Counter Argument

In Defence of Common Sense

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In Defence of Common Sense

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In the Philosophy of Language

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CHAPTER I

A Controversy in Argumentation Theory

REMARKS BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

A contextualisation of the current thesis as a contribution to a larger debate about rationality, in science as well as in day-to-day discourse.

Prologue: The Science Wars

In 1996, a North American scholarly journal, the well-esteemed *Social Text,* published a paper[1] by New York University physicist Alan Sokal, in which it was suggested that an emerging field in physics known as *Quantum Gravity* is best understood in postmodernist terms. Sokal's point is unequivocally post-modern, in that he firmly rejects the self-proclaimed authority of traditional science, maintaining that scientific discourse is but one discourse among dozens of other, competing discourses (some of which are unjustly marginalised). To privilege one particular discourse (i.e. that of traditional science) is simply not justified, maintains Sokal, as

> …scientific "knowledge", far from being objective, reflects and encodes the dominant ideologies and power relations of the culture that produced it. (Sokal (1996a), p. 2)

That objectivity is not even remotely possible as a scientific goal follows from the fact that

> …physical "reality", no less than social "reality", is at bottom a social and linguistic construct… (Sokal (1996a), p. 2)

[1] Sokal, Alan (1996a) 'Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity', pp. 217-252 in *Social Text*, vol. 46/47, Spring/ summer (1996). Page numbers given here refer to downloads from www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal.

Based on such philosophical assumptions, the paper proceeds to envisage a new, 'liberatory' science that eventually will not only '…liberate human beings from the tyranny of "absolute truth" and "objective reality"…', but which will also be instrumental in disarming oppressive powers currently manifested in society.

The paper inarguably plays on a range of well-established postmodernist or social constructionist dogma, albeit somewhat radically. Sokal's high profile could have been seen as a welcome contribution from the side of 'hard' science to the postmodernist tradition, were it not for the events taking place soon after publication. Shortly after the release of *Social Text*'s spring/summer edition, *Lingua Franca* featured another paper by professor Sokal, this one entitled 'A Physicist Experiments With Cultural Studies'[2]. The paper opens in this way:

> For some years I've been troubled by an apparent decline in the standards of intellectual rigor in certain precincts of the American academic humanities. But I'm a mere physicist: if I find myself unable to make head or tail of *jouissance* and *différance*, perhaps that just reflects my own inadequacy.
> So, to test the prevailing intellectual standards, I decided to try a modest (though admittedly uncontrolled) experiment: Would a leading North American journal of cultural studies - whose editorial collective includes such luminaries as Fredric Jameson and Andrew Ross - publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors' ideological preconceptions?
> The answer, unfortunately, is yes. (Sokal (1996b), p. 1)

Sokal then continues by referring interested readers to his article in *Social Text*. What had seemed to be a radical yet serious, programmatic article, was really nothing but skilful arrangements of fashionable phrases and clichés, unsupported arguments claiming highly dubious relationships between physical concepts and political, social, and cultural phenomena, and, occasionally, sentences whose only merit is grammatical well-formedness. The article, in its almost complete lack of logical coherence, is built instead on a massive appeal to authority (complementing 109 footnotes with 218 entries into the citations list!). To most observers, the elaborate parody lucidly revealed the obscurity of post-modern thinking: If scholars of great reputation would allow a paper of no scientific value to be made available to the public, then what kind of science do these scholars represent? Seductive but confused, post-modern philosophy seemed to have nothing to offer to anyone seriously occupied with understanding *the nature of things*.

[2] Sokal, Alan (1996b) 'A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies', pp. 62-64 in *Lingua Franca*, may-june (1996). Page numbers given here refer to downloads from www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal.

Undoubtedly, the incident (now often known simply as 'The Sokal Affair') represents the fiercest offensive to date in the so-called 'science war'[3] going on between sociological and humanistic traditions of 'postmodernist' and 'social constructionist' persuasions on one side, and the traditional conceptions of rationality and science on the other. Sokal did not just argue, but indeed demonstrated, that at least the particular journal in question did not possess the editorial credibility expected of serious scholarly or scientific fora. The generalising conclusion (along with an unavoidable 'emperor's new clothes'-analogy) was close at hand: Postmodern studies (social constructionism, cultural studies, post-structuralism, etc.) provide habitats for intellectual sloppiness and confused thinking.

Obviously, the deception had its ethical problems, and a defensive response from *Social Text* editors Bruce Robbins and Andrew Ross brought up problems related to the status of *Social Text* as a non-refereed 'little magazine' not predominantly committed to science, but to politics. The joke was ill-placed, according to the editors, since *Social Text* is '…an editorial millieu with criteria and aims quite remote from that of a professional scientific journal'[4]. Surely, this is a good point. Sokal's point, however, is equally good: the infamous article was not just an original piece of nonsense, it was also based on a vast amount of quotations of an equally nonsensical nature which were notably *not* manufactured, but in fact meticulously checked and verified quotations of highly esteemed post-modern thinkers from France and North America[5].

If nothing else, the Sokal Affair serves to make an important point: in many academic circles there is a pronounced tendency to let go of the scientific and scholarly ideals of clarity, coherence and validity, gaining scholarly approval instead through the use of inconspicuous imagery and fashionable clichés. As I hope it will become evident, the theme of this study, argumentation, is a discursive phenomenon, and hence it should be illuminated by theories dealing with language and discourse. This should not be a problem were it not for the fact that most contemporary theories of discourse are by and large products of the postmodern tradition, complete with all the shortcomings of rigour and clarity which the Sokal affair testifies to. In particular, it is a problem in the case of argumentation, which is a field with a strong dependence on the existence of an ideal of what it is to be 'rational', an ideal that cannot, and should not, be thought of merely as a 'discursive construct'. In chapter II, I am going to examine postmodern thinking in more detail, insisting that it is possible to deal with discourse as a phenomenon existing in a world that is otherwise independent of our perception of it, and our language about it. I am going to say that while discourse is greatly influenced by the social context in which it appears, and while it may to some extent serve to

[3] The term 'science war' has become increasingly prominent in recent years to denote the philosophical and political discussion of what is to count as 'science', 'pseudo-science', 'non-science' etc. To my knowledge, the term was first used in this sense in Ross (1995).
[4] Response by *Social Text* editors Bruce Robbins and Andrew Ross (no title) in *Lingua Franca*, July/August 1996.
[5] Sokal's file of prominent thinker's unintelligible - or downright deceptive - theorizing on physical and mathematical issues was not exhausted in the *Social Text* paper. Quotations from such thinkers as Lacan, Kristeva, Virilio, Baudrillard and Latour are compiled and commented on in Sokal & Bricmont (1998).

constitute that very context, it is never fully constituted by, and constitutive of, external reality. This prologue can be seen as choosing sides in the science war: There is an on-going discussion in argumentation theory, I will argue, which is a small-scale reflection of the science war, and this discussion centres on the status of the concept rationality. This study is faithful to the idea that there is such a thing as 'rationality', and that science, and any other activity where we relate ourselves to the world, the norms of society, and to each other, is meaningless without it.

Notes on the Title

This study is entitled *Counter Argument*, which means two things: the text *is* a counter argument, and it *is about* counter argument. As for the first meaning, the text is intended to reconstruct and criticise positions from which it is argued that rationality, in particular the rational use of language, is relative to whichever situational setting language is used in. A counter argument of this kind need not be only destructive; this counter argument is also meant to provide constructive proposals for an understanding of rational argumentation. But above all, this study is *about* argumentation and the ongoing evaluations of arguments in conversations: I am going to propose that the conversational counter argument displays rational criteria for argument criticism, criteria that are not relative to situational setting.

The subtitle, *In Defence of Common Sense*[6], implies that there is such a thing as 'common sense', and that, somehow, it needs defending. This, in turn, seems to further suggest that some other party holds the opinion that there is some mode of being, reasoning and communicating in the world which is superior to the everyday, ordinary common sense. Indeed, such assumptions and suggestions are fully intended. But like the title, the subtitle is also deliberately ambiguous, and I will begin by showing why I think that it should be so. First of all, the term 'common sense' is not a very frequent term in academic writings, as it seems to be beyond definition. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*[7] has no suggestion as to a precise meaning or application of the term:

> **common sense** (...) It seems likely that common sense defies definition; certainly no one has succeeded in giving a satisfactory definition, and very few have tried. (...)

However, the dictionary continues, '[i]t is clear that the creative intellect needs some constraints other than logic since the conclusions of metaphysical thought need tests of acceptability other than consistency, and sheer intellectual intuition is unlikely to provide enough.' This hint at a concept of 'common sense' implies that logic is *not* a part of it (cp. 'constraints other than logic'), but rather that the intellect *uses* logic, but requires common sense as a supplement, in order to be sufficiently 'constrained'. In my framework, a comparable idea is proposed: logic is complementary to communication,

[6] No intertextual reference to G. E. Moore's "A Defence of Common Sense" in his *Philosophical Papers* (1959), London, is intended.

[7] Honderich, Ted (ed.) (1995) *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press.

as the latent system of what can hypothetically be inferred, regardless of the current situation. When people engage in communication, however, this latent system is activated, but is highly *constrained* by communication's own necessary condition of being a co-operative effort. Contrary to the above description, I include both logic and communication, and the proposed relation between them, under the term 'common sense', without claiming to have finally 'defined' what it is to have, or to exercise, common sense. Accordingly, being communicatively uncooperative, albeit still logically consistent, is a non-sensical behaviour, resulting in *nonsense*. The same can be said for being communicatively co-operative, while disregarding logical consistency. Those are the constraints that logic and communication mutually impose on each other.

For a person to have, or to exercise, common sense is usually taken to mean that that person is 'sensible', not prone to ranting phantasm and persuaded only by what is directly evident from a non-hallucinatory experience of the world around him - that is, the world in his particular perspective. In this conception of the term, the adjective 'common' means 'ordinary', in that the experience of the 'ordinary world' is the ground for common sense. In contrast, 'common' can also denote 'collective' or 'social', and in this way the above allusion to communication begins to fall in place. The common sense I want to defend contains both meanings of the word 'common'; The faculty of reasoning consistently, independently of contextual influence, combined with the faculty of communicatively arriving at mutual understanding of facts and norms in any given, social context.

But why defend this concept? Is it under vicious attack from somewhere? The answer is both yes and no; Frequently in the following text, readers may ask themselves if the views argued against are really views that anyone in their right mind would claim to hold. Is this study merely chasing ghosts? But the point is that whereas certain radical views may not be explicitly defended by anyone, such radical views can be seen to be *consequential* of certain, apparently less radical views, once they are properly understood. In this respect, common sense (in both its stipulated meanings) is in fact under pressure from various sides. The most prominent rejection of a concept such as the mentioned 'common sense' comes from positions where it is believed that not only is the surrounding world (social *and* physical) understood as a socially constructed fact (and hence relative to any given context), but also the faculty of reason is a social construction, in that systems of logic are reducible to convention (and hence relative to any given context). I am going to try to build a defence against positions of this general persuasion.

Another threat comes from an authoritarian view of philosophy and formal sciences as the privileged loci of final knowledge and insight. In traditional, philosophical approaches to argumentation, empirical arguments have been thought to be degenerate versions of an otherwise consistent system of deductive logic, the ordinary, argumentative discussion giving evidence of generally fallacious reasoning. This is a characterisation that leaves the ordinary language user in a less than flattering light - it seems that the common man in the street is incapable at arriving at a conclusion from a set of given premises in a way which can be acceptable to the philosopher. In any case, this study is going to make a case in defence of the competence of the ordinary language users to reason intersubjectively in perfectly acceptable ways. I propose that common sense is a necessary and sufficient condition for intersubjective reasoning, and

that the faculty of reasoning is not reserved for people with university degrees. Obviously, real life argumentation can frequently be seen to be utter nonsense (and so can, some might say, certain philosophical dogma), but the thesis is that common sense - the kind of reason that we all employ in everyday life - is not degenerate, but merely constrained by factors that underlie language and communication as such. A further argument in the following chapters will extend this thesis to a point where the role of logic in communication is understood as that of employing valid inference as an invariant standard for critical assessment, rather than as an invariant standard for producing new knowledge. This argument involves recognising the philosophical analysis of arguments as being in principle identical to the real life, conversational argument evaluations.

The final thing I am going to say about common sense for now is that apparently the concept in its ordinary use is highly value-laden. To have common sense is a positive feature of a person, while someone not in possession of this faculty is generally not to be trusted or taken seriously. This renders the title a platitude; who would not automatically agree with the appreciation of a universally *good* thing? So the concept still needs to be refined; as common sense involves the use of formal rules for reason (constrained as they may be), this fact does not make any guarantee for producing better and more valid understanding, nor does the co-operative nature of communication in itself; these features in combination only guarantee the *potential* for increasing knowledge and understanding, which means that it is up to the human agents at any given point in history to be 'sensible' - the formal character of the concept 'common sense' means that the concept cannot in any concrete context point out what would be sensible in the situation. Common sense is only an account of the *conditions* for being sensible. So the concept should be understood in a strictly neutral sense as a necessary precondition, not a guarantee, for acting in a rational manner.

In the course of the text ahead, the need for some portion of analytical rigor necessitates that the expression 'common sense' is dissolved it into its constituent parts, concepts such as 'reason', logic', 'knowledge', and 'communication'. So while enough has now been said about the concept 'common sense', there are still some points to be made concerning the 'defence'. Both at the rather local circles of argumentation theory, and, as we have seen, at grander level, in the current climate of the sociology of science, such notions as 'reason' and 'rationality' are points of conflict and controversy. In the next subchapter, I am going to trace the controversy in argumentation theory on the question of the status of such notions.

Statement of Intent

Modern society (I deliberately avoid the prefix 'post-' when referring to modernity - for reasons I hope will become apparent in the course of the following text) is characterised by having its norms made the object of debate. In fact, neither regulatives nor descriptions pertaining to the circumstances of late modernity can in principle claim immunity from criticism, or defiance of argumentative discourse. This is as it should be; there is no reason to regret that we do not anymore possess a sacred text, issuing the imperatives of society.

Be that as it may, what remains after the loss of determinism and absolutism is the practice of negotiating norms and truths through *language* - or, if you like, discourse. This has led some to the conclusion that there is in fact nothing *but* discourse[8] - whatever that can possibly mean. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of a certain kind of frustration; a relativist is an absolutist who has been very badly disappointed. There is no reason, however, for disappointment, if you did not originally believe that science, or whatever we can call the pursuit of the truth, would finally come up with the final, indisputable theory of everything. In any case, the conclusion that all experience and knowledge are discursive constructs is not viable, as it will be shown in the present text. What *can* be concluded, however, is the rather more modest claim that we are stuck with language to settle our disputes, and that language is quite qualified for that task.

The intention underlying this thesis is *to pursue a rational invariance in the nature of argumentative discourse*. The assumption behind this is that there is such an invariance, and that it has nothing whatsoever to do with absolutism, but that the very state of being in the world, functioning socially with others, eliminates certain possibilities, while leaving others open. This mechanism is characteristic of what I refer to as 'rationality'.

INFORMAL LOGIC AND CONTEMPORARY ARGUMENTATION THEORY

A descriptive account of the field of contemporary argument theory, and a survey of relativistic and postmodernist tendencies in the field.

Introduction

This study is not predominantly intended to bring about a total overview of the field of argumentation theory and analysis, in any case, providing an exhaustive, historical account is not possible within limited space. Instead, the intention behind this subchapter is to provide a brief contextualisation of the study: what tradition it is a part of, what theoretical persuasions it is based on, accepts, or objects to. This task involves a brief survey over the field commonly known as 'informal logic' (in the US, Canada, and UK) or 'argumentation theory' (in continental Europe) which will be laid out in the immediately following sections. Secondly, the intention in this subchapter is to clarify why the dissertation is elaborated in the form of two major parts: a philosophical criticism of postmodernism and an advocation of critical rationalism (chapters II, III, and IV) on the one hand, and a pragmatic discussion of argumentation as dialogue (chapters V and VI) on the other. It is a central assumption that various approaches to argumentation, especially practical, linguistically oriented approaches, are based on philosophical ideas that more or less directly resemble postmodernism, even if they do not actually claim to be postmodernist.

[8] e.g. Edwards et al (1995). Such a position is also sometimes assigned to Laclau & Mouffe, see discussions in Jørgensen & Phillips (1999), pp. 34-71, and Burr (1995), pp. 79-95.

Ancestry of Informal Logic

In 1958, the Polish-Belgian philosopher Chaim Perelman published *La Nouvelle Rhétorique*[9] in co-operation with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca[10]. The 'new rhetoric' represents the reintroduction of values into the domain of rationality. Aristotle dismissed value from the domain of rationality, as the *epideictic* speech (speech of praise) was not supposed to be assessed according to its content matter but according to the skill of the speaker, and this singled out the epideictic speech from the *forensic* (judicial) and *deliberative* (political) speech genres. Perelman's work can be understood as an attempt at correcting this problem in the form of a practically applicable rhetoric. This involved the introduction of a distinction between 'argumentation' and 'demonstration', where 'argumentation' can be understood as the discursive technique by which the audience's adherence to some thesis is strengthened or weakened, while 'demonstration' is the logical calculations performed according to pre-established rules. Perelman claimed that communicative problem solving in the real world is accomplished by argumentation rather than demonstration, seeing that the mechanical deduction of a conclusion from a set of premises does not necessitate that the audience's *acceptance* of those premises is automatically transferred to the conclusion.

This idea led to the conclusion that the notion of the *audience* be central to any theory of argumentative practice. The most well known aspect of the new rhetoric is probably the distinction between the *universal audience* and the *particular audience* which was introduced in order to account for a rationality in argumentation that did not exclude values. The universal audience is the speaker's notion of the 'group of all rational and competent people', whereas the particular audience is the speaker's notion of the group of people he actually means to address and persuade. The point is that in order for arguments to be rationally persuasive to the particular audience, they should be addressed to the universal audience, seeing that the universal audience is equivalent to the speaker's idea of rationality as such. Values can, understood in an abstract sense, be part of the universal audience, according to Perelman, but once values are attributed concretely to some person, institution etc., they become acceptable only to the particular audience.

Perelman's work is an ancestor of informal logic, insofar as it focuses on the practice of argumentation rather than logical demonstration, and it is highly rhetorical in its focus on audience. The distinction between the particular and the universal audience, however, is not without its problems, and it does not stand unchallenged today. Van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984, p. 13) object to the fact that the audience in Perelman's work is really a passive (sometimes actually imagined) group of listeners, thus making a dialogical perspective impossible. Along the same lines, Foss, Foss & Trapp ((1991) p. 138f.) argue that the universal audience is not a useful concept, as it is too broad; the universal audience can contain anyone -with any possible idea of facts and norms, depending only on the speaker's choice.

[9] English translation 1969: *The New Rhetoric*.
[10] The work is often attributed exclusively to Perelman, as it is believed that Mme Olbrechts-Tyteca was not directly involved in the conception of the theoretical aspects of the work. See van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Henkemans et al (1996), p. 93.

Another important book on argumentation was released in the same year as *La Nouvelle Rhétorique*. Arguably, Stephen Edelston Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (1958) has had an even greater impact than Perelman's work. Contrary to the author's expectation, *The Uses of Argument* was received as a rhetorical work, not as a philosophical one, and to many scholars, it remains a contribution to a 'new rhetoric'.

Toulmin was, like Perelman, critical of what he called the 'geometrical' approach to arguments, that is, the formalist expectation that arguments should conform to strictly deductive argument schemata. Toulmin proposed the notion of argument 'field' being the domain from which arguments lend their 'strength'. The field-dependency of arguments serves as a foundation for Toulmin's famous 'lay-out of argument' which is an argument scheme resembling a syllogism, but with the idea of field dependency diagrammed into the model. Toulmin's layout of argument will be commented on extensively in the present study, which means that I will postpone the criticism lending itself to this theory. See chapter IV.

The last ancestor of informal logic that deserves mention here is Charles L. Hamblin's *Fallacies* from 1970. Objecting to the 'standard treatment' of fallacies which was lacking of theoretical coherence, Hamblin suggested that fallacies should be studied in the light of a theory of dialogue, and proceeded to propose such a theory[11]. Crucial to this effort was the concept of 'commitment'. It was central to Hamblin that the notion of 'truth' was not a useful criterion in the assessment of fallacies, as the final establishment of truth was not possible. Hence a premise could be true or false, without our *knowing* its truth or falsity. An account of fallacies would be better served then by looking at the attribution of commitment in the dialogue, rather than the distribution of truth of the propositions.

Hamblin pointed out that interlocutors in a dialogue need to take on certain commitments, and that such commitments need to be internally coherent. A formal dialogue is an ideal (not realistic) model of how such commitments may be distributed among interlocutors. Fallacies, then, may be seen as transgressions, one way or the other, of such ideal models. Hamblin's theory has been greatly elaborated by especially Woods & Walton (1982; 1989), van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984; 1992), and Walton & Krabbe (1995).

The three approaches taken together add up to form the soil out of which the informal logic tradition could grow. Perelman introduced the change of focus from demonstration to argumentation, and a new emphasis on audience acceptability, Toulmin, in the same vein, proposed a dissociation of 'geometric logic' from the practical *uses* of argument and suggested the idea of 'argument field', while Hamblin's contribution is the change from monologue to dialogue along with the focus on commitment rather than propositional truth. It is worth noting that while by no means all approaches in informal logic contain relativistic or quasi-relativistic tendencies, it is perfectly possible to collect relativistic ammunition in this trinity of argumentation pioneers - and many have in fact done so. Both Perelman's and Toulmin's works can

[11] Hamblin's theory does not give due credit to its own ancestry, however. While dismissing Alfred Sidgwick's *Fallacies: a View of Logic From the Practical Side* (1883) as being really a book about 'non-fallacious reasoning', Hamblin's book is in many respects anticipated by that very work of Sidgwick. See Nielsen (1997), p. 130ff.

easily be interpreted as representing the attempt at understanding rationality as a culture-relative convention, and as for Hamblin, a critical comment notes, his argument against truth as an evaluative criterion '…was not unlike that of the deconstructionist: The idea of truth presupposes an impossible God's eye position from which to view matters' (van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Henkemans et al. (1996), p. 179), or in other words, the idea of 'truth' is interpreted rather pessimistically: outside human reach and thus outside any realistic study of argumentation.

The Domain of Informal Logic

Informal logic was, and is, predominantly a reaction to formal logic. So in most writings on the subject, the criticism of 'formal logic' is central. Scriven (1980) writes:

> … I have never been persuaded that formal logic has ever contributed anything significant to the understanding of any problem that it did not create. It's supposed to solve *other* people's problems, not create its own. (Scriven (1980), p. 149)

The domain of informal logic, by contrast, is the real world, the practical application of logic to *real* problems:

> Why all this enthusiasm about informal logic? The reason … is simply that it represents a turning back to a proper task of philosophy in general and of logic in particular, namely the study of argument. (Scriven (1980), p. 149)

It is important to note that informal logic was not originally a reaction to logic as such, but to the *use* of logic in the particular, philosophical tradition dominating academic approaches in the 50's and 60's. The rise of informal logic is by and large characterised by its various practitioners being united primarily by their joint *resistance* to the old tradition, more than by agreement on the new tradition in terms of method, theory or philosophy. The *place* of logic, in particular, has remained a point of dispute since the beginnings of informal logic. What impact should the calculi of deductive logic have on the analysis of arguments in practice? Can deductive logic be a part of the study of real argumentation at all?

The colloquial term for informal logic's primary object of study is 'the market place'. The market place is a metaphor for natural language discourse as opposed to the formalised languages of logic. While formal logic is thought to be primarily self-referential, informal logic refers to language-in-use. Where formal logic focuses on validity, informal logic focuses on context. Where formal logic is intrinsically decontextualised, informal logic basically studies social processes in their contexts. While formal logic has no empirical aspect, informal logic is based on empirical, hands-on observation of, and interaction with, discussions and debates.

Historically, informal logic is closely connected to the dramatic changes taking place in the western world in the late sixties and early seventies. In North America, the idea of

Critical Thinking was introduced into educational programmes[12]. Critical thinking denotes the extensive training of *reflection* and *critical attitude* as an approach to the surrounding world. It emerged effectively in North America during the 1970's as what might be seen as a natural development of the prevailing intellectual climate - the 'counter culture' - of that time. Informal logic can be seen as a branch of critical thinking; It is a branch of critical thinking as it employs broader approaches to arguments than those offered by formal logic, as it is focused on *practice* rather than abstraction. Critical thinking, however, is more than just argumentation and language, extending into such domains as art, literature, ethics, and politics. You might say that the label informal logic gains the 'informal' bit from critical thinking. In contrast, the 'logic' bit stems from a rather broad conception of logic as the '…philosophical study of the norms of reasoning' (van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Henkemans (1996), p. 164). Once logic is attributed a narrower definition as the study of decontextualised, aprioristic rules and calculi, informal logic is mainly dissociated from logic.

The rise of informal logic in North America was, as mentioned above, closely related to the reforms of colleges and universities, that came about as results of pressure from student groups with new and more critical attitudes to the curricula and syllabi of educational programmes. It is not surprising, then, that the first major statements of informal logic were generally textbooks rather than research monographs.

Influential texts such as Kahane (1971), Thomas (1973), Scriven (1976), and Fogelin (1978) share the insistence that logic should be applied concretely to texts and other forms of communication, and not be a study in its own right. Kahane's book marks a radical departure from an only two years older textbook on formal logic by the same author (Kahane (1969)), in that it introduces an adjusted theory of fallacies to the practical study of real texts taken predominantly from the media. This focus on practical communication is also adopted by Thomas (1973) who is the first to seriously question the orthodox ideal of *logical validity*, introducing instead 'argument strength' as a measure of the relationship between premises and conclusion. The result is a highly interpretive approach in the absense of the notion of logical form from analytical practices. Scriven (1976) also places heavy emphasis on the interpretive practice, rather than on theoretical abstraction, giving the most influential formulation to date of the 'principle of charity'[13] as the standard for interpretation: the analyst should give the argumentative text a 'fair trial', by assuming initially that the arguer is morally respectable, and that the argument is basically coherent and reasonable. The point is that analyses are legitimate only under observation of the principle of charity, rather like legal decisions which are only legitimate if the defendant has been assumed innocent until proven guilty. Scriven proposes a seven-step procedure for analysing arguments in which the notion of argument form is only one part.

Fogelin (1978) is the first to introduce speech act theory into the field of argumentation theory. Fogelin's point is that argumentation is a form of communication and should be analysed as such. While not rejecting the notion of

[12] See van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Henkemans (1996), p. 165 for an account.
[13] The principle of charity is the doctrine that an interpretation of some stretch of speech or text should keep to a minimum the assignment of false beliefs the person expressing the speech or text. The principle of charity is usually ascribed to W.V. O. Quine, see also Davidson (1986).

logical form, Fogelin stresses the importance of understanding argumentative discourse as a linguistic and communicative phenomenon, and proposes a framework in which speech acts and Grice's co-operation principle plays a central role.

These approaches have in common the tendency to reject *deduction* in favour of *induction* as the primary object of study. It is generally claimed that practical reasoning is non-conclusive, and hence the deductive ideal of entailment does not apply. In its place, it is suggested that in most cases premises provide only partial support for their conclusions, and hence argument *strength* rather than argument *validity* is the appropriate criterion for argument assessment. Fogelin ((1978) p. 237) illustrates this point by examining a famous example of inductive generalisation (which is one of the various forms of induction):

I. A

> All swans we have observed are white
> ∴ All swans are white

Though the argument is not deductively valid, the premise does support the conclusion considerably, while it does not support a negation of the conclusion at all. Consequently, the argument is inductively strong, even if it is not deductively valid. Up to a point in history, this argument was indeed very strong. But when the Australian continent was explored in the late 1700's, *black* swans were observed, rendering the argument premise false. It was suddenly no longer true that 'all swans we have observed are white', and consequently, there was suddenly no support for the conclusion[14]. And this, says Fogelin, is the hallmark of inductive arguments: they are cancellable in the face of further evidence. By contrast, the validity of deductive entailment is 'non-cancellable' by further evidence. The validity of the deductive argument

I. B

> All swans are white
> The bird in the lake is a swan
> ∴ The bird in the lake is white

cannot be cancelled by the information that it is in fact false that 'all swans are white'. One must grant that this new information renders the argument *unsound*, but it remains *valid*. And, it might be added, if the argument is not only valid, but also *sound*, then the addition of further premises will not change the soundness of the argument,

[14] This happens to be a prototypical example of the falsification mechanism in scientific discovery. While the verification of theories like 'all swans are white' can never be final (there is always the possibility that a counter example may be found), the falsification of the theory *is* final: the existence of one black swan is sufficient to refute the theory. See my chapter III for an account of falsificationism.

provided that the additional premises are true. The point for most practitioners of informal logic, however, is that this feature of deduction is not much of an advantage after all. The presentation of an argument like **i. b** always presupposes another argument establishing the major premise, 'all swans are white'. And that subargument will invariantly be something like the *inductive* argument **i. a**, the generalisation from observation. So at the end of the day, the soundness of a deductive argument always depends on some inductive argument establishing (non-conclusively) the truth of the premises.

This observation leads many proponents of informal logic to the conclusion that the object of argumentation analysis is the strength of premise support, rather than the validity of argument forms.

Conductive Reasoning

Another, and even more radically informal approach to argumentation, is known as *conduction*. Originally proposed by Wellman (1971), it has been embraced by several informal logicians (Govier (1980a); (1985); 1987), Hitchcock (1983), Bickenbach & Davies (1997)).Wellman defines the trichotomy of deduction, induction and conduction in this way: An argument is deductive if it claims a necessary entailment of the conclusion, given the premises (Wellman (1971), p. 4.). Apparently, the claim that an argument is deductive is equivalent to claiming that it is valid. An inductive argument, on the other hand, is the confirmation or disconfirmation of some hypothesis by examining whether its implications are true or false[15]. 'To show that the consequences of some hypothesis are true', says Wellman, 'is to provide evidence for its acceptance' (Wellman (1971), p. 32.). Finally, a conductive argument is defined as 'that sort of reasoning in which 1) a conclusion about some individual case 2) is drawn non-conclusively 3) from one or more premises about the same case 4) without any appeal to other cases' (Wellman (1971), p. 52.). Wellman claims that conductive reasoning is the dominant form of reasoning in ethical matters, and that it is also very common in other contexts. The central feature of conduction as opposed to deduction is the idea that conduction is *non-conclusive*. i.e., that it may be cancelled by further evidence. A conductive pattern of reasoning accordingly involves the balancing of different, mutually independent premises, some of which support the conclusion, and others that do not. Conductive reasoning is the cogent 'weighing' of pro- and contra-evidence of a mutually incomparable nature.

While on the face of it, the notion of conductive reasoning allows for both conclusive reasoning (by deduction) and non-conclusive reasoning (by conduction), what the above trichotomy arguably does is to effectively blur the distinction between approaching argument from formal and informal perspectives. In doing that, it becomes almost impossible to identify any argument as actually deductive, because it depends on the argument actually being conclusive *as written or uttered*. And almost no arguments are actually conclusive as written or uttered. It appears that the distinctions introduced by Wellman relegates deduction to the remote province of strictly logical or scientific discourse, while the non-conclusive reasoning of conduction will cover most

[15] For a criticism of Wellman's rather curious stipulation of induction, see Govier (1987), p. 67.

everyday-discursive arguments[16]. In its insistence on the analysis of the inconclusiveness of arguments, a contribution such as Wellman's is, I will argue, crucial to the emergence of relativist or semi-relativist/postmodernist traditions in the field of argumentation studies. Such developments are the subject of the next section.

Postmodern Traces in Informal Logic

There is something in the word 'argumentation' that somehow resists the label 'postmodernism'. Whenever a study seems to deal with argumentative practices while at the same time claiming to be 'postmodernist', it is soon evident that it does not, after all, really deal with argumentation, but with a more broad approach towards *persuasion* or *rhetoric* (A case in point is Billig (1996), who mentions Perelman as a major inspiration for his postmodernist revival of rhetoric)). The word argumentation has a modernist flavour, it tastes of rules and standards, diagrams and methodical rigour, which does not go well with the postmodernist discourse on fragmentation, decentralisation, and ideology. Accordingly, it appears that some postmodernist theorists deal with argumentation without using the word 'argumentation', and some argumentation theorists approach postmodernist viewpoints without literally referring to their approach as 'postmodernist'. Supposing that the concepts were not as incompatible as it seems to be the case, one might expect that a field of 'postmodern' or perhaps 'social constructionst argumentation theory' would be much larger than it otherwise appears to be. There are, however, also exceptions where the connection is literally claimed. Be that as it may, I hope to demonstrate in this thesis that the examination of argumentation should be part of a broader examination of language-in-use, or, if you like, discourse. The lines separating argumentation studies from discourse are indeed unclear, and perhaps such lines are really redundant. But if there is not going to be any lines, the controversy on modernism/postmodernism has to be resolved. The task of this section is to substantiate the claim that many theoretical approaches to argument, especially those that aim at describing argumentation in terms of language and communication[17], are informed by postmodernist and/or relativistic philosophy. Starting from ancestors such as Toulmin and Perelman, certain later approaches to argument tend to slide into philosophical dogma such as 'reality is constituted by discourse' and others like it. What is *problematic* about such philosophical dogma is the subject of chapter II. This section only aspires to showing that postmodernism is alive and well in contemporary argumentation theory.

Long before the label 'postmodernism' has been invented, McKerrow (1982) proposes that ideas such as these are among the components needed for a useful theory of argument:

> Ontological reason, as expressed in theories of rationality grounded in discourse, is the preferred foundation for a theory of argument. (McKerrow (1982), p. 121)

[16] See my chapter IV for an extensive discussion of the problems connected to this kind of categorisation of the concept 'inference forms'.
[17] Notably *excluding* the pragma-dialectical tradition.

and

> The concept of rational argument is grounded in a perception of reality formed by language. (McKerrow (1982), p. 121)

Among theorists such as K. O. Apel and Jürgen Habermas, McKerrow cites Chaim Perelman for the distinction between *rationality* ('technical' reason - rules of logic and mathematics) and *reasonableness* ('ontological' reason - what is accepted by common opinion in society) (McKerrow (1982), p. 112). Insofar as ontological reason - what is socially acceptable in the given context - is the 'preferred foundation for a theory of argument' (cp. the first quotation), and insofar as such a theory is supposed to assess arguments that refer - *not* to an ontological reality, but to a *linguistically formed* reality (cp. the second quotation), one cannot avoid the impression that what we are facing is a pure-breed, relativist theory of argument. In a much later paper, McKerrow (1993), has been given the label to put on such a theory:

> In the postmodern world, the agent is decentered, reason is contingent and fallible, and progress is no longer the teleological rationale for discourse. (McKerrow (1993), p. 119)

And later on, McKerrow writes: 'In its postmodern guise, argumentative discourse is perceived as it actually is - not as modernist ideals would have it be' (McKerrow (1993), p. 121). According to this view, the modernist idea of argumentative discourse is a set of rules which do not correspond to the way discourse really is. In fact, it would appear, there cannot be such rules for argumentative discourse, insofar as reason is 'contingent' and 'fallible'. The lack of rules, the contingency, is the hallmark of a postmodern conception of argumentative discourse. As an other characteristic of the postmodern argument theory, McKerrow emphasises that the approach is basically emancipatory: Only in a postmodern rhetoric is it possible for several, distinct publics to achieve acceptance without dominating the others, that is, without establishing discursive hegemony. Be that as it may, it should be evident that a truly postmodern conception of reasoning as fundamentally a discursive phenomenon is central to this approach to argumentation.

The reluctance towards rules and diagramming is evident already in Willard (1976): '… persuasive arguments cannot be adequately diagrammed. Although diagrams may have normative value they have no descriptive value…' Willard's point is that real argumentation is far too complex to be adequately reduced to a model, or more generalised: real world phenomena are so complex that reduction into theoretical models is not tenable. Willard takes the cognitive representation of speakers and hearers as well as the communicative transmission of such representations into account in order to conclude that diagrams - *in casu* Toulmin's lay-out of argument - cannot adequately describe all this (incidentally one might object to this on two counts. First: no theory can be expected to account for every relevant aspect of the phenomenon it describes. If one wanted complete exhaustiveness, the theory would eventually become

identical to the object it was to describe. Any theory of explanatory power has to be reductive. Second: Willard seems to object to Toulmin's model's inadequacy to describe argumentative *dialogue*, while the model is clearly only proposed to cover monological arguments as such, (cp. the account of O'Keefe's distinction between $argument_1$ and $argument_2$ in the section on 'Fallacy Theory and Dialogue Studies', below)). In terms of philosophical orientation, Willard proposes a form of *individual constructivism* (inspired by the philosopher / psychologist George Kelly) (Willard (1978; 1982), while Kneupper (1981) proposes an early form of *social constructivism*, see Zarefsky (1982). Govier (1987) is basically in line with Willard in her rejection of the rigidity of logic. In chapter IV, I will especially take Govier's work as a point of departure for criticism. Govier seems to be a proponent for the quasi-relativistic, and postmodern-inspired trends in argumentation theory and informal logic.

The truly *in*formalist branch is, however, complemented with a contrasting *formal* branch of informal logic. Since 'informal logic' may be defined not only as 'logic that is not formal' but also as 'logic about non-formal (i.e. empirical) matters', this is not as paradoxical as it might otherwise sound. In the following section, I look briefly at the tradition of formalising fallacies in argumentative dialogue.

Fallacy Theory and Dialogue Studies

A cornerstone in modern informal logic was provided by O'Keefe's (O'Keefe (1977) observation that in English, the word 'argument' can mean two strikingly different things: the word can mean a combination of two or more sentences forming a claim and a justification for that claim, combined in a way which can be analysed in terms of logical form. By contrast, the word 'argument' can also mean a particular kind of dialogical activity in which at least two persons engage, and in which these two persons exchange standpoints and try to persuade the other of the correctness of their own standpoints. O'Keefe referred to the first meaning of the word as $argument_1$ and to the second meaning as $argument_2$. The point is that while $argument_1$ is basically accessible to a logical analysis, $argument_2$ does not lend itself so readily to formal examination. For many scholars the distinction helped to show that it was a serious mistake to attempt to examine $argument_2$ by methods designed for analysis of $argument_1$, For others the distinction was a spur to start working on devising a system such that also $argument_2$ would be accessible to formal analysis. In the following, I will briefly look at some of the prominent approaches to dialogue and dialogical analyses of fallacy.

Hamblin's work on fallacies and dialogue has provided for a renewed interest in such matters in informal logic, not least in traditions where analytical formalisation is acceptable: On the one hand, Barth & Krabbe's formal dialogue logic (Barth (1978)), and on the other, the formal approach to fallacies associated mainly with Douglas Walton. In this connection, however, 'formal' can mean a range of different things. In van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Henkemans et al (1996) a distinction is introduced between (1) formal fallacies, (2) formally explicable fallacies, and (3) formally analysable fallacies:

(1) A formal fallacy is an argument which is fallacious by virtue of its form, like the fallacy of four terms,

All A are B
All B are C
∴ All A are D

Or other direct explications of invalid forms like e.g. the fallacy of asserting the consequent:

$p \rightarrow q$
q
∴ p

(2) A formally explicable fallacy is not formally fallacious as it stands, but its fault should be explainable in terms of form. The case of ambiguity is an example: if an argument has the form,

All A are B
All B are C
∴ All A are C

it is formally valid, but if it can be shown that one of its terms refers to different concepts in its two instances in the argument, it can be explicated that the argument form really conceals a fallacy of four terms. It is a formally explicable fallacy as we need the syllogistic form to show what is wrong; for the syllogism to be correctly applied, all its terms should be unambiguous. If they are not, the valid form of the argument is used to *explain*, to *explicate*, that in order for all its propositions to count as true, we have to reinterpret the argument form as fallacious.

(3) A formally analysable fallacy does not display fallaciousness in its argument form or in formal problems deriving from reinterpreting that form. The formally analysable fallacy is an argument which is entirely valid, but whose constituent propositions are somehow problematic. Problems in the propositional content can then in some cases be analysed by some or other formal theory, and in such cases the argument in question is a formally analysable fallacy. Inspired by the work of Hamblin (1970), the Canadian philosophers John Woods and Douglas Walton (1982; 1989) maintain that apart from fallacies of the first two types, a range of different approaches is necessary to deal with fallacies of this third type. For each fallacy, it should be considered what formal theory is most likely to analyse it appropriately. It is their view that the category of fallacies is an irregular category, the individual members of which are not analysable from the perspective of one single approach, but that each type of fallacy needs a (predominantly formal) approach suited for the nature of that particular fallacy. The approach of Woods and Walton has resulted in attempts at formulating rule systems for commitment and retraction in different types of dialogue, recently formulated in Walton & Krabbe (1995). While this approach deals with the formal analysis of

dialogue, linguistic and pragmatic insights on this matter are surprisingly rare (in Walton & Krabbe (1995) Grice's work on conversation is only mentioned in passing (p. 176), and speech act theory is practically absent). In the continental tradition of argumentation, however, things are strikingly different. In the following section, I will look at the Amsterdam-based discipline of *pragma-dialectics*, in which speech act theory is central.

Pragma-Dialectics

The term 'pragma-dialectics' signals the fusion of pragmatic focus on language as social action with the dialectical focus of rule-based conflict resolution. The term is coined by the Dutch scholars Franz van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst, whose major works, *Speech Acts in Argumentative Discussions* (1984), and *Argumentation, Communication, and Fallacies* (1992) have been the corner stones in establishing a continental school of argumentation studies to match the North American/Canadian tradition of informal logic. Pragma-Dialectics presupposes that giving an argument constitutes a 'complex argumentative speech act', and that the government of argumentative discourse (or 'critical discussions') is explainable in terms of observing the felicity conditions of such speech acts.

The pragma-dialectical programme as it was initially laid out (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), pp. 4-18) was the identification of argumentation as *external*, *functional*, *social*, and *dialectical*. This commits pragma-dialectics to four corresponding methodological choices:

The *externalisation* is the emphasis on language, that is, what is actually expressed in discourse. As opposed to some informal logicians (e.g. those primarily involved in the study of critical thinking), pragma-dialectics is not the study of the *thoughts* or *motives* of the language users, but of their expressed utterances. Arguments are above all communicative and interactional as they are produced in order to convince someone else of the acceptability of standpoints, hence the analysis of arguments should not speculate into psychological factors such as motives, but rather distinguish what commitments follow from the discursive contributions of the interlocutors. The externalisation points to a change of emphasis, not to a redefinition of argumentation as such: the cognitive inference work works behind the articulations of arguments, but it is the arguments and their communicative and interactional commitments that are focused in pragma-dialectics.

The *functionalisation* of argumentation refers to the emphasis on process rather than product. Whereas the product of argumentation can be subjected to post-hoc diagramming and evaluation, the process of argumentation takes the form of verbal action which is dynamic and subject to contextual criteria of success: in order for some connected sequence of utterances to be an argument, it has to *count* as an argument in the speech situation. Accordingly, arguments are not primarily deductions, that is, valid derivations of conclusions from premises, but communicative acts functioning, ideally, as contributions to the resolution of dispute, and, practically, as persuasive acts.

The *socialisation* of argumentation consists in stressing that argumentation cannot in principle be performed in solitude: there has to be a hearer, otherwise there can be no communication, and the hearer has to take on a contrary standpoint, one way or the

other, otherwise there cannot be argumentative interaction. Argumentation is a dialogical process in which a speaker intends to convince a hearer of some standpoint, and the social aspect of argumentation analysis involves both communicative roles such as speaker and hearer (alternatively addresser and addressee / sender and receiver), and interactional roles such as protagonist (the one who defends the standpoint) and antagonist (the one who criticises the standpoint) (alternatively proponent and opponent).The dialogical process involves continuously switching the communicative roles of speaker and hearer, and the interactional roles of protagonist and antagonist.

The *dialectification* of argumentation refers to van Eemeren & Grootendorst's philosophical position of critical rationalism. They note that dialogical argumentation is not only the enterprise of *advancing* standpoints, but just as much *criticising* standpoints. A critical discussion consists in some protagonist claiming a standpoint (which may be either positive or negative) and then defending it from the critical attempts at refutation produced by the antagonist. *Persuasion*, in turn, happens either when the antagonist fails in refuting the standpoint (in which case the antagonist should be persuaded that the standpoint cannot be falsified), or when the antagonist succeeds in refuting the standpoint (in which case the protagonist should be persuaded that his standpoint is falsified). The dialectification of argumentation analysis is the operationalisation of this insight in order to produce a set of rules for the dialectical conduct of critical discussion.

The main works of pragma-dialectics are Van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984) and (1992). In these books a full, theoretical foundation is laid for the pragma-dialectical programme. It involves the idea that all rational argumentation is essentially to be understood as critical discussion where participants engage with the goal of *resolving disputes*. The argumentation evolves in four stages, i.e., the confrontation stage, the opening stage, the argumentation stage, and the concluding stage (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992), p. 35), which are not to be understood as sequential stages that occur one after the other, but rather as different states that the discussion may be in at various times. The confrontation stage is the state in which it is established whether or not there is a dispute at all. The opening stage, then, is the state where interlocutors assume argumentative roles as either protagonist of a standpoint or antagonist. The argumentation stage is the locus of the actual, critical discussion, the state of discussion which the current thesis is mostly preoccupied with. Finally, at the concluding stage, the conflict is resolved by one of the interlocutors backing down.

At the argumentation stage, argumentation is regulated by a 'communicative principle' (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992), p. 50ff.) which is formulated as follows:

> Be clear, honest, efficient, and to the point

And this principle is in practice maintained through five rules for the appropriate conduct of speech acts in critical discussions:

1. Do not perform any incomprehensible speech acts
2. Do not perform any insincere speech acts

3. Do not perform any superfluous speech acts
4. Do not perform any futile speech acts
5. Do not perform any speech acts that do not appropriately connect to preceding speech acts

As it might be observed, these rules resemble Grice's conversational maxims (Grice (1975)), and their function can in fact be seen to be basically the same as the maxims: the rules enable the derivation of implicatures from utterances and texts. The fundamental difference is that the concept of speech acts, along with its constitutive set of rules, has been incorporated into the principle. The communicative principle, then, is comparable to Grice's co-operative principle with the addition of a concept of speech acts. For the present purposes, the communicative principle is mostly interesting as a regulating device for the explicitation of unexpressed premises. Van Eemeren & Grootendorst ((1992), p. 55) propose this scheme for such explicitations:

1. The speaker S has uttered *U*.

2. If *U* is taken literally, S has performed speech act 1, with communicative function 1, and propositional content 1.

3a. In context C, speech act 1 observes the rules of communication.	3b. In context C, speech act 1 is a violation of rule *i*
4a. *Therefore*: Speech act 1 is a correct interpretation of *U*.	4b. In context C, speech act 2 observes rule *i* and all other communication rules.
	5. Speech act 1, speech act 2, and the context C can be linked by means of rule *j*.
	6. *Therefore*: Speech act 2 is a correct interpretation of *U*.
DIRECT SPEECH ACTS	INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS

As it is evident in the scheme, arguments consisting of 'direct speech acts' are interpretable by following the left branch - such speech acts are defined by conforming to all communicative rules. On the other hand, interpreting 'indirect speech acts' involves the right hand branch of the scheme. When encountering some evidence indicating that the speech act is not in agreement with the rules, one attempts another speech act (speech act 2) which is not just in agreement with the rules in the given context but which is also coherent with speech act 1, one way or the other. It might be noted at this point that it is this last piece of interpretation (in step 5) which is by far the most troublesome. However, the problems of deriving unsaid meaning from spoken

utterances will be the subject of especially chapters V and VI, and therefore we shall postpone that discussion for now.

BRIEF SURVEY OF THE DISSERTATION

In order not to suspend the central claims made in the thesis, here is a brief resume of problems discussed and conclusions made in the course of the text, along with some methodological remarks.

Method: Going Shopping

The study emphasises interdisciplinary generalisation at the cost of disciplinary specialisation. Methodologically, there might be two different types of approach in a study like this: (1) The exhaustive (or near-exhaustive) investigation of some theoretical field regarding possible explanations or solutions to some particular problem, arising in that particular, theoretical framework. (2) The general examination of a much wider field in order to illuminate some hypothesis or idea from as many angles as possible within reasonable space. While in (1) the theoretical approach is given beforehand, a study of type (2) is liable to 'go shopping' in whatever theoretical field may provide arguments, explanations, problematisations, or solutions to the central hypothesis. Obviously, (1) and (2) represent extreme ends of a scale. The current study is rather more like case (2) than case (1). Rather than, e.g., investigating in depth the possible contribution of one particular field, say, speech act theory, to argumentation studies, this text is driven instead by the *idea* or *hypothesis* of an inherent rationality in dialogue. Methodologically, then, the study draws on a wide range of approaches, from philosophy and theory of science to micro-analytic approaches such as conversation analysis. The draw-back of this approach is conspicuous: It does not exhaust the theoretical fields drawn upon as one might expect of a study of type (1). Instead it is committed to provide general credibility beyond particular paradigms or research traditions. For obvious reasons, it falls in the lot of others to decide whether or not this study succeeds in providing such general credibility.

Resume of Crucial Points and Conclusions

As a guide to the reading of this text, the following section provides brief characterisations of the remaining five chapters.

Following this first contextualising chapter, chapter II, entitled 'Rationality and Postmodern Thinking', is supposed to provide a criticism of relativism and its contemporary manifestations in postmodern science. The objective is to suggest a concept of rationality that is not relative to culture or framework.

First, a series of objections to relativism is launched, not only towards basic, protagorean relativism, but also towards the more subtle relativism of sc. framework relativism, personified by such theorists of science as Thomas Kuhn. The account leans

heavily on Siegel (1987) who demonstrates that, regardless of its manifestation, relativism is inescapably *self-refuting*: The very relativist assertion that no assertion can be valid beyond the context in which it was made, that very assertion must itself be asserted under the assumption that it is valid beyond the context in which it is made. As it is tacitly assumed to have universal validity, it contradicts itself and becomes a paradox.

Seeing that the problem of relativism has been discussed, the relevant question to ask is whether postmodernism or social constructionism in fact *is* relativistic. Following Collin (1997), the answer is that social constructionism has to choose between comprehending 'social constructions' as literally 'socially generated illusions', thus arguably reducing the social constructionist idea to trivialities, or comprehending social constructions as an actual construction of reality, including *physical* reality, in which case we face a true relativism: the surroundings are actually socially or discursively constituted.

Finally, this chapter suggests a concept of rationality consisting of two elements: the basic condition for communication - *co-operation* - combined with the basic condition for thought - *reason* (that is, non-contradiction). It is assumed that reason and co-operation impose constraints on each other, enabling a form of rationality which allows only arguments and propositions that abide by both demands at the same time to be thought of as 'rational'.

This coincides with Karl Popper's *critical rationalism*, which is the subject of the third chapter, 'Logic and Criticism'. Based on especially Popper (1963) and Popper (1972), elements for a philosophical foundation for a critical rationalist theory of argumentation are suggested. It is a central doctrine that critical argument is necessarily deductive, since its counterpart, induction, is impossible in an orthodox critical rationalism. For Popper, induction is 'psychologically impossible' in that it is not possible to perform simple enumeration based, for instance, on *similarity* between various phenomena *without* already having a theory about what will constitute 'similarity' in a given case. Popper's solution to Hume's induction problem lies in the deductive nature of falsificationism. Hume realised that deduction does not lead to new knowledge as the conclusion is already contained in the premises combined, while on the other hand induction is indefensible - the principle of induction is unproveable. Popper's objection is that while acknowledging that positive proofs by deduction do not generate new knowledge, deduction is fully applicable negatively, as criticism, and when it uncovers contradiction it leads to falsification. And the knowledge that a theory is false, *is* in fact new knowledge, and it has been obtained without the use of induction.

Chapter III also features a discussion of Popper's application of the term *common sense*, and it shows how inductivism (represented here by Rescher (1980)) in its opposition to critical rationalism involuntarily appears like a form of critical rationalism. Thus equipped with the philosophical foundation for a critical theory of argument, the dissertation advances into chapter IV, 'The Critical-Reconstructional Approach', where some pertinent questions and problems relating to argumentation theory are discussed.

The aim of chapter IV is to argue in favour of the theoretical and practical validity of a reconstructive-deductivist method in argumentation analysis. For that purpose, three basic analytical problems are identified, problems which are still debated in various traditions of argumentation studies, but which can be avoided given a reconstructive-deductivist method.

The three problems are:

1. The deduction/induction dichotomy is artificial and unclear, and the two inference types are not mutually exclusive.

2. The distinction between language-about-the world and language-about-language, i.e., object-language and meta-language, is far from clear.

3. The linguistic articulation of arguments becomes representative of the form of the argument as such. The analytical significance of implicit meaning is largely disregarded.

Ad 1. This is a widespread problem and can be seen among others in semi-relativists like Govier (1987). The problem stems from the misapprehension that the linguistic content has some influence on the form in which the argument appears. Form and content, however, must be seen as disconnected if the distinction is to make any sense. An argument can have an inductive content and still be formally (i.e. deductively) valid.

Ad 2. Tarski's correspondence theory for objective truth launches a hypothetical concept of truth which finds expression in the meta-language. The meta-language may for instance be a logical calculus, so when a logical analysis features the words 'true' and 'false' it is not an indication, contrary to the beliefs of many informalists, of the rigidity of the logical analysis when reducing the complexity of reality to binary choices. What is happening is that the analysis assigns truth *conditions* (but notably not truth *values*) to the relationship *between* language and the world.

Ad 3. Lacking a context-invariant standard the reconstruction of incomplete arguments, the explicitation of unexpressed premises is a shaky project indeed. As a consequence, many informalists abstain from reconstruction and insist instead on analysing the argument *as spoken*, adding no extra meaning. Among others, Toulmin (1958) suggests analysis methods based on such presuppositions. The problem is that the characteristic *economy* of language is overlooked. In normal use of language, the language user expresses only the amount of information needed for the receiver to inferentially complete the argument. When failing to acknowledge this kind of inference, argumentation analysis is far from complete.

Chapter IV argues that all three problems can be solved by employing a reconstructive-deductive method. First of all, reconstruction is based on logic (or popular speaking 'on deduction'). While inductive argumentation is thought to be a frequent mode of expression in dialogue, it is only analysable in terms of deductive forms. Secondly, the various linguistic levels are clarified (roughly speaking, the assertion of positive arguments goes on at the object linguistic level, while analysis and criticism goes on at the meta-linguistic level), and a Grice-inspired *principle of charity*, in combination with a principle of non-contradiction, ensures that it is possible to reconstruct arguments with a reasonable amount of certainty.

In that way, Grice's co-operation principle becomes central to understanding the essence of counter argument. Grice's theories of meaning and communication (1957; 1975), however, are not undisputed. Chapter V, entitled 'On the Nature of Dialogue', discusses various problems relating to Grice's theory of meaning, especially the criticism formulated by Searle (1969), who accused the theory of reducing communication to the bare recognition of intentionality without any concept of linguistic codification. In connection to that, an interpretation is suggested in which Grice's concept of meaning *presupposes* codified meaning while not focusing on it. In such a conception, Searle's speech act theory can be seen as the missing link between language and intentionality, and it can be assumed without basically changing the understanding of communication as an application of the co-operation principle. In addition, Grice's intentionalist theory of communication can be understood as a basic theory on which intersubjectivist theories of communication (such as Habermas (1987) can be developed.

In empirical practice the concept of implicature is not clearly demarcated. In real conversations it is not always possible to positively identify an implicature as either *genuine* (intended) or *not genuine* (assigned as a commitment by the antagonist) until this issue of how such assumptions are to count has actually been debated by the participants. Along with a critical-rationalist conception of criticism, the concept of implicature in all its complexity becomes the central issue in the following chapter dealing with elements of counter argument in real life conversation.

Chapter VI, called 'Counter Argument', suggests a pragma-dialectically inspired model for argumentative and counter argumentative communication strategies. The chapter includes some empirical examples demonstrating some of the model's most crucial elements.

The focus of the chapter is on the argumentative choices available to the antagonist. A crucial distinction is drawn between *reconstruction* and *criticism*. Basically, reconstruction functions as clarification of the protagonist's argument. In terms of counter argument, however, the central role of the reconstruction practice is that of serving as the stepping stone for *criticism*. Reconstruction may involve *paraphrasings* of what the protagonist has literally uttered, or it may be realised as the derivation of *implicata*, indicating what the protagonist *meant* by what he said, or what he is further *committed* to mean in the given situation. This reconstruction may bring about further indications of the structure and content of the protagonist's argument, and accordingly it can serve as the basis for criticism. The antagonist can claim that one of the protagonist's claims - perhaps *as reconstructed* - is false, in which case the criticism has the form of *factual refutation*. Or the antagonist may claim that the *combination* of propositions in the protagonist's argument is *inconsistent*. In that case, the criticism is referred to as *formal refutation*.

The chapter ends by pointing out that further work in the uncovering of the critical function of argumentation seems to be even more close-linguistic analysis forms such as Conversation Analysis. The present work has brought about several indications that the system of argumentative dialogue is describable in terms of dialogue-internal conventions.

CHAPTER II

Rationality and Postmodern Thinking

INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses a fundamental, philosophical question underlying a dialogical approach to argumentation: Can we assume a standard of rationality which is invariant to context? In the following, a stipulative definition for such a concept will be proposed, and it will be arrived at through a critical assessment of relativism and social constructionism.

There are, generally speaking, two kinds of definition. One type of definition is the one we know from dictionaries. Dictionary definitions are supposed to give an account of the way a word or phrase is established in a given language. The dictionary definition is obliged to be not only *exhaustive*, that is, it should cover all ordinary linguistic conventions pertaining to the word or phrase, but it should, strictly speaking, also be *true* or *accurate*, that is, it should give an account of the meaning(s) of the word that corresponds fairly well to the way the word is actually used by the speakers of the language. Another type of definition is the *stipulative* definition. While not being a general account of a word's meaning in a language, it is rather like a programmatic statement of how the speaker intends that a word should be understood in some specified context. The specified context can be a communicative situation, like a speech, an argument, or a book, where the author might begin with statements of the kind, 'In this book, when I refer to "missiles", I mean a specific class of weaponry known in the Roman legions, notably spears, arrows, and stones.' In that way, the stipulative definition is *ad hoc*; once the specified context somehow ceases to be active, e.g. when the reader closes the book, the meaning of the word automatically switches back to its default meaning. The point is that the stipulative definition does not have the same obligation as the dictionary definition. The stipulative definition is not committed to being either exhaustive, or necessarily true or accurate, but instead it should be *useful* for the purposes of the communicative context. To return to the above example, if the book in question is an historical account of infantry tactics in ancient Rome, the stipulation is obviously useful, while for most other purposes, it is not.

The current chapter is intended to provide central elements for a stipulative definition of 'rationality'. I am going to propose a notion of rationality as a strictly formal concept of a universal nature, consisting of two elements, namely reason and co-operation. In proposing this as a stipulative definition, the concept enjoys the luxury of relative immunity; it makes no sense to accuse the concept of being 'not exhaustive' or 'not accurate', because it simply is not committed to such criteria. By contrast, this chapter has an obligation to show that this concept is *useful* for the current purposes. I hope it will be evident in the following, that it is.

Methodically, I am going to show this by attempting to eliminate alternatives - that is, by showing that alternative conceptions of rationality are *not* useful, either due to their incoherence, paradoxicality, or vagueness. Most of the following is accordingly dedicated to showing that an account of rationality as empirical and non-formal will not get us anywhere when dealing with argumentation. The contemporary tradition known as 'social constructionism' will be at the centre of the discussion, since a majority of proponents of this influential tradition seems to subscribe to more or less relativistic conceptions of rationality.

PARADOXES OF RELATIVISM

In this section, the legitimacy of relativism is questioned. It will be argued that any form of relativism, be it classical or modern, is paradoxical, in that it is incoherent and self-refuting.

Reality vs. Construction

It is highly probable that many social constructionists would hesitate to accept the views on reality and rationality which are attributed to social constructionism in the following. So the following account might be accused of chasing ghosts - criticising views held only by 'straw men', not by real, responsible researchers. As one social constructionist comments, '...it is becoming clear that those who adopt a relativist view of the world are no more likely than realists[18] to recommend or defend an 'anything goes' morality' (Burr (1998), p. 22). The concealed reference to Feyerabend's bold assertion 'anything goes' (Feyerabend (1975)) seems to indicate that relativism proper is no longer in fashion. The aim of the following, however, is to show that the relativistic views presented here are *consequential* of a radical, social constructionist position, even if this may not be realised by constructionist practitioners.

[18] In most contemporary, social constructionist writings on philosphical foundation problems, the term 'relativism' is habitually juxtaposed to 'realism' ((Burr (1995), Burr (1998), Edwards et al. (1995)). In texts critical of relativism, the contrast is often 'absolutism' (e.g. Siegel (1987)). The term *realism* is, however, more a perspective than an actual, philosophical position, as both extreme realism and extreme anti-realism lead to absurd consequences like scepticism and, in turn, solipsism. 'Absolutism' in Siegel (1987) means not only the possibility of absolute *norms*, but the possibility of absolute *truth*, and I will generally adopt this use of the term, as a contrast to relativism.

Burr (1998) makes a very delicate point when she claims that the discussion of whether or not (or to what extent) reality should be thought of as a social construction is often based on a misunderstanding on the part of the realists. Reality, says Burr (p. 22), can be understood in at least three different meanings:

> 1 Reality (truth) versus falsehood.
> 2 Reality (materiality) versus illusion.
> 3 Reality (essence) versus construction.
> (Burr (1998), p. 23)

Allegedly, the realist's mistake is that '...the reality-construction dimension (dimension 3) gets 'mapped on to' the other two, so that constructionism is taken as also implying illusion and/or falsehood' (p. 23). In other words, the critics of social constructionism take the concept 'reality' in a much too literal sense, whereas the social constructionist, when talking about reality, refers to the 'essence' of objects or phenomena, not to the truth or materiality of these objects or phenomena. In order to be fair to this argument, we should not approach it until we know how we are to understand the term *essence* in this context. What is immediately puzzling is the claim that the antithesis of 'essence' is *construction*, where you would normally expect to find *accidence*. But if we go along with the idea that construction is contrary to essence, the 'essence' of some object must be taken to refer to some selected property of the object by which it is named or nominally defined. Were it to be taken in another sense, *i.e.* 'essence' meaning 'a property by which the object is made ontologically distinct from other objects', it does indeed seem hard, if not impossible, to distinguish dimension 3 from dimensions 1 and 2.

Insofar as the 'essence' of things are largely properties we ascribe to categories through linguistic convention, it should be no revelation to anyone (realist and relativist alike), that such essences are social constructions. On this account, the social constructionist claim about reality adds up to very little: Any given social group constructs its own categorisation of things in the world by the use of language. But this gives us no indication of social constructionism's position on dimensions 1 and 2, in Burr's proposed distinction.

For the realist, on the other hand, the fault lies in equating 'reality' with 'essence' in the first place; for the realist, the sentence 'snow is white' cannot be counted as a representation of reality just because we happen to have a convention saying that 'whiteness' is an essence of 'snow'; for the realist, 'whiteness' and 'snow' both have to exist independently of our thought, and the former has to be a property of the latter. So if the realist was to accept Burr's third meaning of 'reality', he would have to stop being a realist. It's a definitory trick which gets us precisely nowhere. As we shall see, this is the fundamental problem facing social constructionism, when dealing with issues such as 'reality': either the social constructionist has to profess to full-blown relativism, or he has to accept some form of realism as the backbone in theories of how social conventions are generated in various cultures - *in* a reality independent of such constructions.

In the following, I am going to deal with the philosophical validity of social constructionism in some more detail[19]. The intention is not that of striking out at the social constructionist tradition which I believe is highly useful when employed as practical criticism (though not when employed as philosophy), on the contrary, I am going to make a case for a moderate form of social constructionism for exactly the purpose of practical criticism. But, as noted in the introduction, the primary aim of this chapter is that of arriving at a stipulative, philosophically based, definition of the concept 'rationality' which can serve for the remainder of this text.

But before proceeding to such matters, there is a question which demands a positive answer first: *is there anything fundamentally wrong with relativism?*

Unless we can answer with a decisive *yes*, there is hardly any point in going on to charging social constructionism with being relativistic. Accordingly, the first half or so of this chapter will be devoted to showing that there is indeed something fundamentally wrong with relativism: it is incoherent and self-refuting.

Protagorean Relativism

In Plato's *Theaetetus*, an early, and very radical, form of relativism is proposed by Protagoras, and the primary objection to this position is formulated by Socrates (a.k.a. Plato) in the same work. In Harvey Siegel's head-on confrontation with relativism (1987), this discussion is taken as starting point for a further account of contemporary positions of relativism and the major objections against them. For the present purposes, it will be helpful to start by briefly examining the arguments used to refute protagorean relativism, since these arguments often turn out to be the cornerstones that one inevitably returns to, when discussing relativism of a more sophisticated nature.

In brief, protagorean relativism is based on the idea that knowledge of the world is achieved through the individual experience of subjects, and since no subject can be the judge of the experience of another subject, it follows that what is true for subject A can perfectly well be false for subject B, and what is true for subject B may be false for subject A. Experience is private, so to speak, and can never transcend the experiencing subject, and hence, subject A has no rational cause for saying that his knowledge of the world is true beyond his own experience, and neither can he say that subject B's knowledge is false, as he has no access to subject B's experience. As long as we embody human form, equipped with only five, subjective senses (and, possibly, senses of balance, pressure, temperature etc.) delivering our sole input of a surrounding world, there is, it seems, no way out of this unfortunate situation.

[19] I distinguish between two kinds of social constructionism: a radical and a moderate kind. The radical kind of social constructionism is based on the assumption that the construction thesis virtually knows no boundary, *ie* that any human experience, individual or collective, is essentially reducible to being a construct. The moderate kind of social constructionism is the assumption that the construction thesis should be limited to account for the social generation of meaning as it is ascribed to otherwise objectively existing objects, events and processes in physical reality. In the critical parts of the current chapter, I use the phrase 'social constructionism' to refer to the *radical* kind, unless otherwise indicated.

That experience is private is, at first glance, not easy to refute; we do not have a neutral vantage point from which we can finally experience the world *as it is*, or as it is *for someone (or everyone) else*. But when one anticipates the most absurd consequences of this position, the road lies open to scepticism and solipsism: how can 'I', as a subject, know that there is anything out there at all? After all, the five 'input channels', being a part of 'me', may very well transmit nothing but illusions generated in 'my' mind. In which case, 'I' may be alone in an endless void. However, when the words 'I', 'me', and 'my' in the above are put in quotation marks, it is because the strongest argument against solipsism will point to the fact that it is impossible to speak, or think, of a 'subject', unless one assumes that there is something other than 'I'. The very concept of 'a subject' presumes the existence of objects. Wittgenstein's 'private language argument' is roughly speaking a variant of this argument against solipsism (Wittgenstein (1953), pgfs. 243ff.): It is not possible for the individual to possess a private language, as judgments of what is good or bad, right or wrong, and true or false, are essentially social processes, involving other participants 'out there'. It would be impossible to pass judgments *privately*, without doing so in a language which is *common*. The nightmarish extreme of scepticism can be countered in a similar way: A scepticist position might be that, seeing that we have no proof of the validity of sense impressions, and seeing that sense impressions are the sole input to our minds, there is no reason why the subject might not be a computer into which someone or -thing was continuously feeding fictional, but meticulously correlated data. In this scenario, unconsciousness would be explainable as the temporary pause in data transmission, insanity (delusion, schizophrenia) would be faults in data correlation, and death would be the final pulling of plug. Putnam (1981), however, dismisses arguments like these, on the count that in order for the mind to formulate the idea that it is a computer (or 'brain in a vat'), it needs a term, 'computer', which refers to an entity which is not part of that mind's actual experience (in fact, the mind in question *has* no actual experience - it has acknowledged that it is all fiction). But how can it be possible to refer to something that plays no part in the formation of our beliefs about the real world? The term 'computer' could only be known by the computerised mind as a fiction, a non-existence, and hence, by claiming to be a 'computer', it has claimed itself to be non-existent.

That notwithstanding, there is something else wrong with protagorean relativism as an epistemological theory, something we do not have to take relativism into absurd consequences to be able to see. Socrates points out that you cannot assert relativism, without, at the same time, refuting it. If relativism is to count as a *theory* about what we can or cannot know about the world, it has to be explanatory on some general level, otherwise it is not a theory. And when a statement is meant to explain some generality, it transcends the subject making that statement, and in doing so, it asserts its own truth beyond the mere subjective truth. It must be meant as an *objective* truth. But if there can be an objective truth, then, apparently, we *can* know something which transcends subjective experience. And if we can know something which transcends subjective experience, then the premises of relativism are false. So the very act of asserting protagorean relativism becomes a paradox: once you have asserted that relativism is a true theory, it becomes, based on its own premises, a *false* theory. The

paradox leaves the relativist with the unavoidable alternative that relativism is *not* a theory, but a subjective *belief*.

But it makes no sense to speak of the notion 'truth' in purely relativistic or idealistic terms. In the relativist conception, 'truth' becomes synonymous with 'belief', which is precisely what 'truth' is *not*, in any conceivable definition of the word. It seems impossible to give a definition of 'truth' without having the word denote some kind of *existence*, where existence is understood as something which is independent of the experiencing subject, viz. an *object*. Relative truth is (in its strict, protagorean sense) inescapably a contradiction in terms; if you claim that some phenomenon X *is* (exists) for subject A, but not necessarily for subject B, then 'is' is the wrong word, because in this case, X is not an object, but an appearance which depends on the experience of subject A.

This view is not undisputed, however; Siegel ((1987), p. 10ff.) attributes the following account of 'relative truth' to Jack W. Meiland (Meiland (1980)), here in a simplified paraphrase:

(1) Absolute truth is a *two*-term relation between statements and the world.

(2) Relative truth is a *three*-term relation between statements, the world and the perspective from which the relationship is experienced.

(3) The three-term relation of relative truth does not contain the two-term relation of absolute truth; in relativism it is not possible to separate the concept 'truth' from the perspective of experience.

Apparently, stating a relative truth is to say that some statement corresponds to some phenomenon in the world, in some particular perspective. Saying, e.g., that X is true-for-A, is saying that the phenomenon X exists in the perspective of subject A.

It is not obvious in this account what 'the world' means in (2). Does it mean 'that which exists', *i.e.* objects in the sense discussed above? If it does, then (3) seems incoherent; if 'the world' denotes phenomena that are essentially independent of the experiencing subject, then it should be perfectly possible to single out 'the truth' (that which exists) from the experiencing perspective. If, on the other hand, 'the world' does not refer to an objective reality, then what does it refer to? The only possible answer must be that it means 'the world as perceived', that is, the world *in some particular perspective*. If this is how it is to be taken, then relative truth is not a three-term relation after all: in (2) the third term (the perspective) is redundant, as it is already contained in the second term (the world as perceived).

As Siegel frequently notes, the relativistic notion of truth invariantly collapses into the notion of belief, resulting in a notion of truth which is '...hardly a challenging epistemological doctrine, since it in no way precludes the posing of the absolutist question regarding the truth of the various beliefs.' (Siegel (1987), p. 15)

It follows that there is no reason to accept the protagorean doctrine. All we learn from protagorean relativism is that Protagoras (or anyone else teaching it) believes in it. There is no reason for us to believe that it is true, for if it were, paradoxically, it would be false.

In being unable to account for the question of truth, without relying on a theory of correspondence, the last way out for relativism may be to shift the burden of proof: It may be that it is impossible to define precisely what 'true-in-some-perspective' means, but this does not make a relativist position less plausible than absolutism: for absolutism faces similar problems in accounting for the classic problem of how one can conceive of truth as a correspondence between language and world, without reference to an experiencing subject. To this objection, Siegel answers:

> ... [I]t is not the case that the absolutist and the relativist are on equally difficult ground here. The absolutist faces the hoary philosophical problem of accounting for a reality which cannot be directly perceived or known. But this is a problem which is independent of the absolutism/relativism controversy. For the purposes of her debates with the relativist, all the absolutist needs is a distinction between reality and her conception of that reality. One can acknowledge that distinction while accepting that reality as such is known to us only through our perceptions, concepts, etc. The relativist, however, needs more than the distinction between reality and our conception of it. The relativist also needs an account of what it is to be 'reality-for-a-person', where that phrase must denote neither reality as such (i.e. independently of any conception of reality) *nor* a person's beliefs concerning or conception of that reality - for the latter alternative reduces ... simply to belief. (Siegel (1987), p. 17f.)

No doubt, for *other* purposes than those of arguing against relativism, absolutism certainly *has* a problem concerning the correspondence theory of truth. Especially, that is, if one takes absolutism to necessitate the insistence that we *can* in fact know certain things to be infinitely and eternally true. As I hope to make evident, however, a rejection of relativism does not necessitate such radical absolutism.

A Non-Vulgar Absolutism

The motivation for opting for a relativist view may, according to Siegel's conjecture, be a consequence of the failure to distinguish clearly between sc. *vulgar* and *non-vulgar absolutism*. The alternative to relativism is often thought to be absolutism in its vulgar variant, that is, the idea that there exists knowledge which is fundamentally certain and incorrigible, and that such knowledge inhabits one particular, privileged framework from which it is possible to derive final truth. For a whole range of good reasons, this idea is generally unattractive as an epistemology. Hence, when that idea is thought to be the only alternative to relativism, you have to assume a relativist stance; as noted by Siegel, it is reasoning by disjunction:

we can have either relativism or (vulgar) absolutism

we *don't* want (vulgar) absolutism

so, it's relativism.

In that way, relativistic approaches may be adopted not because relativism is useful, but because there is no epistemologically viable alternative. However, it appears that the disjunctive syllogism is made the instrument of an unfortunate fallacy; the choice is

not limited to the two, almost equally undesirable options. Siegel quotes Beach's rendition of the essential features of a 'non-vulgar' absolutism (called *Objectivism* by Beach):

> (...) [A] systematic method of reasoning and a coordinate set of beliefs embodying its principles which (...) are accessible to knowledge and are capable of sustaining a dynamic, self-correcting belief system. These principles may contain errors or half-truths, and they may never attain to a fixed and final form. Yet insofar as (a) their consistency is publicly verifiable, (b) their development is rational, and (c) their truth-content is demonstrably greater than that of rival contenders, they do constitute reliable criteria by which to evaluate subsidiary beliefs and hypotheses. (Beach quoted in Siegel (1987), p. 160)

A non-vulgar form of absolutism corresponds quite well to the epistemological approach in this study: The rejection of relativism does not entail that a certain framework obtains privilege in deciding the final truth, on the contrary, it is possible to adopt an intermediary position, where approximation to truth, while never final, is still responsible to objective, yet *fallible* criteria of assessment. This position of non-vulgar absolutism will be further developed in chapter III.

The Myth of the Framework

When one approaches relativism in the way it has been done up until this point, again it might seem like overshooting the mark: Some relativists would certainly demand a somewhat more nuanced account of relativism than that provided by Protagoras. Still, I would argue, while disciplines of the humanities and social sciences that are committed to more subtle forms of relativism probably outnumber those who are not, such contemporary forms of relativism, exemplified by Thomas Kuhn's (not admitted) 'framework'-relativism, add up to precisely the same fundamental assumptions as does protagorean relativism, and hence, cannot apply in the pursuit of the rational aspect of argumentation.

Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* from 1962 has had an enormous impact not just on philosophy and the theory of science, but also on research in both humanistic, natural and social sciences. Kuhn's basic claim is that at any given time the scientific community works under a certain *paradigm*, containing a set of rules and standards for the way scientific puzzles are to be solved. This 'puzzle-solving', which is performed observing the rules and standards of the paradigm, is labelled *normal science* (Kuhn (1962), pp. 35-42). A paradigm is only scientifically viable to the extent that it enables normal science to progress; that is, normal science is not static - it progresses, exchanging old puzzles for new ones, developing and refining knowledge, but it does so within the limits given by the paradigm. A scientific *revolution* occurs, however, when results in the normal science conducted begins to give evidence of internal contradiction - which in turn rubs off on the very standards by which the community arrives at new knowledge, *i.e.* the paradigm. This situation constitutes a *problem*, and for Kuhn, problem solving is, contrary to normal science's

puzzle solving, the enterprise of *revolutionary science* (Kuhn (1962), p. 111ff.). Problems transcend the dominant paradigm and points to inconsistency in the rules and standards presupposed in that paradigm, and in solving this problem, revolutionary science overthrows the old paradigm, substituting it with a new paradigm in which a new set of consistent rules and standards can be formulated.

This text is not primarily an essay in the philosophy of science, but as it is often the case when discussing notions such as knowledge and rationality, the starting point is science. Kuhn's conception of paradigms and revolutions has been a major resource for the general development of the idea that knowledge, values, and rationality are relative to the prevailing framework in which people interpret and understand the world. And this idea seems to be viable not only in the philosophy of science, but far beyond. Roughly speaking, apart from the general term *framework*, such words as *paradigm*[20], *conceptual scheme*[21], *field*[22], *universal audience*[23], *episteme*[24], *order of discourse*[25], *idealized cognitive model*[26], *form of life*[27] and many more are all near-synonyms referring to this idea, one way or another. I shall use the word 'framework' except when referring specifically to writers who use one of the other synonyms.

On Siegel's account, framework relativism can be defined as follows:

> [T]he notion that epistemic judgments are in some sense *bound* by schemes or frameworks, so that cognizers are limited or trapped by, and cannot transcend or escape from, some sort of fundamental restraints which sharply delimit the possible range of claims they are able to regard as true or justified. It is the idea that there is a boundary beyond which defensible judgments cannot be made, and an arbitrariness or in-principle-unjustifiedness about the particular features of any given boundary, that is the heart of framework relativism. (Siegel (1987), p. 33)

According to Siegel it is the 'boundary' that presents the relativistic feature of a framework: it is the boundary of the framework which can in principle not be questioned. This corresponds well to Kuhn's paradigm: beyond the boundary of a paradigm are ideas which the rules or standards of the paradigm cannot allow for, or explain.

But the very notion that a framework cannot be transcended, is, says Popper (Popper (1994), a *myth*. The myth consists, not in the idea that we understand and interpret the world according to some presupposed framework, but in the idea that this framework can *never* be discussed itself. Popper's claim is that the transcendence of a framework is basically cumulative, and this is one of the central differences between Popper and

[20] Kuhn (1962)
[21] Davidson (1973)
[22] Toulmin (1958)
[23] Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958)
[24] Foucault (1972)
[25] Fairclough (1989)
[26] Lakoff (1987)
[27] Wittgenstein (1953)

Kuhn[28]. Kuhn holds that a scientific revolution is discontinuous, and that paradigms are *replaced* in this process, not *developed* or *improved*. Paradigms in competition are, says Kuhn, incompatible and incommensurable (Kuhn (1962) p. 103). Contrary to this, Popper asserts that transcending a framework inevitably means establishing a new framework, but this new framework is 'a better and roomier one' (Popper (1970), p. 56) in that it contains the old paradigm's knowledge and the refutation of that knowledge - in that way knowledge has been accumulated in the process of transcendence. In short, it is one of Popper's central dogma that 'we learn from our mistakes', and the old framework being such a mistake, we bring the knowledge of this mistake with us into the new framework. Furthermore, says Popper,

> ... the relativistic thesis that the framework *cannot* be critically discussed is a thesis which *can* be critically discussed and which does not stand up to criticism. (Popper (1970), p. 56)

The very fact that we can speak about and criticise different frameworks indicates that frameworks can, with some effort, be transcended (cf. below Collin's similar argument against the 'different worlds-metaphor' of social constructionism). In order to show that frameworks are unavoidable for human experience, *but* that their existence does not imply that knowledge and experience becomes relativistic, Popper has on many occasions[29] returned to the following quotation from Xenophanes:

> The Ethiops say that their gods are flat-nosed and black
> While the Thracians say that theirs have blue eyes and red hair.
> Yet if cattle or horses or lions had hands and could draw
> And could sculpture like men, then the horses would draw their gods
> Like horses, and cattle like cattle, and each would then shape
> Bodies of gods in the likeness, each kind, of its own.
> The gods did not reveal, from the beginning,
> All things to us; but in the course of time,
> Through seeking, men find that which is the better.
> ...
> These things are, we conjecture, like the truth.
> But as for certain truth, no man has known it,
> Nor will he know it; neither of the gods,
> Nor yet of all the things of which I speak.
> And even if by chance he were to utter
> The final truth, he would himself not know it:
> For all is but a woven web of guesses. (Xenophanes quoted in Popper (1958) p. 31)

[28] See Kuhn's reply to Popper's original criticism in Kuhn (1970).
[29] See Popper, Karl (1966) *The Open Society and its Enemies* p. 387, Popper, Karl (1994) 'The Myth of the Framework', and Popper, Karl (1958) 'The Beginnings of Rationalism' in Miller, David (1985) (ed.) *Popper Selections*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 31. The latter appeared later as chapter 5 in Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963).

From this, Popper derives the lesson that, although one has to acknowledge the existence of frameworks, the very act of acknowledging this seems to indicate that such frameworks are not insurmountable: if one can acknowledge the difference between frameworks, then one can also critically assess that difference (such critical assessment is hinted at in the last parts of the quotation, and incidentally, it seems to suggest that an embryonic form of Popper's own *critical rationalism* was anticipated by Xenophanes some 2.500 years ago). If frameworks were in fact insurmountable, it would not be possible to talk about them at all. And Xenophanes does indeed talk about and assess the differences between frameworks. This fact must somehow, says Popper (Popper (1994), p. 40), make Xenophanes wiser and better at understanding different cultures, and, should Xenophanes' understanding be made accessible to Ethiops and Thracians, then, surely, they would be wiser too. Popper considers the myth of the framework a 'logical and philosophical mistake' (Popper (1970) p. 56) in that it turns a difficulty into an impossibility, without, apparently, being able to rationally justify this turn.

Whereas Popper generally accepts the notion of frameworks (but not the notion of their relativistic consequences), others are more radical. Donald Davidson finds that the 'very idea' of a conceptual scheme is basically *unintelligible*. Davidson departs from an inherent paradox in conceptual relativism:

> The dominant metaphor of conceptual relativism, that of differing points of view, seems to betray an underlying paradox. Different points of view make sense, but only if there is a common co-ordinate system on which to plot them; yet the existence of a common system belies the claim of dramatic incomparability. (Davidson (1973), p. 184)

Davidson's point of view, however, resembles Popper's to some degree: in order to speak of different perspectives, you need to presuppose that there is a 'map' on which these different perspectives can be located, otherwise the notion of perspective makes no sense. This view seems to be a somewhat stronger version of Popper's idea that you *can* transcend frameworks, and in doing so you get a better (though not full) view of the map.

Davidson departs from Popper, however, in his insistence that conceptual schemes can in the last resort be reduced to language; Davidson's thesis implies that in order for conceptual schemes to be truly different, they would need to defy intermediate *translation*. This leads Davidson to the argument that the idea of conceptual schemes is *unintelligible*. The argument can briefly be summarised this way:

1. The idea of conceptual schemes presupposes that schemes (*languages*) are not intertranslatable.
2. In order to certify that two schemes are not intertranslatable, you have to refer to unconceptualised content which is common to these two schemes.
3. Insofar as the two schemes have common, unconceptualised content, they *are* intertranslatable.
4. If they are intertranslatable, the two schemes are *not* different.

The identification of schemes with languages, however, is contested. Siegel writes:

> Several writers have criticised Davidson's argument by challenging Davidson's assimilation of schemes and languages, and his utilizing intertranslatability as the criterion of individuation of alternative schemes. (Siegel (1987), p. 40)

Siegel, allegedly referring to one of the 'several' critics, quotes Popper:

> It is just a dogma - a dangerous dogma - that the different frameworks are like mutually untranslatable languages. The fact is that even totally different languages (like English and Hopi, or Chinese) are not untranslatable, and that there are many Hopis or Chinese who have learnt to master English very well. (Popper quoted in Siegel (1987), p. 40)

On the face of it, it does indeed seem as if Popper takes Davidson to propose that in fact there exist different frameworks that can be identified by their mutual untranslatability, whereas Davidson's proposal actually states the unintelligibility of such a view. The quotation of Popper, however, is misused; Popper was commenting on Kuhn, not on Davidson (whose paper was not to be published for another four years at the time of Popper's comment!). Similarly, it seems that Siegel turns Davidson's proposal upside down. Davidson does 'utilise intertranslatability as the criterion of individuation of alternative schemes', but he does so in order to show that the 'very idea' of alternative schemes is absurd: If 'alternative schemes' is to make any sense, they must be mutually untranslatable, while for them to be mutually untranslatable, they must contain some common, empirical content, in which case they cannot - in principle - be completely untranslatable after all.

The final argument against framework relativism which I am going to look at is Quine's. While some have (mistakenly) taken Quine to be a relativist, he can be attributed this argument, here quoted in Siegel:

> Truth, says the cultural relativist, is culture-bound. But if it were, then he, within his own culture, ought to see his own culture-bound truth as absolute. He cannot proclaim cultural relativism without rising above it, and he cannot rise above it without giving it up. (Quine quoted in Siegel (1987), p. 43)

Again, we see the characteristic paradox: once you begin to become a relativist, you immediately cease to be one. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter, much of this paradoxicality arises in introducing the word 'truth' into an account of relativism: to speak of 'relative truth' amounts to a contradiction in terms; if truth is relative, it is not truth, as it makes no sense to define truth in non-absolute terms[30]. The alternative is to

[30] See also Quine (1984), where he clarifies his position on relativism / absolutism.

speak of 'belief', in which case the account ceases to have any philosophical interest. There is, after all, nothing peculiar about the fact that we all do not believe in the same things - if we did, you might say, then there would be real cause for concern.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RATIONALITY?

It is argued that radical versions of social constructionism (in which *both* physical and social realities are thought to be social constructions) cannot escape relativism and its inherent paradoxes. Accordingly, a concept of rationality incorporated in a social constructionism of this radical persuasion is a contradiction in terms.

Social Constructionism: Philosophy or Methodology?

I have discussed the philosophical idea of relativism and shown that it is as best non-constructive for any practical purposes, at worst, highly *de*structive. It is now time to take a look at the way relativism finds strongholds in certain areas of science and research. While not yet approaching the concrete subject matter of this dissertation, *argumentation*, it will presently be sufficient to note that I believe that any account of argumentation needs to be incorporated in a theory of discourse or communication. Theories of discourse tend to be based on some form of *social constructionism*, and they generally prove to be of a more or less relativistic nature. Accordingly, social constructionism and its consequences will be the subject matter of the following.

In a recent book, critical of a radical interpretation of social constructionism, Finn Collin (1997) argues that social constructionism cannot be conceived of as a mere methodology. If the social constructionist understanding of different groups' various 'truths' about the exterior or social world are taken as nothing but a sociological description of a certain culture, the basic idea of social constructionism is reduced to a platitude: different social groups produce different *illusions* about the nature of things around them. Since social constructionists would probably dislike the predicate 'illusion' for that which is 'socially constructed', it seems necessary to follow another path: the social construction of reality means that different social groups construct different social *realities* (where the term 'reality' should be taken in the traditional, philosophical meaning: that which *exists*). This poses a central problem to social constructionism:

> ...[T]he constructivists underestimate the logical strengths of the core notions used to express their position, notably 'true', 'fact', 'real', 'knowledge', etc. These are all absolute notions, in their ordinary use, not relative ones. The idea that there is only one truth and only one reality is not a fiction dreamed up by philosophers, as constructivists are fond of insinuating, but is deeply embedded in these perfectly ordinary notions and their critical function in everyday discourse. Hence, when the social scientist follows the precept of going along with the way a community talks about the world, calling certain things real and others unreal, he faces a dilemma if it turns out that society A declares some kind of thing X to be real, while society B denies this. Apparently, he cannot go along with both societies. The sociologists may try to suggest that, contrary to what is normally believed, 'truth' and 'reality' are not absolute notions, but are implicitly relative to a society; hence, such apparently contradictory claims can be reconciled by saying that X exists in society A but not in society B. However, to articulate a relativist reading of existence claims and to defend it against familiar difficulties is a squarely philosophical task; social constructivism will now have moved beyond an innocuous methodological stance. (Collin (1997), p. 18.)

But hardly any theorists would wittingly assume a position of radical, ontological relativism, so this forms a central problem for social constructionism: either a strictly relativistic position is assumed (with all the associated paradoxes inherent in that position), or social constructionism should live with the understanding of social construction as, ontologically speaking, socially generated illusions. None of these options are even vaguely attractive for social constructionism: on the one hand inherent paradoxicality is intolerable for any serious research, be that social or natural science. On the other hand, the retreat from claiming that 'reality is socially constructed' to the modest claim that 'certain illusions about reality are socially constructed' will render a massive part of recent sociological research irrelevant. However, as it will be argued below, as long as there is no clear distinction between 'social reality' and 'physical reality', there seems to be no passable middle way between the mentioned options[31]. In Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's influential book *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967), a serious attempt is made to avoid the undesirable paradoxicality of ontological relativism, but as we shall see, with the help of Collin's precise analysis, the attempt remains at best indeterminate, at worst, failed.

[31] It should be noted for the sake of clarity that whereas Collin declares to have nothing to say about physical reality as such, he maintains that it is still important to examine how physical reality may be said to be (or not be) socially constructed. According to radical social constructionism, a social construction is not merely the (social) construction of *social* reality, but the (social) construction of 'human fact', pertaining to both social and natural phenomena. The word 'social' means that we deal with social (in the sense *collective*) constructions of facts about both the physical and interpersonal world. Contrary to this, Collin's claim is that the construction thesis should be extended only to the truly social world, not to the physical. (Collin (1997), p. 5-6)

Quote: Reality. *Unquote.*
Berger & Luckmann sees the need for sociology to draw a distinct demarcation from philosophy, when it comes to such 'ancient philosophical preoccupations' as questions of what 'reality' is, what it is to 'exist', and what 'knowledge' is (Berger & Luckmann (1967), p. 13ff). It is a matter of pressing importance to the sociology of knowledge that such questions be left entirely to philosophy, as sociological investigations are concerned only with the social processes through which the 'ordinary member of society' can construct a meaningful reality, whereas the ontology of this member's surroundings is outside the sociologist's scope. Accordingly, Berger & Luckmann seek to clarify this position by noting that in their book (and presumably in any kind of sociological investigation), words referring to existence and knowledge should be understood as contained in quotation marks. In a sociological study, reality means 'reality', knowledge means 'knowledge', where the quotation marks refer to the purely sociological meaning of the words. Apparently, the word 'reality', means to the sociologist only *what appears to be real* to a certain individual or group in the particular social context presently under investigation.

However, far from being a modest admission that sociology is not geared to undertake philosophical questions, Berger and Luckmann seem to doubt that even philosophy is capable of answering these 'big' questions:

> Since our purpose in this treatise is a sociological analysis of the reality of everyday life, and we are only tangentially interested in how this reality may appear in various theoretical perspectives to intellectuals, we must begin by a clarification of that reality as it is available to the common sense of the ordinary members of society. How that common sense reality may be influenced by *the theoretical constructions* of intellectuals and other merchants of ideas is a further question. (Berger & Luckmann (1967), p. 33) (my italics)

And they proceed to establish the programmatic statement that, consequently, '...our purpose is *not* to engage in philosophy' (Berger & Luckmann (1967), p. 33). Apart from being a sudden outburst of inverted snobbery (the authors clearly do not count themselves 'intellectuals' or 'merchants of ideas'), it seems inescapable from this quotation that philosophical enquiries into the nature of existence and knowledge (without quotation marks) are really theoretical *constructions*. If this is so, it seems quite hard to decide by what standards one should distinguish the common-sensical construction of reality by 'ordinary members of society' from the theoretical constructions of reality by the philosophers. In which case philosophers are really not entitled to skip the quotation marks either.

The question arising from this, however, is this: if it is not a philosophical attempt to account for the nature of reality, what is the contribution of social constructionism but the obvious recognition that different social contexts make us conceive of things differently? Collin has something to say about that. In showing that Berger & Luckmann have shifted from dealing with (socially constructed) *beliefs* about reality to (socially constructed) *reality per se*, Collin quotes Berger & Luckmann for arguing

that '...the sociologist may find himself ... the inheritor of philosophical questions that the professional philosophers are no longer interested in considering' (Collin (1997) p. 69), one of these philosophical questions being 'the constitution of reality'. Collin replies:

> ...[I]n so far as 'reality' is furnished with invisible quotation marks in the cited passage, it is far from evident why philosophy should have anything to say on the matter. 'Reality' in quotation marks means 'what is *believed* to be real'; and it is no part of philosophy as traditionally conceived to deal with empirical issues concerning the factors that shape people's conception of reality - this is precisely the task of the sociology of knowledge. It is true, on the other hand, that philosophy traditionally addresses itself to the problem of the constitution of *reality* (the genuine article, without quotation marks), in particular to the relationship between reality and the way we conceive it. One issue here is precisely that of whether reality is independent of our conception of it, or whether reality is essentially reality as conceived by us. (Collin (1997), p. 67f.)

Consequently, Collin argues, we cannot take Berger & Luckmann's quotation marks at face value. Their book should be read as a book concerning the social construction of *reality*, not the social construction of *'reality'*. In so far as Berger & Luckmann's book can be taken as foundation of most radical versions of social constructionism, the philosophical orientation of such approaches will then face great difficulties in steering clear of ontological relativism.

However, many social constructionists would probably agree with Collin's criticism of Berger and Luckmann, and insist that the sociology of knowledge, and any other discipline of a social constructionist observation, makes no claim whatsoever to contributing to philosophy. On this position, Berger and Luckmann's book should be taken at face value, while we should disregard their claims to philosophy (in their concluding chapter). This highly empirical view, however, imposes an odd irrelevance on the very concept of 'the social construction of reality', as discussed earlier in this chapter.

The constitution of reality is, however, not the primary object of this chapter, even if this question is related to the main question which is stated as follows:

Is there a standard of rational thinking and behaviour which is invariant to context[32]*?*

I am going to claim that there is such a standard, and I am going to do so in two ways: first by showing that arguments to the contrary effect are not viable, and second by giving a positive argument for the invariance of rationality, with the concept of rationality defined in purely formal terms.

[32] See also the section 'Statement of Intent' in my chapter I.

An Objection to Cultural Relativism

In considering a social constructionist claim that standards of rationality ultimately depend on ideas that are relative to a given culture or society, it is necessary to go into some detail on the matter. For that purpose, I am going to follow quite closely Collin's counterargument (Collin (1997), pp. 47-63) to this claim.

When ethnomethodology insists on the possibility that various groupings within a society may employ different standards of rationality which may be mutually incompatible, and of which not one single standard may be taken as more rational than the others, complete indeterminacy of social matters ensues. In order to escape from this problem, Collin says, an 'argument from cultural relativity' may be adopted, in which standards of rationality are assumed to be identifiable in whole societies or cultures rather than in smaller units such as social groups. For a first approximation of this view, it involves the idea that different societies can be understood as 'different worlds' which are essentially completely disconnected. In any case, in Collin's counterargument, not even when the 'different worlds' - metaphor is discarded can cultural relativity escape the destructive dilemma of choosing between vicious circularity and unbounded, social indeterminacy.

Collin identifies three premises on which the claim, *standards of rationality are relative to culture* is based. This is a short paraphrase of these three premises:

> 1. Variance in standards of reasoning is both an empirical fact, and attestable from the prevailing *norms* of reason in a society.
> 2. Standards of rationality play an important part in our cognition of reality, as the choice between different theoretical interpretations of reality is decided by the current standard of rationality.
> 3.Reality cannot transcend our cognition and knowledge of it.

Premises 1 and 2 seem immediately reasonable (that is, as long as the term 'reasoning' is to be taken in its broad sense, 'thinking rationally', not in the narrow sense of 'logic'[33]), so an argument against cultural relativism should focus specifically on the third premise, the one stating a truly *idealist* position on the relationship between the outside world and our knowledge of it: if reality is non-transcendent, then, in short, what we know of reality is what it *is*. This, however, is not what Collin chooses to do. Instead he gives an account of what the consequences are in terms of our capacity to know anything about social reality, when the cultural relativity argument is taken into its consequences.

According to Collin, the standard objection to the cultural relativity argument may be as follows:

When the cultural relativist claims that different societies are 'different worlds' in that their values and principles of rationality differ in fundamental ways, how is that to be taken? A standard objection is that the metaphor 'different worlds' cannot contain a literal meaning; If two different societies (say, society A and society B) engage in a

[33] Unfortunately, Collin provides no definitory distinction between 'reasoning' and 'rationality'.

dispute *about* the differences between their respective values and principles of rationality, then where does this dispute take place? In society A's world or in society B's world? Clearly, it must take place in 'one, overarching world' (Collin (1997), p. 54) in which communication between the two worlds is possible (Incidentally, this argument brings to mind both Popper's idea of framework transcendence and Davidson's intertranslatability thesis, cf. above). This entails that the metaphor 'world' is not an appropriate designation of two culturally different societies. This objection, however, can easily be countered by the cultural relativist.

The standard reply, says Collin, will involve a retraction of the 'world-metaphor': Different societies are not different worlds in the sense that they are fundamentally (and ontologically) set apart, but they are fundamentally different as they incorporate different *perspectives* for the cognition of reality. Collin shows (Collin (1997), pp. 55-58) how social anthropology can make a case for differences in rationality underlying traditional (native) and modern thought, without having to resort to the most radical interpretation of the 'different worlds'-metaphor. In this modified version of the argument (attributed mainly to Robin Horton), traditional thought is guided by a *closed predicament*, meaning that interpretations of reality are fixed and cannot be questioned *within* traditional thought, whereas modern thought is guided by an *open predicament* in which alternatives to explanations of the world can always be sought without disrupting the rationality of modern thought.

Collin's answer (Collin (1997), p. 58ff) to this position comes in two arguments, a simple argument which is disputable, and a complex argument which is not.

The simple argument goes like this:

It is the cultural relativist's claim that when rationality varies across different societies, it does so *as a consequence of basic (cultural or otherwise) differences* in those societies. But those differences cannot be established in a given society before some standard of rationality has been adopted. And as the adoption of a standard of rationality is consequential *of* particulars of that society, the argument falls into circularity. The cultural relativist, however, may counter this argument by excluding the exterior world from the category of objects to be established relatively. If objects in physical reality are conceived to defy social construction, such objects, and their characteristic features and uses, may serve as an invariant foundation for adopting a certain standard of rationality, and in that way the argument escapes the circularity.

The complex argument disputes this by focusing on a serious flaw of reason: the cultural relativity argument must presuppose that it is possible to distinguish sharply between various cultures, and that the point of transition from one developmental stage to another can be identified with historical accuracy. An example may clarify the futility of this position. If cultures could somehow be distinguished discretely from one another, it should be possible for a researcher of the history of ideas to point out exactly when e.g. the Danish society made a change from traditional to modern thought, that point perhaps being identified as the reformation in 1536. Clearly this is not possible, as it is an empirical fact that medieval patterns of thought were viable far into the Danish renaissance. And the advent of the first printing press in this period - being an empirically observable, physical fact - cannot be said to have brought about a

sudden change in rationality from traditional to modern thought, but rather a gradual change, lasting, perhaps, for centuries.

Collin stresses (Collin (1997), p. 61) that in order for the argument from cultural relativity to hold, there must be no 'grey zone' between different societies, neither in space nor time. Different cultures have to be specifiable in a precise manner, as to the question of what standard of rationality is adopted, and what facts about reality this rationality is based upon. In the above example however, it should be clear that this is not possible, as both temporal and spatial changes and differences are gradual, not catastrophic or discontinuous. The answer to the question, 'who is in authority to decide what standard of rationality prevails, and where do the lines go that separate this rationality from the rationality of some differing culture?', is that only the *inhabitants* of a given culture may consensually agree that a given period along with its standard of rationality has expired, or that a given, geo-cultural location constitutes a unity with regard to a specific standard of rationality. Yet again, once this view is adopted, says Collin, the argument from cultural relativity becomes circular. To reach consensus that a new standard of rationality has taken over (thereby rendering an old standard irrational) is a social process, hence, it presupposes the standard of rationality it supposedly defines. Additionally, the supposition that hybrid forms might exist between old and new paradigms of rationality cannot save the cultural relativity argument, as standards of rationality may be - and very often are - mutually incompatible. Adopting a modern mode of thought literally excludes a traditional one, and vice versa. A society may well contain rivalling standards of rationality, but in most cases, such standards cannot fuse into a compound form, because that would involve serious inherent contradictions in this new form of rationality.

With the realisation that the concept of 'a society' as a discrete entity in terms of the standard of rationality adopted in that society, is a theoretical abstraction which fits reality badly, the cultural relativist has to understand societies as in a permanent stage of transition, as multiple entities in which no one form of rationality can be identified at any given point in neither time nor space, and consequently, social reality becomes utterly indeterminate. Collin finds it imperative to stress the actual extent of this indeterminacy, as

> Otherwise, a critic might suggest that the constructivist is right: when societies are in transition, social reality *is* indeed in a state of indeterminacy and flux. But while this may hold for such global, institutional features as, for instance, the political or legal structure of a society in metamorphosis - think of Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union - it certainly will not hold for simple aggregative social facts as, for instance, that 45 per cent of the population believe that they are better off than before the upheaval, or that 1 per cent of males under 30 years of age have emigrated. In the present argument, all such concrete facts parttake fully of the indeterminacy. Not only will global institutions disappear, concrete statistical facts will as well. (Collin (1997), p. 63)

Collin's objection to cultural relativity is a *reductio ad absurdum*; once the premises of cultural relativity are accepted, the consequences become intolerable even to the social constructionist: social reality is in all its aspects beyond any conceivable, rational assessment.

A FORMAL CONCEPTION OF RATIONALITY

I propose a definition of rationality as a formal notion which is invariant to context. Formal rationality embodies two distinct elements; the faculty of logical *reason* and the principle of communicative *co-operation*.

Social Constructions Are Intentional

This far, two counterarguments have been launched towards various forms of relativism; Siegel argues that relativism is internally incoherent and self-refuting, *i.e.* relativism is a priori unacceptable. Conversely, Collin shows that relativism is unacceptable in its final consequences. In that way, both approaches help to object finally to the idea that standards of rationality can be relative to individual, social group, society, or culture.

The focus on the concept of rationality has so far been primarily negative: 'how can we *not* characterise rationality?' The answer has invariantly been something to the effect that 'rationality cannot be characterised as relative'. Siegel takes pains to explicate the fundamental contradiction in adopting any conceivable form of relativism, whereas it is worth noting, that Collin's argument is basically normative, in that his argument can be reduced to the norm, *standards of rationality cannot be socially relative, since we cannot tolerate complete, social indeterminacy*. This is a genuine common sense position which must be welcome to anyone critical of orthodox social constructionism, but it seems to me that Siegel's argument against relativism as such remains a stronger point of departure, when one wants to assert - positively - that there are crucial elements contained in the concept of rationality which are in fact *universal*. As it will be evident, I propose that such elements boil down to a handful of axioms of deductive[34] logic and some abstract conditions for communication, but that abstraction should not subtract from the relief that after all, we may be able to positively assert the possibility of rational thinking and behaviour that transcends subjective impressions of physical and social reality.

Earlier in this chapter, the central question of the thesis was phrased: Is there a standard of rational thinking and behaviour which is invariant to context? Having given a negative argument of what rationality is *not*, it is time to approach the question of

[34] The term 'deductive' should be taken with a grain of salt at this point. In later chapters of this text I shall use only the terms 'logic' and 'reason', as I believe that there is only one form of logic when 'logic' is understood as a strictly formal system. I will clarify my position on *forms* of inference versus *modes* of inference in chapter IV.

what, then, rationality positively *is*. But in order to get there, it is necessary to wrap up the discussion of what it means when some part of reality is socially constructed, as we cannot dispose of this concept altogether. Collin's ultimate claim as to what aspects of human existence that can be said to be socially constructed is that only facts in which *intentionality* is an essential part can be understood as 'socially constructed'. Indeed, he says,

> ... human thought generates social fact by being a part of it (Collin (1997), p. 219).

Which implies that only those phenomena in which human thought is in fact a part, can be said to be social facts. Social fact can be distinguished from natural fact by the former's feature of being intentional; natural fact is the category of things and events to which we cannot normally ascribe such predicates as 'knows that' or 'intends to', including human behaviour when defined as events in a physical reality. To such behaviour, however, *meaning* can be ascribed, and meaning is what constitutes social fact. In Collin's words:

> The presence of a certain 'meaning' (belief or intention) turns a certain bodily movement into the social act of signing a contract, or casting a vote, and turns a piece of paper into a means of economic exchange. In brief, 'meanings' transform colourless movements and lifeless physical objects into human reality. (Collin (1997), p. 224)

This limited view on what can be said to be socially constructed provides an escape from the ontological chaos which is the consequence of a radical, social constructionism. In this moderate form, there is a large class of objects and events which is ontologically immune to construction, and thus can serve as the starting point for sociological inquiries. The demarcation of physical reality (not involving meaning) from social reality (ascribing meaning to events, processes, objects etc.) establishes the middle way between realism and relativism, a middle way which is very useful for theoretical conceptions of discourse and pragmatics. The standard objection (e.g. Edwards et al (1995)) that anything we can talk about will inescapably be equipped with meaning and hence everything we can talk about is then socially constructed, does not refute *realism*. The fact that our access to the real leads through a filter of language or meaning can never attest that the real is somehow not real. It only attests to the fact that our *access* to the real is rather troublesome[35].

As it is the aim of this chapter to show that rationality is invariant to context, I am now committed to giving an account of rationality as not a *part* of human meaning, but instead as a *condition* of meaning, because otherwise, rationality would be the object

[35] As we shall see in the following chapter, Popper emphasises that a theory of truth has to be objective, simply because a 'subjective theory of truth' is a contradiction in terms. The fact that our ability to know the truth is highly constrained or maybe non-existent does not theoretically imply that there is no (objective) truth, independently of a knowing subject.

of social construction, according to the above definition. For Collin, the term 'meaning' is the formation of belief ascribed to the exterior reality and intention to act according to this belief (including, one might add, the intention to *communicate* meaning). But in order for such meanings to become constitutive of social fact, they have to be arrived at collectively, not individually, and to arrive at collective meaning is inarguably a communicative process (if meanings were not arrived at collectively, they would not be constitutive of *social* fact, but of *subjective* fact). In the following, I am going to define rationality as the combination of a necessary condition of thought or mental representation (i.e. reason), and a necessary condition of communication (i.e. co-operation), in order to incorporate the collective aspect of social fact. Roughly speaking, a subject cannot *think*, if he is unable to reason, and he cannot *communicate*, if he is unable to co-operate. And without the ability to think and communicate, a group of subjects cannot arrive at meaning. In assuming this position, it is claimed that it is possible to keep rationality out of that category of human experience which is potentially socially constructable, while positioning rationality as conditional for being able to generate social constructions in the first place.

Reason

In a straight forward, dictionary definition of rationality, language is strikingly absent. In the following, it will be argued that the failure to incorporate a notion of language in an understanding of what it is to be rational is bound to result in some indeterminacy or other. This is a typical dictionary definition (from the *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*):

> **rationality**. (...) [R]ationality is the key feature that distinguishes human beings from other animals (...)
> Beliefs that are contrary to the dictates of reason are irrational. Rational beliefs have also been contrasted with beliefs arrived at through emotion, faith, authority, or by an arbitrary choice.

This seems to be a commonplace of the term. But as it is always the case, one definition contains words which themselves require other definitions. The definition of rationality here is of no use until we know how the dictionary explains the term 'reason'. This is it:

> **reason**. The general human 'faculty' or capacity for truth-seeking and problem-solving, differentiates from instinct, imagination, or faith in that its results are intellectually trustworthy - even to the extent, according to rationalism, that reason is both necessary and sufficient for arriving at knowledge (...)

From these definitions, it seems hard to distinguish clearly between 'rationality' and 'reason'. If reason is not only necessary but *sufficient* for arriving at knowledge, what do we need rationality for? Furthermore, if 'irrational beliefs' are characterised by being 'contrary to the dictates of reason', then rational beliefs must be known by their

observance of the dictates of reason. So, apparently, reason dictates what to believe, and such beliefs are rational inasmuch as reason dictates that they are. It should be clear that there seems to be near-identity between the two concepts in this interpretation. In the following, the concept of reason is to be defined so as to be clearly separable from rationality.

Understood as a condition of 'arriving at knowledge' (cf. the dictionary definition above), reason has to be a formal concept; it has to consist of conditions that are always already presupposed. This does not turn various rules of inference into 'laws of thought', but rather into tacit assumptions that enable a subject to mentally represent a coherent model of his experience, and notably also to critically reflect on that model. Such conditions primarily involve *consistency*, which in turn requires the notion of the binary value of true/false. This, in turn, requires a hypothetical correspondence theory of truth. These concepts will all be further developed in chapter III.

Reason is formal in the sense that it provides *invariant* conditions for gaining knowledge, even if it cannot provide final answers to concrete, empirical questions (which means that it may be a *necessary*, but not a *sufficient* condition for arriving at knowledge, cp. dictionary definition above) . So the concept of rationality contains as one of its key elements the norm of valid reason, a norm which is irrefutable, lest one resorts to performative contradiction. The fact that the concept is proposed to be immune to construction, is not the same thing as saying that it is immune to *criticism*. The conditions can always be made explicit in discourse, and *any* explicit claim can be the object of discussion. So when I claim above that the norm of reason is irrefutable, it does not mean that it is beyond discussion - it only means that it is already presupposed by any possible attempt at refuting it, and hence any attempt at refuting it, legitimate as that may be, is bound to fail.

The account of reason will turn out to be useful primarily by virtue of its critical potential. While we cannot expect people to express themselves in the form of syllogisms, stating premises first and then conclusions, we can in fact expect them to be able to critically assess enthymemic argumentation, according to relevant, logical forms. As I will try to show in the following chapters, this process takes the form of testing hypotheses and trying to falsify them, in practice by criticising claims by confronting premises that are necessary for arriving at such claims. The position on this matter can best be summarised by a quotation from the American philosopher Thomas Nagel:

> ... [T]he position to which I am drawn is a form of rationalism. This does not mean that we have innate knowledge of the truth about the world, but it does mean that we have the capacity, not based on experience, to generate hypotheses about what in general the world might possibly be like, and to reject those possibilities that we see could not include ourselves and our experiences. Just as important, we must be able to reject hypotheses which appear initially to be possibilities but are not. The conditions of objectivity that I have been defending lead to the conclusion that the basis of most real knowledge must be a priori and drawn from within ourselves. The role played by particular experience and by the action of the world on us through our individual perspectives can be only selective - though this is a very important factor, which makes the acquisition of such knowledge as we may have importantly subject to luck: the luck of the observations and data to which we are exposed and the age in which we live. (Nagel (1985), p. 83, errata corrected NMN)

This, I would argue, contains a fairly accurate account of the view of invariance of reason that I want to advocate, though it is curious that Nagel does not add the adjective 'critical' to his notion of 'rationalism'. The tacit reference to *critical* rationalism seems evident in the assertion that rationality is the ability to form 'hypotheses', and, through experience, to falsify ('reject') them. It is also evident from the admission that reason is not capable of delivering concrete truths about the world, but has to rely on the odd, lucky strike in the search for viable hypotheses. It seems clear that Nagel's 'form of rationalism' is none other than the critical form[36].

Co-operation

Above, it is stated that rationality is a combination of reason and co-operation, so having given an account of reason, I should now give a brief account of what is to be understood by co-operation, before moving on the concept of rationality.

That communication depends on participants being *co-operative*, is the central thesis of H. P. Grice (1975). It is possible to communicate only on the assumption that the participants co-operate. This can be seen from the fact that it is not possible to deny the sentence that comes just before this one, without having already assumed its truth; that is, the denial of the co-operation thesis, must itself, as an instance of communication, be co-operative. So again we have a necessary condition: it is impossible to refute the co-operation thesis without always already assuming it.

The specific workings of Grice's co-operation principle will be approached in chapter V, so at this point the preoccupation with co-operation will be at a more general level. The term 'co-operation' may easily be understood as the joint attempt at reaching intersubjective consensus, as in Habermas' parallel theories of communicative action (Habermas (1987)) and discourse ethics ((1990)). This is not how the concept is to be

[36] The application of the hypothetico-deductive method of critical rationalism will be discussed in chapter III.

understood in this context[37]. 'Co-operation' refers to the attempt at *clarifying communicative intentions* only. When language user A interprets language user B's utterance in a co-operative way, what that means is only that A makes a serious attempt at understanding what B wants to communicate, it does emphatically not mean that A means to engage in a co-operative and argumentative effort at reaching an intersubjective agreement with B. When A is communicatively co-operative, it only means that A basically assumes that B, by producing some utterance, intends to convey something to him, and that A tries to find out what it is. It is possible that B has no such intentions, but that does not change the fact that A's approach is co-operative: he assumes, until there is evidence to the contrary effect, that B communicates.

Hence, the co-operation thesis is basically a contribution to the technical study of language-in-use, not to a sociological understanding of linguistic co-operation in a larger perspective. Consensus-oriented theories like Habermas may be applied at a higher level than this, but the present study is preoccupied with language and argumentation at a close-up level.

Rationality Is Reasoned Dialogue

It is time to be more specific about the relationship between reason and co-operation. I shall argue that this relationship is based on mutual constraints. Reason potentially constrains communicative events by virtue of pointing to possible inconsistencies. Conversely, co-operation constrains reason in that only those inferential moves are discursively acceptable which at the same time can be seen to be relevant and dialogically economical in some given context.

In the following, I am going to illustrate the workings of this mechanism by producing examples of how (1) the critical use of reason is primarily the objection to mutual inconsistencies in various claims in a dialogue, and (2) critical dialogue can rule out instances of reason that are not directly relevant to the current context.

If language user A asserts some proposition q in the cause of a dialogue, language user B may critically point to the fact that A has previously asserted the proposition ¬p. B may proceed to inquire if A believes that p→q, and, given an affirmative reply, B may point out the inconsistency of the argument,

II. A

$$p \rightarrow q$$
$$\neg p$$
$$\therefore q$$

[37] While Grice's theory should be understood as an intentionalist theory, Habermas' theory is an intersubjectivist theory, which is arguably a fundamentally different level of description. See a discussion of that in chapter V.

B's criticism is notably not directly related to the truth[38] of one of the propositions, ¬p or q, but rather to the *combination* of these propositions in A's mental model. The negotiation of truth goes on at a different level, because the assessment of truth depends on concrete contexts, while assessment of consistency does not. It is an important point that, theoretically, it is perfectly possible to assess that **ii. a** is invalid (and thus inconsistent), without relating any of the symbols to a specific proposition or speech act, but the argument form cannot, as it stands, be assessed in terms of truth (obviously, in practical contexts this criticism is not carried out symbolically, but for the current purposes I find it instructive to do so.)

In practice, the criticism may start at the formal level, pointing to inconsistency, and then move on to *repairing* this inconsistency by problematising the truth of one of the elements: suppose that p in **ii. a** is realised as the statement 'all muslim immigrants are criminal' and q as the statement 'we should get rid of all muslim immigrants'. Suppose that A has asserted the statement 'we should get rid of all muslim immigrants' (q), while at some earlier point in the conversation he has admitted that 'not all muslim immigrants are criminal' (¬p). B might then inquire if A thinks that 'if muslim immigrants are criminal, they should be expelled' (p→q). Should A accept this as reasonable, then B could point to the inconsistency inherent the combination of A's two statements, 'we should get rid of all muslim immigrants' (q) and 'not all muslim immigrants are criminal' (¬p). But this is still an assessment of reason - it only points to the inconsistency in the *combination* of statements. Assessing their truth is a whole different matter: given that the combination of statements is inconsistent, it follows that at least one of those statements is false[39]. B may then problematise the inconsistency in order to find out which of A's statements is false. Such problematisations are co-operative; they are intended to *repair* the inconsistency in A's argument. In that way reason can be seen as a regulation of co-operation. Participants will generally negotiate claims until they, at the very least, are not mutually inconsistent.

But it also goes the other way; co-operation also regulates the use of reason.

Suppose speaker A in the course of conversation says 'I think we should expel all muslim immigrants!', to which speaker B replies 'Aha. I take it, then, that you think that we should expel all muslim immigrants.'

B's reply is perfectly reasonable. The argument,

[38] For the present purposes, I use the word 'truth' as if it is uncontroversial. A serious discussion of how truth is to be understood wil be expounded in chapter III.

[39] In this context, the sc. *coherence theory of truth* (orig. Leibniz ; later Hegel - recently advocated a.o. by Nicholas Rescher and Donald Davidson), is understood as an indirect *correspondence* theory: the coherence theory says, roughly, that a proposition is true when it coheres non-contradictorily with the most comprehensive system of propositions. But when two propositions are incoherent, as in the given example, it is because (at least) one of them does not *correspond to the facts*.

II. B

p
∴p

is valid, in fact, it is a tautology. But it does not qualify as communicative co-operation, as it is irrelevant and not economical. Reason is subject to co-operation in the sense that the co-operation requirement will generally filter out logical consequences that are not appropriately relevant or informative.

This account of rationality probably raises more questions than it answers. Four questions in particular demand an answer:

(1) How can one make the translation from natural language into formal language in a systematic and valid way?

(2) Is the distinction between reason and co-operation an artificial inflation of the co-operation principle? That is, is the notion of reason as laid out here, already contained in communication?

(3) This account of rationality does not seem to provide any guarantee that rational communication can bring about more, or better knowledge. What it the point, then, of proposing a concept of rationality? If it can be rational to claim, as in the instantiation of **ii. a**, that 'it is criminal to be a muslim immigrant', what do we need rationality for?

(4) According to the proposed definition of rationality, it is impossible to act rationally without being reasonable and co-operative. But this seems counter-intuitive: If , for example, some person A does not want to have person B understand some given problem complex for instance, A may deliberately misinform, give contradicting statements and so forth. A's behaviour, however, is definitely rational insofar as it facilitates A's achievement of his goal.

The answer to question (1) has several branches: One of them is that the account is *theoretical*, and should not be confused with the practical act of representing language in meta-language, which is indeed not unproblematic at all. The account, however, attempts to explain a crucial difference between the mental process of reasoning and the social process of communication. In practice there are great difficulties in the translation process, but theoretically, the distinction has explanatory value. Another, and perhaps more important branch of the answer, is that criticism by way of reasoning can in fact be witnessed in empirical conversation. It is central to the way a critical discussion works, and, I am going to argue, language users do in fact make the transition from language to meta-language, and back again, rather effortlessly. That the analysis of this transition requires interpretation on the part of the analyst, and that this interpretation is not immune to criticism, are preconditions we can probably learn to live with.

The answer to (2) might take this form:

As it has been argued above, reason is formal at another level than the communicative principle of co-operation. Logical criticism is independent on context while the co-operative criticism is only realised *in* specific contexts - even though, notably, the principle itself *is* formal. In addition, many theorists tend to embrace some variant of a

co-operation principle, while at the same time rejecting the role of deductive logic in communication[40]. So it seems to be instructive to distinguish between the two concepts of reason and co-operation, in order to show that there is no fundamental contradiction involved in combining them in the understanding of communicative rationality.

Question (3) is indeed problematic. On the face of it, it seems that we do not get one tiny step further towards producing more valid, or better knowledge, just by being rational in the sense proposed here. But this is not accurate. It is true that the present concept of rationality can produce no guarantees of arriving at the *truth*. The point is, however, that without it, we almost have a guarantee of *not* arriving at the truth. The concept of rationality *can* guarantee that, at any given time, knowledge being what it currently is, the possibility exists that we may arrive at some new knowledge that is *more true* than competing ideas, and on that basis we may arrive at plans for action that are *more right* than competing plans for action. This process is secured only by the appropriate use of critical reason and dialogical co-operation. Reason may not in itself produce new knowledge, but it can critically rule out knowledge which is inconsistent. Knowledge which cannot be criticised for being inconsistent is accordingly tru-*er* than knowledge which can. Needless to say, the idea that 'it is criminal to be a muslim immigrant', will, if subjected to serious criticism, lead into absurd consequences, and hence that idea can probably be proven inconsistent with other worldviews held by its proponent.

As for the ever-problematic notion of 'truth' we can provisionally say that the present concept of rationality does not pave the way for establishing *positive* truth ('true'), but that it makes possible the notions of *comparative* and *superlative* truth ('more/less true' and 'most/least true').

Question (4) points to a need to limit the scope of the proposed concept of rationality: the kind of rationality discussed here *is* indeed *communicative* rationality, the type of rationality employed to resolve disputes in language. Another kind of rationality is strategic; the use of communicative contradiction and non-co-operativeness may be intuitively rational in terms of its efficiency at reaching some (non-communicative) goal. But in terms of the example given in question (4) the point is that, given A's behaviour, B can legitimately criticise or even sanction A's *lack* of communicative co-operation. He can disclose A's contribution as not communicatively rational by way of reconstruction and criticism. At this point, this presentation approaches Habermas' normative advocation of communicative rationality (especially Habermas (1987)). In order for B to 'legitimately sanction A's lack of communicative co-operation', it is presupposed that the context is such that communicative rationality is ranked the most legitimate form of rationality, and clearly this is not so in just any context. However, this account is not normative in the same way as Habermas, and this can be explained from the fact that this account is basically intended to describe communication at the level of intentionality, not at the level of intersubjectivity. At the level of intentionality, the object of inquiry is the mutual recognition of communicative intentions, while at

[40] Habermas is a good example: arguably, at the level of intersubjectivity, the discursive negotiation of communicative validity claims corresponds to some variant of the cooperation principle at the level of intentionality. But still Habermas calls for a 'pragmatic' logic as substitution for deduction (Habermas (1987), p. 249).

the level of intersubjectivity, the focus is on the negotiation of validity claims with the aim of arriving at communicative consensus. At the level of intentionality, consensus is not a relevant issue.

CHAPTER III

Logic and Criticism

INTRODUCTION

Moderate, social constructionism is not incompatible with a critical-rationalist perspective on argumentation. Critical rationalism can be applied, not only as a theory of science, but as a general theory of argumentative discourse in social reality.

Arguments in Social Reality

Like the social constructionist position, critical rationalism maintains that there are no final sources of experience and knowledge. The ontology of the exterior world is basically beyond direct access. But in a critical rationalist view it is possible to establish experience intersubjectively, even if this experience is always at most preliminary. Like social constructionism, but unlike logical positivism, critical rationalism rejects the idea that experience can be obtained through neutral gathering and comparison of sensory data; In critical rationalism there will always be a theory directing our observations of the world. However, critical rationalism departs from relativistic positions on the question of the universality of rationality. When observations - intersubjectively established - contradict the theory that directed these observations in the first place, we are obliged to reject the theory, and this rejection is basically the enterprise of being *critically rational*. The rationality is based on the logical impossibility of contradiction - when observations contradict prediction, the prediction must be false - at least for the time being.

But critical rationalism is not incompatible with a *moderate* social constructionism; given a clear distinction between a physical reality that transcends human experience and a social reality which is furnished with socially produced meaning, it is possible to suggest that while argumentative discourse is a social process, it is ultimately regulated by a critical rationality which is invariant to social reality.

Scientific and General Knowledge

The aim of this chapter is to suggest a theoretical framework for a dialogical approach to argumentation, a framework which is philosophically in keeping with a 'non-vulgar' form of absolutism and the concept of rationality suggested as a combination of reason

and co-operation (see chapter II). I shall argue that such a framework can be extracted predominantly from Karl Popper's main works, especially his *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963) and *Objective Knowledge* (1972).

Popper is mainly regarded a philosopher dealing with the 'theory of science', and one might object to the use of Popper's ideal of science (*i.e.* mainly the *natural* sciences) as a model for the everyday, non-scientific discourse. But contrary to what many might think, Popper's view was somewhat more nuanced than that:

> Although I shall confine my discussion to the growth of knowledge in science, my remarks are applicable without much change, I believe, to the growth of pre-scientific knowledge also - that is to say, to the general way in which men, and even animals, acquire new factual knowledge about the world. The method of trial and error - of learning from our mistakes - seems to be fundamentally the same whether it is practiced by lower or by higher animals, by chimpanzees or by men of science. My interest is not merely in the theory of scientific knowledge, but rather in the theory of knowledge in general. Yet the study of the growth of scientific knowledge is, I believe, the most fruitful way of studying the growth of knowledge in general. For the growth of scientific knowledge may be said to be the growth of ordinary human knowledge *writ large*. (Popper (1963), p. 216)

Popper's demarcation between empirical science and pseudo-science entails a kind of definition of science. But as it is evident in the above quotation, this does not mean that the falsificationist method is reserved for science. As this study deals with the 'growth of knowledge in general' rather than with scientific knowledge, the remark can be taken to legitimise an account of argumentative dialogue *in general*, based on the falsificationist mechanism.

One might, however, have one quarrel with Popper's idea of the primacy of science. Popper maintains that '… science is one of the very few human activities - perhaps the only one - in which errors are systematically criticised and fairly often, in time, corrected' (Popper (1963), p. 216), which means that science can generally produce *progress*, while in 'most other fields of human endeavour there is change, but rarely progress' (Popper (1963), p. 216f). But what then is the difference between 'change' and 'progress'? In the field of politics, for instance, it seems much too easy to dismiss developments as nothing but 'changes', although they may seem so at the time of their occurrence. But when looking at a large historical span of time, would it not be fair to say e.g. that the development from absolutist rule to relatively stable democracies (occurring over a span of some four hundred years in Europe) is *progress*? It seems ridiculous to say that it is not. And this progress has not been achieved through a strictly scientific method, but rather, I would argue, through the growth of general knowledge. Critical discussion undoubtedly has played a major role in this process, and while some of the participants may have been 'men of science', I am sure only very few were 'chimpanzees'. Most of them were surely somewhere in between.

The faculty of critically assessing the acceptability of arguments, for example, is a faculty bestowed not just on people who do this professionally, but it is a general

faculty which most people master (though not equally well). And this is, after all, very fortunate, for otherwise, the critical discussions that eventually may lead to progress would not in themselves be democratic. In any case, while it is reasonable to say that the study of science is a fruitful approach to the growth of knowledge in general, I find it hard to accept the idea that *only* science (in a strict sense of the word) leads to progress. Both science and 'pseudo science' have led to remarkable progress as well as to incomprehensible disaster.

The current chapter will present critical rationalism in some detail, and make an argument for the relevance of hypothetico-deductive methods in the evaluation of argumentation. Central to this project is the argument that rationality, as defined in the preceding chapter, plays a crucial part in critical argumentation, as a context-invariant norm. And, notably, that rationality is not the privilege of science or philosophy, but that it is present as a regulative norm in all types of critical discussion. The structure of the chapter will be first to discuss various aspects of critical rationalism, retaining science as a model for rational discussion, and second to apply a critical rationalist approach to the study of the development of general, common sense in dialogue.

CRITICAL RATIONALISM

This subchapter is devoted to showing that Karl Popper's falsificationist programme provides some important solutions to problems that are not only central to argumentation theory in particular, but also to epistemology in general. It will be argued that the critical-rationalist idea cannot be effectively dismissed: whereas *truth* is not practically decidable, falsity is, and this understanding is invaluable for an account of the functions of argumentative dialogue.

The Induction Problem

It seems that one cannot write a text on argumentation theory without somewhere producing the most famous example of the sc. *Barbara*-syllogism[41]. This text is no exception:

III. A

All humans are mortal
Socrates is human
Therefore, Socrates is mortal

This is type-case deduction in the most traditional sense of the word; A particular statement ('Socrates is human') is subsumed under a universal statement ('All humans are mortal'), and from the combination of these two statements we may derive a

[41] A categorical argument consisting of three sentences with 'All'-quantifiers, hence the name *bArbArA*.

further particular statement ('Socrates is mortal'). We can do so because the conclusion is *entailed* by the premises, *i.e.* it was there all along, contained implicitly in the two premises combined. It follows that it is impossible to maintain that the premises are true and at the same time deny the conclusion, and when an argument is construed in that way, we generally say that it is deductively valid.

On the one hand, the premises' entailment of the conclusion ensures that once we accept that the premises are true, we have to think of the conclusion as true as well, whether we like it or not. This means that deduction can - in principle - provide us with *certain truth* - that is, if the premises are in fact certainly true. This is no small advantage - deduction is no less than an infallible calculator. On the other hand, the greatest strength of this syllogism is paradoxically also its greatest weakness. The problem is that entailment, as mentioned above, means that the statement in the conclusion was there all the time in the premises combined. This seems to indicate that the conclusion is redundant; it just tells us what we already learned from the premises in combination. If we know for a fact that all humans are mortal, and we know, likewise for a fact, that Socrates is human, then it should come as no surprise that he is mortal. We already knew that. So deduction is not only infallible, it is also 'empty' in that it delivers no new knowledge, only old knowledge in a new appearance[42]. (This account of deduction however, depends on its definition. I shall revert to this in chapter IV.)

Critics of the traditional philosophical insistence on deduction accordingly object to the idea that this form of reasoning is the only way of understanding the world. Critics will point to the futility of entailment, and object that what is interesting is not the question of how we get to certain knowledge about particulars, but how we get to the *universal* statements that underlie deductive reasoning. The point is that, in returning to **iii. a**, we have to somehow arrive at a point where the universal statement ('all humans are mortal') appears to us to be true, *before* we even begin to argue for the mortality of Socrates. And this point, the critics would say, can only be arrived at by observing a lot of humans through their lives and noting that - sooner or later - their lives end. At some point, then, the observer will be satisfied that 'it is true that all humans are mortal'. This is the point where his observations have been rendered general by *induction*.

So the critics will say that when we give a deductive argument like the example, we have always already presupposed an inductive argument establishing the universal premise of the deduction, and hence, the strength of deduction is problematised: saying that deductive arguments give us certainty is a strictly theoretical claim, since in any practical context whatsoever, the deductive argument always rests on inductive generalisation. And the problem with this is that induction is not valid. No matter how many people you have observed to eventually die, there is no way you can claim this to be truly *universal*, because then you would have had to observe not just nearly everyone, but actually *all* human beings in past, present *and* future, *and* in the entire

[42] While not providing new knowledge about the world, however, the deductive inference does provide new *logical* knowledge, when fully explicated: namely the claim that the premises actually *entails* the conclusion. And as I will discuss later, this kind of knowledge may be just as crucial and disputable as is empirical knowledge.

universe. In practice of course, there is no way of knowing if Socrates might be the *first* or *only* human being equipped with immortality.

This problem is generally known as 'The Induction Problem', and its sharpest formulation is due to the Scottish scepticist David Hume, who wrote:

> …not only our reason fails us in the discovery of the *ultimate connexion* of causes and effects, but even after an experience has inform'd us of their *constant conjunction*, 'tis impossible for us to satisfy ourselves by our reason, why we shou'd extend that experience beyond those particular instances, which have fallen under our observation. We suppose, but are never able to prove, that there must be a resemblance betwixt those objects, of which we have had experience, and those which lie beyond the reach of our discovery. (Hume (1740), p. 392)

The 'constant conjunction' refers to our experience that a given phenomenon is always accompanied by some particular property, e.g. human beings have invariantly been observed to be mortal, the state of being human is, in other words, in constant conjunction with the property of being mortal. But the problem is that we can never 'penetrate into the reason of the conjunction' (Hume (1740), p. 394), all we have are *observations* of some conjunction that has hitherto been invariant, but from such observations we cannot validly infer that the invariance will continue:

> …there can be no *demonstrative* arguments to prove, *that those instances, of which we have had no experience, resemble those, of which we have had experience*. (Hume (1740), p. 390)

('Demonstrative arguments' are equivalent to deductive arguments, whereas Hume calls induction for 'arguments from probability')

If we should be able to establish the truth of a generality like 'all humans are mortal', we would have to presuppose that there is a basic *invariance of nature*, in the form of a certainty that phenomena not experienced could be expected to 'resemble' known phenomena. But as there can be no deductive proof of the invariance of nature, there is no way of arguing for such invariance. An inductive proof of the invariance of nature would always already *require* an invariance of nature, that is, the proof would be circular; so it follows, says Hume, that induction is not a valid form of inference.

Popper's Solution: Falsificationism

Realising the impossibility of valid, inductive reasoning, Hume believed that there was no rational way of achieving knowledge of the world, but that reasoning for all practical purposes would have to be 'deriv'd from nothing but custom' (Hume (1740), p. 475). In this very sceptical understanding, the induction problem reveals its rather serious consequences: We cannot 'know' anything general about the world, which means that even deductive reasoning will always rely on general presuppositions that

are merely habituous, not established by reason. Which means that deductive reasoning can only generate habits that are ultimately unfounded.

But whereas Popper agrees that induction is not a valid form of inference, he disagrees with the pessimistic view that there can be no generation of knowledge:

> We do not act upon repetition or 'habit', but upon the best tested of our theories which, as we have seen, are the ones for which we have good rational reasons; not of course good reasons for believing them to be true, but for believing them to be the *best available* from the point of view of a search for truth or verisimilitude - the best among the competing theories, the best approximations to the truth. The central question for Hume was: do we act according to reason or not? And my answer is: Yes. (Popper (1972), p. 95)

It should be noted that Popper does accept the notion of 'habit' or 'custom' in his notion of *tradition*. Our theories are formed according to tradition, that is, not according to reason. But the innovation in relation to Hume is Popper's insistence that the testing of theories *can* be performed according to reason, and, when theories are rejected, so, eventually, is the tradition from which they arose. In that way, the induction problem does not exclude the possibility of reason. Popper's solution to the induction problem is based on the idea of *falsificationism*.

To give a brief outline of falsificationism, it may be constructive to do so in comparison with the antithesis of falsificationism, *i.e.*, verificationism. Verificationism is the doctrine that the observation of some phenomenon originally predicted by a theory can render that theory *verified*. Contrary to this, falsificationism is the doctrine that the failure to observe some phenomenon predicted by a theory renders the theory *falsified*.

To take a very simple example, which I will revert to later, a theory might be one about the planetary trajectories in the solar system, and the observation might be an observation of a certain prediction deriving from the theory, e.g. that Mars will be at position X at time Y. Now, the verificationist will generally maintain that if Mars is observed at position X at time Y, then this observation verifies the theory predicting it - even if only one observation conforming to the theory is not sufficient *proof* - any sensible verificationist would undoubtedly require 'statistically adequate' evidence for that. The reasoning underlying this example can be laid out as follows:

III. B

> IF there is statistically adequate observations of Mars conforming to theoretical prediction
> THEN the theory of planetary trajectories is true

This line of reasoning, however, can be questioned by reference to the induction problem: *We cannot know if the next observation will be of Mars not behaving as*

predicted. There is, the scepticist will say, a very real possibility that Mars has behaved according to theory only by chance; one can easily construct other equations and calculations than those proposed by the theory, which would let you observe Mars at position X at time Y. One thousand observations of Mars in the predicted spot, or ten thousand, or a million, can never guarantee that we have worked out the trajectory of Mars; there is always the slight possibility that Mars *accidentally* happens to come by as predicted.

A sensible verificationist would probably not reject the scepticist objection to **iii. b**, he would more likely retract any claims to 'truth'. It may be that we cannot guarantee the truth of the theory, but one million observations of Mars behaving according to theory, is, after all, rather strong evidence that it *might* be correct. The verificationist would no doubt point to the high degree of *probability* invoked by one million positive observations, rather than to the truth claim. And, he might also say that, since the induction problem renders absolute truth an illusion, a high degree of probability is the best evidence we can hope to get. After all, a high probability is better than nothing.

Falsificationism, on the other hand, takes the induction problem very literally: probability is of no real use. The man who has had an airliner crashing into his house has little use of the information that the chance of this happening is 1:100.000.000, because when it happens, the chance is, as it were, 1:1 (of course the 'chance' of something happening *when* it actually happens, is irrelevant). The same applies, in a sense, to the expectation of Mars at position X at time Y. We do not know for a fact that the theory is true, no matter how many observations we have performed. Only when Mars *fails* to appear as predicted, can we know *for a fact* that the theory is *false*. The point for the falsificationist is that the relationship between truth and falsehood is asymmetrical in that we can never know for a fact that some theory is true, but in some cases, we can know that it is false, that is, when its predictions do not correspond with observation. No one can ever know as 'absolutely true' that his home will never be hit by an aeroplane, but if you actually observe this to happen, then you do know for sure that the theory 'an aeroplane will never hit my house', is indisputably false.

The falsificationist reasoning underlying the testing of the theory, will thus be different from that of the verificationist:

III. C

> IF there is an observation of Mars *not* conforming to theoretical prediction
> THEN the theory of planetary trajectories is false

Accordingly, the falsificationist will test the theory by trying to find counter examples through 'rigorous testing'. As we have seen, not even one million positive observations will render the theory true, yet only one counter example is sufficient to render it false. But while the verificationist would say that a high degree of probability is the best evidence we can get, falsificationism will say that any kind of probability calculation is not evidence at all, because probability calculation does not deal with *existence*, but with chance. Calculating the probability of an aeroplane hitting some house does not deal with the existence of the house, the existence of some given aeroplane, or of its

flight paths, engine malfunctionings, or of the flight crew's tendency for in-flight drug abuse. The observation of the aeroplane crashing into the house, however, is an observation dealing with existence, not chance. So this observation *is* evidence - evidence that the expectation that it could not happen is false.

The point is that whereas verification does not provide certain knowledge, falsification does. And though this knowledge is negative, it is still knowledge - and no less valuable than positive knowledge.

An Objection from Inductivism

The 'negativity' of falsificationism is, however, often comprehended as being a *problem* inherent in the method. Objections typically point to the *futility* of gaining knowledge about what is false, when what one really wants to know is what is true. Critics argue that gaining certainty of a hypothesis' falsity virtually brings us no closer to the truth. This is an example of this objection:

> Serious questions ... confront the claims of such a falsificationist program to qualify as functional equivalent of inductivism - a genuine alternative to it. After all the object of the enterprise of inquiry is the pursuit of truth - to find answers to our questions about nature that can reasonably and defensibly be held to be true answers. And how can the falsificationist program effectually help here? It is a prime weakness of the falsificationist approach that it proposes to pursue truth by the elimination of error. To falsify a conjectured truth-candidate is to do no more than to eliminate one possibility. And here lies a problem. Once one establishes, for example, that the value of the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, π, is not 3.12222... (with 2's *ad indefinitum*), is one really closer to a true answer? If we know that the fingerprint is not *X*'s, that still leaves *Y*, *Z*, and a great many others. As any schoolmaster knows, the possibilities of "getting it wrong" are virtually endless. Error is hydra-headed - eliminate one possibility and a multitude of others spring up in its place. (Rescher (1980), p. 217)

The idea of falsificationism, however, is not to carry on mindlessly eliminating false hypotheses, the one more silly than the other. The hypotheses to be tested are conjectures, *bold* ones perhaps, but not *unqualified* ones. In order to arrive at the conclusion that π is 'not 3.12222....', one would have had to conjecture that it should indeed be so, otherwise there would be no motivation for examining this problem. But why would anyone bother to hypothesise that this should be the true value of π? In order for this to be a *qualified* guess, someone would have had to have measured a circle's circumference's relation to its diameter to be in fact 3.12222. Only then would the guess be qualified. The person producing this guess would then be entitled to test the hypothesis that his result would hold good for other circles as well, and he would soon find, through 'rigorous testing', that his hypothesis was false (perhaps because he had been measuring on a geometrically imperfect circle, or had been using an inaccurate measuring instrument). Should he then realise that on all other circles he had been measuring, the result had invariantly been 3.14 (or precisely 22/7), he would be

entitled to hypothesise that this figure was indeed correct. And testing this hypothesis on geometrically perfect circles would inescapably show that the hypothesis could *not* be falsified, hence it could be said to be as true as it can possibly get. Similarly, as regards Rescher's example of fingerprints, a detective investigating some crime would obviously not resort to the kind of unqualified guessing, that Rescher seems to suggest. If a fingerprint is found on a crime scene, no detective in his right mind would start hypothesising that it might be Adam's, it might be Eve's, and so forth, covering the totality of humanity. Hypotheses pertaining to the ownership of the fingerprints would be qualified by circumstantial knowledge: the detective would probably have knowledge of a limited group of people who were somehow connected to the crime. The hypothesis that one of these persons might have left the fingerprint is a qualified guess, and at the same time it is *fallible*, which makes the testing of the hypothesis worthwhile.

That there are 'virtually endless' possibilities of going wrong is true of course. But that does not mean that just any possibility is as good as the other. It is central to Popperian philosophy that we have *theories* directing our conjectures, such theories qualifying the conjectures.

Rescher's metaphor of the hydra is appropriate only on the conditions that the person holding the sword is disinterested in getting it right, that he has no theory to go on, and that chopping off heads is what it is really about. But a falsificationist enterprise in Popper's sense is not aimed at killing the hydra: what Rescher misses, it seems, is that it is not the aim of falsificationism to falsify hypotheses, on the contrary, it is the aim to find a hypothesis that *cannot* be falsified. Eventually, with a bit of luck, there will be one head on the hydra that just won't come off. This is the hypothesis which cannot, in spite of 'rigorous testing', be falsified.

However, Rescher seems to be vaguely aware of the claim that theories direct our observations and conjectures. Seeing that hypotheses may be based on presupposed background knowledge, Rescher objects that

> ... we then cannot avoid induction in delimiting the range of hypotheses that are *worth* trying to falsify. (Rescher (1980), p. 218)

It appears that a theory is something we arrive at inductively from observation and presuppositions. Popper, however, would probably have no quarrel with this (though he would definitely put it differently); theories derive, says Popper, from *tradition* (Popper (1963), pp. 120-136), so they are inevitably relative to framework. However, theories are not truths, precisely because they are not arrived at by a valid method of inquiry (that method being, perhaps, induction), nor would any critical rationalist postulate that they were. The theory underlying the formation of hypotheses, along with other traditional presuppositions, is never immune to criticism. And, as discussed in chapter II, the very framework in which the theory is proposed is invariantly questionable. Accordingly, the objection that theory choice is guided by induction, generally misses the point of critical rationalism: Neither is induction a valid method

for arriving at the truth[43], nor do theories constitute truth. If theories were expected to be true, they would not be conjectures, and they would not be subject to criticism. Popper readily admits that theories are *myths* that arise from the sociological phenomenon, *tradition*. What is 'scientific' about a theory is not the theory itself, or the criteria applied in choosing the theory. The scientific aspect is the *critical examination* of the theory, and this is what makes science distinguishable from religion: religion is just the 'telling of the myth', whereas the telling of the scientific myth is 'accompanied by a second order tradition - that of critically discussing the myth' (Popper (1963), p. 127). In addition the scientific myth is characterised by being *fallible*: in order for a theory to count as potentially scientific, it should be possible that it could be false, and that it could be tested to be false.

Above, Rescher insists that 'the object of the enterprise of inquiry is the pursuit of truth'. This sounds very attractive, but before embracing this ideal, one should look closer at the central assumption behind it; it would appear that Rescher assumes that the pursuit of truth might actually *lead* us the truth. This, however, is not the assumption of his book. Rescher wisely limits his expectation of what we can achieve to be '*...rational warrant of claims to correctness*' (Rescher (1980), p. 37). A 'rational warrant', in turn, is derived from the observation of 'systematicity', that is, when an account of some phenomenon is systematic, then it is the best approximation to the truth of the matter:

> Systematicity becomes our test of truth, the guiding standard of truth-estimation. Our "picture of the real" is thus taken to emerge as an intellectual product achieved under the control of the idea that systematicity is a regulative principle for our theorizing. (Rescher (1980), p. 37)

Systematicity is shorthand for such criteria as completeness, inclusiveness, unity, connectedness, and comprehensiveness. So in order for a conjecture about some phenomenon to be true, it has to 'fit' in terms of such criteria with the current body of background knowledge about the phenomenon. So induction is '... a particular sort of cognitive systematization with "the data"' (Rescher (1980), p. 38). But the 'data', Rescher admits, '...are invariably fallible - ... our sources of information afford misinformation as well' (Rescher (1980), p. 38), and consequently, the attempt at arriving at a systematic account of some phenomenon will often involve a revision of background knowledge itself:

[43] Additionally, induction is necessarily *always* theory-guided itself. There is no way a subject can observe e.g. 'likeness', or 'constant conjunction', since he would need an underlying theory suggesting what standards would constitute the 'likeness' or 'constant conjunction' between observations. So preceding 'induction' there is always a theory guiding it. This is why Popper dismisses the very idea of induction altogether.

> In the course of [the process of broadening our range of experience], it may well eventuate that our existing systematizations - however adequate they may seem at the time - are untenable and must be overthrown in the interest of constructing ampler and tighter systems. Cognitive systematization is emphatically not an indelibly conservative process which only looks to what fits smoothly into hereto established patterns, but one where the established patterns are themselves ever vulnerable and liable to be upset in the interests of devising a more comprehensive systematic framework. (Rescher (1980), p. 39)

Substitute the word 'systematization' with 'theory' in this passage, and add that the 'overthrowing' of theories is necessarily obtained through the observation that predictions derived from the theories in question turn out to be false. Do that, and you have a nearly perfect account of a falsificationist programme, albeit in different terms. Rescher's complaint at falsificationism must derive from the misunderstanding that the procedure of falsification is not informed by theories, and that it has only 'elimination of possibilities' as its goal.

As pointed out by Miller (1994), inductivism and verificationism have to presuppose regularity - a regularity that can itself not be verified. Falsificationism, contrastingly, is not committed to *verifying* regularity (Miller (1994), p. 25); a basic regularity in the world may be a mere conjecture, which, as it has not been *falsified*, possesses enough verisimilitude to enable the possibility of generating knowledge. The need for verification ironically becomes the ball and chain of verificationism.

It seems that Rescher's concept of 'systematicity' is really another word for Hume's *invariance of nature*, an invariance which, he argued, cannot be rationally defended. Moreover, it seems striking that Rescher, who is a declared *inductivist*, should acknowledge the 'fallibility' of the data, seeing that this would mean that systematicity can never be established beyond doubt, in which case systematicity can hardly provide a 'rational warrant of claims to correctness'.

When seen in that light, Rescher's inductivism is no closer at arriving at the truth than falsificationism, as he agrees that there are no ultimate sources of truth, and that all we can do is make qualified guesses. As Miller points out (Miller (1994), p. 6), the genius of falsificationism is that the recognition that truth is unobtainable leads to the idea that the pursuit of truth (understood as the final, absolute truth) should simply not be attempted. But this is what Rescher fails to incorporate: the understanding that 'getting it wrong' is far from a wasted effort at getting it right. Getting it wrong is, as Popper would say, an invaluable *source of ignorance*. Whereas '... our knowledge can be only finite, ... our ignorance must necessarily be infinite' (Popper (1963), p. 28). Knowing that we do not know is knowledge, too.

FROM SCIENCE TO EVERYDAY ARGUMENT

The basic mechanism of critical argument is basically invariant to context or framework. Hence the notion of scientific discourse as a model for 'ordinary' discourse is not inappropriate, since critical argument in scientific frameworks functions on the same principles as the critical argument of everyday life.

On Popper's Notion of Common Sense

It is time to transfer the discussion from science to everyday conversation. I argued in chapter II that common sense is the practical application of being rational, *in* specific contexts. As it happens, this notion of common sense is not altogether different from Popper's corresponding term (Popper (1972), pp. 32ff.), even if an ambiguity in Popper's notion of common sense deserves a minor adjustment. This ambiguity will be considered below, but first we should take a look at Popper's general understanding of the term, common sense:

> ... the term 'common sense'' which I am using here is a very vague term, simply because it denotes a vague and changing thing - the often adequate or true and often inadequate or false instincts or opinions of many men. (Popper (1972), p. 33)

I would basically agree that the term is vague - that is, common sense is neither a guarantee for truth nor for falsehood. Common sense, in my conception, is the practical application of rationality on empirical questions or problems - that is, the concrete manifestation of common sense depends on context, while being governed by context invariant rationality. But rationality can never immunise common sense against error - it only guarantees that common sense is arrived at rationally, that is, consistently and co-operatively. On this conception, common sense is *both* starting point and end result of being rational. Assumptions about the world which are generally believed to be common sense may be problematised in rational discussion, and consequently, through this process, it may result in a change in common sense. Popper's corresponding notion deviates from this, in that common sense may be the starting point of a rational discussion, but it needs not be the end result:

> Any of our commonsense assumptions ... from which we start can be challenged and criticized at any time; often such an assumption is successfully criticized and rejected (for example, the theory that the world is flat). In such a case, common sense is either modified by the correction, or it is transcended and replaced by a theory which may appear to some people for a shorter or longer period of time as being more or less 'crazy'. If such a theory needs much training to be understood, it may even fail for ever to be absorbed by common sense. Yet even then we can demand that we try to get as close as possible to the ideal: *All science, and all philosophy, are enlightened common sense*. (Popper (1972), p. 33f.)

In this quotation we have the characteristic distinction between science and non-science; But if the application of rational criticism results in ideas thought to be 'crazy' - and thus *not* commonsensical, and if the understanding of such ideas require large amounts of 'training', it is, I would argue, because it is seen from outside the framework in which the ideas were produced. It is only outside the framework of some science or philosophy that its special ideas will seem 'crazy'. For example, it may appear to be not-commonsensical to assert that some given object may have both value x and value y at the same time, that is, saying that e.g. the chair I am presently sitting on is both right below me *and* in the far end of the room. This seems to be *non*-sensical, even though it is an (admittedly extreme) consequence of quantum physics[44], a science that has been rationally produced. It will take a lot of 'training' indeed to appreciate this as common sense knowledge. But in the particular science in question the inferential moves producing precisely such conceptions are conversationally relevant, while in another context they would not only be highly irrelevant, but also strongly counter-intuitive. What would seem to be nonsensical in other contexts, constitute perfectly co-operative moves in the context of quantum physics, that is, among quantum physicists, it *is* common sense to talk about objects with indefinite value. In the present conception, common sense is a highly context-bound phenomenon, because it is the application of formal rationality on empirical matters.

It seems that Popper is unclear about the question of contextuality of common sense (this ambiguity does not jeopardise his main thesis in any fundamental way, but it has some importance for the present purposes); while it is likely that Popper would admit that common sense is relative to frameworks, it seems that he uses the term common sense also as a notion covering the totality of 'instincts and opinions of many men'. When he says that a theory might appear 'crazy' to some people one needs to ask: to *what* people? To whom would, e.g., quantum mechanics seem 'crazy'? And when he says that some 'crazy' ideas might never be 'absorbed by common sense', then *whose* common sense does he refer to?

But some given crazy idea *is* at least absorbed by the common sense *of the particular framework in which it is conceived*, I would argue, otherwise the idea would not have been conceived in the first place. Surely, quantum mechanics seems 'crazy' to 99.99 percent of the totality of people in the world, but to the rest, the physicists, it turns out to be fair and square, common sense. It is so, I would argue, because in their framework, gaining knowledge about elementary particles is highly *relevant*, which means that the principles of communication, in that particular context, will have to allow for a highly abstract form of reasoning which involves premises largely unknown to the rest of us, in our habitual discourses. Therefore it seems crazy to us, but not to them.

[44] On the micro-level, a case in point is the electron, whose whereabouts are value-indefinite, that is, the physicist cannot validly assert that it is in one or another particular place, only that it definitely *is*. And quantum physics has no principle by which the macro-level can be immunized to the same problem. It follows that theoretically some given object like a chair may not have a definite value, where value could for instance be spatial location.

Accordingly, common sense is always the starting point of rational discussion *in* some given framework, but it is also always the end result of a rational discussion *in* some given framework.

However, frameworks are transcendable by way of *criticism*. At present, it seems a wild guess to suggest that someday, quantum mechanics will be common sense knowledge to a majority of people. But then, there was a time when you could have said the same about the idea that the earth is round (cf. Popper's example above). During an extensive period in history, however, criticism of the common sense dogma that 'the earth is flat', finally rejected that thesis and paved the way for the general acceptance of the idea that the earth is round. We do not know for sure if the future will bring a final refutation of *that* thesis, convincing us that, no, it is not round, it is in fact rectangular.

But what is probably the most central point in critical rationalism is that even though what is true today may be false tomorrow, it is not as if it makes no difference what we hold to be true and what we hold to be false. There are perfectly good reasons for our assumption that the earth is round, not flat, rectangular, square, or even defiant of the very concept of form. The reason for our knowing that the earth is round is that its roundness has not been falsified in spite of many attempts to do so. And rival theories of the earth being flat or rectangular etc. *have* been refuted, or *can* easily be refuted. Consequently, the theory 'the earth is round' has by far the highest degree of verisimilitude in the set of proposed and proposable theories about the shape of the earth.

What is almost equally important in a critical rationalist view is that, having refuted a theory and introduced a new one, we are better off than we were before; The new theory contains in it the argument refuting the old one, and in that way, the new theory represents an accumulation, or increase, of knowledge. Whereas medieval astronomers knew that the 'earth is flat' based only on the positive argument of *why* it is flat (the argument from observation, 'it *looks* flat (from an earth-based perspective), hence it *is* flat'), the new theory, 'the earth is round', involves not only the positive argument of *why* it is round, but also the negative argument of why it is *not flat*. The new theory contains a surplus of knowledge compared to the old one. This is the critical rationalist objection to Kuhn's assertion that paradigms replace one another without accumulating knowledge[45].

These mechanisms are potentially the same in ordinary conversation. In fact, I find it less than convincing that rational discussion in science and rational discussion on the street are fundamentally different; they go on in different frameworks and relate to different phenomena, but the principles are basically the same. Criticism is equally powerful as argumentative tool in all kinds of argumentative discourses; if a speaker's argument is convincingly criticised for being inconsistent the argument loses its force regardless of subject, speech situation or framework. And like in the above scientific examples, the falsification of an argument provides the (sometimes valuable) knowledge that the argument in question is *not* a passable way.

[45] Cf. chapter II.

Logic is far from absent from everyday conversation. But while any logical system for the sake of theoretical consistency displays highly advanced rule systems that may seem alien to the way we ordinarily argue, I suggest that ordinary dialogue usually takes advantage of only the most basic fraction of logic, *i.e.* the axioms, and a few, simple applications thereof. A strong comparison is the ordinary application of mathematics: while theoretical mathematics is highly abstract and seems far removed from the practical purposes of ordinary life, we do use the most elementary knowledge of natural numbers, and we do so hundreds of times every day. The fact that mathematics is abstract cannot persuade us that addition and subtraction are not useful faculties. Likewise, we should not rule out that basic logic is present (and should be present) in our everyday discourses, just because a textbook on theoretical logic seems far removed from daily life and its problems. The everyday use of logic is limited by communicative demands of simplicity and comprehensibility, not to mention *contextual relevance* (see e.g. Sperber & Wilson (1986), pp. 65-171). In the following section, I will briefly discuss what aspects of elementary logic can be expected to be communicatively applicable.

The Laws of the Excluded Middle and of Contradiction

Most logicians hold the laws of the excluded middle and of contradiction to be axioms of any useful logic. The law of the excluded middle is the claim that there is no middle way between true and false. The law of contradiction states that it is impossible for a given statement to be true and false at the same time. I shall consider them in turn, as the latter presupposes the former.

Following Allwood et al. (Allwood et al. (1977), p. 103), the law of the excluded middle can be symbolised in this way:

III. D

$$p \vee \neg p$$

meaning ‘either p or not-p.’ It means that any given proposition is, theoretically, always either true or false, not somewhere in between. This may seem odd at first glance for language users with a normal sense of language; obviously, almost all languages have adverbial qualifiers, modal markers, and the like, and it is perfectly possible to express propositions such as *maybe p*, *it is likely that p*, *I guess that p*, and so on. However, such expressions do not indicate a truly intermediate truth value, rather they indicate the speaker’s degree of access or commitment to a proposition. They do not position the proposition in an alternative truth value between true and false, instead they indicate the speaker’s relation to the proposition. Languages which do have a real word for an intermediate truth value are rare, if at all existent.

Claiming that there is no alternative to the binary system of true/false is notably not the same as saying that truth can be finally established in practice. The law of the excluded middle says only that it is not possible to attribute an intermediate truth value to a proposition. The law of the excluded middle is treated in logic as a tautology, and by virtue of its tautological character, it can be used as an *axiom* of logic; without it, logic

would, it seems, not be logic[46]. However, though it is a necessary axiom, the law of the excluded middle is not sufficient as the axiomatic foundation of logic. As noted above, the law of the excluded middle can be formulated as 'either p or not-p', but this still leaves us with the possibility that *both* p and not-p could be true, in other words, that we allow for *contradiction*. But allowing for contradiction undermines the very idea of logic. So to the axiom 'either p or not-p' we need to add 'but not both'. This last bit is the law of contradiction. It says, symbolically:

III. E

$$\neg (p \wedge \neg p)$$

or 'it is false that *both* p *and* not-p'. As it turns out, contradiction is a very important issue for a falsificationist approach. Popper presupposes the law of contradiction in his insistence that we cannot tolerate contradiction (Popper (1963), pp. 312 - 335). Whereas it is valuable to discover contradictions, their 'fertility' is no reason to tolerate them. Contradiction is at the heart of any critical approach; once you discover inherent contradiction in a theory, you have no choice but to reject that theory, and the rejection of a theory is, as we have seen, an indispensable precondition for increasing knowledge.

But what would be the consequence of *tolerating* contradiction, that is, regarding a theory as 'true', while recognising that it is internally contradictory? The problem of contradiction is in the doctrine of *ex falso quodlibet*, meaning roughly 'anything follows from a contradiction (literally 'falsehood').' The sentence

III. F

$$(p \wedge \neg p) \rightarrow q$$

is a popular way of putting it (cf. Allwood (1977), p. 103). The important thing to observe about **iii. f** is that it is infallible: for an implication to be false, we need to produce an interpretation where the antecedent (the part before the arrow) is true, and the consequent (the part after the arrow) is false. But in **iii. f** the antecedent cannot *in any interpretation* be true - it is false by logical necessity - and consequently we cannot find an interpretation of the sentence which is false. Hence it is *a logical truth*. This means that from a theory with inherent contradiction, anything at all can be concluded.

[46] In referring to 'logic', I consistently mean a classical, two-valued logic. There are of course schools of logic that would object to this, e.g. intuitionist logic or fuzzy logic. However, the object of the current account is the use of logic for critical purposes, not for demonstrative purposes (as in the formal sciences). As it has been noted by Popper (1972) pp. 304-307, a 'weakened' logic, like multi-valued logic, is best suited for mathematical proof, while for critical, empirical purposes, what is needed is a 'strong' logic, i.e. a logic in which the law of the excluded middle is not up for grabs. A similar point is central to Sidgwick's account of the 'negative logic' of empirical language: criteria for the *ad hoc*, argumentative criticism are first and foremost *simple* and thus *powerful* (See Nielsen (1997)).

If a theory claims that 'Mars is a planet and Mars is not a planet', anyone is free to conclude e.g. that 'The moon is made of cheese', 'I am Napoleon', or 'Austria is the capital of Vienna'. Or whatever one likes. One need hardly explain further why inherent contradictions are intolerable.

The accusation of contradiction is probably the most powerful form of criticism conceivable; if speaker A has advanced some claim supported by some reasons, then, if B can demonstrate somehow that the argument in its consequences or its basic assumptions contains a conjunction such as $(p \wedge \neg p)$, then A is forced to withdraw the argument, or at the very least, to rephrase it in a modified and non-contradictory version. If he does not, he can no longer pose as a serious dialogue partner. The demonstration of contradiction in an argument effectively blocks the way leading on from that argument, because the criticism refers to the authority of the law of contradiction. Obviously, it is quite possible to engage in a discussion of whether or not the argument is in fact contradictory, but the law itself is always already presupposed: there is of course no law against attempting to refute a logical truth like the law of contradiction, but such attempts are bound to fail: You cannot refute anything without assuming that refutation is possible.

The law of contradiction is an axiom of logic. All rules of inference are ultimately derived from this law (and the law of the excluded middle), which can be seen from the fact that the criterion of validity has the question of contradiction at its centre; a valid inference is, by definition, an inference in which it is not possible to accept the premises and yet deny the conclusion, *without contradiction*. Validity is the *absence* of contradiction, while invalidity is the *presence* of contradiction.

In so far as it can be assumed that language users master the law of contradiction (and this is a fair assumption - if they did not, they would not be able to use language), it is tempting to assume that they will also master some basic rules of valid inference. For the moment, however, this last assumption will remain a - not very bold - conjecture. At this point it is necessary to discuss in what appearance such rules of inference can be expected to surface in language. For that purpose, it is necessary to apply Popper's distinction between 'rules of inference' and 'calculi of logic'[47].

Consider the following argument (taken from Popper (1963), p. 209):

III. G

> Rachel is the mother of Richard
> Richard is the father of Robert
> The mother of the father is the paternal grandmother
> Therefore, Rachel is the paternal grandmother of Robert

Two things may come immediately to mind about this argument. First, it seems to be a valid argument; given the truth of the general principle stated in the third premise, and given the truth of the concrete data in premises one and two, a denial of the conclusion

[47] The exposition of this distinction is based on Popper (1963), pp. 201-214.

seems to be contradictory. Second, it seems to be the kind of argument that could be represented as a syllogism, that is, it should be representable as a class calculus formula, and in this representation, the validity of the argument should be demonstrable. But this is not so: if we let the symbols '*A*' and '*C*' stand for 'Rachel' and 'Richard' respectively, '*b*' for 'mother of Richard', '*d*' for 'father of Robert', '*e*' for 'mother of father', '*f*' for 'paternal grandmother', and '*g*' for 'paternal grandmother of Robert', we get the following argument:

III. H

A is b
C is d
e is f
∴ A is g

A look at this formula will persuade the inquirer that it is perfectly possible to accept the premises and yet deny the conclusion. Hence it is invalid. But in its linguistic representation, **iii. g**, the argument seems intuitively valid, so what is wrong?

The fault arises from the fact that we have produced a formula by the use of a logical language *too poor* to convey the underlying rule of inference. The logical language used is the 'class calculus' which is simply too coarse to distinguish between relations and subjects within a given class[48]. Apparently there *is* a rule of inference certifying the validity of the argument, but this rule of inference cannot be formulated in *all* logical languages (*i.e.* calculi). Accordingly, we have to distinguish between rules of inference and their representations in logical languages. A rule of inference is *an unconditional claim about all possible statements of a certain kind*, while a formula of some logical language is *a conditional claim about all relations and individuals of a certain kind* (Popper (1963), p. 203). The formulae are linguistic, while the rules of inference are *meta*-linguistic. This means that you can never encounter a 'rule of inference' in natural language - once it is formulated linguistically, it becomes *a descriptive theory*, *i.e.* a conditional claim about the exterior world, not about language.

The point of all this is that many valid inferences may not be directly explicable in natural language, a fact that might seem to pose a severe difficulty for any logical approach to argumentation. However, as I am going to argue, the logic of argumentative dialogue is *simple*, that is, it probably involves only a few, basic linguistic representations of inference rules, in particular such a form as the Modus Ponens:

[48] A logical language that can demonstrate the validity of the argument is the calculus of relations, see Popper (1963), p. 202.

III. I

$p \rightarrow q$
p
$\therefore q$

and the Modus Tollens:

III. J

$p \rightarrow q$
$\neg q$
$\therefore \neg p$

I think it is a reasonable guess that the ordinary language user, in giving the argument **iii. g**, would understand it more or less like a conditional:

III. K

$((A \text{ is } b) \wedge (C \text{ is } d) \wedge (e \text{ is } f)) \rightarrow (A \text{ is } g)$

The underlying inference rule of Modus Ponens would allow the language user to conclude that q, given that p, where p = ((*A is b*) ∧ (*C is d*) ∧ (*e is f*)), and q = (*A is g*). At this point it should be pointed out that I do not address the problems of the *actual* articulation in language of logical relations - the semantic meaning of 'if…then…' in natural language notably often differ from the meaning of the connective '→' in sentential logic, and in addition the logical meaning of the connective may often be expressed *without* the use of words like 'if' and 'then' (see Grice (1989), pp. 58ff.). For the present purposes I assume that the *idea* of two sentences having the relationship described by '→' can exist (and very often *do* exist) in natural language dialogues, regardless of the actual articulation of this relationship.

Falsificationism and Dialogue

'Our powers of reasoning are nothing but powers of critical argument' says Popper (Popper (1972, p. 121), and nothing could be a more appropriate motto for this study. But our powers of reasoning being related to the argumentative function of language is no apology; for Popper, the argumentative function of language is the most advanced form of language use, belonging in the so-called World III[49], the world of objective knowledge. Objective knowledge is not, as one might suspect, knowledge which is necessarily objectively *true*, but it is knowledge which may exist *independently of a knowing subject*.

[49] Or world IV, if we follow Leech's reasonable suggestion that Popper's three worlds (I: physical objects, II: mental states, III: objective facts) be complemented with a world of social facts (Leech (1983), p. 48-56)

The idea is that, in real arguments, logic is a critical instrument used to examine arguments already produced, it is not a procedure for establishing necessary conclusions from already given premises. The practical exercise of *reason* (as defined in chapter II) is that of discovering, by expecting consistency, what commitments are necessarily contained in some argumentative discourse. If some language user A produces some argument, some other language user B may elaborate on A's argument by extracting what further assumptions A are committed to in order for the argument to be consistent. What may happen, and it fairly often happens, is that A may not accept such further commitments, and B may then *falsify* A's entire argument or some element in it. B's argumentation to this effect has been critical qua its following an expectation of logical consistency. Very often, in this process, it can be seen that the order of criticism is the reverse of the order of establishing proof. In theory, deductive logic is taken to describe the inferential move of bringing the truth of the premises to bear on the conclusion, whereas real life argumentation involves bringing the falsity of the conclusion to bear on the premises. The logic of everyday discourse is basically a critical instrument, and it works on critical rationalist principles, where falsification rather than verification brings about rejection of presupposed standpoints (in case of falsification) or increasing verisimilitude of a standpoint (in case falsification is not successful).

The argumentative use of falsification requires a concept of truth. For that, Popper turns to Tarski: Tarski's theory of truth is correct, says Popper (Popper (1972) pp. 304 - 340) because it is based on *objectivity*. All other theories of truth are based on subjective perspectives: The coherence theory of truth (which is really a theory of consistency) claims that a theory is true if it is consistent with all other theories held to be true. But this is the epistemic observation of a subject observing from some subjective viewpoint in history: In the eighteenth century, for example, one can imagine that, according to the coherence theory, some theory of alchemy was true, because it was not inconsistent with other theories held to be true at the time. The coherence theory, however, would say today that a theory of alchemy is false, because it is now inconsistent with contemporary theories of chemistry. In this way, a coherence view remains relative to the subject using it. A similar argument can be made concerning a pragmatic truth theory - it has to be based on subjective experience: it is theoretically possible to envisage two contradictory claims, p and ¬p, which are pragmatically true for group A and group B, respectively. In group A, there is general agreement that p is the most useful (true) proposition, while in group B, members agree that ¬p is the most useful (true) proposition. A pragmatic conception of truth does not effectively block such a subjective (or intersubjective) understanding of truth.

As it should be evident from the discussion of relativism in chapter II, the very concept of 'truth' has to be objective, otherwise it is simply reducible to *belief*. Tarski's theory of truth is objective: it is possible that a theory can be true *without a knowing subject*. We - as subjects - cannot expect to *know* the truth, but this does not mean that a theory cannot *be* true - regardless of the time and circumstances of establishing it. Tarski's theory of truth introduces two very important notions for this dissertation: the *object-language* and the *meta-language*:

> Since we have agreed not to employ semantically closed languages, we have to use two different languages in discussing the problem of the definition of truth and, more generally, any problems in the field of semantics. The first of these languages is the language which is 'talked about' and which is the subject-matter of the whole discussion; the definition of truth which we are seeking applies to the sentences of this language. The second is the language in which we 'talk about' the first language, and in terms of which we wish, in particular, to construct the definition of truth for the first language. We shall refer to the first language as '*the object-language*,' and to the second as '*the meta-language*'. (Tarski (1944), p. 545)

It now follows that an objective theory of truth as correspondence with fact has to be *hypothetical*: *If* grass is green *only then* is the proposition 'grass is green', *true*. Given the lack of availability of final sources of experience, however, we can never certify finally that in fact grass *is* green, we can only hypothesise that it is so.

The hypothetical, objective correspondence theory of truth is crucial to any critical-rationalist project. In the following chapters, this should be evident from the fact that the distinction between meta-linguistic descriptions of the relationship between object-language and the world becomes absolutely central: critical argument is, when looked upon from a linguistic point of view, a meta-linguistic form of activity.

Meta-language may be an artificial language like some formal calculus of logic, or it may be the language in which participants reconstruct and evaluate the arguments of others. Whether some argument is represented symbolically in some formal language or it is reconstructed in natural language, makes a difference only insofar as the formal representation is based on a technical faculty that must be learned, while the conversational reconstruction comes more or less naturally along with the ability to use language in the first place. Otherwise, the meta-linguistic description is basically the same: it represents the truth conditions of some object-linguistic utterance, the purpose of such reconstruction being understanding, clarification, and, in turn, criticism.

CHAPTER IV

The Critical-Reconstructional Approach

INTRODUCTION

The present chapter has a double focus, one critical, and one creative. The critical focus will identify three serious problems in informalist theories of argument and subject them to critical treatment. Based on that, the creative focus will suggest a theoretical framework for a critical-reconstructional approach to argumentation, considering formalist and pragmatic insights.

On the Origins of Informal Logic

The central figure of the informalist tradition is the English philosopher Stephen Edelston Toulmin, whose groundbreaking work *The Uses of Argument* from 1958 is an embryonic version of what later came to be called *informal logic*[50]. This does not mean that Toulmin's work is still dearly treasured in circles of informal logic; as one prominent researcher recently commented[51], 'I think we should tip our hats to Toulmin's achievement - and then move on!', but I will argue that some central confusions that are very much alive in informal logic today can be traced back to Toulmin. A reason for this may be that, for someone who wants to make a case against formalism in argumentation analysis, *The Uses of Argument* readily delivers a whole range of critical arguments directed at formal ('geometrical') logic, without reference to technicalities that the reader would have to be a logician to decipher[52]. As a result, some of Toulmin's ideas that even informal logicians would agree to dismiss, still find their way into scholarly writings on argumentation, rhetoric, discourse and persuasion research. Prominent misconceptions are the dissociation of the concept of 'validity'

[50] As Douglas Walton readily admitted at the fourth ISSA conference in Amsterdam, 1998, 'the very term *informal logic* is a contradiction in terms', not only because it is difficult to imagine what a 'logic' is like that is 'not formal', but also in the sense that, as a scholarly discipline, the term covers everything from fierce, relativist attacks on even the faintest attempt to systematise analytical practices, to analyses that are virtually inseperable from strict, orthodox formalism. In order to delimit the range of the criticism in this chapter, I shall use the term 'informalism' to cover those approaches in which the three mentioned problems appear, so that 'informalism' is a subset of 'informal logic'.

[51] Said by American rhetorician Jean Goodwin at the third OSSA conference in Canada, 1999.

[52] No sarcasm intended. The present writer is no logician either and not especially at ease with highly technical writing. Such unease, however, should never in itself be allowed to form a base for objecting to the geometry of logic.

from the concept of 'form', and the use of the concept 'validity' as a quality that can be ascribed to 'propositions'. Both misconceptions are prominent in Dahl (1993):

> Toulmin's ultimate aim is to demonstrate that the syllogism is not tautological and that *no arguments are valid entirely because of their form, but always depend to some extent on content*. (Dahl (1993), p. 136) (my emphasis)

In this quotation, the meaning of the concept 'validity' slides into the meaning of the concept 'truth'. The standard definition of 'validity' states that an argument is valid if it is structured such that, given the truth of the premises, the conclusion cannot be false. All definitions of validity have in common the idea of the *hypothesis* of truth, and of argument *structure*. Validity is not a function of the truth of the premises, but of the structure or relationship between premises and conclusion - the notion of truth in the definition is merely given as a hypothesis. So validity refers to the quality of a structure or form making the conclusion a tautological entailment of the premises, regardless of content. If this definition were to apply in the above quotation, the statement that no arguments are valid by virtue of their form is a contradiction in terms. The other misconception (which is a close relative to the one just treated), that validity is a quality which can be ascribed to 'propositions', is evident in the following passage:

> (...) the validity of a proposition is not only determined by its being true or false, but by its being appropriate or inappropriate in given circumstances. (Dahl (1993), p. 133)

As already noted above, the standard definition of the term 'validity' can produce no such thing as 'the validity of a proposition'. The only way the above passage makes sense is when 'validity' is taken to mean 'acceptability', which is indeed far from the standard meaning of the concept.

In any case, Dahl must understand something else by the word 'validity', which means that none of the above passages argue against validity as a property of natural arguments after all. Confusion about the meaning of the term 'valid' is not local, it prevails in many other central informalist writings; Compare how the notion of validity is treated in Carl Wellman's highly influential *Challenge and Response* (1971), dealing with 'conductive reasoning'[53]:

[53] See my chapter I for an account of Wellman's *conductive* reasoning.

> It is precisely because the subject matter does not affect the validity of most deductive inferences that a single deductive logic can apply to the deductive reasoning of philosophers, biologists, and chemists alike. The situation is very different in conductive reasoning. Consider "you ought to do it because you promised." Whether or not this is a valid argument depends upon the relevance of promising for obligation and not at all on the logical form of the argument. (Wellman (1971), p. 54f.)

This account seems to be entirely self-contradictory. In the case of a certain type of argument (the conductive ones), says Wellman, validity does *not at all* depend on logical form. Apparently, it depends instead on content - in this case the 'relevance of promising for obligation'. On Wellman's account, validity is made to mean the relationship between a particular speech act type and a particular action obligation. In any traditional definition of 'validity', however, it is impossible that it could depend on anything *but* logical form: validity is *defined* by its dependence on logical form *only*. So relativisation of validity is possible only when the notion is redefined completely. Such redefinitions are central to many informalist approaches. In this chapter, I will examine in some detail how concepts of logic are tacitly supplied with a meaning that deviates from the standard meaning, and how these new concepts are then used for the criticism of formalism.

Three Problems

In the following, I will devote three sub-chapters to the discussion of three central problems which can be found in many informalist approaches. The problems of informalism belong on three levels of description, that is, at the level of *philosophy* (problem 1), at the level of *the philosophy of language* (problem 2), and at the level of *pragmatics* (problem 3). This is a brief outline of the three problems:

1. The deduction/induction distinction is not a viable dichotomy, as the two notions are not mutually exclusive, but overlap greatly. This problem is not reserved for informalism only, but arguments based on this misconception give rise to informalism's *rejection* of deduction as a feature of natural language reasoning.

2. Informalist approaches fail to distinguish clearly between meta-language and object-language. When informalism finds the truth values of logic (true or false) too rigid for the description of the complexity of empirical reality, it is disregarded that these truth values do not refer to *the world*, but to *sentences of the language*.

3. Informalist approaches give supremacy to use over system; the 'uses of argument' are almost invariantly thought to be constitutive of a 'system of argument'. The problem is that any idea of a system of argument becomes relative to any given context of use, and consequently the very idea of a 'system' is rendered meaningless. This problem pertains even more so to the language system: informalism generally tends to take the *expression* of arguments at face value, thus disregarding the significance of indirect illocution, presuppositions, and implicatures.

THE DEDUCTION/INDUCTION DICHOTOMY

The deduction/induction distinction is not a viable dichotomy, as the two notions are not mutually exclusive, but overlap greatly. This problem is not reserved for informalism only, but arguments based on this misconception give rise to informalism's *rejection* of deduction as a feature of natural language reasoning.

A Categorical Mistake

Suppose we take 'forms of inference' to refer to a category containing all possible ways of inferring. In order for a category to be useful for any purposes, its members should be mutually exclusive. In a category of letters for instance, the letter A has to be the only member being A. The category is no good if, e.g., B is 'also A', or 'partly A', or 'sometimes A'. So in the category 'forms of inference', we should expect members to be mutually exclusive in the same way, but, as I will propose, this expectation is not fulfilled. In fact, there seems to be a vast confusion about these central concepts.

I take the category to have at least 'deduction' and 'induction' as members; there may be others such as 'abduction' and 'conduction', but for the present purposes, these are of lesser importance.

The central question is: are the concepts of deduction and induction mutually exclusive? I am going to argue that they are not.

This is a selection of encyclopaedia definitions of the concepts of 'deduction' and 'induction':

Politikens Filosofi Leksikon (PFL) proposes this definition of deduction:

> **deduction** ...to derive a statement (a proposition) from other statements (propositions) in accordance with logical rules of inference.

Moreover, deduction is a 'syntactic concept', as

> ...it is possible to follow the rules of inference and check the validity of the deduction, without knowing the meaning connected to the words that appear in premises and conclusions.

Finally, says PFL, deduction is traditionally

> ... an inference from universal to specific. (transl.[54] NMN)

[54] The original passages read: '...udlede et udsagn (en dom) fra andre udsagn (domme) i overensstemmelse med logiske slutningsregler ... det er muligt at følge slutningsreglerne og at kontrollere følgerigtigheden af deduktionen, uden at man behøver at kende den mening, vi forbinder med de ord, som optræder i præmisser og konklusion ... en slutning fra det almene ... til det specielle'.

Den Store Danske Encyklopædi (SDE) is more economical, but the essence is generally the same:

> **deduction** ... in formal logic the derivation of a statement (the conclusion) from other statements (the premises) in accordance with logical rules of inference. (transl.[55] NMN)

And The Oxford Companion to Philosophy (OCP), too, agrees:

> **deduction** A species of argument or inference where from a given set of premisses the conclusion must follow. ... The set consisting of the premisses and the negation of the conclusion is inconsistent.

On *induction*, PFL says:

> **induction** In logic and methodology i. stands for any kind of inference in which the premises support the conclusion without logically entailing it ... the basic form of i. is *i. by simple enumeration* where one infers from the premise that all examined phenomena of a given type A have property B to the conclusion that all A-phenomena altogether have B. (transl.[56] NMN)

In SDE, the wording is almost identical to PFL, but with the addition that induction is not valid:

> **induction** In logic and methodology a chain of inferences. The basic form is induction by simple enumeration, where one infers from the premise that so far, all observed occurrences of phenomena of type S have possessed the property P, to the conclusion that new occurrences or all occurrences of S-phenomena possess P ... This kind of inference is not logically valid ... (transl.[57] NMN)

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[55] The original passage reads: '...i den formelle logik en udledning af et udsagn (konklusionen) ud fra andre udsagn (præmisserne) i overensstemmelse med logiske slutningsregler.'

[56] The original passage reads: ' I logik og metodelære betegner i. ... enhver form for slutning, hvor præmisserne underbygger konklusionen uden dog at medføre denne logisk. .... Den grundlæggende form for i. er *i. ved simpel opregning* (lat. *i. per enumerationem simplicem*), hvor der sluttes fra dette, at samtlige undersøgte fænomener af en given type A har egenskaben B, til det, at alle A-fænomener overhovedet har B.'

[57] The original passage reads: 'Inden for logik og metodelære en række slutninger. Den grundlæggende form er induktion ved simpel opregning, hvor der sluttes fra, at alle hidtil iagttagne forekomster af fænomener af typen S har besiddet egenskaben P, til at nye eller alle forekomster af S-fænomener besidder P. ... En sådan slutning er ikke logisk gyldig ....'

Finally, OCP gives this definition in which invalidity is also vaguely mentioned:

> **induction** Induction has traditionally been defined as the inference from particular to general. More generally an inductive inference can be characterised as one whose conclusion, while not following deductively from its premisses, is in some way supported by them or rendered plausible in the light of them.

We have seen in the above mentioned commonplaces that it is a defining feature of deduction that it is an inference which is 'logically valid', while the traditional definition (the scholastic definition) of deduction as 'an inference from a universal statement to a particular statement' has generally been abandoned. So deduction seems to be solely a characterisation of a particular *syntax*: when a set of statements is arranged in such a way that the conclusion can be calculated from the premises, *regardless of the meaning of the statements*, then the inference is deductive. It appears that 'deductive' is another word for 'logically valid'.

Insofar as 'induction' is defined as a form of inference which is 'invalid', the category of forms of inference seems to be consistent; if 'deductive' means 'valid', and 'inductive' means 'invalid', then these category members are mutually exclusive. But induction is not *only*, and not even *primarily*, defined by its invalidity. The basic feature of induction is, according to most definitions, the 'inference by simple enumeration', that is inferring from observation to rule (or from particular to universal). This, however, is not *syntactical* in the same way that deduction is. While we could make a list of deductive inference forms, using symbols and rules of inference, we cannot do the same thing with induction, unless, of course, we stick to the definition of induction as simply *invalid*. Then we could make a list of invalid inferences with symbols and indications of which rules of inference were in each case violated, but that would never be able to comprise the much more basic feature of induction, i.e. the 'simple enumeration' feature. The reason for this is that simple enumeration is not a syntactical feature, but rather, it is in the meaning of the sentences used in the inference, not in its formal representation. And this is the core of the problem: if 'deduction' means 'using a valid, logical form', and 'induction' means 'inferring rules from observation', then deduction and induction are *not* mutually exclusive. The following argument is an example:

IV. A

> 1. If all the pearls I have produced from this bag have been observed to be red, then all pearls in this bag are red
> 2. All the pearls I have produced from this bag have been observed to be red
> ∴ All the pearls in this bag are red.

iv. a qualifies as a deductive argument, in that it is based on a valid form (the *modus ponens*). But at the same time, the argument satisfies the criterion of induction, as it is a case of inferring from particular observations (premise 2) to generality (the conclusion). As it is evident, this is achieved by using an instantiation of the very principle of induction as a premise (premise 1). That induction can be 'turned valid' in this way has been pointed out by several scholars (see e.g. Collin et al. (1987), p. 110-113); Weddle (1979), p. 3), and the consequence is that the induction problem does not apply to the *form* of the argument, but applies instead to the premise in which the principle of induction is presupposed.

But the problem remains: **iv. a** can be referred to as 'deductive' when we look at its form, and 'inductive' when we look at its content. Deduction is a formal feature, induction is a non-formal feature, and hence they cannot be compared, and they cannot be thought of as members of the same category. (One might speculate that this problem derives from the fact that formalisation is a far younger development in logic than are these concepts themselves; medieval logic thought of deduction as the inferential move from a universal to a particular judgment, and of induction as an inferential move with the inverse direction. This actually constituted a consistent category, it seems. But with the advent of formalisation and symbolic logic (especially Frege), it became more obvious that the deductive inference was valid, while the inductive was not, and with logic being the philosophy of *valid* inference, deduction, not induction, became the object of study. This development has in turn made the term 'deduction' synonymous with 'valid form', while the term 'induction' still primarily is used to refer to its traditional meaning of 'inference from particular to general', with the invalidity of this inference being only an addition.)

From the early beginnings of informal logic the deduction/induction-dichotomy has been a point of dispute and remains so today. Some theorists have stuck to deductivist conceptions (Weddle (1979; 1980), Groarke (1992)), some claim that the distinction of induction / deduction should be taken to be differences in arguers' 'intentions' of argument strength (Fohr (1980)), some think that the distinction does not exhaust the possibilities, and that other forms such as 'conduction' should be included (Govier (1980b; 1980c; 1987), Bickenbach et al (1997), Johnson (1999)), and still others claim that deduction and induction are not 'forms of inference', but 'standards of assessment' (Hitchcock (1980; 1981)).

Modes of Inference

This category mistake is richly represented in the mentioned encyclopaedic definitions. PFL describes induction as being 'any kind of inference in which the premises support the conclusion, yet without logically entailing it.' From the point of view of formal logic, there is no such thing as 'premises supporting the conclusion without entailing it'; either the conclusion follows - or it does not. So the 'support' must be a kind of support other than logical support - the support must be derived from the presupposition of the truth, or *probability*, of the induction principle. But as **iv. a** demonstrates, there is no reason to suppose that this 'support' cannot be arranged in such a way that it actually serves as a *logical* support. Similarly, SDE simply states that 'such an inference (i.e. simple enumeration) is not logically valid'. But, when we look at **iv. a**, this characterisation of induction is simply false: the example *is* an

instance of simple enumeration, and the form of the argument *is* inarguably logically valid.

If this outline of the forms of inference as reflecting a categorical mistake is accurate, it appears that the terms 'deduction' and 'induction' are really not very useful for any practical purposes. If I say that some argument is 'deductive', I have not excluded that it might also be 'inductive', and if I say, perhaps critically, that some given argument is 'inductive', it may very well be representable on a deductive form, which will render my criticism unwarranted. No set of statements can be so preposterous, ridiculous or abusive that they cannot be represented as a logically valid argument; what we may claim to be true or false, likely or unlikely, sensible or ridiculous, charming or offensive, ethical or unethical, right or wrong, sincere or deceptive, simply has nothing to do with the logical syntax in which such claims can be arranged.

In order to remedy the overlap of meaning, there seem to be two ways of restating the meanings of the terms 'deduction' and 'induction':

IV. B

> Deductive inference = A valid form of inference
> Inductive inference = An invalid form of inference

IV. C

> Deductive inference = A mode of predicting singular observations from presupposed regularities
> Inductive inference = A mode of suggesting regularities from singular observations

Both of these options will eliminate the confusion arising from categorical mistakes, as both of the suggested categorisations involve mutual exclusion between the members; in **iv. b**, 'deduction' covers all types of formally valid inference, while 'induction' covers what remains, *i.e.* the formal fallacies. Systematic as this may be, it also renders both concepts redundant; we do not need the labels 'deduction' and 'induction' as we already have 'valid form' and 'formal fallacy' which seem to serve us fairly well. This seems to suggest that the traditional uses of the words can be reintroduced, with the important caution that these terms have nothing to do with the technical validity of arguments. This is why I suggest option **iv. c**. I propose that 'deduction' and 'induction' should not be thought of as *forms* of inference, but as *modes* of inference; deduction, in this definition, is the mode of inference in which one presupposes some agreed-upon regularity and claims that some particular observation is predictable on that basis. Contrary to this, induction is the mode of inferring from the observation of some kind of invariance or systematicity to the claim that this invariance is a transcendent regularity.

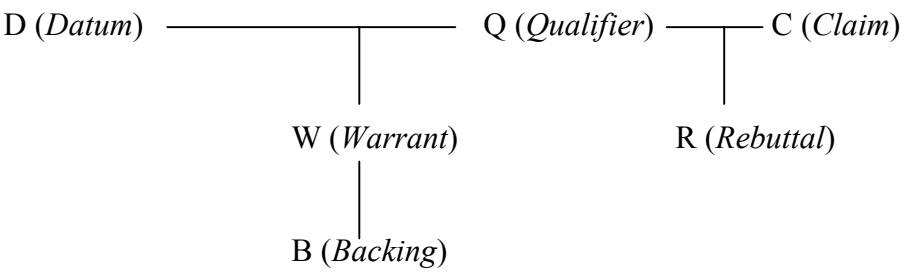
On this conception, the Socrates-argument (**iii. a**) is deduction, in that it is a prediction that eventually, Socrates' life will end. And it is predicted by reference to an agreed-upon presumption that 'all humans are mortal'. The example of the red pearls, then, is

on this conception an inductive argument in that it infers from the observation of continual occurrence of only red pearls to the proposed regularity that this bag contains only red pearls. Both of these arguments can be represented in an argument form which is valid, and both can be represented in invalid forms - their real difference, however, lies in the mode of reasoning employed in them. And what is probably most important, both can be *criticised*: the deductive argument can be faced with the question of the certainty of the general presumption of the argument, while the inductive argument can be criticised for its allowance for regularities that transcend the observations (*i.e.* the induction principle).

From Backing to Warrant

The problem of the deduction/induction distinction is central to Stephen Toulmin's criticism of formal approaches to argumentation. Toulmin's objection to traditional, syllogistic logic points out that practical argumentation has many other purposes than just calculating proof from given premises in a 'geometrical' way. In his *lay-out of argument*, he presents his famous alternative model of argument:

IV. D



(After Toulmin (1958), p. 104.)

The lay-out of argument is clearly based on the traditional syllogism, seeing that a basic version of the model is essentially no more than the assertion that the minor premise (D) in combination with the major premise (W) entails the conclusion (C). Thus, the Socrates-argument (see **iii. a**) fits in well in this basic model. The major premise, or W, 'all humans are mortal', provides the authorisation that allows us to take the step from the minor premise, or D, 'Socrates is human' to the conclusion, or C, 'Socrates is mortal'. The three other elements, however, transcends the syllogism; Q is the possible expression of *modality* connected to the claim of the argument - Q reflects the degree of certainty of the claim, and this certainty ultimately stems from the degree of certainty provided by the warrant, e.g., 'Socrates is *certainly* mortal'. The Rebuttal, R, is the mentioning of conditions under which the claim will fail to apply, e.g., Socrates is mortal *unless he is a new kind of human being of which we have no previous experience, a human being which is not mortal or not entirely mortal*'. When the authorisation of the warrant may invoke various qualifications or rebuttals to apply to the claim of the argument, it is because the warrant is eventually based on a *Backing* (B). The backing is the evidence that authorises the warrant, evidence collected in the appropriate *field* of argument: if an argument deals with legal matters, the proper field

is that of law a.s.o. In the Socrates example, the appropriate field would most likely be the field of common, human experience, producing a backing such as 'all humans which have been observed in historical time have been recognisably mortal', or something to a similar effect.

Central to Toulmin's line of thought is the distinction between 'warrant-using' arguments and 'warrant-establishing' arguments, a distinction which corresponds to the traditional distinction between 'deduction' and 'induction', respectively. This far, Toulmin's definitions of these concepts correspond to the above proposed definition **iv. c**, in which deduction and induction are inference modes, forming a consistent category. Toulmin explicitly points out that warrant-using and warrant-establishing is the 'everyday' meaning of the words 'deduction' and 'induction', respectively (Toulmin (1958), p. 121ff.). In this distinction, a warrant-using argument is the traditional, deductive inference from generality to particularity, and the warrant-establishing argument is the traditional, inductive inference from particularity to generality. The central point is that behind every warrant-using (deductive) argument, i.e. D, W, so C, lies a warrant-establishing (inductive) argument, i.e. B so W.

Yet, in his crucial distinction between the kind of inference used in getting from *backing* to *warrant*, and that used when getting from *warrant* to *claim*, the distinction seems to collapse; whereas the main argument (W, D, C) can easily be formally valid, the sub-argument (B, W) cannot, as it is warrant-establishing, and *hence* not valid (Toulmin (1958), p. 120ff.). Evidently, the 'everyday' use of the word 'induction' (a 'warrant-establishing argument') suddenly becomes synonymous with the 'logical' use of the same word, namely 'a formal fallacy'[58].

While, on the face of it, addressing the alleged invalidity of the inductive step from B to W, it seems that Toulmin's real point is really a variant of the more general *problem of induction*: it is not so much validity, but truth, which is the problem.

OBJECT-LANGUAGE AND META-LANGUAGE

Informalist approaches fail to distinguish clearly between meta-language and object-language. When informalism finds the truth values of logic (true or false) too rigid for the description of the complexity of empirical reality, it is disregarded that these truth values do not refer to *the world*, but to *sentences of the language*.

Tarski's Truth

One central objection against formalism is the rigidity of the distinction 'true/false'. Informalists tend to be quite dissatisfied with this distinction on the grounds that in practice we can never finally determine the state of the world - and hence, it seems, 'the truth' is a notion of very little practical use in argumentation theory. Alternatively, informalists opt for more vague attributes such as 'acceptability' or 'goodness' in the

[58] I discuss this problem extensively in Nielsen (1999), pp. 230-246.

attempt at capturing more accurately the quality of real arguments produced in real situations.

'Truth', however, can mean different things; if a person claims to know the 'truth' about some phenomenon in the objective world, and establishes this claim by referring to premises which he claims to be equally 'true', we may be faced with a person who believes in the epistemological idea referred to as 'vulgar absolutism' in chapter III. He may believe to be observing the world from a neutral vantage point, or from a certain, privileged framework which is superior to rivalling frameworks due to its capacity for objectivity. This concept of truth roughly means 'a correspondence between language and the world', and it presupposes that it is possible to give an exact description of things and states in the world which is absolutely accurate. The problems arising from this naïve correspondence theory are well-known and can be boiled down to such questions as these: what does it mean for language to 'correspond' to things in the world? How can a word, being an auditory or graphic pattern - possibly with a 'mental image' attached to it - 'correspond' to some object not connected to it? Does the word 'point out' the object, or is the word somehow 'shaped' so as to 'resemble' the object? Any attempt at answering these questions quickly turns a very straightforward account into an extremely complicated matter.

In any case, the notion of 'truth' in formal logic is different from the naïve correspondence theory; in logic, the assessment of truth is only hypothetical, it is a description in the meta-language conveying what the relationship between an object-linguistic utterance and the facts of the world would be like, in order for the utterance to be 'true'. The meta-linguistic description provides only the truth *conditions* for the utterance, not the truth *values*. The term 'meta-language' was introduced by Alfred Tarski (Tarski (1944)) as a solution to antinomies that had been haunting philosophical accounts of truth ever since antiquity; such sentences as 'all Cretans are liars' (said by a Cretan), 'I am lying now', or 'this sentence is false' are either paradoxical (the first one) or antinomical (the second and third) when their truth is to be assessed according to the naïve correspondence theory. In Tarski's semantic truth definition, a distinction is made between the language used for describing a given sentence and the language used *in* the sentence, where the former is the *meta-language* and the latter is the *object-language*. Truth claims are given in the meta-language in the form *'p' is true if and only if p*, where *'p'* (in quotation marks) is the sentence in the object language, and *p* (without quotation marks) is the object referred to in the world. Two aspects of this definition make it superior to the naïve correspondence theory:

(1) The problem of deciding on the truth of a sentence like 'This sentence is false' arises out of linguistic self-reference. However, according to the semantic truth definition such antinomies dissolve, as the possibility of self-reference is removed: the semantic description of a language cannot be made in the language described, but has to be articulated in a meta-language. The sentence 'this sentence is false' represents only a confusion between these linguistic levels.

(2) The semantic truth definition articulates the 'correspondence' between language and object as purely *hypothetical* (cp. 'if and only if'), and hence the problem of what it is to 'correspond' can be withheld from the attribution of truth conditions. In that way, the semantic definition of truth avoids charges of vulgar absolutism: the meta-

linguistic description of sentences can never claim that some object-linguistic sentence *is* true, but merely gives the *conditions under which* it is true. The meta-linguistic description assigns truth conditions to propositions, not truth values.

In this sub-chapter, I will show how some informalist accounts of truth can be seen to originate in a confusion between object-language and meta-language.

Approximation to Truth Requires Infinite Qualifications

In a recent paper, a prominent proponent of informal logic problematises the use of the concept of 'truth' in argument theories based on formal, deductive logic (habitually abbreviated FDL). This quotation ought to give some idea of the reasoning inherent in the criticism of formalism:

> FDL fails as a theory of argument because it cannot accommodate this important condition: i.e., that there can be good arguments for and against a given proposition. It is true that there can be a *valid* argument for P and a *valid* argument for ¬P. But there can not be a *sound* argument for P and a *sound* argument for ¬P. This is obvious by *reductio* reasoning. If there were a sound argument for P, then P would be true. If there were a sound argument for ¬P, then ¬P would be true. But it cannot be that P and ¬P are true. Hence there cannot be a sound argument for P and a sound argument for ¬P.
> If, then, we take goodness in argumentation to be soundness, it follows that there cannot be good arguments for P and ¬P. But we know that this is not true: there can be good arguments for both P and ¬P. Hence the goodness exhibited in the practice of argumentation is not the goodness prescribed by FDL, at least when we understand that as the doctrine of soundness. If we want a theory that illuminates our best argumentative practices, then we must look elsewhere. That elsewhere is informal logic. (Johnson (1999), p. 271)

Johnson's line of reasoning can be summarised as following:

If goodness is equivalent to soundness, then there cannot be good arguments for both P and ¬P, as this involves a contradiction.

But there can be good arguments for both P and ¬P.

So goodness is not equivalent to soundness.

This is perfectly good(!) reasoning; All the same, I should like to dismiss the argument for being irrelevant to the application of formal logic in argumentation theory. First of all, Johnson arrives, by *modus tollens*, at a conclusion explaining what argument goodness is *not*, rather than what it *is*. Before going into this discussion, one might be wary at this point, as theory formation in argumentation studies should benefit far more from a positive account. And this positive account is precisely what is so hard to give, in case soundness is not a relevant criterion. The argument is definitory, but gives no positive definition, which is emphatically problematic seeing that the definiendum is actually *applied* in the second premise: 'There can be *good arguments* for both P and

¬P'. At closer scrutiny, it is evident that the argument is of no use until we know what Johnson means by 'goodness'.

Johnson gives a range of examples where there are allegedly good arguments both for and against the same proposition, e.g. in legal decisions, where verdicts are often based on almost equally split decisions, although all participants are 'practised in both construing and appraising arguments' (Johnson (1999), p. 271). On this account, it seems that a good argument is an argument that can be accepted by people 'practised in both construing and appraising arguments', which is at most an empirical observation, but hardly a theoretical description of argument quality[59]. However, if this definition of 'goodness' is what was meant, Johnson's argument falls under the third problem of informalism (next sub-chapter), because it takes the use of arguments to be fully constitutive of the system of arguments.

One question remains, however, which is no less important: How can this account of goodness lead to the claim that formal, deductive logic cannot serve as a theory of argumentation?

The answer, I believe, has to do with the application of the concept of *truth* in the definition of *soundness*. A theory of argument, in applying formal logic would precisely say that if there are apparently 'good' arguments for both P and ¬P, then there are two solutions: either one of the arguments is not-quite-as-good as the other, or the symbol P is employed incorrectly. I would suspect that the latter explanation very often applies, and this may be illustrated by an example. Suppose that P stands for 'Abortion is right':

IV. E

Abortion facilitates the liberation of women
The liberation of women is right
∴ Abortion is right

IV. F

Abortion involves taking a life
Taking a life is not right
∴ Abortion is not right

The soundness of these arguments will rely on meta-linguistic definitions, such as *it is true that 'abortion is right' if and only if abortion is right*. The soundness of the arguments is therefore, in contrast to their 'goodness' (in Johnson's approximate definition), hypothetical.

[59] Assessing argument quality in terms of balancing pro- and con-arguments to find the strongest argument is known in many informalist traditions as *conductive reasoning*. See e.g. Bickenbach et al (1997), pp. 315-326, for a thorough account. The criticism directed at Johnson's argument can be taken as covering the notion of 'conduction' as well.

If we were to render these arguments *actually* sound (that is, non-hypothetically sound), we would have to be able to finally establish the truth of the premises. Theoretically speaking, that would require the inclusion of not only a vast but in fact an *infinite* amount of modal qualifications, reservations, exceptions etc., in both arguments. But having done so in the premises, one would have to transmit all these elements to the conclusion as well, in order to retain the validity of the arguments. Accordingly, the conclusions of the arguments would be something like

iv. e'

> Abortion is right, to the extent that (...), and seen from the perspective of (...), under the condition that (...) (infinitely)

iv. f'

> Abortion is not right, to the extent that (...), and seen from the perspective of (...), under the condition that (...) (infinitely)

In so far as the empty parentheses would have *different* material import, in **iv. e'** and **iv. f'**, you could no longer symbolise **iv. e'** and **iv. f'** with only one symbol P and its negation, respectively. That would be a notational error. The point is that in order to establish the truth of the premises, the amount of qualification is infinite, so soundness is a strictly hypothetical concept. The truth is always preliminary, often an increase in verisimilitude, but never final. Johnson's assertion that theoretical soundness is not the same thing as practical goodness, remains indeterminate. But with 'goodness' lacking a definition, the concept cannot pose as a viable element of a theory of argument, and neither does it contribute to refuting formal logic as a theory of argument. The fact that a theory describes phenomena that are only hypothetical, does not refute the theory.

The point is that soundness *is* equivalent to goodness, and when pro- and con-arguments seem to be equally good, it is typically because they are arguments focusing on different aspects, relying on different presuppositions etc., and hence it is not a case of arguing for P and ¬P, since the P's do not stand for exactly the same propositions. Essentially, Johnson comments on the well-known problems of representing indeterminable language in the form of well-ordered logic, while he does not succeed in rejecting formal logic as a theoretical foundation for argument analysis.

Reply to a General Criticism of Formal Logic

Govier emphasises the need to distinguish between 'formal' in two senses:

> (1) 'Systematic, well-ordered, having universal or general scope'.
> (2) having '...clearly stated rules, definite criteria for well-formed strings or formulae, and axioms to serve as the basis for derivations'. (Govier (1987), p.14)

The distinction eventually serves in an analogical argument, claiming that the study of argumentation does not require a theory which is formal in sense (2). Govier continues:

> In [the second] sense of 'formal' there is no more reason to believe that the principles of a theory of argument would be formal than there is to believe that the principles of moral, political, or epistemological theories would be formal. That is to say, there is no reason at all to believe this. (Govier (1987), p. 15)

But apart from the analogy with moral, political and epistemological principles, it remains unclear why Govier should think that there is 'no reason *at all*' to require of a general theory of argument that it display rules, criteria, and axioms. To begin with the analogy, the pressing question is if a theory of argument should be articulated at the same level as theories of 'morality, politics and epistemology'; after all, the three mentioned areas are characteristically represented *in* arguments: moral arguments, political arguments, epistemological arguments. Argumentation is a linguistic phenomenon, and, just as it would be odd to object to the fact that grammatical theory employs a concept of well-formed sentences, so too is it natural that argumentation theory employs concepts of well-formed arguments.

But at this point, we should return to Govier's distinction between 'formal' in the senses (1) and (2); the problem is that Govier does not show that these two senses of the word are mutually exclusive. It appears that (1) is really a consequence of (2); once a theory displays clearly stated rules, criteria for well-formed formulae, and unrefutable axioms, it *follows* that such a theory is 'systematic, well-ordered, and has a universal scope' (while, of course, there is no guarantee that it can tell us anything interesting). But it does not work quite as clear-cut the other way around. Having proposed a theory which is formal in the sense of (1), it does not *follow* that one has a theory on one's hands which is also formal in the sense of (2), but I would argue that when one has a theory, formal in the sense of (1), one is committed to try to finally justify that theory by reference to a formal system in the sense of (2), if at all possible. Govier trades the formal aspect of a theory for nothing - there is no gain by rejecting formalism in Govier's sense (2).

In any case, the distinction seems highly artificial, and it may be so devised in order to finally dissociate formal logic from the idea of a 'general theory of argument'. Govier's purpose is to suggest that a theory of argument may well be non-formal and still possess the virtue of being 'general', and the proposed distinction is useful for doing just that.

Govier's suggestion that there can be no theory of argument which is formal in the sense (2), stems from a certain conception of what 'formal logic' is, and what it can, and cannot, do. Formal logic 'can exhibit rigor and objectivity' (p. 5), and within the formal system absolute certainty for conclusions can be obtained. These privileges, however, come at a high cost:

> But such rigor and certainty are achieved at the cost of emptiness. Real arguments in natural language are not amenable to fully precise treatment. They deal with topis [sic.] of controversy, disputed facts, plausible hypotheses, approximately correct analogies. (...) Formal logic is, by its very nature, incompetent to address such matters. (Govier (1987), p. 5)

First of all, I should like to question the relevance of accusing logic of being *empty*. After all, were it not empty, it would not be formal; it is rather like accusing a car of having wheels, and thus unable to sail. But just as we do not usually expect cars to sail us anywhere, neither should we expect formal logic to settle controversies for us. The strength of logic is precisely its emptiness, because it means that it does not depend on context. If you 'fill out' a premise with a controversial statement, then a validly derived conclusion is certain to be equally controversial. If a premise is realised by a 'plausible hypothesis', the entailed conclusion will display precisely the same degree of plausibility as did the premise. That is not a weakness of logic, but a strength; logic can be used as an instrument to discover if someone turns a plausibility into certainty, or controversy into consensus, and it can do so regardless of context. The misconception here displayed by Govier is that a formal system is supposed to provide 'certainty', where formal certainty is thought to apply also to empirical matters.

To straighten this out, it is necessary to distinguish between the meta-linguistic and object-linguistic levels of description: the 'rigour and certainty' of logic does not make logic incompetent to deal with natural language arguments, however non-rigorous or uncertain these may be. The rigour and certainty of logic resides in the entailment mechanism and the binary truth values at the meta-linguistic level, but this feature does not subtract from the fact that the sentences processed in this mechanism may display all kinds of complexity and uncertainty in their reference to subjects, objects, states, and processes in the world. Roughly speaking, a logical calculus can render a given statement about the world absolutely certain under the condition that the premises supporting the statement are equally certain. And, our epistemological access to the world being as *un*certain as it is, such a condition never fully qualifies for *absolute* certainty. Instead, logic can ensure that given some degree of plausibility of statement A, some statement B which follows validly from A, is *certainly plausible* to the same degree. This is a very important feature of logic which is much too often overlooked - certainty is conditional, and can only apply within the formal system, though not when applied on empirical matters. It is indeed certain that q is true, given that p, and $p \rightarrow q$, are also true; but once we start 'filling out' these empty symbols, we can never finally say that the premises are 'true', and hence, we cannot say that the conclusion is 'true'. We can however, say that the conclusion's plausibility depends on the plausibility of the premises, and this is no unimportant knowledge. In fact, it is a necessary condition for critically evaluating arguments at all. So when Govier says that formal logic is, *by its very nature*, incompetent to address empirical matters, she is right insofar as logic cannot turn plausibility into fact, or convert a dispute into agreement. She is wrong, however, when logic is used for that which it *can* do - by its very nature: being a critical instrument for assessment.

The conception of logic as an instrument for criticism is not alien to Govier, however. But she regrets that the critical use of logic has been replaced by a mathematically inspired emphasis on proof and strictly rule-based modelling:

> [Logic] is an evaluative discipline, which originally was supposed to set forth standards delineating good reasoning from poor. Formal logic, however, is now so technical, so rarefied, and so specialized, that it is greatly removed from this original concept of what logic is supposed to do. (Govier (1987), p. 2)

Govier rightly points out that developments in the last century have rendered logic highly 'technical', thus to some extent losing its practical applicability as an evaluative or critical instrument. But the fact that certain branches of formal logic have become highly abstract can hardly constitute an objection to logic as such, any more than you can complain that advanced, theoretical mathematics is not a realistic subject to teach in primary school. As it happens, there are good reasons to teach that 2+2 equals 4, no matter what abstractions might be conceived in advanced number theory. Similarly, it is reasonable to assert that the *modus ponens* is a valid form of inference, and that it can be applied for evaluating real-life argumentation, even if some philosophers may be discussing abstractions which can hardly be applicable to real-life arguments.

In short, we should not blame logic for mistakes committed by logicians. But this is exactly what Govier repeatedly does. Logicians have, especially in the past, confused theoretical logic with real life argumentation. In textbooks on logic, examples have invariantly been artificial constructions with no similarity whatsoever to the way people actually argue. Govier gives a range of examples such as this:

IV. G

> If the weather is warm and the sky is clear, then either we go swimming or we go boating. It is not the case that if we do not go swimming, then the sky is not clear. Therefore, either the weather is warm or we go boating. (Copi quoted in Govier (1987), p. 4)

Obviously, Govier is perfectly entitled to call this text 'bizarre', that is, if it is indeed supposed to be an example of real argumentation. But the objection has nothing to do with logic, nor with the applicability of logic. The objection attests only to the fact that someone actually expressing **iv. g** as an argument in a real life context is likely to be communicatively dysfunctional. It does not change the fact that the form of the argument

IV. H

$$(W \wedge C) \rightarrow (S \vee B)$$
$$\neg(\neg S \rightarrow \neg C)$$
$$\therefore W \vee B$$

is valid. If logic has not been incorporated in a general theory of communication it may be said to be a fault on the part of some logicians (and some linguists), but it can never be a fault in logic.

SUPREMACY TO USE OVER SYSTEM

Informalist approaches give supremacy to use over system; the 'uses of argument' are almost invariantly thought to be constitutive of a 'system of argument'. The problem is that any idea of a system of argument becomes relative to any given context of use, and consequently the very idea of a 'system' is rendered meaningless. This problem pertains even more so to the language system: informalism generally tends to take the *expression* of arguments at face value, thus disregarding the significance of indirect illocution, presuppositions, and implicatures.

On the Problem of Face-Value Readings

In chapter II, I proposed a definition of rationality which was based on *reason* and *co-operation*, two faculties necessary for the exercise of logic and communication, respectively. Alternatively, one might say that reason and co-operation constitutes central elements of the logical and communicative *systems*, where the term 'system' should be taken as complementary to the term 'use'. The systems outline the boundaries within which logic and language can come to use; the logical system enables the use of logic within the limits of non-contradiction, while the communicative system enables the use of language (and other encoded transmissions of meaning) within the limits of being driven by a mutual intention of obtaining minimal understanding among the communicators. It is the assumption in this study that whenever the use of argumentation complies with such systemic requirements, the argumentation is rational.

The systemic requirements do not guarantee that argumentative discourse always work optimally - one need only take a brief look on the state of argumentation in practical contexts to be assured of that. The high frequency of severe breaches of systemic requirements has made many researchers speculate that perhaps the systems are misconstrued, or that these systems are really arbitrary conventions, relative to any given community of interpretation. While such doubts are indeed the hallmarks of any critically serious research, I believe they are basically wrong in this case. First of all, in the case of logic and communication, the basic, systemic principles are paradoxically always presupposed in questioning them. Any critical account claiming that logical validity is irrelevant to the study of practical argumentation, can be seen to present this

critical account in an attempted non-contradictory way, i.e. in a way that strives to avoid invalidity in its inherent reasoning. Similarly, scholars who doubt the importance of a communicative criterion of co-operation invariantly communicate their doubts in a co-operative way. This must be so, simply because there is no other way, it is all in the transcendental nature of logic and language. Secondly, researchers critical of the idea of a 'system' may choose to take a different perspective: they may claim - explicitly or implicitly - that the practical use is fully constitutive of the theoretical system, that is, whenever uses deviate from the requirements of the system, this discrepancy is seen as evidence of the shortcomings of the system, and consequently that the practically manifested use in fact *is* the *real* system. This means that whenever e.g. argumentative practices change, the system changes accordingly; which means, I would argue, that the idea of a system eventually becomes meaningless.

The current sub-chapter examines some examples of the manoeuvre of giving supremacy to use over system, first at the level of logic in argumentation, where the face-value expression of (enthymematic) arguments is taken to be fully developed arguments, and following that, at the level of communication, where the co-operation principle is taken as a conventional rule of conduct which ceases to function as soon as it is disobeyed.

Does the Expression of Arguments Reflect their Internal Structure?

Toulmin observes that the practical expression of argumentation *deviates* from the standard of validity in logic. While this general assumption is hardly disputable, what *is* disputable is the conclusion that Toulmin draws: Hence, formal logic is *not useful* for the description of practical argumentation:

> Once we bring into the open the backing on which (in the last resort) the soundness of our arguments depends, the suggestion that validity is to be explained in terms of 'formal properties', in any geometrical sense, loses its plausibility. (Toulmin (1958), p. 120)

The trouble with this argument is that either it has to reflect a relativistic attitude, where formal logic as a universal standard for rationality has to be completely rejected, or it facilitates a total disconnection between norm and practice, with the pessimistic objection that since the norm is generally being disobeyed, you have to accept, defeatedly, the inference forms that are actually expressed. It follows from both options that the notion of 'implicit premise' loses its analytic significance; in the absence of a formal standard of rationality, there is no principle by which one can interpret the 'unsaid parts' of a text. There is no way one can apply the principle of charity (see below) in any effective way.

Moreover, the argumentation is weak: what is missing is an argument establishing why a non-correspondence between practice and norm should prevent us from *assessing* the practice in relation to the norm. It is rather like saying that the idea of a 'universal grammar' is wrong because people most of the time express themselves in ungrammatical sentences. Inherent in this misunderstanding there seems to be a basic discrepancy: it is not acknowledged that language in use has its own ways of reducing

redundancy: it draws heavily on the participants inferential capacities to complete and validate the enthymemic everyday argumentation.

On the Principle of Charity

The principle of charity presupposes that what is *said*, is not necessarily isomorphic with what is *meant*. Consequently, when that which is said seems to be incoherent or incomplete, it is the obligation of the hearer to work out - *charitably* - what the speaker might mean. Doing so 'charitably' means working out the meaning in such a way that it is no longer incoherent or incomplete - if at all possible. Being charitable is not the same as doing the speaker a favour by 'repairing' his 'awkward' use of language; the point is that use of language is almost always incomplete and often incoherent, so the application of the principle of charity is invariantly present in working out coherent and complete meaning. It is not charitable in the sense of 'favourable', since the act of straightening out the meaning of the speaker, very often uncovers offences much more serious than incompleteness: there may be inconsistencies or propositions which are downright intolerable in the given context, hidden in the expressions of the speaker, and uncovering such things is hardly equal to doing anyone a favour.

In the following I will assume that the principle of charity is part of the co-operation system of communication, and that it is basically a variant of Grice's Co-operation Principle (the 'CP').

Used and Needed Assumptions

Govier's definition of the principle of charity is, as we shall see, closely related to Grice's CP. Govier rightly notices that Scriven (1976) fails to define sufficiently what is involved in being 'being charitable'. To straighten out this discrepancy, Govier distinguishes between three degrees of charity (Govier (1987), p. 147):

1. 'Strong Charity' is the approach where the aim is to find the interpretation that makes a passage appear maximally sensible and rational. It involves 'ignoring empirical indicators of implausible assertions or faulty reasoning.'

2. 'Truistic Charity', in contrast, is the careful interpretation of discourse where close attention is paid to 'nuances of meaning, possible irony and ridicule, aspects of contexts', etc. This merely adds up to a basic co-operation with the text, but with little emphasis on interpretation.

3. 'Moderate Charity' is the middle way between truistic and strong charity, advocated by Govier:

> When other indicators (context, logical pattern, professed intention, indicator words) count equally in favor of several distinct interpretations, we adopt that one which generates the most plausible argument (Govier (1987), p. 148).

What is immediately disturbing in this formulation of moderate charity is the expression 'the most plausible argument'. It signals that the object of study is what the arguer has meant, not what he has communicated. The question of what was meant by an argument is a question that can be addressed to the arguer alone, whereas the question of what was communicated should be addressed primarily to his audience; if the aim of study is finding out only what the arguer might plausibly mean, then the critical aspect of argument examination is set aside. Whereas the study of what an argument communicates will focus on what further claims the arguer is committed to in the eyes of a critical audience. A central distinction which should be introduced at this point is that between 'used assumptions' and 'needed assumptions', as proposed by Ennis (1982). The used assumptions in an argument are those assumptions which are implicit in an argument in the sense that the arguer has in fact omitted them, intentionally or not. Needed assumptions, on the contrary, are assumptions which the arguer may never have thought, meant, or considered, but which are seen by others (argument participants, commentators, analysts) to be *necessary* for the argument to be passable in the context.

In a strictly reconstructive approach, the disclosure of needed assumptions is a truly critical form of activity, whereas the disclosure of used assumptions represent speculation into the workings of the mind producing the given argument. When argumentation theory is seen in this light, as a general, critical theory, it follows that the object of study should be needed, not used, assumptions[60]. A strictly reconstructive study of argument investigates what commitments face a given argument, on the charitable assumption of validity. It does not speculate whether or not the person giving the argument intended it to be valid or invalid, but it maintains that any argument is externally committed to giving a conclusion that actually follows from the given premises. Consequently, as arguments usually do not display surface validity, the aim of the analysis is (1) to bring about the assumptions needed to validate the argument, and (2) then to problematise such assumptions. While (1) is mechanical and independent of context, (2) is a fully contextual form of interpretation. This, however, is too rigid a view on dialogue. In chapter V, a more nuanced view on the reconstruction of *implicated* (either intended or supposed-intended) premises will be introduced. For the present purposes, however, the distinction between used and needed assumptions serves to make the point that the arguer's own account of the acceptability is not sufficient for the argument to be rational. It also has to be explainable according to an external norm of validity.

The distinction between used and needed assumptions is not discussed by Govier in connection to the definition of charity, which means that it remains indeterminate, precisely what kinds of assumptions, Govier intends argumentation theory to study.

Disregarding the Economy of Language

Govier further formulates charity as a form of co-operation, tightly connected to the Gricean CP:

[60] In this connection, I disregard the fact that used and needed assumptions may occasionally coincide.

> We presume, other things being equal, that others are participating in the social practise of rational argumentation. (Govier (1987), p. 150)

In this proposed definition, it appears to be a descriptive principle, as it states what we 'presume' in the social practice of argumentative discourse. But it remains unclear whether Govier intends it to be descriptive or normative; does the principle describe how we argue, or does it prescribe how we should argue? Elsewhere, she specifically states that it is normative (Govier (1987), p. 150). But if it is normative, it does not seem to be a communicative principle in Grice's understanding. Grice did not propose his conversational maxims as rules we *ought to* abide by, but as governing principles we do in fact - by default - abide by. There are, however, several indications that Govier understands the co-operative Principle of Charity as normative. Concluding on the matter of charity, Govier speculates that the moderate principle of charity might be 'too idealistic', as

> ...[it sees] arguers and listeners as *more honorable* than they in fact are. ... It might be urged that some arguers do not intend to persuade their audience by offering good reasons but rather to persuade their audience by offering whatever is effective. (Govier, 1987), p. 155) (My emphasis)

Elsewhere Govier stresses how the principle should only be employed in contexts where you have good reason to presume that participants actually behave concurrently with the principle:

> If for one reason or another, the presumption [of the participants' observation of the principle of charity] would not be appropriate - the people lacking all credibility, or the context being one where people seek persuasion at any cost - then there is no reason for approaching the discourse charitably - not even moderately charitable. (Govier (1987), p. 150)

If being charitable involves being 'honourable', then the principle of charity is a regulative norm which one can freely choose to ignore, but which one chooses to obey to the extent that one is 'honourable'. But if this principle is modelled on Grice's CP, then the CP would also be some norm which speakers and hearers could choose to follow, and the observation of the CP would be an act of reciprocal altruism. This, I would argue, is not how the CP was intended by Grice. The CP is a prerequisite for any rational form of communication; if speakers and hearers do not presuppose as default that they engage in a co-operative effort, then why should they think they were communicating? Communication requires such basic co-operative efforts as negotiating turn allocation, respecting basic answer/response structures, attempting to produce grammatically well-formed and semantically unambiguous sentences in a code of language known to the other person, referring to phenomena known to the other person, etc. If Govier's principle of charity is to make any sense it has to be understood similarly. Participants engaging in argumentative discourse presuppose as

default that they engage in a co-operative effort, in which rationality applies. If a speaker claims some statement A, and indicates that A is justified by some statement B, then the hearer is entitled to derive the implicatum that B somehow entails A, and this implicatum has nothing to do with honourable goals on either behalf. The principle works no better or worse on effect-oriented persuasion than it does on altruistic, consensus-oriented discourse.

In summary, it can be pointed out that

(1) Govier's principle of charity represents a misreading of Grice, and

(2) if Govier's understanding was correct, it would effectively render the idea of a principle of charity nothing but a regulative advice (at this point, it seems evident, that Govier's project very much resembles traditional rhetoric: rules for appropriate, argumentative conduct, rather than principles for rational assessment.)

In Toulmin's work, the idea of a principle of charity seems to be altogether absent: Toulmin presumes that the actual, linguistic expression of arguments in everyday discourse should be understood as the fully developed argument, with no interpretation necessary. As I have argued elsewhere (Nielsen (1999), p. 241ff.), this attitude goes directly against the principle of charity. A charitable analysis of an argument of the type *Datum*, *Backing*, so *Claim* would not take this to be the complete argument, but rather, it would represent it in a chain of two consecutive enthymemes, a warrant-establishing and a warrant using argument, respectively.

The argument (again)

IV. I

> *Claim:* Socrates is mortal
> Because:
> *Datum:* Socrates is human
> Since:
> *Backing:* All humans of whom we have knowledge have been seen to be mortal

can be analysed this way according to the principle of charity:

IV. J

> Warrant-using:
> *Claim:* Socrates is mortal
> Because:
> *Datum:* Socrates is human
> Since:
> (*Warrant:* All humans are mortal)

IV. K

> Warrant establishing:
> (*Claim:* All humans are mortal)
> Because:
> *Datum:* All humans of whom we have knowledge have been seen to be mortal
> Since:
> (*Warrant*: If all humans of whom we have knowledge have been seen to be mortal, then all humans are mortal)

The Claim in argument **iv. k** is employed as Warrant in argument **iv. j**, and thus the arguments are warrant-establishing and warrant-using, respectively. In that way, argument **iv. i** is understood as a shorthand version of arguments **iv. j** and **iv. k** in combination. The claim that **iv. i** is invalid can only be defended if you deny the argument a fair trial qua the principle of charity.

A whole different matter is the fact that the argument is not *sound*. The problem arises from the implicit Warrant in argument **iv. k** which is lacking modal qualification in the consequent of the implication, something like 'most likely' etc. In an approximately sound argument, such modal qualification would be transmitted to the conclusion: 'Socrates is most likely mortal'. The conclusion in argument **iv. j** is nothing but a *conjecture*, it can never be established beyond doubt, since it is based on a warrant which is a *theory* that can never be universally *true*. So the hypothetical aspect is evident in the unavoidable modal marker: the argument can never be sound without modal qualification. The phenomenon is best known in academic or scientific discourse, which are discourses where exactly *truth* is the grand imperative. And arguments can be made sound - valid and true - only insofar the statements on which the argument is built, are qualified, taken reservations for, *ad infinitum*. That is the sorry state of the affair: Arguments will always miss the final anchoring in cold, hard fact. Of course there may be arguments and chains of arguments which are ultimately based on an infallible premise, but such arguments are disqualified from science (or any activity directed at gaining knowledge), because they will never provide new knowledge (This objection happens to apply to logic itself: the law of contradiction is in fact infallible - it is a logical truth - and, logic being based on the law of contradiction, it follows that logic is not a science. It will not provide new knowledge. This objection, however, is not harmful to the insistence that logic is a crucial part of language and argumentative discourse, in fact it stresses one of the central claims of this study: logic is, in itself, utterly uninteresting, as it can provide no new knowledge whatsoever, but once logic is denied its position as a passive structure in argumentative discourse (as Toulmin does), there is no standard of assessment, and hence, argumentation analysis eventually loses its force.).

Some General Remarks on Toulmin

It is a recurrent presupposition in Toulmin's work that the surface representation of arguments should be interpreted as identical to underlying form and that hence, there is a 'defect of reason' in ordinary argumentative discourse. Accordingly, the form *Datum*, *Backing*, so *Claim*, is thought to actually be 'a syllogism' (see e.g. pp. 133-

134). This idea is generally based on the empirical observation that arguments are often *expressed* that way. This has been argued thoroughly above. But what is probably the most striking thing about this line of reasoning is that Toulmin infers from observation to generality. One might say that his entire argument is a 'warrant-establishing' one, that is, an inductive argument, and according to the above discussion, the argument should be furnished with modal qualification or tentativeness in order to be sound. The heart of the trouble is that Toulmin's theory of argument presupposes itself: from the observation of enthymemic or otherwise incoherent reasoning, it is concluded that these observations are representative of the underlying norm, and that consequently, the norm prescribes that kind of reasoning. But this very argument is itself inductive (warrant-establishing), and hence, it does not, on Toulmin's own account, support its claim conclusively. Furthermore, the theory does not explain how it can be that the empirical occurrence of quasi-syllogistic forms can change the underlying norm of logic. And if, on the other hand, the underlying norm of logic is untouched by the empirical observation of deviant forms of argument, then we still need an argument establishing why it is that we cannot use this norm as a standard of rationality for practical argumentation. There is no justification for the claim that arguments in real life should be taken at face value, instead of being treated as compressions of longer stretches of reconstructable, valid inference.

In relation to Toulmin's reservation that 'An argument in any field whatever *may* be expressed in a formally valid manner, provided that the warrant is formulated explicitly as a warrant and authorises precisely the sort of inference in question', (p. 135) one can only infer that Toulmin's project is really not the discussion of the underlying norm, but only to propose a descriptive analysis of the practical application of arguments - the *uses* of argument.

Is Toulmin a Relativist?

Toulmin claims to avoid the absolutism/relativism-dichotomy: But the question is: if the above mentioned emphasis on the *descriptive analysis of practice* is not a roundabout articulation of a relativist standpoint, then of what use is *The Uses of Argument*? If it is not a framework-relativistic claim that any argument has to be assessed relatively to the field in which it collects its backing, the entire proposition seems trivial:

Argumentation in natural language deviates from logic by being quasi-logical. This seems almost too obvious: natural language deviates from a systematic, meta-linguistic description of it. If it did not, language and meta-language would be identical.

And yet, Toulmin is not after all involved only in purely descriptive relativism:

> Many of the current problems in the logical tradition spring from adopting the analytic paradigm-argument as a standard by comparison with which all other arguments can be criticised. But analyticity is one thing, formal validity is another; and neither of these is a universal criterion of necessity, still less of the soundness of our arguments. (Toulmin (1958), p. 145)

It seems as if it is still the purpose to have the practical description serve as foundation for a revision of formal logic. Accordingly, *The Uses of Argument* can be taken as the ancestor of *informal logic*, depending on the definition of that discipline. If informal logic is taken to be an *alternative logic* with an authority in the theory of science, equivalent to that of traditional logic, then there is indeed some problems (I take it here that Toulmin's project is in fact the attempt at such an alternative logic): Traditional logic is a *formal* examination method, that is, it should by definition not describe what is, but rather *can be*. But an alternative logic like Toulmin's will be a *real* science, in that it directly draws on the observation of linguistic behaviour. It follows that it cannot display the same epistemological status as traditional logic[61]. Informal logic depends on contexts, and contexts have the habit of changing every once in a while.

In order to return to the *grammar*-analogy introduced earlier, you could say that formal and informal logic are interrelated the same way that universal grammar and language-specific grammars are interrelated. Formal logic sets the overall rules of inference (such as, e.g., the overall principle for syllogism validity, as discussed by Toulmin), while informal logic describes the way inferences are conveyed in natural language discourse. By this definition, informal logic is indeed an indispensable complement to formal studies of argument, but as mentioned, this is not the way Toulmin lays out his alternative logic (Toulmin (1958), p. 146ff), on the contrary, his alternative logic is an adjustment of errors and paradoxes in traditional logic. When the alternative logic in that way rejects formal logic, it does not serve as a valuable contribution to argument studies, but rather as a relativisation of the field.

THE RECONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

A reconstructive approach to argumentation is an approach that avoids the three mentioned problems of informalism: first, there is only one logic, i.e. entailment; second, logic is not thought to provide certainty about empirical questions, but only about the relationship between premises and conclusions; and third, argumentative discourse consists centrally in linguistic representations of underlying arguments which are essentially reconstructable by reference to an external norm of rationality.

Deductivism

Deductivism is the doctrine that there is basically only one type of inference, and consequently only one standard for assessing arguments: deduction[62]. Canadian scholar Leo Groarke is one of the defenders of a deductivism of a kind similar to the one proposed in this study: *reconstructive* deductivism. In a deductivist approach,

[61] This is evident in Toulmin, Rieke & Janik (1979), in which Toulmin's argument theory is applied more concretely than in Toulmin (1958). The emphasis on field-dependency (or 'forum'-dependency) stresses the non-formal character of the theory.

[62] The term 'deduction' in this context means roughly 'entailment', which means that it corresponds to my definition **iv. b**.

argument indicators such as 'therefore' and 'since' are taken to be 'announcements' of a deductive entailment (Groarke (1992), 114). Indeed, whenever there are indications that a text or sequence is argumentative, it is presumed that the arguments are deductive entailments. A deductivist approach is in that way a very uncomplicated application of the principle of charity.

Another highly relevant idea in deductivism is the doctrine that '…ordinary linguistic practice is not a sacred cow that cannot be questioned' (Groarke (1992), p. 114). A deductivist account easily allows for such pragmatic insights that meaning and intentionality as well as communicative commitments may be communicated implicitly.

In her account of rival approaches to argumentation, Govier points out that there are two variants of deductivism (Govier (1987), p. 25):

One version is literal deductivism, where the statement of arguments - the actual expression - is taken to account for the entirety of the argument. On this conception, most arguments in everyday life are simply invalid, and moreover, Govier notices, '…all invalid arguments are *equally* and totally flawed' (Govier (1987), p. 25, my emphasis). On this account, any expressed argument where the conclusion is not literally entailed by the premise(s), is invalid regardless of relevance, lucidity, coherence, etc. As Govier points out, the arguments

> all of the 10 flames observed in the past have been hot, so the next flame observed will be hot

and

> all of the one million flames observed in the past have been hot, so the next flame observed will be hot

will be taken to be equally useless as they are both invalid as stated. Obviously, this is intolerable, as it should be obvious that the second argument provides a *better* reason for its conclusion than does the first. However, literal deductivism falls directly in the trap of the problem of 'use over system' as discussed above. From a linguistic point of view, there is no reason to think that what is *said* bears full witness to what is *communicated*. In a real conversation it is understood that the speaker is committed to more than just the *said* part of the argument - he is also committed to the inferential strength of the relation between premise and conclusion. As Groarke puts it,

> …such arguments rely on an implicit premise to the effect that "the flames which have been examined are representative of flames in general" and this premise is more problematic in the first case than in the second. (Groarke (1992), p. 115-116)

The other type of deductivism is the one advocated by Groarke: 'reconstructive' deductivism, where the task of the analyst is that of *validating* the argument in question, by filling in the premises which are 'missing' if the argument is to be logically valid[63]. Two major problems arise in connection with reconstructive deduction, however:

1. In reconstructive deductivism, the analyst gets deeply involved in the analysis, as his interpretations become imperative to exactly which premises (or conclusions) are added to the argument - Govier remarks that the analyst is 'committed to a "reading-in" policy which is quite extensive' (Govier (1987), p. 25). It appears that the risk of bias in the analysis is considerable in a reconstructive analysis.

2. In reconstructive deductivism, all arguments are valid - there are virtually no invalid ones. This problem, it appears, deflates the very notion of validity into a fruitless concept. If all arguments are mechanically made valid, then it seems that argument analysis has become a very charitable institution indeed.

As for problem 1 it can be argued with some emphasis that reconstructive deductivism is on firmer ground than an informalist approach; the deductivist does have a guiding principle for reconstructing implicit elements (i.e. the knowledge of what it takes to make an argument valid), whereas the informalist has no such principle. The informalist approach will have to discuss in each case whether or not it is reasonable to explicate a missing premise, and to discuss, in the light of a variety of contextual factors, what exactly that missing premise might be[64]. This is indeed an insurmountable task. The reconstructive approach, on the other hand, basically only has to rely on a simple method which might be formulated like this:

The commitment taken on by anyone expressing an argument is the implicit premise:

IF (Explicit Reasons) THEN (Explicit Claim)

In many cases the notorious 'uncovering of implicit premises' simply boils down to 'uncovering' the above commitment. The analyst - or the discussion partner - is in any kind of argumentative discussion entitled to confront the arguer with this commitment, and the act of doing so *always makes the argument valid*[65]. And this is almost always what is at issue in reconstructive argumentation: does the conclusion follow from the premise(s) or does it not?

The strength of this method is above all its relative immunity to bias; if someone has produced the argument

[63] A reconstructive deductivism similar to Groarke's is advocated van Eemeren & Grootendorst, see Gerritsen (1994).
[64] This is in fact what is recommended by scholars such as Woods (1990).
[65] This reconstructive method corresponds closely to the pragma-dialectical method of reconstructing the 'logical minimum'. See van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992), p. 60ff.

IV. L

> I should be allowed to ride the bus free of charge. You see, I'm an anarchist

the bus driver is not particularly biased when confronting the arguer with the arguer's own argumentative commitment: 'Apparently, you think that being an anarchist entitles you to not paying your bus fare. Well think again'. On the level of analysis, the analyst is not particularly biased in inserting the implicit premise 'if x is an anarchist, then x should ride the bus free of charge'.

The weakness of the method is, as it is also pointed out by Govier (Govier (1987), p. 26), that it adds precious little to the argument, in that the implicit premise adds up to no more than a mere reiteration of what was already expressed in the argument. Along similar lines, Berg (1992) argues that

> In many cases the addition of implicit premises rendering an argument deductively valid merely begs the question. After all, it is in some sense implicit in *every* argument that the conclusion follows from the premises. But adding on an implicit premise to that effect - that if the (other) premises are true, then so is the conclusion - does not get us anywhere. For the initial question of the argument's validity then merely becomes reformulated as a question of the argument's soundness, or more specifically, as a question of the truth of one of the argument's premises. This merely trivializes the notion of validity - every argument would be deductively valid - thus dissolving the domain of logic. (Berg (1992), p. 105f.)

That, however, is debatable: in **iv. l**, does it not problematise the argument greatly to articulate explicitly the very idea that 'being an anarchist legitimately excuses one from obligations bestowed on other people in society - such as paying in a bus'? The truth of this particular premise is not unimportant, and bringing it about is not, as Berg suggests, a trivialisation of the notion of validity; on the contrary, it is an example that shows how logic is not the object of study in itself, but rather an instrument for bringing out into the open those premises whose truth may be questionable. So the method does 'dissolve the domain of logic' *as an object for study in itself*, and it does change the focus from argument validity to premise truth. The really great mystery is why researchers of the informalist tradition would want to object to *that*. It seems to coincide perfectly with the very informalist programme: we should discuss truth (or in practice, acceptability) rather than logical forms. The only difference is that on the deductivist account, validity is presupposed as the necessary - and only - instrument for disclosing implicit premises. Once the instrument has been set to work on the text at hand, and has produced an account of what further claims the arguer is committed to, if his argument is to be consistent, then, eventually, the analyst may get on with the more pressing business: the discussion of the truth, acceptability, relevance etc. of the argument.

This discussion begins to deal with central topics pertaining to Govier's second problem of reconstructive deductivism.

Govier compares literal and reconstructive deductivism in this way:

> Literal deductivism has the consequence that almost all arguments in empirical science, scholarly endeavour and ordinary life are absolutely worthless. But reconstructive deductivism, unless very elaborately qualified, will have the consequence that they are all absolutely worthy. (Govier (1987), p. 26)

Whereas Govier has a point in saying that from a rigorous, literal-deductive perspective, all real-life arguments are worthless, it seems less convincing that a reconstructive perspective renders all arguments 'worthy'. It would be correct to say that all arguments are reconstructed as valid - but does that make them 'worthy'?

It appears that Govier confuses the validity of arguments with their general acceptability - or worthiness, if you like. It seems ironical that - like Berg (see above) - Govier ascribes to logic far greater importance than a formalist would normally do[66]. If we return to **iv. l**, the validity of the argument when reconstructed

IV. M

> X is an anarchist
> (If x is an anarchist, then x can ride the bus free of charge)
> ∴ X can ride the bus free of charge

does not make it worthy or acceptable in most contexts. The validation of the argument by reconstruction produces an analytical claim concerning what more the arguer is committed to, apart from that which he has said. And the reconstructed premise (in parentheses) is not *just* a reiteration of the parts already expressed, as Govier suggests. The reconstruction also involves the logical connective 'if…then', which is in effect equivalent to the statement 'the antecedent entails the consequent'. In other words, the reconstruction brings about - and emphasises - the fact that the conclusion *actually* follows from the stated premise. The logical entailment is what the arguer is additionally committed to, and in the case at hand it should be evident that the arguer owes a further explanation of how it can be that this particular antecedent in fact entails this particular consequent. There is nothing automatically 'worthy' about the reconstructed argument **iv. m**; the entailment claim is not trivial at all.

Asking the Arguers

As it has been hinted at earlier on in this study, reconstruction is not just an activity performed by analysts of argumentation. On the contrary, reconstructive practices are central parts of argumentative dialogue. So when informalists like Govier object to reconstructive deductivism on the charge that the reconstruction efforts are untenable

[66] Along the same lines van Eemeren & Grootendorst ((1994), p. 62) remark that 'The straightjacket of logic is still confining Govier just as much as the representatives of the standard treatment'.

or based on shaky, interpretive ground, they overlook the fact that language users feel perfectly free to perform reconstructive, ad-hoc analyses in dialogue, and that such analyses do in fact contain elements of a logical or 'deductive' nature.

Informalist approaches such as Govier's tend to stick to the purely descriptive level, under the rather sceptical supposition that reconstruction will always be biased, so a mere description of the actual articulation of arguments will give a more accurate understanding of argumentation. It is assumed that the structure of arguments as they are uttered contains the full structural information about that argument: there is no 'surface structure' reflecting a richer, and more systematic 'deep structure'. Without wanting to argue against that position, I propose, however, that it is not impossible to employ a reconstructive approach and at the same time reduce the amount of loose interpretation drastically: instead of having the reconstruction of implicit premises performed by the outside analyst, the idea is instead to analyse - descriptively - the reconstructions performed by the language users themselves, the reconstructions employed in order to appreciate, understand, agree with, criticise or downright refute each other's arguments.

Behind these concerns lies the assumption that arguments - understood as linguistic utterances - do not possess some kind of 'real form', a form of which they are themselves only imperfect reflections. This assumption can be ascribed not only to Popper's critical rationalism, but even more so to Popper's widely ignored predecessor in the domain of argumentation theory, the English philosopher Alfred Sidgwick. For Sidgwick, logic was an application used for producing objections or questions, rather than a property belonging to the arguments themselves. Based on an exhaustive examination of Sidgwick's philosophy, Nielsen (1997) suggests that a sc. *principle of access* applies: the only access to the arguer's intentions and motivations is the medium of language:

> According to this principle we have no access to any kind of superpersonal 'propositions' that could be individually inspected by both parties in a discussion in order to ensure absolutely unambiguous communication. The principle does not rule out (…) the possibility that even the arguer himself may have only a vague idea what he means by his utterances and argumentative articulations.
> For exactly that reason there is no other path to knowing the 'arguer's intention' (…) than that which runs through the medium of language - *asking* him about it! The context of the argument is the given, particular discussion and it can be disclosed (or formed) only through the objections and counter objections and the specifying questions and answers of the dialogue. (Nielsen (1997), p. 392. Transl.[67] NMN)

[67] The original passage:
Ifølge dette princip har vi ikke adgang til nogen form for overpersonlige 'domme' el.lign., som begge parter i en diskussion hver for sig kan inspicere for derigennem at sikre sig absolut entydig kommunikation. Princippet udelukker end ikke (- ifølge min senere rekonstruktion af Sidgwicks vaghedsteori implicerer det ligefrem -) at også hævderen selv kun kan have et uklart begreb om, hvad han mener med sine udsagn og sine argumentformuleringer.

The principle of access is a stepping stone towards the following chapters, in that it supports a qualification of the concept of intentionality: while communication in its most basic structure is based on the recognition of the other party's intentions, such intentional meaning is rarely clearly stated or consciously well formed, but rather, intentional meaning is often brought about and developed in the course of dialogue through the ad hoc, dialogical examination of arguments and argumentative positions. The use of logic in dialogue is critical, dialogical and deductive, or, in Sidgwick's word, *negative*. While a traditional approach to argument would depict arguments as 'positive' reflections of underlying entailment relations, Sidgwick's 'negative' logic is the subsequent, critical analysis of arguments in terms of their possible meanings - and further meanings - according to deductively derivable commitments. Nielsen (1997) proposes the term 'rogative' to cover Sidgwick's approach to logical distinctions, as opposed to a more traditional 'criterial' approach (Nielsen (1997), p. 78f.). The term 'rogative' will be used in that sense in the remainder of this dissertation.

In the second part of the dissertation, I shall largely leave behind the philosophical problems related to argumentation theory, and turn towards the linguistic and pragmatic insights needed to produce a model of the reconstructive and critical strategies employed by language users in dialogue.

Netop derfor er der ingen anden vej til information om 'hævderens intention' - eller til at præcisere hans måske ganske løst konciperede påstande og argumenter - end via det sproglige medium at *udspørge* ham desangående! Argumentets kontekst er altså den givne, individuelle *diskussion* - og afsløres (eller dannes) kun gennem dialogens indvendinger og modindvendinger og dens præciserende spørgsmål og svar. (Nielsen (1997), p. 392).

CHAPTER V

On the Nature of Dialogue

INTRODUCTION: THE STUDY OF DIALOGUE

A very brief introduction to the scholarly study of dialogue.

In chapter IV I described Govier's approach as being typical for the relativistic variant of informal logic. Moreover, I proposed a criticism of such approaches, central to which was the accusation that a relativistic approach can never serve as a general theory of argument, whereas it may effectively block the way for rational approaches. One aspect of Govier's work, however, deserves acknowledgement; it assumes a language-oriented perspective, in that Grice's Co-operation Principle is taken as a description of the practical application of charity in everyday conversations. But Govier seems to miss completely that if we are to take Grice seriously, his position on the relationship between logic and conversation contradicts directly Govier's claim that formal logic is irrelevant to the analysis of practical language use. After all, Grice opens his famous paper on 'Logic and Conversation' (Grice (1975)) with the claim that the practical use of language is logical by necessity:

> I wish (…) to maintain that the common assumption (…) that the divergences [between the 'formal devices' and their 'natural language counterparts'] do in fact exist is (broadly speaking) a common mistake, and that the mistake arises from inadequate attention to the nature and importance of the conditions governing conversation. I shall, therefore proceed at once to inquire into the general conditions that, in one way or another, apply to conversation as such, irrespective of its subject matter. (Grice (1975), p. 43.)

As it should be evident, it is central to Grice's approach to communication that there are 'general conditions' involved in the very possibility of communicating, and that these conditions are *formal*, in that they apply 'irrespective of subject matter'. This idea is also central to the current study, and it will be the theme of this chapter. The attempt at giving adequate descriptions and explanations of the phenomenon of

'communication', or more specifically, of 'dialogue', is a fairly recent development in language studies.

The study of dialogue has emerged from different disciplines: sociology (Apel, Habermas), philosophy (Austin, Searle, Grice), mathematics (Lorenzen, Lorenz), rhetoric (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca) later fusing into such disciplines as pragmatics (Leech, Levinson etc.), conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff etc.), discourse analysis (van Dijk, Fairclough etc.), and argumentation theory (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, Walton etc.). Facing this multitude of approaches, I would argue that there is no serious contradiction involved in combining them. Dialogue can be seen as a form of action governed by principles of co-operation (pragmatics), further structured by sequential mechanisms of turn-taking and other power-related functions (conversation analysis), and dialogue reflects its context and eventually contributes to creating social contexts (discourse analysis). And in the midst of this fusion, there is no contradiction involved in claiming that argumentative dialogue is a process where participants negotiate meaning in a critical way, based on an assumption of rational argumentation. In this chapter I specifically focus on the contribution of *pragmatics* to argumentation theory.

THE CO-OPERATION PRINCIPLE

This section describes Paul Grice's work on conversation and implicature in some detail. It is argued that the co-operation principle is crucial to a dialogical account of argumentation. There are, however, also problems and ambiguities connected to Grice's theoretical framework.

How Conversation Works

Early linguistics succeeded in describing the systematics of language by such dichotomies as syntagm/paradigm, synchronicity/diachronicity, and langue/parole. Saussure formulated most of these innovations in 1907-11 (reconstructed manuscripts were published 1916) and was succeeded by such structuralists as Bloomfield (1935) and Hjelmslev (1943), and later still, the generative tradition of Chomsky (1957). The langue/parole-distinction (language system versus language use) is the most significant distinction in the context of this study, for it was Saussure's disinclination to approach questions related to *parole*, that came to set the standards for linguistics for more than fifty years; the task of linguistics was to adequately describe and explain the underlying system of language, while the day-to-day use of language was largely dismissed from the scope of linguistics proper. As a consequence, language was seen as little more than a descriptive tool, the accuracy of its description of the world being the standard for a given language.

The narrow focus of early structuralist linguistics meant that the phenomenon *dialogue*, or conversation, was not explainable in linguistic terms, or at least not very interesting. Saussure himself is believed to have been quite disinterested in the use of language as a conversational phenomenon in all its messy imperfection.

However, soon a relevant question came up: if the use of language is non-systematic to the degree that a traditional, linguistic observation would have it, how can it be that we seem to understand one another? Why indeed would we bother to talk, if we had no reason to believe that anyone would understand? And how can it be that we, through the use of language, are able to organise and maintain complex social structures such as societies? If linguists had seen such problems as specifically *linguistic* problems (in fact they did not), the descriptive approach of linguistics could easily be seen to be insufficient to explain such matters.

One of the first to ask such questions was the British philosopher John Langshaw Austin, who in the 1950's worked with a radically different approach to language. It was Austin's thesis that language was far from merely an instrument for description, but just as much a particular form of social action. Austin coined the term 'speech act' to signify one such unit of linguistic action, distinguishing in this early work between *constatives* (description by way of language) and *performatives* (action by way of language). In the posthumously published *How To Do Things With Words* (1962), any linguistic utterance was thought to be the simultaneous performance of three distinct acts: The *locution* (the act of uttering), the *illocution* (the performance of the intended act *in and by* the utterance), and the *perlocution* (the act of bringing about the intended effect in the hearer). But it was one of Austin's followers who were to attempt an actual articulation of a general principle governing the social phenomenon, conversation. In his 1967 *William James Lectures*[68], Henry Paul Grice proposed his *Co-operation Principle* ('the CP') to account for the fact that language users are able to infer unspoken meaning so as to render the incoherent surface structure of conversation meaningful. This is the CP:

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice (1975), p. 45)

The CP is one possible articulation of the thesis that it is impossible to communicate without an assumption of mutual co-operation. Most would agree with the idea that any form of communication has to be based on a mutual *wish* to engage in communication, and, having such a wish, it is natural that one engages co-operatively and expects others to do likewise. What is not uncontroversial is the question of what criteria precisely define what it is to engage co-operatively. Grice tentatively suggests the four categories of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, under which fall the more concrete *maxims*:

[68] The first lecture was later published in a now famous paper entitled 'Logic and Conversation' (Grice (1975)), and the complete lectures appeared with further notes and comments in Grice (1989).

QUANTITY
1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

QUALITY
1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

RELATION
1. Be relevant.

MANNER
1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly. (Grice (1975), p. 45f.)

These four categories were never intended by Grice to be the final word on the matter of how co-operativeness may be realised; the CP (or some variant thereof) is a well-founded theoretical concept, but fixating the actual criteria by which language users mutually assess conversational contributions poses some very complex problems of which Grice was very much aware. That notwithstanding, much criticism of Grice has focused on precisely the articulation and ordering of the maxims, and many attempts have been made at proposing more adequate classifications pertaining to the CP[69]. This - still ongoing - discussion is not going to influence this study much. What is important for the present purposes is the CP and the understanding that specific criteria are brought into play when one language user is to make sense of the contribution of another. No doubt, the maxims mentioned by Grice play a part in that process, and it is perfectly possible that other maxims do as well, some of which may be local or genre specific. It is also possible that the priorities given to various maxims vary from one discursive context to another, so that in some contexts, QUALITY is superior, in others RELATION, and in others still, one of the additional maxims mentioned by Grice (Grice (1975), p. 47), aesthetic, social or moral maxims, might take priority.

The tentativeness in the suggestion of concrete maxims, however, is not the only aspect of Grice's suggestion that has often been overlooked. Another, and probably much more important misapprehension, is the widespread idea that the CP is normative - i.e., an advice on good, communicative behaviour. For some reason, Grice chose to phrase not only the CP but also its attendant maxims in the imperative mood rather than in the indicative. What is intended as a *description* of conversational practice, then, may erroneously be apprehended as *prescriptive*. Indeed, Grice's stylistic choice has in fact led several scholars into the delusion that the CP and the maxims represent a proposed set of rules for appropriate, communicative conduct (we saw in chapter IV that Govier seems to have fallen victim of this misapprehension). Unfortunate as this may be, Grice specifically stated that

[69] e.g. Sperber & Wilson (1986), van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992), Tsui (1991), Leech (1983).

> …it is just a well-recognized empirical fact that people DO behave in these ways; they have learned to do so in childhood and not lost the habit of doing so; and, indeed, it would involve a good deal of effort to make a radical departure from the habit. (Grice (1975), p. 48)

Following the CP is also something we 'should do' as it is simply 'reasonable' to do so, notes Grice in passing (p. 48), so it is granted that the CP *also* enjoys a normative status. But above all, the CP and the maxims are not prescriptions telling language users how to behave. Rather, they reflect the communicative *expectations* held by anyone engaging in communication, expectations without which there could be no rational communication.

> …I would like to be able to show that observance of the CP and maxims is reasonable (rational) along the following lines: that any one who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication ... must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the CP and the maxims. (Grice (1975), p. 49)

I have referred to the CP as a condition of communication (in chapter II), which means that the CP is always already assumed to apply. Otherwise, the CP would be a contingent regulative. This, however, may seem intuitively wrong, but that depends on the way one chooses to appreciate the relationship between the CP itself and the maxims working under it. In this context, the CP is interpreted as a kind of interpretation scheme: while the maxims are rules we assume have been obeyed (until evidence to the contrary turns up), the CP is an interpretation scheme which is *always* used to interpret the speaker's observation or flouting of particular maxims. So saying that the CP is a condition of communication is not equivalent to saying that people always co-operate, that they strive towards consensus (in a Habermasian sense) or anything like that. The existence of the CP as interpretive scheme attests to the fact that people always try to find meaning in the utterances of others, regardless of whether or not the other actually co-operates. In a police interrogation, for instance, the detective may expect that the prisoner violates every conceivable maxim in order to deceive him as much as possible. However, this complete violation of maxims does not rub off on the CP; the prisoner's utterances still have to be interpreted according to the CP, or, in other words, you cannot violate a principle without first acknowledging its legitimacy. So the key word in the above quotation is *assumption*. As a participant in a communication situation one automatically *assumes* that other participants follow the CP, and the inferences one makes concerning the meaning of utterances and others' intentions underlying these utterances are based on this assumption. It may be that in fact some other participant is lying, but that does not change the basic assumption that he is being truthful. This applies until other circumstances, linguistic or extra-linguistic,

indicate or prove otherwise. The assumption that others obey the CP is *sine qua non* of any communicative event. An example[70]:

V. A

> A: Would you like some coffee?
> B: Coffee would keep me awake.

Suppose for a moment, that A does not, by default, believe that B's reply is sufficiently informative, truthful, relevant and well ordered, or that it at least possesses one of those features. If A does not assume that B is engaging co-operatively, A has no reason to expect B's remark to be connected in any way to A's question. Lacking, for example, an obligation towards being relevant, B's remark could well be completely disconnected from the context in question - for all A knows. And there is no reason why it could not be simply false. And it might not be informative of B's intentions at all. And so on. In short, the co-operative interpretation is necessary for deciding whether or not the other party is acting in a co-operative manner.

The other side of the coin, however, is that while the CP (or some other principle to the same effect) is invariantly functional as interpretive scheme in any communicative form of activity, the maxims are not, in practice, always respected. A conversational maxim is a rule that a language user *expects* another language user to respect, but which he does not necessarily respect himself. What happens, then, when a language user realises that, judging from what has been said, it is logically impossible that the conversation partner could actually obey the maxims they tacitly agree to expect? The answer is that the language user sticks to his expectation of the other's co-operation, and on that basis launches a particular kind of inferential calculation that produces whatever additional (or correctional) meaning is needed to make the conversation partner's contribution adhere to *all* relevant, conversational requirements. That inferential calculation is referred to by Grice as *conversational implicature*. As the performance of an intentional speaker act, Grice defines the conversational implicature in this way:

> A man who, by (in, when) saying (or making as if to say) that *p* has implicated that *q*, may be said to have conversationally implicated that *q*, PROVIDED THAT (1) he is to be presumed to be observing the conversational maxims, or at least the co-operative principle; (2) the supposition that he is aware that, or thinks that, *q* is required in order to make his saying or making as if to say *p* (or doing so in THOSE terms) consistent with this presumption; and (3) the speaker thinks (and would expect the hearer to think that the speaker thinks) that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively, that the supposition mentioned in (2) IS required. (Grice (1975), p. 49f.)

[70] Borrowed from Sperber & Wilson (1991 / 1986) 'Inference and Implicature' in Davis, Steven (ed.) (1991).

This explanation of how the phenomenon of implicature works is absolutely central to Grice's project. Unfortunately, as the density of the above quotation duly testifies, Grice cannot be said to have possessed the gift for expressing complex matters in simple syntax. So it is reasonable in this context to spend some effort on disentangling the delicacies of the process of implicature. When analysing Grice's account into its constituent parts, I will take the liberty of removing some of the (*almost* redundant) disjunctions ('or making as if to say'; 'or thinks that' etc.), in order to emphasise what appears to be the central elements in the account:

V. B

> A speaker who has said that *p* has conversationally implicated that *q* if and only if the following four conditions are satisfied:
> 1. The speaker can be presumed to observe the co-operation principle.
> 2. It can be supposed that the speaker is aware that *q* is required in order to make his saying *p* consistent with the presumption mentioned in (1).
> 3. The speaker thinks that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out that the supposition mentioned in (2) *is* required.
> 4. The speaker expects the hearer to realize (3).

(It should be pointed out at this point that I do not think that this simplified scheme exhausts the meaning of this passage. I shall revert to the analysis of the passage later on in this chapter. For now, however, this interpretation will do.)

Note that the third condition of the original passage really contains not one, but two, distinct criteria. This is reflected in the above interpretation which has four conditions. If we apply this four-step description on example **v. a** things may become a bit clearer:

B has, by saying 'Coffee would keep me awake', conversationally implicated 'I do not want any coffee', on these conditions:

V. C

> (1) B can be presumed to observe the CP.
> (2) B is aware that the implicatum[71] 'I do not want any coffee' is required if the utterance 'Coffee would keep me awake' is to count as a co-operative effort in the conversation.
> (3) B thinks that A will be able to work out (2).
> (4) B thinks that A realises (3).

[71] A note on terminology: Grice uses the terms 'implicatum' for the implicated meaning, that is, the end result of the process of implicature, but often this end result is also simply referred to as 'implicature'. In this text, I use a terminology in which the *implicans* (that which implicates - the *said* meaning - also known as 'propositional form' or 'explicature' (Carston (1988)) sparks of the *implicature* (the internal inference process involving the CP and maxims) which brings about the *implicatum* (that which is implicated - the *un*said meaning).

This explanation is not sufficient, however. We still need to know what it means (in (2)) that the implicatum is 'required' for the implicans to count as co-operative. This is where the conversational maxims come in: The implicans, 'Coffee would keep me awake' is, on the face of it, a violation of at least the first maxim in the category of QUANTITY; it is not sufficiently informative: B's utterance does not *inform* A whether or not B wants come coffee, in spite of the fact that A's utterance was in fact the request for such information. It is arguably also a violation of the maxim under RELATION in that it is not *relevant*: it is an assertive utterance about the effect of coffee on B, but that was not what A wanted to know about.

At this stage, the conversation is in distress: B's utterance violates various, conversational maxims, leaving A with two possible interpretations of the situation: (1) B is not being co-operative, or (2) B's utterance is a carrier of implicit meaning - it means something else and/or something more than what is conventionally carried by the words used in producing the utterance. Option (1) can in most cases be ruled out: non-co-operation is a special case. In this case it seems obvious that an interpretation according to the CP will be worth the while. So A is left with option (2). He may assume that B's utterance somehow conforms to the CP. What A must now do is *examine the context of utterance*. In different contexts B's utterance may implicate different implicata. In this analysis it is presupposed that the context involves the mutual knowledge that 'it is late, and B wants to go to sleep' (or something to a similar effect). Given this contextual knowledge, A may infer that B does not want to be kept awake (obviously, wanting to go to sleep and wanting to be kept awake is a contradiction). Now, suddenly, it is evident that the utterance 'Coffee would keep me awake' *is* sufficiently informative *and* relevant after all. It is relevant as it provides sufficient support for the conclusion that B does not want coffee. It gives the reason why B does not want coffee. And, as the conclusion follows quite clearly, B's utterance is as informative as required for the purposes of the exchange. In fact, adding '…so I do not want any coffee' would transgress the second maxim of QUANTITY - it would be *over*informative for the purposes of the exchange. So, the implicatum 'I do not want any coffee' *is* required in order for the implicans 'Coffee would keep me awake' to count as co-operative.

The above is a standard account of how implicatures work, an account which is necessary in order to understand how implicit elements of arguments are made explicit in argumentative dialogue. The account, however, is not undisputed. It does have its problems, some of which are important in this context. The following section will examine the concept of implicature in a rather more critical light.

The Theoretical Status of Implicature

The concept of conversational implicature, unfortunately, is not a well-established theoretical concept. Various different notions of implicature can be distinguished in the relevant literature, an example of which is the question of the *cancellability* of implicature. In Grice (1965), implicated meaning is, among other features, characterised by being *non-cancellable* - meaning that the implicatum carried by some utterance cannot be cancelled by adding a further utterance annulling the implicatum, while still retaining the original utterance (Grice (1965), p. 446; see also Harnish (1976) p. 326). In Grice (1975), *cancellability* covers both *explicit* and *contextual*

cancellability, the former being the direct contradiction of the 1965 claim of 'non-cancellability', and the latter being the doctrine that an implicatum carried by some utterance may be cancelled given a change in context (Grice (1975), p. 57; see also Vanderveken (1991), p. 374). Both Levinson, Mey, and Verschueren take the cancellability of implicatures to mean that they are *defeasible*[72] (that is, non-deductive) (Levinson (1983), p. 114; Mey (1993), p. 200; Verschueren (1999), p. 29ff), despite the fact that Grice emphasises that the relationship between the said and the implicated is a relation of entailment (Grice (1965), p.445-6). The point may be that the cancellability of implicatures depends on whether or not the relevant contextual information is incorporated in the inference. As it will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, if the context ('c') is worked into the conditional $(p \wedge c) \rightarrow q$, where 'p' is the implicans and 'q' is the implicatum, then there is in fact a relation of entailment: given that the conditional is accepted, then the utterance *in context* entails the implicatum.

Another point of dispute has to do with distinguishing between different *kinds* of implicated meaning; Grice (1975) distinguishes between conventional and non-conventional implicatures, the conventional variant being those vehicles of implicature in which the implicatum is carried by the conventional meaning of the words used in the utterance, and which is consequently independent of context. The non-conventional category predominantly contains the *conversational* implicatures. The taxonomy, however, is far from clear in the relevant literature, when such notions as what was *said*, what was *meant*, what was *presupposed*, what was *conventionally implicated*, and what was *conversationally implicated*, are to be singled out from one another. Harnish distinguishes between saying, meaning, *and* implicating (Harnish (1976), even if it is far from clear in Grice (1975) that it should be possible to distinguish between what was *meant* and what was *implicated* by some utterance. The notion of *presupposition* has an equally indeterminate status; Harnish considers presupposition to be a third type of implicature (parallel to conventional and non-conventional implicatures) (Harnish (1976) p. 325ff.), while Sadock counts presupposition as a subclass of conventional implicatures (Sadock (1991), p. 366).

Sadock (1991) concludes that of all suggested tests of implicature (including cancellability), only the criterion of calculability (a conversational implicature should be capable of being *inferred*) is necessarily a property of conversational implicature, but that the calculability condition is really trivial, seeing that the CP and its submaxims allow for great variance in what precisely may be worked out from some given utterance in some given context. In fact, given the existing methodology, says Sadock, there is '…no way of knowing for sure whether an implicature is conversational' (Sadock (1991), p. 375).

It is beyond the scope of the present text (and beyond the abilities of the present writer) to disentangle these concepts and present them in an exhaustive and non-contradictory framework, but it goes without saying that the fact that so much confusion remains does not encourage confidence in Grice's theory. Still, the notion of implicature has a strange viability to it - the very idea of co-operativeness and

[72] Verschueren points out that *defeasibility* is really '…just another term for context-sensitivity' (Verschueren (1999), p. 29).

calculability as basic preconditions of communication is very hard indeed to dismiss. And as I hope to make evident, the notion of implicature is indispensable - with some adjustment - to the analysis of argumentative dialogue. But before proceeding to that, however, there is still one particular critical point in Grice's concept of communication which needs to be touched on: the definition of meaning. As it will be evident, the notion of *speaker intention* is central to understanding dialogue, and this means that we have to explore what the impact of the speaker's intentions are in terms of the meaning conveyed. Grice's concept of meaning can be seen as consisting of speaker intentions only, as devoid of conventional meaning. That account, however, is too simple, and that is what the next subchapter is about.

MEANING AND INTENTION

A specification of the concept of *meaning* seen in the light of a distinction between the codified, 'linguistic' meaning, and the communicative, 'intended' meaning. The specification of the term is informed by a discussion between the philosophers Paul Grice and John R. Searle.

On the Meaning of 'Meaning'

The concept of conversational implicature reflects the idea that it is possible to somehow transmit intended[73] meaning in a way which is not coded by language. That, at least, is the way some of Grice's critics have seen it. John Searle raised the question how it can be possible to base a theory of meaning entirely on *intention* and not at all on (linguistic) *convention* (Searle (1969)). Searle's point of departure is Grice's account of 'meaning' in his early article of that name (Grice (1957)), where Grice distinguishes between *natural* and *non-natural* meaning. On the one hand, 'natural meaning' is the kind of meaning we refer to in a sentence like 'those spots mean measles', that is, meaning behind which there is no subject *intending* to communicate (unless, of course, one believes that nature itself is animated and thus intentional). Non-natural meaning (or 'meaning$_{NN}$'), on the other hand, is the kind of meaning which is *intended* by someone. Non-natural meaning, following Grice's early account, can be laid out as follows:

> '*A* meant$_{NN}$ something by *x*' is (roughly) equivalent to '*A* intended the utterance of *x* to produce some effect in an audience by means of the recognition of this intention.' (Grice (1957), p. 27)

[73] In the philosophy of language, the term 'intentionality' is used in a strictly technical sense, here explained by Searle: 'Intentionality is that feature of the mind by which mental states are directed at, or are about or of, or refer to, or aim at, states of affairs in the world' (Searle (1999), p. 64f.). So the word 'intention' covers more than just intending some particular *action*, it covers the very idea that mental phenomena represent, one way or the other, states of affairs.

On this account it is the audience's *recognition of A's intention* that enables transfer of meaning, while the conventional semantics of the words used in *x* seems to have been left out. Accordingly, Searle establishes two critical points on Grice's account of meaning:

> First, it fails to account for the extent to which meaning can be a matter of rules or conventions. This account of meaning does not show the connection between one's meaning something by what one says, and what that which one says actually means in the language. Secondly, by defining meaning in terms of intended effects it confuses illocutionary with perlocutionary acts. Put crudely, Grice in effect defines meaning in terms of intending to perform a perlocutionary act, but saying something and meaning it is a matter of intending to perform an illocutionary, not necessarily a perlocutionary, act. (Searle (1969), p. 43f.)

Elsewhere, Searle makes his point by way of a fictional example (Searle (1965), p. 45f.): An American soldier is captured by Italian troops during World War II. The American wants the Italians to think they have accidentally seized a German officer and to set him free. In order to make them get this impression, the American utters the only line he knows in German, '*Kennst Du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen*', in a commanding tone of voice. The point of the story is that Grice's account of meaning would require that the Italians understood that the captive was German, *by recognising his intention* to have them think so. As Searle points out, recognising the intention 'I want you to think that I am a German officer', could hardly move the Italians to release the American. If they were to get the impression that the American was a German officer, they would need to believe that his words actually *conventionally meant* that he was a German officer - 'Ich bin ein deutcher Offizier' or something to that effect. And that kind of meaning is not covered by Grice's account of meaning, says Searle.

But granted that Grice's definition of meaning does not contain linguistic meaning, this objection is still not a very co-operative reading of Grice, once you take into account Grice's later work on implicatures. When the American officer, on Searle's account, says '*Kennst Du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühen*' to Italian troops whom he assumes (and hopes) do not understand German, he is not producing an implicature in Grice's sense of the word. The generation of an implicature requires that the hearer has access to the linguistic code: an implicature is *always* based on what was *said*, but that does not seem to be the case in Searle's example. Note that the American officer might just as well *not* speak German in order to produce the same effect with the Italians: all he needs to do is utter some sounds that *ring* German, that is, some string of phonemes or random sounds which could be interpreted by foreigners as typically German; He needs to convince them that he is speaking German, he does not have to actually *speak* German. But that would not be implicating. To generate an implicature, he would need to flout or exploit a maxim, and the American officer does not do this, if he just utters some sounds that may give the impression that he is German. He is not saying something he believes to be false, he is not being over- or underinformative, he is not being irrelevant, and he is not really being communicatively disorderly, either. He is

doing something which is not covered by the CP; he is conveying a (false) impression by *non-linguistic* means. He is in fact not 'saying' anything in Grice's terms.

Leech (1983) makes a similar point:

> …if *s* says *My aunt has a villa in Vladivostok!*, meaning by that that *s* has three aces and two kings up his sleeve, this is no concern of pragmatics, because the meaning conveyed in that case has nothing to do with the sense of the utterance. (Leech (1983), p. 35)

What Searle succeeded in showing, however, was that Grice's account of meaning was, if not wrong, then incomplete. It was presupposed that apart from the meaning of the *utterer*, there is also a meaning conventionally attached to the *utterance*, but it was not explicitly stated in Grice's original definition of what it means that '*U*[tterer]meant$_{NN}$ something by *x*'[74]. Searle himself later assumed an intentionalist view in his (1983), granting that Grice's account is an adequate description of the communicative if not the linguistic aspect of meaning.

That a conventional concept of meaning is already presupposed in Grice (1975) can be seen from the fact that Grice contrasts the idea of conversational implicature with *conventional* implicature, a concept which obviously requires an assumption of codified, conventional meaning. But in order to respond more explicitly to Searle's challenge that his concept of meaning involves only U's meaning, not x's meaning, Grice proposes a redefinition of what it means that '*U* meant$_{NN}$ something by *x*', in which it is added that the speaker needs to have the hearer recognise a 'feature of the utterance' to be conventionally (or iconically or associatively) correlated to the intended effect on the hearer[75].

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[74] The original definition as restated in Grice (1989):

"*U* meant something by *x*" is true iff, for some audience *A*, *U* uttered *x* intending:
(1) *A* to produce a particular response *r*
(2) *A* to think (recognize) that *U* intends (1)
(3) *A* to fulfill (1) on the basis of his fulfilment of (2).
(Grice (1989), p. 92)

[75] Grice's redefinition, in which conventional meaning is introduced:

Variables: *A*: audience; *f*: features of utterance; *r*: response; *c*: modes of correlation (such as iconic, associative, conventional).

($\exists A$) ($\exists f$) ($\exists r$) ($\exists c$):

U uttered *x* intending
(1) *A* to think *x* possesses *f*
(2) *A* to think *U* intends (1)
(3) *A* to think of *f* as correlated in way *c* with the type to which *r* belongs
(4) *A* to think *U* intends (3)
(5) *A* to think on the basis of fulfilment of (1) and (3) that *U* intends *A* to produce *r*
(6) *A*, on the basis of fulfilment of (5), to produce *r*

Speech Act Intentionality and Communicative Intentionality

But the notion of intentionality is not exhausted so readily. Searle claims that while Grice is right in claiming that the communicative event is based on the recognition of speaker intentions, there is also a form of intentionality connected to the very act of uttering a speech act altogether. A speech act in Searle's theory has the form F(p), where F is the illocutionary force lending itself to the proposition p. In the below example (dealing with the utterance 'it is raining') the difference between Searle's and Grice's concepts of intentionality begin to emerge:

> In making the utterance, I intend to represent assertively the state of affairs that it is raining (that is the F(p) part) and I intend you to recognize that representation, by means of getting you to recognize my intention that you should recognize it (and that is the Gricean communication part). Frankly, this distinction between the representing intentions and communication intention seems to me obvious. (Searle (1991), p. 86.)

Here we have essentially the difference between speech act theory and conversational theory. According to Searle's concept of intentionality, the act of conveying the utterance 'it is raining' to someone else needs to go through not one, but two, different intentional phases:

> (1) I $INTEND_1$
> to represent assertively
> that it is raining
>
> (2) And I $INTEND_2$
> that you recognise $INTENTION_1$ *and* $INTENTION_2$.

$INTENTION_1$, however, is a double structure, since there is one intention involved in *saying*, and another in *meaning*.

> It is clear in general what the package to be communicated is: speech acts in general have the form F(p), and it is the intention to produce an object with that form that constitutes saying something and meaning something by it. (Searle (1991), p. 86)

The form of the speech act, F(p) constitutes *saying* and *meaning*. This is the 'package' which may - or, notably, may not - be communicated. As the speech act consists of both saying and meaning, there is a form of intentionality attributed to each of these. First, the intention of uttering something is satisfied on the condition that it results in a particular utterance. No 'meaning' is involved at this point - just a 'sentence' of a

(7) *A* to think *U* intends (6)' (Grice (1989), p. 103f.)

particular type. Second, the intention of meaning something (by uttering it) is satisfied on the condition that the speaker *believes* that the world fits the propositional content of the utterance (Searle (1991), p. 83).

Searle's criticism of Grice revolves around the rather obvious point that $INTENTION_2$ is not possible without the existence of $INTENTION_1$, since recognising $INTENTION_1$ is actually a part of $INTENTION_2$. And, says Searle, $INTENTION_1$ need not be a *communicative* act, as it is only the intention to 'represent' something by language, not necessarily to convey it to someone else. These objections to Grice are certainly relevant - but including the notion of $INTENTION_1$ into Grice's understanding of communication does not seem to alter the status of the implicature in any radical way - at least not for the present purpose. As the object of this study is not the act of uttering and/or meaning, but the act of *communicating*, the CP-driven implicature remains the right point of departure. In a theoretical account of argumentative dialogue, the existence of $INTENTION_1$ is taken for granted, while the actual description pertains to the communication of $INTENTION_2$.

IMPLICATURAL REASONING AS A RECIPROCAL ACT

In order for the concept of implicature to be set to work as a theoretical concept describing the explicitisation of 'unexpressed' or 'implicit' premises or conclusions, the concept requires further specification. An implicature is the hearer's inferential derivation of the speaker's intended - yet unexpressed - meaning. In this subchapter, a question is posed: what should we call meaning which is inferentially derived by the hearer, but which was *not* intended by the speaker?

Intentionalism and Intersubjectivism

Both the theories of Grice and (contemporary) Searle, however, are purely *intentionalist* theories, as opposed to *intersubjectivist* ones. That observation is made by Habermas (1991) in a critical address to Searle. According to Habermas' distinction, intentionalism is the doctrine that meaning should be explained through the communication of individual intentions - perhaps through the performance of speech acts and linguistic convention, whereas intersubjectivism is the doctrine that meaning is produced in a social, institutional context where consensus is the primary goal. And, according to Habermas, these two approaches are basically incompatible; as the intersubjectivist view will tend to measure the success of a speech act by the discourse participants' agreement on its validity claims, an intentionalist conception of meaning makes no sense, seeing that agreement is not a part of the conveying of meaning in an intentionalist perspective. From a intersubjectivist point of view, says Habermas,

> …a speech act, which the speaker uses in order to come to an agreement with the addressee about something, expresses simultaneously (a) a certain speaker intention, (b) a certain state of affairs, and (c) an interpersonal relationship. According to the original intentionalist view, the whole communication process can be explained from the perspective of the speaker and his intentions in such a way that (c) and (b) are derived from (a). (Habermas (1991), p. 18)

Searle does not take issue with this view, but simply claims that the two views are *not* incompatible but in fact combinable; the intentionalist view of meaning is presupposed by the intersubjectivist view, and the two approaches are simply two different levels of understanding. The intentionalist approach is the close-up view of 'the bare skeletal structure of the basic speech acts' (Searle (1991), p. 90), while the intersubjectivist approach goes on at a societal or institutional level, describing the actual, social act of speaking in all its complexity.

In the following, I am going to assume that Searle is right in his insistence that an intentionalist account of meaning does not rule out intersubjectivism. A satisfactory account of argumentative dialogue, I will argue, and this is a main point, depends heavily on both approaches.

A Double Agency of Conversational Implicature?

In Grice's speaker-oriented definition of conversational implicature, as discussed earlier, at least two conditions attest to the fact that the implicature is a conscious act on the part of the speaker alone. Below, the simplified passage is repeated.

V. D

> A speaker who has said that *p* has conversationally implicated that *q* if and only if the following four conditions are satisfied:
> 1. The speaker can be presumed to observe the co-operation principle.
> 2. It can be supposed that the speaker is aware that *q* is required in order to make his saying *p* consistent with the presumption mentioned in (1).
> 3. The speaker thinks that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out that the supposition mentioned in (2) *is* required.
> 4. The speaker expects the hearer to realize (3).

The implicature reflects what the speaker 'meant', in that you need to *suppose that he is aware that q* in order for his saying *p* to be consistent with his following of the CP (condition 2), and seeing that the speaker expects the hearer to be able to figure out that q is what the speaker really *means* (condition 3). So it seems that what is *meant* is equivalent to what is *implicated*. While the linguistic adjustments already suggested do not (I believe) change any central claims of Grice's, a closer analysis reveals the need for a more important adjustment than mere stylistic ones: **v. d** contains a number of verbs grammaticalised such that their agency is lost: '…he is to *be presumed*…': '…the *supposition* that…'. In order to reconstruct this text in an even more accessible form, we are in need of answers to the questions: *Who* presumes (in condition (1)), and

who supposes (in condition (2))? In the reconstruction of **v. d**, I assume that the missing person is the *hearer*. If this is a reasonable assumption then it is no coincidence, I will argue in the following. **v. e** is the reconstructed version of the simplified scheme, **v. d**, with the changes underlined:

V. E

> A speaker who has said that *p* has conversationally implicated that *q* if and only if the following four conditions are satisfied:
> 1. The hearer presumes that the speaker observes the co-operation principle.
> 2. The hearer supposes that the speaker is aware that *q* is required in order to make his saying *p* consistent with the presumption mentioned in (1).
> 3. The speaker thinks that it is within the competence of the hearer to work out that the supposition mentioned in (2) *is* required.
> 4. The speaker expects the hearer to realize (3).

Still on the assumption that this analysis is correct, and that it is in fact the hearer who has the agency in conditions (1) and (2), the very agency of *performing the implicature* becomes indeterminate - it becomes a kind of intersubjective action.

v. e has a problematic implication: According to **v. e** it is possible that the meaning intended by the speaker is not identical to the meaning reconstructed by the hearer. This is problematic because it becomes indecisive whether or not we are actually dealing with real implicatures, in case hearer meaning is not identical to speaker meaning. In the following, I will inspect various reinterpretations of the status of co-operation and implicature in argumentative dialogue.

One understanding of the double agency in implicature is that non-intended meaning is also implicatural, and this is the train of thought that I will follow first.

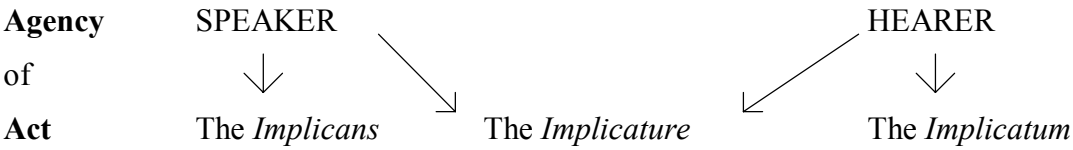
Quite typical of most language philosophical approaches is the die-hard assumption that language users somehow always know what they mean. In a superficial reading of Grice's original account of implicature, meaning deduced from some utterance in a conversation is not of implicatural nature unless the speaker has actually been consciously aware of this particular meaning. But this is a poor representation of real conversations, and besides it is a methodologically hoary question how we can possibly know what the speaker knows. We can ask him, of course, but maybe it is only when asked that the speaker commences a production or extraction of extra meaning. We can never know if he was actually conscious of that particular meaning at the time of utterance anyhow.

A solution may be to suppose that meaning is always negotiated *in* conversation: sometimes speakers 'know' what they mean apart from what they say, sometimes they do not. And sometimes the hearer confronts the speaker with an implicatum, based on what the speaker *said*, which the speaker was *not* aware of but has to take into consideration (this is basically the application of the *principle of access*, as discussed in chapter IV, final section). In such cases, however, the original Gricean account of conversational implicature does not apply. And the reason might be the following: In accounts like Grice's it appears that meaning is transmitted *from* speaker *to* hearer. But

this simply fits badly with the fact that in the case of implicated meaning, it is the hearer, not the speaker, that actually does the *inferential work*. The speaker *says*, the hearer *works out* the implicatum. Who performs the implicature then? Where exactly does the implicature take place? The answer can only be tentative: the implicature - that is, the *act* of implicating - is a reciprocal act; it is a form of action which involves a double agency. A speaker can say something monologically, insofar as saying is a physical act (In Searle's perspective, the speaker may represent a state of affairs in a speech act of the form *F(p)*.). But he cannot implicate anything at all without a hearer to do the inferential work and thus derive the implicatum (disregard for a moment that speaker and hearer may be two roles embodied in one person). This does not mean that 'the implicature' is not in peoples' heads, that it somehow resides *in* the communicative event - whatever that might mean. It only means that implicated meaning is not transmitted *from* speaker *to* hearer, but is ultimately produced by the hearer based on what the speaker said. This implicated meaning may then be made explicit by the hearer, and eventually it may in some cases be subjected to a negotiation between speaker and hearer. On this account, then, an implicatum that was not intended by the speaker is also a result of the act of implicature, seeing that it was arrived at by the same kind of inferential procedure as traditional implicatures.

V. F

A proposition for the graphical representation of the agency of implicature:



The above account, however, is controversial as it runs counter to some of Grice's central assumptions, so it may be necessary to refine the account somewhat. Let us therefore consider a critical reply:

It is central to the very idea of communication that there has to be some form of transmission of meaning, if there is not, then there is no communication. If an implicatum derived by the hearer was not consciously intended by the speaker, then that implicatum has really not been communicated at all, it is instead the hearer's construct. It is central to Grice's theory that the speaker *expects* the hearer to be able to accomplish the implicature, and this could obviously not be the case if the speaker is not aware of the implicatum. In addition, the critical reply may note, the fact that derived implicata often do not correspond to the speaker's intended implicata is basically an empirical observation, not a theoretical one.

The point of controversy is perhaps not really the nature of the implicature, but rather a difference in focal point or perspective. Whenever one focuses, as the traditional Grice-reading does, on the interlocutors participating in communication, the above notion of 'transmission of intentions' will inevitably arise. What is suggested here, however, is a focus *between* the interlocutors on the very communicative event, that is,

on the *relationship* between speaker and hearer. The relationship between speaker and hearer is one of commitment; when B in **v. a** replies 'coffee would keep me awake', he thereby takes on a number of commitments including the commitment that he (B) believes that it will be possible for the hearer (A) to work out a particular conversational implicature. Depending on the contextual information known to B, the intended implicatum may be different utterances, such as 'I don't want any coffee', or 'yes, I want some coffee'. Likewise, in deriving the implicatum, the hearer takes on a set of similar commitments: in deriving the implicatum, the hearer is committed to the assumption that the speaker did in fact *intend* this implicatum. Depending on the contextual information known to the hearer, this implicatum may be different utterances, again such as 'I don't want any coffee', or 'yes, I want some coffee'. The hearer's assumption that the speaker did in fact intend the proposed implicatum, then serves as a commitment on the speaker as well: 'Assuming that you don't want to be kept awake (contextual information), and seeing that you have said that coffee would keep you awake (implicans), you are committed to the claim that you do not want any coffee (implicatum)'.

Obviously, if the contextual information known to the speaker is not identical to the contextual information known to the hearer, the situation discussed above arises: the hearer derives an implicatum which was not intended by the speaker. This happens all the time in argumentative dialogue: reconstructive discussions are about correlating and matching contextual knowledge.

When arguments in dialogue are only partial (and they usually are), it is often necessary to complete them in the course of the dialogue, by filling in the missing parts. Such missing parts may be thought to be either the 'used assumptions' (assumptions that have actually been intended by the speaker) or the 'needed assumptions' (assumptions that are thought to be necessary by a 'rational judge', i.e. some external norm for rationality)[76]. On a reconstructive/deductivist account it is assumed that the hearer will generally propose implicata that validate the reconstructed argument, and attribute to the speaker the commitment to such reconstructed validations. Thus, the implicatum becomes the central point of dispute: the speaker may object to the hearer's reconstruction, by saying that the derived implicatum was not intended (i.e., it was not a used assumption), while the hearer may reply that in the light of the contextual information, the derived implicatum constitutes the needed assumption, the premise which is necessary in order for the speaker's argument to hold. The discussion may then move on to the discussion of whether or not speaker and hearer agree on the contextual information.

In chapter II, it was emphasised that rationality should be understood as a combination of co-operation and reason. In the light of the above discussion of needed and used assumptions, and the question of which kinds can actually qualify as true conversational implicatures, this basic distinction begins to emerge clearly as a real distinction in conversation. The reconstruction of the conversation partner's arguments involves both reconstruction based on co-operation and on reason.

[76] The distinction between used and needed assumptions is taken from Ennis (1982).

V. G

SPEAKER	HEARER'S RECONSTRUCTION		
Utterance	Paraphrase	Implicatum	
		Intended meaning (used assumption)	Commitment (needed assumption)
	By reference to common code	By reference to the norm of co-operation	By reference to the norm of reason (non-contradiction)

The roles of these different reconstruction options will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter VI. What is central at this point, however, is the distinction between inference based on the assumption of co-operation and inference based on the assumption of reason. I subsume both under the heading of 'implicatum', seeing that the two kinds of inference are performed in practically identical ways. However, as it is evident in the above discussion, there are also crucial differences. Theoretically speaking, a reconstruction which does not represent the intended meaning of the speaker is not an 'implicatum', but it seems that for all practical purposes, such reconstructions are *treated* - in a dialogue - in the same way that true implicata are. And they are, after all, performed according to a norm (only not the norm of co-operation, but the norm of reason, the norm stating that *contradiction is not allowed*.). In addition, the practical analysis of argumentative dialogue will generally not be able to draw a distinct line between the two types of derived implicata.

The Locus of Criticism: Hearer Meaning

While Searle's theory of intentionality is predominantly a theory of *speaker meaning*, a form of meaning which can easily be prior to communicative intentions, Grice's theory deals with the question of how intended speaker meaning is communicated. For the purposes of understanding the dialogical aspect of argumentation, however, what is sought for is a theory of *hearer meaning*, in order to account for the fact that whatever meaning is brought about was not always intended. It is the theory that argument assessment and logical criticism can only be carried out *post hoc*, that is, in response to something. It is not as fruitful to look at the positive presentation of argumentative discourse, as it is to look at the critical response. And the one who responds to an utterance is the *hearer* of the utterance, not the *speaker*. The term *hearer meaning*, then, refers to the implicated content generated by the hearer; as it has been noted concerning Grice's theory, there seems to be a vagueness in the fact that implicated content is invariably thought to be *speaker meaning* transmitted to the hearer, but this disregards the fact that the inferences that are necessary to work out implicata are not performed by the speaker, but by the hearer.

For precisely that reason, practical argument assessment and logical criticism are normally produced in the form of questions - *rogative* criticism - not assertions. The hearer has produced meaning connected to the speaker's utterance, and this meaning then constitutes a conjecture as to the intentions of the speaker. As it is only conjectural knowledge, criticism will normally be conducted by asking for confirmation of this meaning, and this is the rogative function. We can attempt a sketch of the process:

V. H

> The speaker has said that *p*
> Given the assumption that the speaker is acting co-operatively, the hearer is allowed to presume that a variety of maxims have been respected.
> Given the assumption that some maxim or other has been respected by the speaker, the hearer is allowed to derive a variety of possible meanings.
> Given the context, co-text, and the assumption that one or more maxims have been respected, the hearer conjectures the implicatum *q*.
> In order to confirm or disconfirm this guess, the hearer inquires the speaker if he, by saying *p*, meant that *q*.

Only through this process it will be clarified if the proposed implicatum is of the 'intended' type or the 'commitment' type. If the speaker refuses the implicatum, it must be viewed as a commitment imposed on the speaker by the hearer. In this framework, the meaning produced is understood to have been predominantly brought about by the hearer, not the speaker, and the implicatum is essentially a point of dispute. It is necessary to arrive at a decision as to whether the implicatum is a used assumption on the part of the speaker, or a needed assumption imposed on the speaker by the hearer.

Reconstruction Based on Relevance

As we have seen, the production of conversational implicatures may be seen both as an intentional act on the part of the *speaker*, or as an inferential reconstruction of speaker meaning on the part of the *hearer* - or both. Even if the focus remains on speaker intentionality, the hearer, and the hearer *agency* in the determination of implicated meaning, continuously lurches in the background, as it should be clear from the analysis of Grice's explanation of implicature. At another point in Grice (1975) the process is in fact explicitly seen in the perspective of the *hearer*; Grice suggests that the working out of a conversational implicature is a stepwise procedure like this:

V. I

> (a) He has said that *p*;
> (b) there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP;
> (c) he could not be doing this unless he thought that *q*;

> (d) he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *q* IS required;
> (e) he has done nothing to stop me thinking that *q*;
> (f) he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that *q*;
> (g) and so he has implicated that *q*. (Grice (1975), p. 50)

Whereas Grice is here concerned with the question of how you get from (a) to (g), Sperber and Wilson (1986) is primarily concerned with the question of how you arrive at (c), that is, while Grice intends to uncover the big (though not complete) picture of how people work out conversational implicatures, Sperber and Wilson focus on one of the points needing clarification in this account: what is the inference like, that enables hearers to derive *unsaid* meaning that deviates from the immediate meaning of what has been *said* by speakers. The problem is that, given some proposition *p*, a whole range of different implicatures (*q*) may be derived, depending on the context of uttering *p*. So it follows that the context has to be a part of the inference scheme. Sperber & Wilson point out that the implicature generated in any given context is the implicature which is the most *relevant* in that context, and they propose the following account of relevance:

> A proposition *P* is relevant in a context *{C}* if and only if *P* has at least one contextual implication in *{C}*. (Sperber & Wilson (1991), p. 381)

The term, 'contextual implication', which is synonymous with 'conversational implicature', is explained in this way:

> A contextual implication is a special type of logical implication, derived by the use of a restricted set of deductive rules which derive at most a finite set of conclusions from any finite set of premises. The contextual implications of a proposition *P* in a context *{C}* are all those conclusions deducible from the union of *P* with *{C}*, but from neither *P* alone nor *{C}* alone. (Sperber & Wilson (1991), p. 381)

So the working out of conversational implicatures is explicable in terms of a conditional like this:

V. J

$$(p \wedge c) \rightarrow q$$

Exemplified thus:

V. K

> q: I don't want any coffee
> p: Coffee would keep me awake
> c: I don't want anything that would keep me awake

It is relevant to utter *p* in *c*, because *p* and *c* together allow for the deduction of some conclusion, in this case the implicatum *I don't want any coffee*. On the other hand, *p* is irrelevant if the hearer can find no contextual assumptions together with which *p* leads to a conclusion, e.g. if *p* contradicts an established contextual assumption. In focusing on relevance, it is obvious that one has to approach the phenomenon of conversational implicature from the perspective of the hearer, seeing that the assessment of relevance is necessarily based on the receiver's notion of relevance, not the sender's.

In **v. k**, given that you know for a fact that the context involves the knowledge *c*, and that the conditional $(p \wedge c) \rightarrow q$ is true, the working out of the implicatum *q* is a straight forward logical inference - there is no way the conjunction $p \wedge c$ can be true, while *q* is false. Obviously, this is an artificial example designed so as to illustrate the idea; once we leave the theoretical abstraction, 'contexts' are not 'sets' containing a finite number of 'propositions' of which we may or may not know. What is contained in the context is not shared knowledge from which people derive conclusions about the world and about one another's intentions. Rather, the question of what is contained in the context is more likely what people argue *about* most of the time. In many cases, contextual knowledge is sufficiently conspicuous so that e.g. the hearer in the above example may act according to the knowledge *c* without further ado. But in many other cases, such knowledge is not obvious to all participants in the exchange, and the extraction of contextual knowledge then becomes the dominating task of the conversation.

In the following chapter I am going to propose that there is a certain systematicity in this process, especially when it comes to argumentative discourse. In argumentative discourse, participants derive implicata, based on the counterpart's contributions. The counterpart is often confronted with these implicata (often phrased in interrogative form), in order to either affirm or deny them. Depending on their affirmation or denial, certain other contextual assumptions may be falsified, and this act of falsification is a central strategy to the act of arguing. Behind it all, however, lies the agreement on the basic elements of rationality that I have proposed to be co-operation and reason.

CHAPTER VI

Counter Argument

INTRODUCTION: PRAGMA-DIALECTICAL INSPIRATIONS AND PROBLEMS

In many respects, the present approach to argumentation borrows from the pragma-dialectical tradition. This is an account of the inspirations as well as the deviations from pragma-dialectics. The most conspicuous deviation is in the way the co-operation principle is understood in connection to the explicitisation of unexpressed meaning.

Remarks on Pragma-Dialectics

The approach to argumentative dialogue presented in this chapter can be approximately characterised 'a pragma-dialectical approach'. The philosophical outlook and the theoretical foundation is practically the same: Argumentation is a pragmatic phenomenon and should be studied as such. Argumentation should be evaluated in terms of its critical adequacy as a dialectical process, according to critical rationalist principles[77]. The focus is specifically on the ways in which language users manage to reconstruct and criticise unexpressed premises, and I have suggested in the preceding chapters that this aspect of argumentation is best understood in terms of communicative co-operation and logical consistency, and that unexpressed premises are explicated by way of a form of implicature. About the Gricean approach to unexpressed premises, van Eemeren & Grootendorst write:

> The assumption that language users wishing to resolve a dispute about an expressed opinion by means of a discussion will in principle observe the co-operative principle enables us to explain why it is possible for language users to omit elements of their argumentation without immediately being guilty of misleading or manipulating their listeners and without their argumentation automatically being unsound or defective. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 122)

[77] See my chapter I for an account of pragma-dialectics and chapter III for an account of critical rationalism.

As it is also pointed out by van Eemeren & Grootendorst, the co-operative principle seems the only way to explain the principle of charity as more than 'mercifulness' (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 129). The only reason for employing a principle of charity, apart from a possible wish to 'meet the arguer half-way', is that the principle of charity is simply a co-operative and thus rational way of going about argumentative discourse.

There are, however, deviations from the pragma-dialectical approach. In this study it is assumed that rationality (co-operation and non-contradiction) is a faculty comparable to the ability to speak and communicate, a faculty which is basically allotted to all normally functioning language users, though perhaps not in equal measures. Van Eemeren & Grootendorst take a slightly different attitude - not in point, but in perspective - to the rational powers of the language users:

> … it often emerges that in their evaluation of argumentation they [the language users] either overlook certain unexpressed elements or fill in the gaps with quite arbitrary (and often highly dissimilar) substitutes. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 122)

Hence, the pragma-dialectical programme is designed to provide guidelines for better reasoning. That the problem mentioned in the quotation is accurate is beyond any doubt; we all reconstruct unexpressed premises when engaging in argumentation, and we very often reconstruct them 'arbitrarily'. But it is the same thing with the faculty of, e.g., speech: take a look at a careful transcript of real conversation to be assured that real speech is not flawless or even coherent. However, why should it be so; what puzzle most linguists is that we are able to use language at all. Likewise with reasoning in communication: we should not be surprised that language users often reconstruct unexpressed premises rather unconvincingly, on the contrary, what is puzzling is that they are able to do it at all.

But the pragma-dialectical approach is normative. Based on insights from pragmatics (Searle, Grice) on the one hand, and a critical-rationalist dialectics (Popper) on the other, the approach aims to '… improve argumentative practice by furthering a discussion-minded attitude and promoting insight into the procedural prerequisites of resolving conflicts and an adequate awareness of the obstacles' (van Eemeren (1994), p. 7)[78]. As a contrast to this, the present approach is descriptive insofar as it aims to show that language users *do* in fact occasionally reconstruct unexpressed premises in rational (co-operative/reasonable) ways. This is not meant to constitute an objection to

[78] One might argue that for a normative guideline for improving argumentative reality, the pragma-dialectical approach is far too complicated for ad hoc application in critical discussions. Consider, for example, the scheme for reconstructing implicit premises in van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1992), p. 55. The scheme involves the application of five communicative rules in a six-step procedure towards the explicitation of one single, implicit speech act. The account is much more like a theoretical description than an applicable norm. Analysing argumentative discourse on pragma-dialectical principles is very fruitful and enlightening, but it is hardly a procedure which can actually be used *in* discussion. Contrary to this, it is a basic assumption in the present thesis that the logic actually *used* by language users is *limited* and *simple*.

the normative programme of pragma-dialectics, it only reveals that the present purpose is a different one: this study is a reaction to postmodern / social constructionist / relativist approaches to discourse, including argumentative discourse, approaches claiming in one way or another that norms for argumentative acceptability are features of the *type* of discourse in question, not general features of communication as such. My purpose is to object to that by arguing that the proposed features of rationality are necessarily present in *any* type of argumentative discourse as a critical potential.

Another deviation from the pragma-dialectical programme is more narrowly theoretical: Van Eemeren & Grootendorst take the concept of 'implicature' very literally, when they claim that the implicatural reconstruction of an unexpressed premise is necessarily based on the speaker's intention. In a stepwise analysis of Grice's often cited example 'John is an Englishman. He is, therefore, brave', van Eemeren and Grootendorst propose that the reasoning involved in reconstructing the missing premise involves such considerations as these:

> The argument can be made *valid* by adding 'All Englishmen are brave'. The *speaker* knows this, and *obviously assumes* that I do too. The speaker has made no effort to *prevent* his argument being interpreted in this obvious manner. He therefore *intends* me to add 'All Englishmen are brave' to the premiss of his argument. The statement 'All Englishmen are brave' is therefore the *unexpressed premiss* of his argumentation. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 133)

That the argument is interpreted in an 'obvious manner', would certainly stem from the fact that it is a very obvious case of unexpressed premise. In fact, Grice produces this argument as an example of the *conventional* implicature, an implicature in which the implicatum is carried by the codified meaning attached to particular linguistic units, in this case the word 'therefore'. In more realistic arguments, it is usually not at all obvious what the speaker intends to be the unexpressed element (if he intends such an element at all). Hence, as discussed in chapter V, it is hardly viable to expect all reconstructed premises to have been necessarily *intended* by the speaker. The hearer performs the actual, inferential work related to the reconstruction of unexpressed elements, and does so not only based on what the speaker may intend, but also according to what further claims the speaker is *committed to*, in the light of what he has actually expressed. It is not a viable theory of argumentative dialogue to say that a reconstructed premise is only 'correctly reconstructed' if it was *actually intended* by the speaker. Additionally, this corresponds poorly to one of the cornerstones of pragma-dialectics: the object of study should be the *externalised* argumentation, that is, the analysis is not supposed to inquire into psychological causes of how an argument is expressed, but rather take the actual expression of it as point of departure for a rational examination (see van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), pp. 4-18, or my chapter I for an account of externalisation of argumentation studies.).

In dialectical discussions, which might be said to be ideal models of the criticism performed in argumentative discussions, the aim is to derive claims from the other's argument, claims which the arguer would precisely *not* subscribe to, but which

allegedly follow from, or are presupposed by, the argument put forward. It would be odd indeed to say that in the classical dialogues, Socrates' criticism of one of his opponents' arguments was not correct just because claims reconstructed in his criticism were not *intended* by the counterpart. This is the central reason why I consistently distinguish between *co-operation* and *reason*. Reason is, in a way, external to the co-operation principle, because its application is not reducible to intention.

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst duly note this problem, but maintain that reconstructed premises should in any case abide by *all* maxims of the CP. The following conditions must apply in order for an 'explicitized' (reconstructed) element to count as an unexpressed premise:

> (a) The explicitized premiss must be a statement which, if added to the speaker's argument as a premiss, would make the argument valid (and thereby prevent a violation of the maxim of relation).
> (b) The explicitized premiss must be an informative statement (thereby preventing a violation of the maxim of quantity).
> (c) The explicitized premiss must be a statement that is an element of the speaker's committedness (thereby preventing a violation of the maxim of quality). (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 141)

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst here seem to demand that in order for a reconstructed premise to be legitimate, it should render the argument *valid* (a), while at the same time it should be one which the speaker believes to be true (c). It appears that 'a statement that is an element of the speaker's committedness' is a statement the speaker believes to be true (as it is quoted as having to do with the 'quality' requirement), and hence could be assumed to implicate an implicit intention. In many cases, however, (a) and (c) prove to be incompatible, resulting in a situation where the speaker must be assumed to have conflicting intentions. Consider **vi. a**:

VI. A

> A: We should not go fishing tomorrow. The sky is overcast.
> B: Apparently you think that when the sky is overcast, one should not go fishing the next day.

In **vi. a**, B's reconstruction conforms with (a), as it applies relevance to the connection between A's two utterances, i.e., it validates the argument. However, suppose that A is an experienced fishing enthusiast well aware of the fact that fishing is just fine on a greyish day, *and* that B is aware of A's competence. Then B's reconstruction does *not* conform to (c): there is no reason to suppose that A actually believes in the reconstructed premise, and that he intends to convey that premise to B. The reconstruction validates the argument, and in so doing it suggests that A is logically committed to the reconstructed premise, but not that A intended to communicate that premise. Insofar as A did not intend to communicate the reconstructed premise, he has to provide further details of his argument: 'when the sky is overcast, it might rain

tomorrow. I don't feel like going fishing when it rains, etc.'. A reconstructed element need not conform to (a), (b) and (c) all at once, it is only necessary that it conforms to one of them in order for the reconstruction to be dialectically legitimate.

Jackson (1992) refers to such reconstructions as *virtual standpoints*, i.e., standpoints that are reconstructable in the situational, argumentative setting, in order to examine their acceptability. The point is that an outside analyst's reconstructions are viable only to the extent that they also constitute actual, virtual standpoints *in* the discussion itself:

> …any assertive that can be identified within an analytic reconstruction of discourse must also be accessible, in principle, to naïve reconstruction by the arguers themselves. Any reconstructible commitment associated with an utterance, if it can be achieved through analytic reconstruction, must also be retrievable by interactants. (Jackson (1992), p. 261)

Along similar lines, van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson & Jacobs (1993) argue[79] that

> Ordinary arguers are naïve reconstructors of argumentation, and their reconstructions provide a crucial grounding for any normative reconstruction of argumentation. (van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson & Jacobs (1993), p. 114)

This corresponds well to the claim made in this thesis that the analytical examination of argumentation is a reflection of the counter argumentative practices that are necessary preconditions of any, argumentative conversation: it is regulated by co-operation and reason in mutual constraint. The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to examining the extent to which this hypothesis is plausible. For that purpose, the next subchapter provides an overview of the proposed model of counter argumentation as it is constituted by *reconstruction* and *criticism*.

[79] The quotation should probably primarily be attributed to the two latter of the authors. The book is organised as a first part primarily by van Eemeren & Grootendorst, and a second part primarily by Jackson & Jacobs. The quotation is from this second part.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS FOR A COMBINED APPROACH

It is argued that any theoretical account of argumentation as dialogue has to be able to account for both the linear or sequential progress of the conversation, as well as for the underlying form of the arguments. It also has to account for the interpersonal roles allocated to the participants, and, finally to the distinction between talking about 'states of affairs' as opposed to talking about 'talking'.

Sequential and Hierarchical Approaches to Argument

Arguments in spoken language have fuzzy borders. If, that is, they have borders at all. By 'border' I mean some feature of a phenomenon by which the phenomenon is isolated or identified and can be distinguished from its surroundings. In a traditional view on argument, the deductively valid argument has such borders insofar as it is non-cancellable: once the premises have been fully explicated, and it has been observed that these premises entail the conclusion, no other textual or contextual evidence has any influence on that argument. It is valid as it stands and can be examined and discussed in isolation from its surroundings. This rather rigid view on arguments has prevailed in much argumentation theory, including pragma-dialectics. As several scholars have pointed out (Sandvik (1997); van Rees (1994)), the pragma-dialectical approach analyses arguments as *hierarchies*, rather than as *sequences*. For all the merit of pragma-dialectics, this seems to be a discrepancy, as a pragma-dialectical analysis is poorly suited to describe the dynamical aspects of sequential change in dialogue.

In empirical conversation the identification of the borders of distinct arguments is highly problematic. Consider this empirical example[80]:

VI. B

> **A** The treaty was supposed to create the foundation for a whole Europe after the separation of Europe er up until eighty-nine but instead of er healing it creates new divisions not between east and west but between the countries in east that are allowed in in the first round and the countries that just *might* and then again might *not* be allowed in at a later time
>
> **B** is that one of the main reasons why you now recommend a no to the treaty then

[80] The data I use are taken from a series of television debates leading up the Danish referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty in May 1998. The debates were called 'Et spørgsmål - to svar' (one question - two answers), and the question posed to two debaters could be a general question such as 'What are the effects of the Amsterdam Treaty with respect to domestic policies on refugees and immigration?'. The two debaters were chosen from the pro- and contra-camps, and typically, both would be well-known figures from the Danish public sphere.

> **A** that er that is an important reason why I recommend a no I think that that you can talk of an historic mistake if you create a new division in Europe (Transl.[81] NMN)

Without going into too much detail with this example, it serves to point out that arguments develop in the course of a dialogue, they are not static and describable only as rows and hierarchies of isolated arguments. In the example, the argument put forward in A's first turn is elaborated in A's second turn, as a consequence of B's question. B's question suggests that the argumentative structure in A's first turn serves as 'one of the main reasons' for a particular conclusion not mentioned by A at this point. B's suggestion is then accepted by A in his second turn. In that way, A's argument is greatly expanded sequentially, by the interference of another language user. The point is that in principle this process can go on indefinitely. There is no sequential border of arguments in dialogue, no structural feature that can effectively enable the analyst to delimit one premise/conclusion set from another.

This does not mean that hierarchical analyses should be abandoned, but it emphasises that any hierarchical analysis should be understood as one of several possible interpretations, not as a final disclosure of the structure of an isolated, static argument. Hierarchical analyses may arrive at varying results depending on the amount of text covered by the analytical scope, and on how fine-grained the employed linguistic apparatus is. Static as it may be, the hierarchical approach is not necessarily an abstraction from reality, in fact, hierarchical analysis may actually be *part* of the very argumentative process, as in **vi. b** where B's turn consists of *structuring* the argumentation at hand, proposing that A's first turn is hierarchically subsumed under an as yet unspoken conclusion.

For the present purposes I suggest a combined approach comprising both argumentative hierarchy and sequentiality. The objective is to examine the sequential distribution of *ad hoc*, hierarchical analyses, performed by the language users themselves. For that purpose, it is necessary to identify not only the different types of dialogical moves, but also the dialogical roles defined by such moves. That is the subject of the next section.

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[81] The original passage reads:
A traktaten den skulle skabe grundlaget for et helt Europa efter Europas deling øh frem til niogfirs men i stedet for at øh hele skaber den nye delinger ikke mellem øst og vest men mellem de lande i øst der kommer med i første omgang og de lande der måske kommer med måske ikke kommer med på et senere tidspunkt

B er det så en af hovedgrundene til du nu anbefaler et nej til traktaten

A det øh det er en væsentlig årsag til at jeg anbefaler et nej jeg mener at at der er tale om en historisk fejltagelse ved at man laver en ny opdeling i Europa

Roles of Argument

Van Eemeren & Grootendorst define the roles in an argumentative discussion as 'protagonist' and 'antagonist'[82]. Each role involves a certain form of argumentative activity:

> The protagonist's task is to *defend* [a] point of view (and no other) and the antagonist's job is to *attack* the same point of view (and no other). (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 82)

For a first approximation this may sound compelling, as it coincides rather well with the common conception of argumentation as a symbolic or verbal form of 'struggle' or 'war'. I am not going to oppose the idea of 'struggle' as a metaphor for argumentation[83]; the fact that communication involves co-operation does not contradict the fact that argumentative dialogue is very often a kind of conflict: there has to be a divergence of opinion, otherwise there cannot be argumentation in any ordinary sense of the word. However, this preliminary definition of argumentative roles is not sufficiently detailed, once we apply these roles to dialogue. It becomes quite vague by what standards one can distinguish between what constitutes an 'attack' on someone else's standpoint, and what is a standpoint in its own right. Consider this exchange:

VI. C

> A: In 1969, man set foot on the moon.
> B: Really? In 1969, man set foot in the Nevada desert, dressed up in a space suit, was filmed at night using high-speed cameras, and televised to the world on the pretence that it was a live transmission from the Apollo 11 lunar lander. It was all a hoax designed to beat the Soviets in the space race.

Obviously A defends a particular standpoint, which means that A qualifies as a 'protagonist', according to van Eemeren & Grootendorst's definition. But the question is: Does B attack A's standpoint, or does he defend his own standpoint? According to the definition above, this is not clear; if A's utterance is a standpoint, then so is B's it seems, which means that B is also acting in the role of protagonist. But B's utterance is also an 'attack' on A's standpoint, which seems to indicate that B's statement is antagonistic. This far, the definition seems unable to clarify the notions of 'protagonist' and 'antagonist', and accordingly, van Eemeren & Grootendorst expands on the definition in this way:

[82] Popular alternatives to 'protagonist' and 'antagonist' are 'proponent' and 'opponent', respectively.
[83] In any case, Lakoff & Johnson (1980) have shown how argumentation is normally understood in terms of the metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR.

> ...the antagonist's attacks consist in principle of statements calculated to elicit argumentation in favour of the protagonist's point of view and ... that argumentation is then (or may be) called into question. ...the protagonist's defences consist in principle of statements advancing argumentation in favour of his point of view and in favour of the argumentation attacked. (van Eemeren & Grootendorst (1984), p. 82)

By now, the picture gets clearer: B's utterance is *not* a 'statement calculated to elicit argumentation in favour of the protagonist's point of view' and to subsequently question it, it is just a contradiction of the protagonist's view. So B's utterance is protagonistic. Suppose instead the exchange was like this:

VI. D

> A: In 1969, man set foot on the moon.
> B: Really? What makes you think so?

In this exchange, B definitely makes a statement designed to elicit further argumentation, which makes it qualify as an antagonistic statement. The purpose of the elicitation is to bring out whatever else the protagonist knows and perhaps intends to convey implicitly. Elicitation utterances are utterances in which language focuses on language, so I will refer to them as *meta-linguistic*. In the following section, the particular features of meta-linguistic utterances will be proposed.

But the exchange might progress further:

VI. E

> A: Well, it was broadcast all over the world. Millions of viewers saw it.
> B: So, what makes you think that what they saw was actually sent to them from the moon?
> A: Well, for one thing you could easily see that the astronauts were experiencing less gravity than they would normally do on earth.

At this point, B has elicited from A a complex of evidential premises supporting A's standpoint. Carrying on his antagonism, B might proceed from the *elicitation* of premises to the *questioning* of the protagonist's argument.

VI. F

> B: Look, the effect of low gravity you saw, or thought you saw, can easily be accomplished with high-speed camera technique. The event could easily have been filmed in an earthly desert environment at night. So the fact that the motions of the astronauts looked as if they were happening on the moon cannot prove that it was actually so.

B's statement is now of another kind - it is a criticism of (or 'attack on') the protagonist's argument, not an elicitation of it. What is worth noting is that this criticism is itself an argument, though of a slightly different kind than A's argument. A's argument consists of a claim about a state of affairs in the world, and some reasons supporting that claim. B's argument consists of the claim that A's argument is wrong, with reasons supporting that claim (but notice that, strictly speaking, B makes no claim as to whether or not he agrees or disagrees with A's *standpoint*, he only criticises A's *argument*, the accusation being that it is a *non sequitur* fallacy. Below, I will refer to this kind of criticism as 'formal refutation'.). The claims (or *conclusions*) of the arguments of A and B are not of the same kind; they are *argumentative* and *meta-argumentative*, respectively.

We are now beginning to see an additional feature of antagonistic argumentation: it consists of two different types of utterance, meta-linguistic utterances produced to *reconstruct* the protagonist's argument, and meta-argumentative utterances designed to *criticise* the protagonist's argument. Accordingly, I refer to the 'elicitation' as *reconstruction* and to the 'questioning' as *criticism*, as these terms cover more accurately antagonistic argument; they are not committed to particular direct speech act types - both reconstruction and criticism may be phrased as assertions, questions, etc.

In the following I shall refer to that kind of argumentation as *counter argumentation*. To summarise, counter argumentation is:

(1) meta-linguistic and (2) meta-argumentative. Below, I shall consider these elements in turn.

Meta-Language and Meta-Argument

In the most basic and simple text or communication models, the use of language has three main reference functions, that is, referring to the outside world (states of affairs), referring to the receiver (norms, regulations), and referring to the speaker (emotions, opinions), see e.g. Bühler (1934). This distinction is quite clear and most useful, but it does not exhaust the possibilities of linguistic reference; more advanced models (e.g. Jakobson (1960); Togeby (1993)) include also the reference to the code of language itself - called meta-linguistic reference. The term is adopted from Tarski (1935) (see my chapter IV for a brief account). A logical calculus is a meta-language, designed to calculate the truth values 'true' and 'false', while language referring to anything *but* itself is object-language - here the values 'true' and 'false' can only rarely be used unambiguously. As I argued in chapter IV, informalists tend not to appreciate this difference with the consequence that the values 'true' and 'false' are thought to be too rigid to characterise 'real language'. The argument,

VI. G

> The sky is overcast today
> So it will probably rain tomorrow

would typically be characterised in this way by an informalist:

VI. H

> from the sky being overcast today it follows with *probability* that it will rain tomorrow

While a formalist interpretation would be something like this:

VI. I

> from the sky being overcast today it follows with *certainty* that it will *probably* rain tomorrow

In the informalist interpretation, **vi. h**, it appears that the premise does not give conclusive support for the conclusion. The informalist interpretation, however, fails to recognise that the modal qualifier 'probably' is not meta-linguistic, but object-linguistic. In the formalist interpretation, **vi. i**, it is assumed that meta-linguistic descriptions always stick to the binary truth values, and that modality expressed in the object-language should not be adopted into the meta-language. Contrary to this, the informalist turns the word 'probable' into a logical value, while the formalist leaves it in the domain of object-language. The informalist analysis renders it '*logically probable* that it will rain tomorrow', while the formalist analysis renders it '*logically true* that it will *probably* rain tomorrow'. Ironically, informalism represents the effort at having logic expand over its traditional borders, in such a way that logic attains a status in ontology and epistemology which is far more important than the status normally ascribed to it by formalism.

Obviously, the meta-language actually used in dialogues is of a slightly different nature; it is not a highly formalised language like a logical calculus[84]. Still, it shares some features with a logical language. Language users with normal linguistic and communicative competence are able to calculate basic tests of whether or not some argument is internally contradictory. Such calculations are based on various simple,

[84] A critic might remark that Tarski's meta-language is understood as a strictly formal language. To this objection I would tend to refer to Popper, who writes that '[t]he view that his [Tarski's] theory is applicable only to formalized languages is (...) mistaken. It is applicable to any consistent and - more or less - natural language' (Popper (1963), p. 223). In this study I accordingly use the term meta-language for both a strictly logical language and a natural language representation of some linguistic phenomenon.

logical forms, and they are performed as meta-linguistic claims and questions. Such claims and questions may be directed towards one's own utterances or to the utterances made by others participating in the conversation, that is, a language user may assume the role of antagonist, commenting on his own argument. For the sake of transparency, however, let us assume that the antagonist and protagonist roles are assumed by different language users.

At this point it is necessary to note that I use the terms 'meta-language' and 'meta-linguistic' in a broad sense. Whereas the orthodox understanding of meta-language (e.g. Jakobson (1960)) means the definitory or word-explanatory preoccupation with the linguistic *code* only, others, such as Mey (1993), use the term in a much broader sense as '…language that comments on, examines, criticises, etc., what happens on the level of language itself, the "object language"' (Mey (1993), p. 269). Similar definitions can be found in Leech ((1983) pp. 51ff.), where meta-language (following Popper (1972)) is thought to be essentially the *argumentative function* of language, and in Cramer et al (1996), where meta-language is defined as simply words and sentences referring to other linguistic representation, with the addition that 'Relational communication, i.e., communication about communication, serving as a frame or context for the understanding of the content of the communication, may be articulated in meta-language' (Cramer et al. (1996), p. 95f., transl. NMN).

Using a correspondingly broad conception of 'meta-language' (alternatively referred to as 'meta-*talk*'), Schiffrin ((1980), pp. 201f.) proposes that there are three indicators by which it is possible to identify meta-linguistic utterances with considerable certainty. These indicators are meta-linguistic referents, meta-linguistic operators, and meta-linguistic verbs. The following is based on Schiffrin's account with some additions and adjustments.

(1) *meta-linguistic referents*

Reference to words, phrases, clauses or sentences.

Such references are the kinds of referents of importance for the present purposes. Less importantly, meta-linguistic referents also include entities characterised through their existence in a text, such as discourse deixis: indicators which relate other utterances to the present act of utterance, constructions such as 'the former', 'the latter', 'the next point', 'the first thing' etc.

The meta-linguistic referents notably also include the demonstrative pronouns ('*that* is a lie', I want to say *this*').

(2) *operators*

Not unlike logical operators, meta-linguistic expressions may serve as either modifying or combining predicates. The modifiers recount the truth or acceptability value of single propositions ('[proposition *x*] *is true*', 'you're *right*', 'that *is a lie*'). The combiners characterise the relationship between propositions ('[proposition *x*] *means that* [proposition *y*]', 'When I say that [proposition *x*], *I mean that* [proposition *y*].). The combining operators also involve *like*, *for example*, and *in other words*.

Notice that the verb *mean* can be seen as a combining operator not only when the word refers to semantic, or codified, meaning, but also when it refers to speaker-

intentional meaning. The verb's feature of being an operator supports the idea that this verb and others equivalent to it refers to implicated meaning having some logical relation to what has been literally uttered.

(3) *verbs*

Meta-linguistic verbs come in two main variants:

(3.1) Verbs indicating explicit speech act types such as *say*, *tell*, *warn*, *claim*, *promise*, *ask*, *conclude*, *argue*, etc.

(3.2) Verbs indicating implicit speech act types such as *mean*, *imply*, *assume, think*, etc.[85]

Notice that *mean* occurs both as operator and as verb. While it may act as an operator it is also a meta-linguistic verb, only of a special kind: While verbs of type (3.1) take as complements *paraphrasings* of something the other has literally uttered, verbs of type (3.2) involve an interpretation on the part of the speaker: verbs of type (3.2) take as complements meta-linguistic referents which have not been literally uttered, but which the speaker assumes to be *implicated* by the other's literal utterances.

In practice, these different indicator types very often co-occur. Consider, for example, this:

VI. J

> A: We should not go fishing tomorrow. The sky is overcast.
> B: You say that we shouldn't go fishing tomorrow, 'cause the sky is overcast. So you must mean that it's going to rain tomorrow. But you simply don't know that for sure.

In B's utterance all types of meta-linguistic indicators are present: referents (*we shouldn't go fishing tomorrow*, *the sky is overcast*, *it's going to rain tomorrow*, *that*), operators (*must mean*, *you don't know that for sure*), and verbs (*say*, *mean*).

Accordingly, all three sentences uttered by B may be said to be meta-linguistic. But if we move from the linguistic level to the argumentative level, it appears that there is a crucial difference between the first two utterances on the one hand, and the third on the other. The utterance (you don't know that for sure) has a particular, argumentative function: it is a *non sequitur* claim - it *argues about* the argumentation produced by A, hence it is not only meta-linguistic, but also *meta-argumentative*. The first two utterances do not argue in the same sense. It would be perfectly possible for B to state only the two first utterances, in which case he would only be recapitulating what A said and presumably meant. Once the third utterance is produced, however, the first two utterances step into character as premises for a meta-argument which establishes a

[85] There may be other members of this category such as (3.3) Verbs indicating the intention to manipulate some text or speech: *define*, *expand on*, *clarify*, *circumscribe*, etc.
(3.4) Verbs indicating codified meaning: *(it) says*, *(it) means*. These are not central for the present purposes, however, which is why they are here relegated to a footnote.

refutation of A's argument. This interplay between the reconstructive and the critical function of counter argument is central to an attempt to systematise counter argumentation. Such an attempt is made in the next subchapter.

PROPOSAL FOR A MODEL OF ARGUMENTATIVE DIALOGUE

A model is tentatively proposed that encompasses the distinction between the positive production of arguments, and the counter-argumentative *reconstruction* and *criticism* of the argument.

The Reconstruction/Criticism Model[86]

The notions of argument and counter argument are closely connected to the argumentative roles protagonist and antagonist, respectively. For an approximation to argumentative dialogue, it seems clear that a model should depict this dichotomy. Furthermore, the model needs to be able to account for the kinds of actions typical of the two roles, and the particular, linguistic forms such actions may take.

VI. K

	PROTAGONIST	**ANTAGONIST**	
Linguistic expression	Object linguistic	Meta-linguistic referents and verbs	Meta-linguistic operators
Illocution	Claiming entailment and soundness	*Reconstruction* by Paraphrases Implicata	*Criticism* by Formal refutations Factual refutations
Perlocution	Persuasion / conflict resolution	Clarification	Meta-persuasion
Type of argument	Argument	Warranting counter argument	Counter argument

The role of the protagonist is not our main concern, which can probably be seen from the fact that the description in the model of this role is fairly uncontroversial: The protagonist is characterised by giving expression to arguments about something outside language, i.e., the natural, the social, or the psychological world, in other words the language is *object language*. The force of such utterances are supposed to count as reasons for some claim, where those reasons are intended to count as *true*,

[86] The model and its description builds on earlier work in Nielsen (forthcoming a) and Nielsen (forthcoming b).

and the relationship between reasons and claim is intended to count as a relation of *entailment*. The intended effect is that of *persuading* the addressee. This account of what is normally known simply as 'argument' is certainly not indisputable, but then, neither is it wildly controversial.

The antagonist, on the other hand, has two columns in the model, symbolising the distinct activities of *reconstruction* and *criticism*. At the linguistic level, the antagonist refers to the protagonist's utterances by way of the meta-language. Roughly speaking, meta-linguistic verbs and referents are instruments for *reconstructing* the protagonist's argument, while meta-linguistic operators (especially the *modifying* operators) are used for *criticising* the protagonist's argument, either as uttered by the protagonist, or as reconstructed by the antagonist.

When looking at reconstruction as distinct types of speech acts, it should be possible to stipulate their felicity conditions, the conditions that need to apply in order for a speech act to function as intended. Following Searle (1969), the felicity conditions may be subdivided into the content condition (also known as 'propositional act'), the preparatory condition, the sincerity condition, and the essential condition. Searle gives an account of the articulation of these conditions as they pertain various specific speech act types (Searle (1969), p. 66f.), but he does not give an account of what, in general, are the distinguishing features of these conditions. For that, we turn to Yule (1996):

VI. L

> *Content condition*: 'In order to count as a particular type of speech act, an utterance must contain certain features, e.g. a promise must be about a future event.'
> *Preparatory condition*: ' Specific requirements prior to an utterance in order for it to count as a particular speech act.'
> *Sincerity condition*: ' Requirements on the genuine intentions of a speaker in order for an utterance to count as a particular speech act.'
> *Essential condition*: 'In performing a speech act, a requirement that the utterance commits the speaker to the act performed.'
> (After Yule (1996))

Reconstruction is a special type of representative[87] speech act. But whereas the typical representative speech act aims at bringing 'the words to fit the world', this type aims at bringing the words to fit some other words. In addition, in performing a reconstructive speech act, the essential condition is rather more complex than in the straight forward, representative speech act. In reconstructing, the speaker/antagonist is non-committed to the truth of the propositional content conveyed by the meta-linguistic referents, while he is committed to the truth of the meta-linguistic verbs and operators. The felicity of this speech act involves the hearer/protagonist's identification and

[87] Following Searle's (1979) taxonomy of five basic speech act groups, *declarations*, *representatives*, *directives*, *commissives*, and *expressives*. The representative speech act is about the speaker's beliefs about facts in the world.

acceptance of it; the speaker/antagonist must assume that the hearer/protagonist can identify it as an utterance in which the speaker/antagonist, non-committedly, recapitulates the hearer/protagonist's own utterance, and the speaker/antagonist must assume that the hearer/protagonist is prepared, in the given context, to engage in such meta-linguistic clarification.

As already mentioned, reconstructive speech acts can take the form of either *paraphrases* or *implicata*, where paraphrase is understood as an account of some proposition that has been literally said, and implicatum is understood as an account of some proposition which has been implicated *by* what has been literally said, and/or is derived as a necessary condition for the literally said to be coherent. In terms of their felicity conditions, however, paraphrase and implicatum are almost identical, as it should be evident below. When proposing the felicity conditions for reconstructive acts, it is crucial to operate with two different propositional contents, the propositional content of the reconstructive speech act itself, *p*, and the propositional content of the reconstructed utterance, *p'*. Speaker and hearer are abbreviated *S* and *H*, respectively[88]. The account of the felicity conditions for reconstruction takes its point of departure in Searle's account of the paradigm cases of representatives, that is, speech acts of asserting, stating, claiming etc. (Searle (1969), p. 66).

VI. M

FELICITY CONDITIONS FOR RECONSTRUCTION

1. Content condition (or 'propositional act')
Any proposition *p* describing any proposition *p'*.
(This is a deviation from the representative speech act whose propositional content is simply 'Any proposition *p*'. But reconstruction is meta-linguistic, so in order to count as a reconstruction, the content of the utterance should be about some other utterance, either its literal expression (paraphrase) or its implicit meaning (implicatum)).

2. Preparatory condition
2.1 Proposition *p'* has been uttered (directly or indirectly) at some time prior to the utterance of proposition *p*.
2.2 S has evidence for *p*. It is not obvious to *S* and *H* that *H* already knows *p*.
2.3 Insofar as *p'* has been uttered by *H*, *H* is prepared to have *p'* reconstructed or interpreted.
(Ad 2.1: Clearly, reconstructing some speech act presupposes that the speech act in question has actually been uttered (i.e., said, implicated, or implied) at the time of the reconstruction. 2.2 does not deviate from Searle's account, while 2.3 simply states that it is a preparatory condition that *H* (if *H* is the protagonist) accepts to engage in meta-linguistic discourse about *p'* in the given context.)

[88] I use the words 'speaker' and 'hearer' rather than the argumentative roles, seeing that while the speaker of a reconstructive or critical speech act is necessarily identical to the argumentative role of antagonist, it is not given that the hearer is necessarily identical to the protagonist role.

3. Sincerity condition
S believes that *p* accurately describes *p'*.
(*S* believes that his utterance, *p*, gives a charitable reconstruction of the reconstructed utterance, *p'*, but he does not have to believe *p'*.)

4. Essential condition
S takes on the obligation that *p* accurately describes *p'*.
(In producing the reconstructive utterance, *S* is committed to the accuracy of the fit between meta-linguistic reconstruction and the utterance it is a reconstruction of, but *S* is not committed to *p'* representing a state of affairs.)

In producing reconstructive speech acts, the speaker is committed only to the accuracy of the reconstruction. When giving criticism, however, the speaker's commitment is of a different kind. The speaker of a critical speech act is essentially committed to his criticism referring to either the truth value of some particular utterance (in which case a refutation is 'factual') or to the consistency between two or more utterances (in which case a refutation is 'formal'). The critical speech act is here represented by *q*, and the utterance(s) it evaluates is still called *p'* as in the felicity conditions for reconstruction. I suggest that the felicity conditions for criticism can be laid out like this:

VI. N

FELICITY CONDITIONS FOR CRITICISM

1. Content condition (or 'propositional act')
Any proposition *q* evaluating any proposition *p'*.
(The content of the utterance should be about some other utterance(s), and it should specify *S*'s evaluation of that other utterance, or *S*'s evaluation of the relationship between those other utterances.)

2. Preparatory condition
S has evidence for *q*. It is not obvious to *S* and *H* that *H* already knows *q*.
(Again this condition is identical to the condition for the prototypical 'assertion', perhaps with the addition that insofar as *p'* is ascribed to *H*, *H* should be prepared to accept having his utterances evaluated by *S* in the given context.

3. Sincerity condition
S believes that *q* accurately evaluates *p'*.
(The speaker believes that his evaluation refers to the truth value of some utterance (factual refutation) or to the consistency between some utterances (formal refutation)), and that his evaluation is true.

4. Essential condition
S takes on the obligation that *q* accurately evaluates *p'*.

(*S* is committed to his utterance referring to the truth value of some utterance or the consistency between some utterances.)

The real difference between reconstruction and criticism according to the proposed felicity conditions is that in performing a reconstructive speech act, uttering *p* does not commit *S* to the counterpart's utterance *p'*. By contrast, when performing the critical speech act, uttering *q* contains a specification of *S*'s commitment to the counterpart's utterance *p'*. Reconstruction is a meta-linguistic description of some (explicit or implicit) linguistic phenomenon, while criticism is a meta-linguistic description of the correspondence between some linguistic phenomenon and the facts, or the coherence between two or more linguistic phenomena.

Moving on to the perlocution of reconstruction and criticism, it appears that the intended effect of reconstruction is clarification, while the intended effect of criticism might be called meta-persuasion. A reconstructive speech act can never in itself add up to critical argument, which follows from the fact that the speaker is non-committed to the propositional truth of *p'*, the meta-linguistic referent (cf. the essential condition of reconstruction). In order to establish criticism, that kind of reconstructive clarification is often needed, in order to 'argue about an argument' or, if you like, try to persuade that some argument's persuasive powers are such and such. By committing himself to an evaluation of *p'* (cf. the essential condition of criticism), *S* intends to achieve the effect in *H*, that *H* is convinced that, or agrees with, *q*.

The term 'counter argument' may in some cases be misleading; it is clearly possible to reconstruct and criticise some argument without that reconstruction and criticism running *counter* to the argument. The criticism may be positive, it may express acceptance, agreement, praise. Still, while examples of positive criticism are plentiful, such criticism is not prototypical of what is normally understood by 'critical discussion' or 'argumentation'. The heart of argumentation is *conflict*, so for the sake of simplicity the last line of the model claims that criticism adds up to a type of argument called 'counter argument'. Reconstruction alone adds up to clarification only, and hence reconstruction is not *per se* a counter argument[89], but reconstructions may *warrant* counter argument, or alternatively phrased, reconstructions may serve as premises for a critical, counter argumentative claim. By contrast, the counter argumentative claim itself is the domain of criticism, as it is proposed in the model.

[89] Of course, the very reconstruction of an argument may 'speak for itself' - demonstrating its own absurdity - especially if an implicatum is of the 'commitment' type. However, in such cases, one might say that the counterargument is really an enthymeme - the counterargumentative conclusion is omitted, because criticism is communicatively redundant.

AN APPLICATION OF THE MODEL[90]

Some examples of the descriptive adequacy of the model when applied on empirical samples of argumentative discussion.

Refuting Contradiction

So far, most examples have been manufactured so as to illustrate as clearly as possible the points I have been trying to make. It is now time to turn to some empirical argumentative dialogue, in order to demonstrate the applicability of the model. The following is an excerpt from the debate corpus mentioned earlier. The debate theme is 'What are the effects of the Amsterdam Treaty with respect to eastward expansion of the EU?', and the issue at this point is whether or not the Amsterdam Treaty lays down restrictions on the number of central European countries that will be allowed to join the union:

VI. O

> **Ant.** then you claim that it *says* in the treaty that only five countries can join that's not true you also said yourself that the treaty says nothing about expansion so both can't be right what you're saying is illogical Holger
> **Prot.** No I never said that |[uncl.]|
> (Transl.[91] NMN)

The antagonist's turn consists of three types of counter-argumentative utterances:

VI. P

> 1. then you claim that it says in the treaty that only five countries can join (Paraphrase 1 (PA1))
> 2. that's not true (Factual refutation (FA))
> 3. you also said yourself that the treaty says nothing about expansion (Paraphrase 2 (PA2))
> 4. so both can't be right what you're saying is illogical (Formal refutation (FO))

Lines 1 and 3 have meta-linguistic verbs denoting *explicit speech acts*, 'claim' and 'said', and pronominal reference to the counterpart ('you', 'yourself') as the agency of these speech acts. Consequently, we can safely treat them as clear-cut paraphrases,

[90] The following sections are modelled on revised passages of Nielsen (forthcoming a) and (forthcoming b)

[91] The original passage reads:
Ant. du påstår at der så *står* i traktaten at der kun kan komme fem med det passer ikke du har jo også selv sagt der står ikke noget i traktaten om udvidelse så begge dele kan ikke være rigtigt det er *u*logisk det du siger Holger
Prot. nej det har jeg ikke sagt |[ukl.]|

PA1 and PA2, respectively. Line 2 refutes PA1 directly by reference to its non-factuality, and hence we treat it as an instance of factual refutation (FA). Line 4 is treated as a formal refutation (FO), because it indicates that the combination of PA1 and PA2 is a contradiction. It is not considered a *factual* refutation, because it does not say that the propositions in question *are not* right (factually), but that they *cannot* - both - be right (in any context imaginable, apparently). There is no reconstructed implicatum in this case, and this can be partly explained by the fact that, according to FO, the combination of PA1 and PA2 constitutes an invalid form, and implicating a necessary but unexpressed premise presupposes a valid form as guiding principle. In this instance paraphrasing alone seems to rule out the existence of a valid form, and consequently there is no rational base for eliciting further - implicated - premises, at least not implicata of the reason-generated 'commitment'-type.

Apparently, FO relates to the law of contradiction - stating 'p∧¬p' is absurd: it is not possible that the treaty says *nothing* about expansion *and* that the treaty says *something* about expansion (namely that five countries are allowed to join the EU). We could also say that FO indicates that given PA1 and PA2, *no rule of inference applies*[92].

However, we have not yet taken the factual refutation (FA) into account: FA states that PA1 is false. So apart from criticising the argument for being invalid (FO) the counter argument points to the *reason* for this discrepancy: one of the premises is false (FA). If this analysis is credible, we may infer that the counter argument refers to the principle of contradiction as the external, rational standard for assessment. PA1 and PA2 cannot both be true, since they refer respectively to the proposition *p* and the negation of that proposition ¬*p*, so one of them must be false. And, incidentally, the antagonist happens to know that it is *p* which is false.

To this reconstruction and criticism, the protagonist replies by saying 'No, I never said that.' What he is referring to anaphorically by 'that', PA1 or PA2, is hard to say, as the discussion is cut off at this point, moving on to another aspect of the discussion. But the protagonist's reply, *denying a paraphrased statement* indicates that there is something more to the analysis of counter argument: how should we treat the protagonist reply?

The Negotiated Argument

Evidently, it is necessary to refine our understanding of counter-argument somewhat:

For the present purposes, we deal only indirectly with the protagonist´s initial argument, by looking at the way it is being represented in the counter argument reconstruction. The representation need not be fair or adequate, indeed, the argument

[92] Technically speaking, it is a doctrine in logic that 'anything follows from a contradiction' (*Ex Falso Quodlibet*). This is the proof: In order for a conditional (p→q) to be false there has to be an instance in which the antecedent (p) is true while the consequent (q) is false. However, if the antecedent contains a contradiction, there cannot be such an instance, since in that case, the antecedent *cannot* be true. It follows that a conditional like ((p∧¬p)→q) is a logical truth, and seeing that the consequent *q* can be *any* proposition, it appears that indeed, 'anything follows from a contradiction'. This is a technicality, however. In the limited logic of everyday discourse, it is more likely that the general expectation of cooperation will mean that no conclusion can relevantly follow from a contradiction.

that it is supposed to be a reconstruction of, may not have been advanced at all by the protagonist. After all, the *Straw Man* fallacy is a popular, reconstructive trick. So it is not at all uncommon that the protagonist challenges the antagonist's reconstruction. In such instances, we can say that the reconstruction is being developed gradually in the course of the exchange, as a negotiation between antagonist and protagonist. In other words, we need to distinguish between three kinds of argument: the *original* argument, the *reconstructed* argument, and the *negotiated* argument. The original argument is the defence of a standpoint advanced by the protagonist. The reconstructed argument is the antagonist's proposed reconstruction of the original argument. The negotiated argument is the argument which may be established in an interactive process in which the antagonist's reconstruction is adjusted by the protagonist (The term 'negotiation' does not necessarily mean that the exchange is equal in terms of dialogical power and dominance, and it does not mean that the discourse is supposedly negotiable in the sense that the participants strive for consensus. In many cases, the adjustments that the protagonist is allowed to make, are being instrumentalised for further criticism by the antagonist. However, it seems to be the case that the protagonist has a 'right' to comment on the reconstructed argument, a feature which is evident in example **vi. q**. It is this 'conversational right' bestowed on the protagonist which makes the process a kind of negotiation.)

Mutual Exclusion: Implicatum and Formal Refutation

As a general tendency, it seems that formal refutation occurs when there is no implicatum, and implicata occur when there is no formal refutation: the relationship between them seems to be *mutually exclusive*. There is an explanation for this: When you implicate that some claim is a 'needed' assumption in order for the opponent's argument to be acceptable, you do so by reference to a form you consider non-contradictory (i.e. valid). This is essentially the practical application of the principle of charity. But having reconstructed the opponent's argument on a valid form, there is no ground for a formal refutation - formal refutation is usually only legitimated by an *explicit* contradiction. Conversely, when paraphrases alone seem to indicate an invalid form having been used, there can be no implicatum, as implicata (of this sort) are performed according to an expectation of validity. So formal refutations occur only when there are *paraphrased* indications of invalidity, or when an implicatum is negated. The implicatum may be put forward by the antagonist in order to refute it, or the negation may come about through a negotiation in which the protagonist comments on the antagonist's reconstruction. However, when the protagonist denies the antagonist's implicatum, the antagonist may in some cases reply by way of formal refutation.

vi. q is an example of this mechanism:

VI. Q

> **1. Ant.** Can I just ask you er now you said that the new treaty is going to draw a line across Europe
> **2. Prot.** Mm
> **3. Ant.** Does that m- does that mean that you oppose the inclusion of Poland the Czech Republic and so on three four countries in accord with the *old* treaty?
> **4. Prot.** No
> **5. Ant.** But then your argument doesn't hold
> (Transl[93]. NMN)

The subject matter of this exchange requires a brief explanation and an interpretation of the textual manifestation. Firstly, a preceding argument has established that the protagonist thinks that the new treaty involves the inclusion of four - and only four - new member states in the EU. Accordingly, the expression 'the new treaty' may be taken to stand metonymically for a particular passage in the treaty advocating 'the inclusion of (only) four countries'. Secondly, there is tacit, contextual agreement about the norm that noone wants a new line across Europe after the fall of the iron curtain. So, what the antagonist is saying is that, seeing that noone wants a new line across Europe, and seeing that the protagonist is of the opinion that including only four new member states will create such a line, the protagonist is obliged to be against the inclusion of this limited number of new members under the old treaty[94], too, and indeed *under any circumstances*. Which means that the protagonist's original argument is irrelevant to the question of whether or not to ratify the Amsterdam Treaty. In a rhetorical term, the antagonist accuses the protagonist of committing the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi* - of ignoring the issue.

In terms of counter argumentation, I propose the following analysis:

VI. R

> 1. [the inclusion of only four new member states] is going to draw a line across Europe (Paraphrase (PA))
> 2. (Affirmation (AF))
> 3. we should not include [only four new member states] in accord with the *old* treaty [either] (Implicatum (IMP))
> 4. (Denial (DEN))
> 5. your argument doesn't hold (Formal refutation (FO))

[93] The original passage reads:
Ant. må jeg lige spørge dig øh nu sagde du at øh den nye traktat vil lave et skel i Europa
Prot. mh
Ant. vil det s- vil det sige du er modstander af at Polen Tjekkiet og så videre tre fire lande bliver optaget i den *gamle* traktat
Prot. nej
Ant. så holder dit argument jo heller ikke

[94] I.e., the *Maastricht Treaty*, which is in effect at the time of the speech event, but which is to be replaced by the discussed *Amsterdam Treaty*.

An interpretation of this sequence observes that the counter argument consists of two reconstructions, a paraphrase in line 1 which is affirmed by the protagonist in line 2, and an implicatum in line 3 which is denied by the protagonist in line 4. So we have a paraphrased utterance negotiated to be true, and an implicated utterance negotiated to be false. Following this, the antagonist in line 5 claims that this negotiation of truth values renders the argument invalid. But what is the argument exactly? According to the reconstruction, displayed in lines 1 and 3 only, the argument is:

VI. S

> *Reconstructed argument*
> The inclusion of only four new member states is going to draw a line across Europe
> (we do not want a line across Europe)
> So:
> We should not include only four new member states.

Interpreted charitably, the premise needed for validating this argument is the norm that 'we do not want a line across Europe', which is not controversial in this context, it is a trivial premise and thus a reasonable deletion from the surface expression of the reconstructed argument. When we interpret the reconstructed argument in this way the reconstructed argument is in fact valid - it can be assessed according to the inference form *modus tollens*, without eliciting unexpressed content which is wildly controversial.

When we then look at the *negotiated* version of the same argument (involving lines 1, 2, 3, and 4), the conclusion is negated (in line 4). So an assessment of this argument by reference to modus tollens will render it invalid (the invalidly derived conclusion is marked by an asterisk (*)):

VI. T

> *Negotiated argument*
> The inclusion of only four new member states is going to draw a line across Europe
> (We do not want a line across Europe)
> So:
> * We should include only four new member states.

This is why the antagonist formally refutes the negotiated argument (see **vi. r**, line 5). The formal refutation (your argument doesn't hold) refers to the protagonist's refusal of the conclusion of the reconstructed argument: when the conclusion is refuted, the form is invalid; if not, it is valid, according to the antagonist.

It would seem that the antagonist has a strong case in claiming that the negotiated argument is in fact invalid - to the extent, that is, that the reconstruction is a fair rendition of the *original* argument (in fact, it is not; the protagonist has claimed that the new treaty involves a *restriction* which will prevent the remaining Eastern-European countries from inclusion in the EU for the duration of the treaty. And that does not imply that inclusion of the four countries in other contexts - e.g. as a first step in a gradual process of assimilating *all* eastern-European countries - will 'draw a line across Europe'. But this delicate point is lost in the antagonist's reconstruction.). For the moment it can be concluded that the antagonist has implicitly applied a valid argument form (modus tollens) for the formal refutation of the protagonist's argument.

In the modus tollens-interpretation, we can analyse the mechanism of the negotiated argument in a slightly more formal notation:

VI. U

1. Antagonist's paraphrase: $p \rightarrow q$. (Negotiated: *True*. Serves as premise)
2. Interpretation: $\neg q$ (Contextually agreed: *True*. Serves as premise)
3. Antagonist's implicatum: $\neg p$ (Negotiated: *False*. Serves as conclusion)
4. Antagonist's formal refutation:

$p \rightarrow q$
$\neg q$
* $\therefore p$

Ad 1. from the antagonist's paraphrase 'if p then q' *combined* with the protagonist's acceptance of this reconstruction, it is negotiated that 'if p then q' is true. I interpret this as serving as a first premise in the negotiated argument.

Ad 2. It is a contextually agreed upon norm that 'not-q'. I interpret this norm as serving as an unexpressed second premise in the negotiated argument.

Ad 3. from the antagonist's implicatum 'not-p' *combined* with the protagonist's denial of this reconstruction, it is negotiated that 'not-p' is false, and, consequently, that 'p' is true. I interpret this as serving as the negotiated argument's conclusion.

Ad 4. based on 1, 2, and 3 the antagonist formally refutes the negotiated argument on the charge of affirming the antecedent in the conclusion.

If this negotiation is typical (and that still remains to be seen in further analyses of this kind) we could say that there is a regularity of how negotiation works: in the negotiation of an argument, the protagonist is allowed to decide what interpretation is right. As it is proposed in the essential condition for reconstructive speech acts, the antagonist is not committed to the truth of the reconstructed utterance (he is only committed to the accuracy between reconstruction and original), while the protagonist obviously *is*, so it follows that only the protagonist can legitimately affirm or deny the truth of the reconstructed utterance. After all, it is his argument that is being reconstructed, so he should know. But the negotiated reconstruction may then serve as firm ground for criticism, as in **vi. r**, where the criticism employs the strategy of a formal refutation of the negotiated argument. The protagonist is moved into a position

in which he faces a destructive dilemma: as the protagonist is the judge of the correctness of the reconstruction, the subsequent refutation of the form of the argument is so much more amplified; the antagonist offers the protagonist an impossible ultimatum: 'either we accept *your* version - but then your argument is invalid, or else we accept *my* version - but then your conclusion runs counter to your general standpoint.' In this context one might add that the derived implicatum in this case seems to be of the 'commitment' type rather than the 'intended meaning' type. The antagonist employs the modus tollens form to uncover a conclusion as a further commitment imposed on the protagonist, a commitment which is refused by the protagonist, as it was not an intended element in the argument. The status of this implicatum, however, is really only disclosed in the negotiation of the argument. At the reconstruction phase, it can be thought of as both intended and non-intended.

Chaining and Prefacing

The above account has served to demonstrate that there is a dynamical aspect of argumentation that can only be captured by analysing arguments not only as hierarchies, but also as sequences. It has been the aim of this thesis to explore the foundations of the sequential and dialogical aspects of argumentation, but little attention has been paid to concrete regularities that may be derivable from empirical analyses. This last excourse will very briefly acknowledge that such regularities are indeed derivable in a close analysis of argumentative discourse.

As Malcolm Coulthard has noted, '...one of the major aims of conversational analysis is to discover [the rules for the production of coherent discourse] and to describe the conversational structures they generate.' (Coulthard (1977), p. 63.) One such rule, well-known to most scholars of conversation analysis, is the rule that a person asking questions retains the control of the talk exchange: 'a person who has asked a question has ... a reserved right to talk again, after the one to whom he has addressed the question speaks. *And* in using this reserved right he can ask a question.' (Harvey Sacks cited in Coulthard (1977), p. 71). This feature of conversation is mentioned by Coulthard as the *chaining rule* (p. 71), and the point is that it allows the first speaker to control the nature of the exchange: *who* is to speak next, and *what kind* of move is permitted.

In **vi. q** it is evident that the antagonist controls the exchange by initiating a sequence of adjacency pairs in which the protagonist is obliged to fill in the second pair parts. Move 1 is a paraphrase expressed so as to obtain affirmation by the protagonist. Move 2 is the required reply; the protagonist affirms the paraphrase. Move 3 is an implicatum, again phrased as a question. In this case, however, the protagonist denies (move 4), and this leads to a formal refutation in move 5.

It appears that the conversational structure is deliberately designed by the antagonist to exploit this inverse relationship: having had the protagonist affirm the paraphrase, the antagonist formulates an implicatum which the protagonist obviously cannot subscribe to, and, as he is conversationally obliged to provide the second pair part (Answer), he denies. Then, in adherence to the chaining rule, it is still the antagonist who has the control of the speech situation, and he can then point to the (alleged) incoherence between paraphrase and denied implicatum: 'your argument doesn't hold'. The

mutually exclusive relationship between implicatum and formal refutation is utilised for critical purposes: If the implicatum - the unexpressed conclusion - is falsified, then the argument is invalid.

From this example it appears that counter argument is not just a monological assessment made by the antagonist: the protagonist is allowed to participate in a *negotiation of the reconstruction*, though, apparently, this negotiation is carried out under the full control of the antagonist. A regularity of this negotiating process seems to be that the protagonist is allowed to have the last word at the reconstruction level, though not at the level of criticism.

The allocation of turns is central to **vi. q**. As described by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson ((1978) p. 12), there seem to be two distinct, turn-allocation procedures: the controlled form in which current speaker allocates next speaker, and the free procedure, in which next speaker is allocated by self-selection. Obviously, this instance is of the first type. Utilising the chaining rule, the antagonist retains control of the exchange, and the point is, that this control is imperative to the antagonist's achievement of criticism. Were it not for the fact that the turn taking mechanism is so highly formalised that the protagonist would in fact be 'violating' a conversational rule if he self-selected during the sequence, the antagonist would not be able to succeed in refuting his argument. Only by retaining control of turn allocation can the antagonist succeed in advancing his counter argument.

The exchange, however, is also describable in terms of another, well-documented conversational mechanism. This mechanism is described by Emanuel Schegloff:

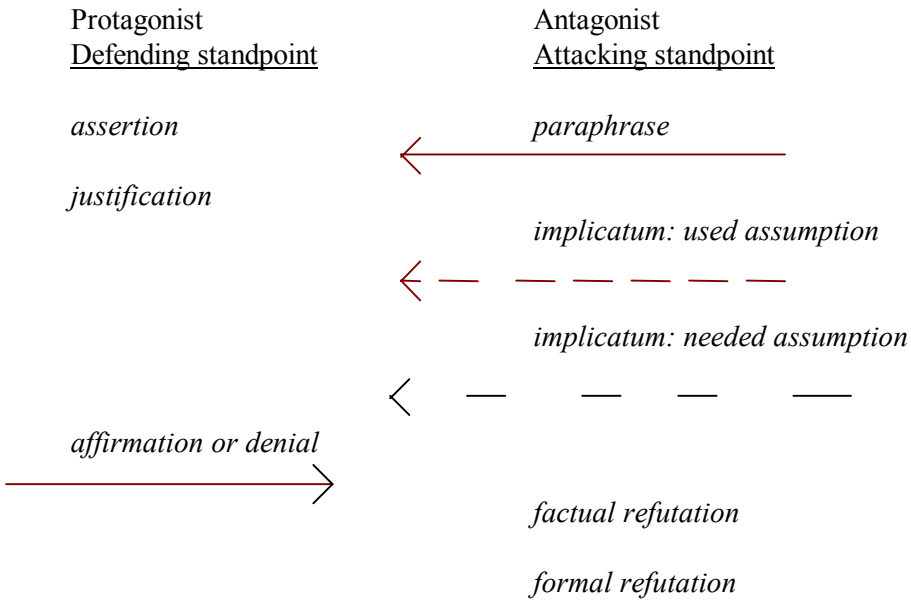
> It is quite common that, after 'Can I ask you a question' or 'Lemme ask you a question,' the next thing that the speaker says or does is not a question. (Schegloff (1980), p. 107)

This peculiar fact is perfectly reflected in the opening line (line 1) of **vi. q**. This kind of prefacing is quite common, but in terms of argumentative dialogue, one might speculate that it serves a special purpose: extensive criticism requires a certain amount of floor control in order to establish both reconstruction and criticism. The postponement of the actual question (the implicatum) allows for a paraphrase first while still retaining turn allocation control with the speaker.

Functional Roles in Argument

By way of summary, an alternative model is suggested, depicting the relationship between argument and counter argument, this one trying to illustrate the *relationship* between different utterances, rather than, as it was the case in the first model (**vi. k**), the distribution of possibilities onto the argumentative roles of protagonist and antagonist. The first model provided the stipulative definitions of the terms 'protagonist' and 'antagonist' in order to identify counter-argumentation as an activity performed exclusively by antagonists. That distinction can be further illustrated by the *functional* model:

VI. V



vi. v recapitulates that assertion and justification (and in negotiated arguments, affirmation and denial) are protagonistic activities, whereas paraphrase, implicatum, factual and formal refutation are entirely antagonistic. In these definitions, the roles of protagonist and antagonist are functional, as they are activated by particular, linguistic actions by which they can be identified. The arrows in the model symbolise the degree of relation to the utterances produced by the counterpart: paraphrase is *directly* related to the original argument, as it is (supposedly) a repetition of an explicit part of the original argument - along with meta-linguistic referents, it will often be seen to contain meta-linguistic verbs of the type pointing to explicit speech acts. This is symbolised by a straight arrow. Implicatum understood as intended meaning or used assumption is related to the original argument by being supposedly intended by reference to the CP. Implicatum understood as a commitment imposed on the original argument is related by virtue of being (supposedly) consequential of what has been uttered, an inferential reconstruction of an *implicit* part of the original argument. Apart from meta-linguistic referents, both types of implicata will often involve meta-linguistic verbs referring to implicit speech acts. Hence, the relation is weaker than in the case of paraphrase, as the implicata are not directly verifiable, so their relations are symbolised by broken arrows, indicating that the intended implicatum is more closely connected to the original argument than is the implicatum-like commitment. Factual and formal refutation are not necessarily directly related to the original argument, but need only relate to the reconstruction (paraphrase and/or implicatum) - containing predominantly meta-linguistic operators. In order to illustrate this lack of necessary connection the refutations have no arrow pointing to the protagonist. On the protagonist side, assertion and justification (constituting the original argument) is obviously not related to any later reconstruction or criticism advanced by the antagonist. Affirmation and denial, however, are the protagonist's direct comments on reconstruction made by the antagonist, thus symbolised by a straight arrow.

REMARKS BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

Re-evaluating the present approach to argumentation in the context of the relativism-debate. It is argued that, in principle, criticism has to know no boundaries if a theory of argumentative discourse is to be morally acceptable.

Arguments Are Public Property

In the critical-rationalist perspective employed here, no argumentative text can legitimately defy counter argument. Any discourse that aims to persuade its audience to make some decision, to accept some fact, to adopt some standpoint, is in principle liable for critical scrutiny. It may be that some given norm is held to be right by some person or some culture, and that it makes little sense for opponents simply to reject the norm. The norm itself may seem immune to criticism, as it lacks an observable material foundation. But the argumentation employed to establish the norm is not immune to criticism. The argumentation used to establish the norm has to be coherent, and it should be such construed that the justification of the norm involves only claims that are *also* held to be true, or right, by the person or culture in question. Otherwise the norm is *not* justified.

It has been imperative in this study to separate argumentation from research traditions that would not allow for such openness to criticism. In a culture-relative understanding of rationality, criticism is only possible within the given form of rationality in that culture, and only up to the point where the culture specific rationality is not criticised itself. While many social constructionists like to think of their research as 'liberatory', as somehow helping the powerless or those oppressed by ideology, what the social constructionist's relativism really does is to defuse the discussion. While disarming those in power, by ruling out the possibility of a rationality invariant to context or discourse, the powerless are equally disarmed. If the discourse constituting the dominant system is fundamentally different from the discourse of those marginalised by the system, also in terms of their 'rationalities' or 'logics', then criticism directed at the workings of the system is just as futile as criticism directed at the marginalised.

But argumentation - especially *critical* argumentation - is the driving force of any open, democratic society (however flawed and imperfect it may be). In order for such a system to work it is necessary that *any* claim whatsoever is debatable. Criticism has to know no boundaries in order to be truly emancipatory, or at least potentially emancipatory. But the first step is to acknowledge that there can be common conditions underlying all forms of valid criticism, and it has been the aim of this dissertation to suggest such conditions.

Argument Analysis: A Mirror of Everyday Interaction

The conclusion is that the hypothesis that language users in general have the potential to perform argumentative discourse according to an invariant norm of rationality is now a qualified hypothesis. I hypothesise that the critical faculty is not alien to most people, a systematised, rational argument analysis is in fact a mirror of the critical practice in everyday interaction. In the light of the discussions in this study, I think that

this hypothesis remains a plausible one (if not as *bold* as Popper would probably have demanded that it be).

For the practical purposes of those that teach, learn, and carry out practical analyses of argumentative discourse, I intend this qualified hypothesis to serve as a legitimisation of a critical-rationalist method. The reconstruction / criticism model (**vi. k**) is not just a descriptive model of interactive strategies, it also resembles the method usually applied for the *analysis* of argumentative discourse. According to the reconstruction / criticism model, it *is* legitimate to reconstruct enthymematic argumentation according to a logically valid form of argument, and to subsequently critically discuss the reconstructed argument.

APPENDIX

Resumé på dansk

Afhandlingens vigtigste erkendelser omkring filosofi, videnskabsteori, argumentation og sprog.

Generelt om afhandlingen

Afhandlingen er resultatet af et Ph.D. stipendium i perioden 1996-2000 - med et par afbrydelser undervejs. Selvom det ikke fremgår så tydeligt af den foreliggende tekst, er mange af de centrale spørgsmål, som afhandlingen bygger på, oprindeligt opstået ud af min undervisning i argumentationsteori og -analyse på Dansk, RUC, i efterårssemestrene 95, 96, 97 samt forårssemestret 99. Tak til de mange studerende som stillede gode og udfordrende spørgsmål. Jeg mener, at der gives nogen svar i denne afhandling.

Afhandlingen er bygget op i to dele: en filosofisk og videnskabsteoretisk del, og en sproglig del. Efter et introducerende og kontekstualiserende kapitel I foldes den filosofiske og videnskabsteoretiske del ud i kapitlerne II, III og IV, og derefter kommer den sprog- og tekstteoretiske del i kapitlerne V og VI. Første halvdel af dette resumé er en meget kort grundindføring i de centrale erkendelser i afhandlingen generelt. Anden halvdel er en læsevejledning, som kort kommenterer afhandlingens seks kapitler.

Rationalitet: opgør med relativismen

Den filosofisk/videnskabsteoretiske del argumenterer for en kritisk-rationalistisk indfaldsvinkel til argumentation i forsøget på at isolere en invarians i den argumentative fornuft. Argumentationsstudier opfattes i denne afhandling som en sprog- og tekstteoretisk praksis, snarere end som en filosofisk praksis. Men forestillingen om en invarians i fornuften er en filosofisk forestilling snarere end en sprogteoretisk. Således er formålet med denne del af afhandlingen at integrere forestillingen om fornuft-invarians i en sprogteoretisk indfaldsvinkel til argumentation. Dette er ikke uproblematisk: samtidige teoridannelser om sprog og kommunikation (især de, som går under betegnelsen 'diskurs') udmærker sig ved en omsiggribende kulturrelativisme, hvor forestillingen om invariant fornuft ikke kan have nogen legitim plads. I den

postmoderne forestillingsverden, hvor virkeligheden består af en pluralitet af modstridende fortællinger, hvor omgivelserne konstitueres som diskursive konstruktioner, og hvor subjektet selv er et decentreret, socialt konstrukt, kan en forestilling om kontekstinvariante mulighedsbetingelser for rationel argumentation kun ses som et ideologiinficeret forsøg på at opnå diskursivt hegemoni for en ud af mange diskurser; nemlig den moderne, 'videnskabelige' diskurs.

Afhandlingen opstiller derfor en større argumentation mod relativismen i almindelighed og socialkonstruktionismen i særdeleshed. Formålet er i første omgang at vise, at relativismen (som er en uomgængelig konsekvens af en konsekvent socialkonstruktionisme) er *selvrefuterende* som forestilling om relationen mellem subjekt og verden. Hertil kommer, at relativismen i dens postmoderne fremtoning er amoralsk, idet dens manglende evne til at skille fornuft fra ufornuft ikke blot gælder på det faktuelle, men også på det normative/etiske område.

Kritik som den gyldne mellemvej

Afhandlingen argumenterer for en kritisk-rationalistisk filosofi som grundlag for argumentationstudier. I dette perspektiv er *enhver* påstand principielt objekt for kritik, og *enhver* påstand er dermed altid principielt afviselig (forudsat at påstanden faktisk udsiger noget overhovedet). Ingen hævdelse af sammenhænge i den omgivende verden eller opfordring til social handling kan påberåbe sig immunitet fra kritik.

For at forklare det kritisk-rationalistiske standpunkt, må det anskues i sammenhæng med både et absolutistisk og et relativistisk standpunkt. Jeg anvender til det formål en velafprøvet metafor om omverdenen som et landskab, som det beskuende subjekt er placeret i. Absolutisten kan henvise til, at *hans* sandhed skyldes et priviligeret, neutralt udsigtspunkt over landskabet, et udsigtspunkt hvorfra virkeligheden kan anskues *objektivt* (i praksis henviser absolutisten sædvanligvis et helligt eller på anden måde autoritativt skrift). Modsat dette kan relativisten hævde, at *hans* sandhed er rigtig *for ham*, og da ingen har adgang til relativistens oplevelse, kan hans sandhed ikke bestrides, ikke engang selv om den modsiger andres oplevelse. Således kan både absolutist og relativist hævde, at hans påstand er immun over for kritik. Men både absolutistens og relativistens grundantagelser er uholdbare: absolutisten hævder at have adgang til et objektivt udsigtspunkt, men de epistemiske problemer hermed er iøjnefaldende. For at et *subjekt* kan have et *objektivt* perspektiv, må subjektet ophøre med at være subjekt. For at kunne se et tredimensionalt landskab fra alle vinkler samtidig kræves det, at beskueren ikke findes på et punkt *i* landskabet, men så at sige er allestedsnærværende i landskabet. Og dette kan aldrig være et subjekt, som kun kan defineres som modstykke til objektet, landskabet. Omvendt hævder relativisten, at subjektet kun kan se landskabet fra det punkt, hvor subjektet befinder sig, og denne oplevelse bliver dermed relativismens eksklusive sandhed: sådan som det ser ud, sådan er det. Når det således ser *anderledes ud* for andre subjekter, må relativisten konkludere, at der ikke kan findes een sandhed om landskabets udseende, men derimod lige så mange sandheder, som der er subjekter placeret i landskabet. Problemet er nu, at relativisten dermed har umuliggjort, at der overhovedet *findes* eet landskab.

Den kritiske rationalist løser problemet på en meget simpel måde: På den ene side har absolutisten ret i, at landskabet *findes*, objektivt set, idet alt andet er absurd. Men

absolutisten tager fejl i, at beskueren nogen sinde kan erkende landskabet helt, som det er, da det forudsætter et uopnåeligt, 'guddommeligt' overblik. På den anden side har relativisten ret i, at beskueren ser landskabet i et bestemt perspektiv, men han tager fejl i, at dette ene perspektiv nu bliver *hans* endelige, relative sandhed (om ikke for andet, så fordi selve forestillingen om 'relativ sandhed' er en begrebslig selvmodsigelse). Den kritiske rationalist understreger, at det indlysende nok *er muligt bevæge sig rundt i landskabet* og dermed se det i flere forskellige perspektiver. Og disse forskellige perspektiver afløser ikke hinanden men ophobes som en stadig akkumulation af viden om landskabet. Hvad der fra eet perspektiv syntes at være et rektangel kan vise sig, ved et perspektivskifte, at være en cylinder. Det, beskueren har lært ved perpektivskiftet, er, at forestillingen om, at det beskuede objekt var todimensionelt, viste sig at være falsk; det var faktisk tredimensionelt. Men observationen af et rektangel, set fra det første perspektiv, bliver ikke dermed slettet, den bliver blot føjet til den nu større viden om objektet, som perspektivskiftet medførte. Landskabet eksisterer, vi kan bevæge os rundt i det, efterprøve vores forestillinger om det, akkumulere viden om det. Vi kan aldrig nå til en total viden om landskabet, men vi kan altid blive klogere. Enhver påstand om landskabet kan *altid* efterprøves kritisk, for ingen kan hævde at sidde inde med den endelige kilde til erkendelsen.

Dagligsprogets simple logik

Denne afhandling anlægger et overordentligt simpelt syn på, hvad logik er i virkeligheden, dvs. ud over de filosofiske lærebøger om emnet. I denne sammenhæng anses logik for at være det centrale element i evnen til dialogisk kritik. Logik kan i dens dagligdags anvendelse koges ned til doktrinen om, at selvmodsigelse er meningsløs (også kaldet 'modsigelsesprincippet'). Samtidig foreskriver samtalens eget krav om dialogisk samarbejde, at *meningsløshed* er uantagelig, og således bliver modsigelsesprincippet en kontekst-invariant doktrin for argumenterende samtale (at modsigelsesprincippet er kontekst-invariant er naturligvis ikke ensbetydende med, at det er immunt over for kritik. Men enhver, der har forsøgt at modsige modsigelsesprincippet, kender de udsigtsløse resultater heraf).

Modsigelsesprincippet er logikkens grundlag. Da kritik grundlæggende er at påpege modsigelser, skal logikken altså forstås som et kritisk instrument, og ikke som en kalkyle til udledning af beviser, som f.eks. i matematikken. I denne afhandling er der kun en slags logik, nemlig den, som man traditionelt betegner 'deduktion'. At en slutning er deduktiv, er normalt ensbetydende med, at den er 'gyldig', dvs. at den unddrager sig kritik for at være selvmodsigende. Den anden almindeligt anerkendte slutningsform, 'induktion', er reelt slet ikke en slutnings*form*, men en slutnings*måde*, idet *induktion* normalt betegner et forhold som har med argumentets indhold, ikke dets form, at gøre; induktion betegner normalt slutning 'ved simpel opregning', dvs. en slutning fra at alle hidtige observationer af at et fænomen A har egenskaben B, til at alle fænomener af typen A overhovedet vil have egenskaben B. En sådan slutningsmåde kan imidlertid fremstilles både i en gyldig og i en ugyldig form. Således er induktion ikke en form, men en bestemt type indhold. Så når en kritisk-rationalistisk argumentationsanalyse er baseret på kritik, skal kritikken langt hen ad vejen forstås som en logisk baseret samarbejdende rekonstruktion af argumenter, med

efterfølgendeepistemisk og logisk kritik af det ekspliciterede argument. Dagligsprogets logik er simpel, idet den er baseret på udelukkelsen af selvmodsigelse.

Samarbejde og forpligtelser

Påstanden om, at det er muligt at rekonstruere eller eksplicitere argumenter, som reelt kun er delvist udtrykt, kræver en forklaring, som kan findes i moderne sprogfilosofi. Nøgleordet er *samarbejde*. For at kommunikation skal kunne finde sted, er det en forudsætning, at deltagerne *formoder* at de øvrige deltagere oprigtigt forsøger at kommunikere - at deltagerne indgår i et samarbejde. Paul Grice's samarbejdsprincip siger, at denne formodning er en nødvendig betingelse for, at kommunikation kan fungere. Det er ikke sikkert, *at* deltagerne faktisk samarbejder, men det er nødvendigt, at de *formoder*, at de samarbejder. Uden denne formodning kan der ikke kommunikeres. Samarbejdet består i praksis i, at samtaledeltagerne genkender andre samtaleparters *intentioner*, dvs. de forudsætninger, som er nødvendige for, at det sagte kan fremstå som et samarbejdende bidrag til samtalen.

I forhold til et studium i argumentationsteori er det oplagt at opleve de såkaldt 'uudtalte' eller 'implicitte' præmisser som en variant af den slags forudsatte intentioner. På den måde kan samarbejdsprincippet forklare, hvordan argumentativ kritik foregår: på baggrund af det, som en samtaledeltager har *sagt*, kan kritikeren rekonstruere, hvad der i øvrigt må være intenderet, for at argumentet kan være acceptabelt. Disse rekonstruerede påstande kan nu eventuelt kritiseres, eller relationen mellem udtalte og rekonstruerede påstande kan udsættes for kritik.

De rekonstruerede elementer kaldes for 'implikata'. I denne sammenhæng anskues implikata som et empirisk fænomen, dvs. som noget man faktisk kan iagttage i rigtige samtaler: herved opstår et vigtigt spørgsmål: hvordan kan man vide, om et rekonstrueret implikatum faktisk var intenderet af den talende? Svaret er, at det i praksis kan være svært at gøre. I denne afhandling opereres der derfor med to forskellige slags implikata. For det første er der den slags rekonstruerede forudsætninger, som bliver opfattet som *reelt intenderede forudsætninger*. Det er formodninger, som den talende faktisk har 'anvendt', men undladt at udtale eksplicit under forventningen om, at lytteren kan slutte sig til dem. Jeg refererer til denne slags 'ægte' implikata, som 'intenderet mening'. Omvendt er der en lignende slags implikata, som udledes under hensyntagen til, at argumentet formodes at være ikke-selvmodsigende, dvs. gyldigt. Sådanne formodninger er ikke altid reelt intenderet af den talende, men opfattes af den rekonstruerende lytter som værende 'nødvendige formodninger', nødvendige, altså, for argumentets gyldighed. Jeg refererer til denne slag 'uægte' implikata som 'forpligtelser'.

Modargumentationens væsen

Afhandlingen foreslår på denne bagggrund en række elementer, som synes at høre med ved en teoretisk afklaring af, hvad modargumentation er. Modargumentation er vigtig, fordi det er her, kritikken hører hjemme, og kritikken er, som Karl Popper siger, selve menneskets rationelle essens.

Modellen fremstiller rekonstruktion som bestående af *parafrase* (gengivelse af, hvad modparten har sagt) og *implikatum* (gengivelse af, hvad modparten mener (intenderer)

eller *må* mene (er forpligtet på). Kritik består i modellen af epistemisk / ontologisk kritik (dvs. spørgsmål om eksistens - sandhed et.) samt logisk kritik (spørgsmål om gyldighed). Hertil kan for fuldstændighedens skyld føjes en *normativ* kritik, men for nærværende problematik er dette ikke så relevant.

Det, modellen viser, er, at metoden for rekonstruktion og kritik grundlæggende er den samme, hvad enten der er tale om filosoffens / lingvistens distancerede analyse, eller om sprogbrugerens *ad hoc* kritiske samtalebidrag. Man kan derfor hævde, at hvis den distancerede analyse af argumentation er rationel, så er de almindelige sprogbrugeres argumentation også rationel. Således kan forankringen i den virkelige, argumenterende diskurs ses som et forsvar for den almindelige sprogbrugers principielle mulighed for at handle og kommunikere rationelt.

AFHANDLINGEN KAPITEL FOR KAPITEL

Læsevejledning. Kort resume af de enkelte kapitlers indhold.

Kapitel I: Studier i argumentation og videnskabelig konflikt

Afhandlingens første kapitel tager afsæt i den såkaldte 'science war'. Begrebet dækker en videnskabsteoretisk kontrovers mellem de nye, postmoderne tænkere (dvs. post-strukturalisme, socialkonstruktionisme, dekonstruktion, - navne som Foulcault, Baudrillard, Latour, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva og mange, mange flere) og de mere traditionelt orienterede modernister (realister - indbefattende rationalister, objektivister, kritiske rationalister m.fl.). Kontroversen angår selve den postmoderne tilstand og dens konsekvenser for videnskaben: fra den postmoderne side opfattes traditionalisterne som dogmatikere, som stadig eksisterer og arbejder i gamle vildfarelser om, at det er muligt at undersøge et objekt uden at påvirke det, at videnskabens mål er at finde frem til den endelige sandhed, at omverdenen principielt kan beskrives akkurat, etc., mens traditionalisterne oplever postmodernisterne som fantaster, som på bekostning af videnskabelig præcision og skarphed fremstiller virkeligheden som en uafgørbar, fragmenteret flerstemmighed, som bedre lader sig beskrive som fortællinger eller myter, end som kolde, hårde fakta. Postmodernisterne beskyldes for at afstedkomme et intellektuelt forfald.

Afhandlingen tager udgangspunkt i en velkendt episode, hvor en amerikansk fysiker havde held til at få et postmoderne tidsskrift til i god tro at udgive en artikel, som reelt blot var skrevet som en parodi uden reel, videnskabelig værdi. Uden i øvrigt at sammenligne, hævder afhandlingen, at der er tendenser også i tekst- og kommunikationsvidenskaber til at lade forblommede, men moderigtige klicheer, dække over manglende teoretisk sammenhæng. Det hævdes, at der også i argumentationsteori findes en tendens til at bevæge sig henimod postmoderne teoridannelser, og det understreges, at særligt i argumentationsteori, som er stærkt afhængig af et utvetydigt rationalitetsbegreb, er relativisme en uheldig udvikling.

Kapitlet giver et kort overblik over udviklingen i den nordamerikanske tradition for 'informel logik' og den kontinentale argumentationsteori, hvor man især i informel logik kan finde postmodernistiske tendenser.

Kapitel II: Problematisering af socialkonstruktionismen

Kapitlet har til formål, gennem en kritik af relativismen og den nutidige manifestation i den postmoderne tænkning, at foreslå et fornuftsbegreb, som ikke behøver at støtte sig til kultur- eller traditionsrelative elementer.

Først opstilles en kritik af relativismen, både den helt oprindelige, protagoreanske relativisme, men også den mere fremskrevne *framework*-relativisme, personificeret af filosoffer som Thomas Kuhn. Denne fremstilling støtter sig bl.a. til Siegel (1987), som demonstrerer, at relativisme, uanset sin konkrete manifestation, er *selvrefuterende*: Hævdelsen af den relativistiske doktrin om at ingen hævdelse kan have gyldighed ud over den den sammenhæng, hvori den fremsættes, denne hævdelse må selv være fremsat under den formodning, at den har gyldighed ud over sin egen kontekst. Hvis ikke den har det, er den nemlig ikke nogen reel hævdelse med nogen konsekvenser. Men idet den forudsættes at have universel gyldighed, modsiger den sig selv, og bliver et paradoks.

Idet relativismens problem er blevet diskuteret, er det nu relevant at spørge, om socialkonstruktionismen som postmodernistisk variant faktisk *er* relativistisk. Svaret er, baseret især på Collin (1997), at socialkonstruktionismen må vælge imellem enten at forstå 'sociale konstruktioner' som socialt genererede illusioner, hvorved den socialkonstruktionistiske ide bliver en noget banal affære, eller den kan forstå sociale konstruktioner som en reel konstruktion af *virkeligheden*, inklusive den *fysiske* virkelighed, i hvilket tilfælde der er tale om en helt reel relativisme: Den omgivende virkelighed er konstitueret af det sociale, eventuelt diskursen.

I dette kapitel foreslås et rationalitetsbegreb bestående af to elementer, nemlig selve kommunikationens mulighedsbetingelse - *samarbejde* - kombineret med tænkningens mulighedsbetingelse - *fornuft* (forstået som *modsigelsesfrihed*). Det er forudsætningen, at fornuft og samarbejde fungerer indbyrdes begrænsende; kun den påstand er rationel, som opfylder betingelserne for at kunne kommunikeres, samtidig med, at den må være modsigelsesfri - internt, og i forhold til andre påstande, taleren er forpligtet på.

Kapitel III: Logik, kritik, fornuft

Dette harmonerer med Karl Poppers kritiske rationalisme. Baseret på især Popper (1963) og Popper (1972) fremlægges det filosofiske fundament for en kritisk-rationalistisk argumentationsteori. Her er det en central doktrin, at det kritiske argument nødvendigvis er deduktivt. I en ortodoks kritisk-rationalisme er induktion nemlig en umulighed. Hos Popper er induktion en psykologisk umulighed, idet det ikke er muligt at foretage simpel opregning, baseret på f.eks. *lighed* imellem fænomenerne, *uden* at have en teori om hvad der i det pågældende tilfælde konstituerer 'lighed'. Poppers løsning på Humes induktionsproblem ligger i falsifikationismens deduktive karakter. Hume viste, at deduktion ikke fører til ny viden, idet konklusionen allerede er indeholdt i præmisserne, mens induktion ikke kan forsvares som gyldig - induktionsprincippet kan aldrig eftervises. Hertil indvendte Popper, at omend den

positive bevisførelse ved hjælp af deduktion ikke genererer ny viden, så kan deduktionen anvendes som kritik, og i tilfælde af, at den afdækker modsigelser bag påstande, fører det til falsifikation. Og den viden at en teori er falsk, *er* ny viden, opnået uden brug af induktion.

Kapitlet diskuterer også Poppers anvendelse af begrebet *common sense*, samt viser, at induktivismen, som modsiger Popper, meget let kommer til at fremstå som en art kritisk rationalisme (induktivismen er her repræsenteret ved Rescher (1980). Således udstyret med et videnskabsteoretisk grundlag for argumentation skrider afhandlingens kapitel IV videre til at diskutere nogle reelle problemstillinger i argumentationsteori.

Kapitel IV: På vej mod en rekonstruktiv deduktivisme

Formålet med kapitlet er at argumentere for den teoretiske og praktiske gyldighed af en rekonstruktiv-deduktivistisk metode i argumentationsanalyse. Til dette formål identificerer kapitlet tre grundlæggende, analytiske problemer, som til stadighed diskuteres i argumentationskredse, men som kan omgås ved hjælp af en rekonstruktiv-deduktivistisk metode.

De tre problemer er:

1. Deduktion/induktion-sondringen er kunstig og uklar, og de to slutningsformer er ikke gensidigt eksklusive.

2. Der bliver generelt ikke skelnet klart mellem sprog-om-verden og sprog-om-sprog, dvs. mellem objekt-sprog og meta-sprog.

3. Den sproglige formulering kommer til at stå for helheden; der regnes ikke med implicit mening eller betydning.

Ad 1. Dette problem er meget udbredt og ses bl.a. hos argumentationsteoretikere som Govier (1987). Men det sproglige indhold har ikke nogen indflydelse på den logiske form, et argument optræder i. Et argument kan have et induktivt *indhold* og stadig være gyldigt, men de to ting har ikke noget direkte med hinanden at gøre.

Ad 2. Tarskis korrespondensteori for objektiv sandhed indfører et hypotetisk sandhedsbegreb, som kommer til udtryk i meta-sproget. Meta-sproget kan for eksempel være et logisk sprog, så når en logisk analyse af argumenter bruger begreberne 'sandt' og 'falsk', er det ikke, som mange informalister synes at mene, fordi den logiske analyse rigidt reducerer virkelighedens kompleksitet til en simpel binær størrelse, men fordi man meta-sprogligt tilskriver sandheds*betingelser* (ikke sandheds*værdier*) til relationen *mellem* sprog og verden.

Ad 3. Når man ikke har et kontekst-invariant begreb for, efter hvilken standard et ufuldstændigt argument skal rekonstrueres, er det reelt et meget usikkert projekt at skulle forestå en rekonstruktion af implicitte præmisser. Konsekvensen er, at mange informalister mere eller mindre vælger at sige, at argumenter i stedet skal analyseres som udtalt, det vil sige uden tilførsel af ekstra mening. Blandt andre foreslår Toulmin (1958) analysemetoder efter denne opfattelse. Problemet med dette er, at man ser bort fra sproget særlige, økonomiske mekanik: der udtrykkes præcis så meget som der er brug for, for at modtageren kan være i stand til at færdiggøre argumentet inferentielt.

Uden erkendelsen af betydningen af denne inferentielle rekonstruktion er argumentationsanalysen ganske ufuldstændig.

Kapitlet argumenterer for, at alle tre problemer løses med en rekonstruktiv-deduktivistisk metode. For det første er rekonstruktionen grundlæggende logisk baseret - populært sagt 'deduktiv', der indgår ikke induktive slutninger i den rekonstruktive analyse. For det andet skabes der klarhed om de forskellige sprogniveauer: fremsættelse af argumenter foregår på objektsprogsniveau, mens analyse og kritik foregår på metasprogsniveau - groft sagt. For det tredje indarbejdes der både et velvillighedsprincip (principle of charity) inspireret af Grices samarbejdsprincip og et modsigelsesprincip i analysen, hvorved det er muligt at rekonstruere argumenter med en rimelig sikkerhed.

Kapitel V: Sprog som rationelt samarbejde

Således kommer Grices samarbejdsprincip til at være en meget vigtig faktor i forståelsen af modargumentationens væsen. Grices teoridannelser (1957; 1975) er imidlertid ikke uproblematiske. Dette kapitel diskuterer forskellige problemer med Grices meningsteori, blandt andet sådan som den blev formuleret hos Searle (1969), som anklagede Grices teori for at reducere kommunikation til den blotte genkendelse af hensigter, dvs. uden en egentlig overførsel af kodet betydning.

I dette kapitel foreslås en opfattelse af Grice som havende en underforstået opfattelse af kodet betydning, hvorved Searles sproghandlingsteori kan opfattes som den manglende brik i puslespillet. Hertil kommer, at man kan opfatte Grices intentionalistiske kommunikationsteori som en grundlagsteori for intersubjektivistiske teorier som f.eks. Habermas (1976; 1987).

I praksis er implikaturbegrebet ikke altid klart afgrænset. I den empiriske samtale kan en implikatur ikke altid identificeres som 'ægte' (intenderet) eller 'uægte' (pålagt som forpligtelse af modparten), før der har fundet diskussion sted, af hvordan sådanne forudsætninger tæller i samtalen. Implikaturbegrebet i al dets kompleksitet kommer sammen med det kritisk-rationalistiske kritikbegreb til at spille hovedrollerne i det følgende kapitel om modargumentationens elementer i virkelighedens samtaler.

Kapitel VI: Rekonstruktion og kritik i argumenterende diskurs

Hosstående (pragma-dialektisk inspirerede) model for argumentative og modargumentative strategier foreslås i dette kapitel. Modellen fremsættes som en hypotese, som jeg håber vil blive udviklet yderligere (eller måske falsificeret). Kapitlet indeholder empiriske eksempler på nogle af modellens elementer.

	PROTAGONIST	ANTAGONIST	
Sprogligt udtryk	Objektsprogligt	Metasproglige referenter og verber	Metasproglige operatorer
Illokution	Hævdelse af følgerelation og holdbarhed	*Rekonstruktion* som Parafraser Implikata	*Kritik* som Formel refutation Faktuel refutation
Perlokution	Persuasion / konfliktløsning	Afklaring	Meta-persuasion
Argument-type	Argument	Præmisser for modargument	Modargument

Protagonisten er den, som forsvarer et standpunkt ved hjælp af argumentation, mens antagonisten er den, som angriber protagonistens argumentation, og stiller kritiske spørgsmål hertil. Kapitlets fokus er på antagonistens modargumentative muligheder: den helt centrale sondring består imellem *rekonstruktion*, som i sig selv er en *afklaring* af protagonistens argument, og *kritik*, som er kernen i det egentlige modargument. Rekonstruktion alene viser sig ofte i ordstyrerfunktioner, journalistiske roller, og i særligt ikke-eristiske diskussioner, hvor en deltager måske påtager sig rollen som medierende eller fortolkende part. Men mest af alt tjener rekonstruktion som grundlag for kritik. Der kan parafraseres hvad protagonisten sagde, eller der kan udledes implikata om, hvad han mente, eller hvad han i situationen er yderligere forpligtet på at mene. Denne rekonstruktion kan så yderligere danne grundlag for kritik. Enten kan antagonisten hævde at en af protagonistens påstande - ofte *som rekonstrueret* - er falsk. Det kaldes i modellen for 'faktuel refutation'. Eller også kan antagonisten hævde, at kombinationen af de påstande, som tilskrives protagonisten er inkonsistent, hvilket her kaldes 'formel refutation'.

Kapitlet slutter ved at pege på, at den naturlige vej at fortsætte afdækningen af argumentationens kritiske funktion går igennem samtaleanalytisk nær-analyse. Der synes at være indikationer på, at megen systematik i den argumentative dialog bedst kan beskrives i de samtale-interne konventioner.

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