssen (*Comparing the incomparable: figurative analogies in a dialectical testing procedure*, Ch. 10) and M. Doury (*Argument schemes typologies in practice: the case of comparative arguments*, Ch. 11) devote their paper to this problem, while an example ascribable to this category is analysed in Rigotti's contribution (Ch. 12, p. 171ff.).

Area IV addresses complex structures of argumentation (IV) from rather different points of view; from the critique to the usefulness of the somehow classical distinction between *linked* and *convergent* arguments made by G. C. Goddu (Ch. 13), to the application of the Toulmin model to study *visual arguments* (L. Groarke, Ch. 16). J. B. Freeman elaborates on the concept of *ampliative probability* of certain types of premises (Ch. 14), while A. Rocci analyses the role of epistemic and non-epistemic *modals in argumentation* (Ch. 15, see section 4, below).

Finally, area II considers the evaluation of argumentation from the per-

spective of norms for reasonableness and fallaciousness. T. Govier (Ch. 7) and D. Jaquette (Ch. 8) analyse specific fallacies in detail: *the fallacy of composition* and *Burleigh's fallacy* (see section 4) respectively. The remaining two contributions exhibit a broader intent; S. Jacobs (Ch. 5) discusses the delicate question whether, for some extreme contexts in which sound argumentation is not facilitated, even *fallacious moves* can equally be read as *rhetorical strategies for promoting more reasoned debate* (p. 72). Drawing on argumentation and persuasion effects research, D. J. O'Keefe's contribution (Ch. 6) deals with some open questions about *normatively responsible advocacy* and the means-end balance in the evaluation of proper advocacy conduct.

3. Beyond the border of the community: synchronous and longitudinal interdisciplinarity

Remarkably, numerous of the advances in argumentation emerging from the various contributions are made possible by an interdisciplinary attitude which allows the community of argumentation scholars to be open to enriching exchanges. The attempt to incorporate rhetoric in the argumentative analysis, characterising the first area of the book, is a classical example in this direction. Classical is also the integration of logical calculus in argumentative analysis in order to verify the logical validity of certain argument schemes; D. Jaquette provides an example of this type of analysis in his chapter *Deductivism and informal fallacies* (Ch. 8); J. Freeman also makes use of formal and informal logic in *Argument strength, the Toulmin model and ampliative probability* (Ch. 14). As I shall more extensively discuss in the next section, various authors refer to linguistic semantics in their analysis.

In *Actually existing rules for closing arguments* (Ch. 20), J. Goodwin reviews rules for the closure of arguments in U.S. trials. She carefully examines legal literature on this issue (see in particular the summarising table on p. 296). D. J. O'Keefe discloses his intention to "provoke" argumentation theorists by highlighting some of the results of persuasion research. His contribution, *Normatively responsible advocacy: some provocations from persuasion effects research* (Ch. 6), concludes with a plea for considering

the means/ends balance in the analysis of normatively desirable argumentative conduct, which “cannot be oriented only to the analysis of argumentative devices themselves, but rather must be situated within a broader understanding of the larger ends sought” (p. 88).

Looking at this volume, interdisciplinarity could be also intended – in a broader sense – in a longitudinal understanding as a dialogue with the past and, in particular, with the tradition of classical rhetoric and the medieval reflection on logic and argumentation. We do not stand on the shoulder of giants inactively; we are also able to pursue a “dialogue” with them, criticize them and inherit what is relevant to current argumentation studies. In particular, D. Jaquette (Ch. 8) analyses and criticizes a provoking but fallacious reasoning, proposed in 1323 by Walter Burleigh in his *De puritate artis logicae tractatus longior* (*Longer Treatise on the Purity of Logic*). M. Kraus (*From figure to argument: contrarium in Roman rhetoric*, Ch. 9) takes us some centuries back to analyse the concept of the “contrarium” argument. Considering different texts – from the *Rhetoric to Herennius* to Cicero’s and Quintilian’s rhetorical works – *contrarium* seems to oscillate between a proper type of argument and a rhetorical figure pertaining to the domain of presentational devices. In *The duties of advocacy: argumentation under conditions of disparity, asymmetry and difference* (Ch. 19), G. T. Goodnight provides a rich overview of the role of *advocacy*, from the classical world (Greece and Rome) to the contemporary one. Thanks to Goodnight’s critical analysis and via the history of a concept like *advocacy*, we are brought to understand contexts and forms of argumentation through time; the result is a vivid picture of the goals and expectations surrounding advocates living in very different historical periods, from Pericles (p. 272) to the American pioneers (pp. 275-276) or Lady Diana (p. 280).

The indirect question that motivates the title to Rigotti’s contribution, *Whether and how classical topics can be revived within the contemporary argumentation theory* (Ch. 12), explicitly refers to the kind of longitudinal interdisciplinarity I have tried to sketch. Rigotti aims at proposing a contemporary model of argument schemes (topics), well grounded in argumentation studies; yet this model stems from consideration of classical and medieval contributions to a model of topics. This is reflected in the typology of *loci* he presents (p. 168) as well as in the analysis of the inferential structure of single argumentations (pp. 170 and 173). In both cases, past ap-

proaches are critically revisited and integrated in an original and consistent analysis.

4. Semantics and the evaluation of argumentative discourse

In my opinion, the role of an accurate semantic analysis in the evaluation of argumentative practices is of particular significance. I am taking up various authors' suggestion in this respect, since many of them are – more or less directly – making use of instruments from linguistic semantics to complete their analyses in different respects.

Following an observation by Aristotle, Rigotti (Ch. 12) remarks that “a fine semantic analysis is in every case useful to apply as a preliminary treatment of the statements that are involved in the argumentative procedures, in order to avoid polysemies and other sources of fallacies”. Jaquette (Ch. 8) is of the same opinion, since he makes uses of semantic analysis to discover a fallacy. The reasoning he examines, which was proposed by Burleigh in the Middle Ages, is the following:

“I say that you are an ass; therefore I say that you are an animal.
I say that you are an animal; therefore, I say the truth.
I say that you are an ass; therefore, I say the truth”.

It is evident that the conclusion does not deductively follow from the premises but, at first sight, it might not be clear why. For this reason, such reasoning claims to threaten logic; yet it is, as the author shows, logically invalid (p. 111) because of the semantics of the terms used here. As the author puts it: “Hypothetical syllogism is deductively valid only insofar as it involves not merely uniform ‘syntactical’ terms loosely adapted from ordinary language, but only referentially univocal terms that designate precisely the same objects or properties” (p. 113). In this case, Jaquette identifies the source of ambiguity in the phrase “to be an animal”. On this point, his analysis could be refined by translating Burleigh's asinine fallacy into an equivalent but different one. Let us imagine we refer to a German citizen and comment: “I say that you are Italian; therefore, I say that you are European. I say that you are European; therefore, I say the truth. I say that you are Ital-

ian; therefore, I say the truth". Perhaps, this equivalent but different formulation makes it clear that the semantic problem rather lies in the relation between the predicates Italian-European ('ass-animal' in the other example), which are not equivalent (so, saying that one is Italian entails that one is European; but saying that one is European does not entail that one is Italian).

The importance of semantic analysis is also highlighted at another level which concerns the exploitation of semantics in argumentative strategies. A. van Rees (Ch. 3) and C. Ilie (Ch. 4) both analyse how "playing" with the meanings of words, through the use of *dissociation* and *definition* respectively (two distinct but interrelated phenomena), can be a purposeful move in a complex argumentative strategy.

Finally, A. Rocci (*Modalities as indicators in argumentative reconstruction*, Ch. 15) presents a fine analysis of the semantics of modality and connects it to argument reconstruction. He proposes a classification of epistemic and non-epistemic modals and their possible argumentative functions (p. 219ff.).

5. Argumentation in context

"I think it is fair to say that if arguers found themselves in ideal circumstances they would have no need to argue", warns Scott Jacobs (p.62). This remark invites the analysis of the actual contexts in which real argumentative practices are embedded. Recent research has shown increased interest in contextualised argumentation; some authors recognize that out-of-context argumentation simply does not exist (van Eemeren et al. 2009). Although *Pondering on problems of argumentation* is not focused on the contexts of argumentation, many of the examples and the analyses still refer to various contexts.

If we look at *which* contexts are tackled in the various chapters, however, an interesting picture emerges. The majority of the contributions refer either to the context of *political debate* (in a broad sense, including various forms of media reports, parliamentary debate, etc.) or of *public discourse*, or *legal argumentation*, particularly in the domain of trials (Table 1)².

² "The majority of the contributions" does not mean all of them. Let me mention in particular the important examples of health communication (O'Keefe, Ch. 6) and Govier's

<i>Political argumentation</i>	<i>Public discourse</i>	<i>Juridical argumentation</i>
Emmeline Pankhurst’s speech “Militant suffragists”, delivered in Harford (Connecticut) on November 13, 1913 (Ilie, Ch. 4).	Satirical open letter, published online, about the Bible as foundational text for social policy (Jacobs, Ch. 5).	(Fictional) trial against the alleged murderer Moosbrugger in Musil’s <i>Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften</i> (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, Ch. 1).
G. Buffi’s discourse at the origin of the political justification of the founding of the University of Lugano (Rigotti, Ch. 12).	The fit-by-nature argument on women (Gough, Ch. 18).	Examples of rules for closing arguments taken from U.S. trials (Goodwin, Ch. 20).
Political cartoons as visual argumentation (Groarke, Ch. 16).	Forms of advocacy – public discourse (Goodnight, Ch. 19).	Forms of advocacy – juridical discourse (Goodnight, Ch. 19).
Political discussion on Kyoto’s protocol (Gough, Ch. 18).		

Table 1: Contexts of application predominantly considered in this volume.

The contributions shown in Table 1 deal with highly institutionalised and rule-based contexts in which argumentative discourses are orations that are accurately prepared and then “performed”, normally by professionals trained for this purpose. Of course, there is nothing wrong with this selection *per se*. On the contrary, we should acknowledge that the selected contexts are highly argumentative. In fact, they are somewhat “traditional” contexts of argumentative analysis. Still, consider the synoptic table I have tried to reconstruct to picture this phenomenon (Table 1). I take this selection (which is not *jointly* intended, since authors did not jointly agree to choose these contexts) to be a symptom for current state of argumentation studies. It may also point to a need for new directions of research. In my opinion,

interesting application of the fallacy of composition to the conflict resolution processes enabled by truth commissions (Ch. 7). I skip a couple of further examples that are mentioned but not extensively discussed in other chapters.

whatever their importance, we should not limit ourselves to traditional contexts of analysis; it would be wise to approach new contexts of analysis, as some authors have started to do (cf. some of the contributions in Rigotti and Greco Morasso 2009). We might also find it interesting to develop more analyses of contexts in which argumentation is not, so to speak, *pre-packaged*, but develops in face-to-face interaction (e.g., in dispute mediation, negotiation, health communication, family interactions, teaching and learning activities...). We might consider contexts in which the dialogue is not a sort of fight on pre-determined standpoints, but in which opinions are created through critical discussion, in interpersonal or intrapersonal settings (Dascal 2005). Other interesting contexts would be those in which argumentation contributes not only to determining one or the other course of action, but also to increase knowledge and cognitive development, scientific debate or learning/teaching being activity types of this kind. In the latter activity types, we could also identify interactions in which the arguers (or *proto-arguers*³) are not adult professionals but young children, for example trying to defend an opinion at school or in their family.

A corollary to my programmatic observation is that including further contexts of analysis would mean to further enlarge the boundaries of interdisciplinary dialogue in order to better understand the considered contexts.

6. “I agree”. But why? The acceptability of premises

Gough’s *Testing for acceptable premises within systems of belief* (Ch. 18) raises the important and delicate issue of the acceptability of premises. As Gough states, his paper represents a comment on Freeman’s *Acceptable Premises: an epistemic approach to an informal logic problem* (2005), highlighting some open questions and problems. In any case, the problem of *acceptability* of premises is a serious one for argumentation theory; it does not merely amount to asking whether certain premises are accepted; and it does not coincide with a reflection on their marketability either (Freeman

³ I am borrowing this term. It was suggested by Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont in the framework of the doctoral program “Argupolis – Argumentation Practices in Context” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (PDAMP1-123089/1).

2005: 3). Rather, it concerns the reasonableness of persuasion in general and of personal acceptance of given starting points in particular. As van Eemeren and Grootendorst (2004) remind us, there is no point in starting a critical discussion if the participants have no substantial zone of agreement. If we could not reasonably accept premises, we could not argue at all. On the other hand, finding shared premises with our co-arguers is often a delicate task.

Going back to the specific contents of Gough's paper, I would like to quote an example of the type of question he raises vis à vis Freeman's account. He criticizes the idea of a "human constitution" or "moral conscience" grounding our common sense beliefs, proposed by Freeman (see Gough's synthesis on pp. 254-255). More specifically, Gough (p. 255) challenges the idea that we recognize the intrinsic value or dignity of persons; in other words, that human beings must be perceived as ends rather than means (Freeman 2005: 240 and ff.). Now, the problems that Gough identifies are still partially unsolved (as he observes himself). For example, if we were to replace the criterion of a human constitution with the idea that "shared intuitions, common value beliefs, and interpretations [...] need to be negotiated through considered argumentation" (p. 264), then it would still not be clear at what point and why this process of negotiation could reasonably end. When shall we really *accept* the results of our negotiations as satisfying? Gough's contribution and more generally the vein of reflection on acceptability brings out fundamental questions for current argumentation studies.

7. Open issues

Let us look at some of the points on which authors (implicitly or explicitly) disagree, in order to present questions for further discussion.

In the previous section, I have shown that Gough's chapter (18) leaves many open questions about the problem of premise *acceptability*. In section 5, I also highlighted how research on argumentation could arguably benefit from consideration of a broader set of contexts. I would like to make two further points.

First, different authors included in the section on argument structures

(IV) adopt or reinterpret, for various reasons, the Toulmin model of argumentation (in particular Freeman, Ch. 14; Rocci, Ch. 15; and Groarke, Ch. 16). However, sometimes the interpretation of this model seems to oscillate between a tool to study *argument structures* and a sort of representation of an *argument scheme*. See for example Groarke's interesting analysis of the cartoon "Bush sets the economy in motion" (pp. 234-235). This appears as a single argumentation, and Groarke's analysis uses the Toulmin model to show how the *warrant* ("If a government accumulates and services trillions of dollars in debt, it cannot move its economy") is visually represented in the cartoon. Now, such a warrant is clearly a premise of that single argumentation; and maybe eliciting its underlying argument scheme would bring the analysis forward. Then, Groarke interprets another cartoon (pp. 236-237) as the visual representation of a possible *backing* supporting the above-mentioned warrant about governments and economy. In this case, Toulmin's model is used to explain the structure of a complex argumentation (a sort of chain of arguments), where the second cartoon supports the first one. This is a matter of argument structure. Perhaps, the ambiguity between schemes and structures was already present Toulmin's original account. However, this ambiguity must be solved in order to define the possible applications of the model. This reflection could also serve to better highlight the relation between argument schemes and argumentation structures in general.

Second, a particular lively object of debate seems to be constituted by argument schemes. Rigotti (Ch. 12) proposes a general model to study the inferential configuration of single argumentation on the basis of the analysis of argument schemes (pp. 168ff.). In focusing their analysis on specific argument schemes, both Garssen (Ch. 10) and Doury (Ch. 11) seem to suggest that a lot of work must be done to elicit the structure of each single argument scheme. In fact, considering different examples in great detail is a good method to specify the inferential dynamics of argument schemes.

Doury provokingly highlights a further important aspect. She holds that much work must be also devoted to the level of proposing typologies of argument schemes, moreover that modern authors are somewhat too "reverent" towards "untouchable" existing classifications, even if they are too broad or lack coherence in the classification criteria adopted, to propose new and more systematic typologies (p. 142). She tries to counter this reluctance, proposing a classification of comparative arguments (p. 143). Rigotti fur-

ther proposes a typology of argument schemes (p. 168) which is inspired by the tradition. However, he defines it as “a *new building*” (p. 160, my emphasis) in the discussion on his typology. Concerning classifications of argument schemes, what remains an open challenge for all the interested authors is Doury’s claim that academic accounts should not completely neglect the “spontaneous classifications of arguments that can be identified through ordinary argumentative practices” (p. 142).

Overall, the volume provides a very good picture of many contemporary advances in the study of reasoning and argumentation. It provides an interesting account of many relevant notions and methodologies of analysis; it equally focuses on open problems and new directions of research, approaching them from different points of view and disciplinary perspectives.

I wrote my review trying to be as fair and objective as possible in the description of the contents of the volume, but at the same time leaving some space to those problems of argumentation that made *me* start pondering and discussing with my colleagues, evoking my curiosity and interest. I hope this review will be of some use in the “school of Athens” dialogue.

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