

Emergent vs. Dogmatic Arguing

Starting Points for a Theory of the Argumentative Process

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ABSTRACT: More than current scholarship in argumentation suggests, successful defense of standpoints depends on learning. As long as arguers comply with a minimum co-operativity, argumentation has genuinely an epistemic interest insofar as any position agreed upon becomes agreeable, i.e., intersubjectively shared because those who did not share it have learned why it is agreeable. Since the epistemic interest of argumentation is absent from most of current scholarship, 'intersubjectification' is basically treated as being always possible. In this paper I argue that 'intersubjectification' – the 'matching of the arguers' communicative backgrounds,' as I will term it – is not a given, but a communicative activity which may or may not succeed. Hence, different types of arguing come into being, depending on how and what arguers are prepared to learn. In the paper, examples are given for unproblematic 'intersubjectification,' for 'intersubjectification' that requires considerable argumentative co-operation, and for 'intersubjectification' that fails utterly. From the analyses, a continuous scale of types of communicative processes of arguing is presented that ranges from one extreme case, termed 'dogmatic arguing,' to another extreme case, termed 'emergent arguing.'

From the mid-70s onwards, in line with the 'pragmaticization' of research into argumentation, scholars have felt an increasing need to turn their attention to the argumentative process. Simplifying a bit, it may be said that they worked with Toulmin's layout, or with the topical tradition into which Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca had put new life; but they began to be interested in how arguers actually sorted out what was claim and data and how they hung together by an inference warrant, or how exactly a topical inference was based on reality or actually reorganized the structure of reality.

In a text as early as Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss's introduction to logic *En del elementære logiske emner* – English version *Communication and Argument* –, first published in Norwegian in 1941, a point is made in favor of taking into account, not only the argumentative product, i.e., the 'completed' layout or topical inference, but also the process of 'completing' it. For Næss has it that the bulk of an argumentative encounter is not about argumentative support proper, but about being clear what an utterer meant when he used a certain expression. Næss introduces the four procedures of 'specification,' 'precization,' 'generalization,' and 'deprecization' by which arguers can be clearer about what exactly they want an expression to mean.



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Few approaches to argumentation have taken up this process-orientedness of Næss's account, among them Frans van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst's *Pragma-Dialectics*. Their meanwhile well-known approach assumes that ideally a resolution-oriented discussion goes through four stages in each of which only certain resolution-furthering moves can be allowed. But furthermore, at every stage the discussants may perform speech acts specifying or precizing what they mean to say. However, these usage declaratives continue to be defined in the perspective of an argumentation that is successfully conducted to its fourth and concluding stage. That is to say, the argumentative process continues to be connected very closely to the product, i.e., the 'completed' argumentation having successfully supported a standpoint which had been contested.

But, as Van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1992, chap. 1) themselves acknowledge, the connection of the process and the product of arguing in colloquial speech is not as systematic as the earlier version of their theory (1984) might suggest. What *prima facie* would seem to be irrelevant side-steps or childish bickering may be revealed to have a determining influence on the outcome of the discussion (see Jacobs and Jackson, 1992). A discussion about one contested standpoint may become more and more complex because clarification is needed as to some of the elements adduced in support of this standpoint (see Snoeck Henkemans, 1992). That is to say, while the product of arguing is perhaps best analyzed as an inference complex that dialectically renders plausible a conclusion with the help of plausible premises, the communicative process of arguing deserves more attention as a particular kind of conversation and, therefore, is best analyzed, as are other kinds of conversation, as a step-by-step process extending in time and not necessarily being organized by a dialectical macrostructure.

This is possible with a joint dialectical and conversational reconstruction, prefigured by Normative Pragmatics as proposed by Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson and Jacobs (1993). In this framework, I shall give a different and more 'communicational' interpretation to Næss's four procedures. Thus, I will be able to reconstruct the argumentative process as a kind of communication organized, on the one hand, by a global dialectical goal and, on the other, step by step by local discursive moves. With Næss's procedures of clarification in mind, I shall develop a tool for reconstruction starting from a model elaborated by Richard Hirsch in a different context. With this tool, it will be possible to show that the process of arguing is not always about the justification or refutation of a definable proposition on the background of presuppositions which are shared in principle, but very often about trying to match these presuppositions, these individual backgrounds, as best the arguers can, in order to overcome a problematic situation. In a sense, then, through the argumentative enterprise something individual becomes 'inter-individual' or 'intersubjective.'

I shall show in this paper that this ‘intersubjectification’ may work easily, may require considerable communicative co-operation, or may fail utterly – and this reflects whether or not at the outset the arguers’ presuppositions resembled each other closely. For obviously, an argumentation is more likely to succeed if the respective arguers’ uncontested starting points are quite similar and more likely to fail if they do not find enough common ground to start from (see, as to this, Willard’s (1983, 1989) theory of argumentative fields).

1. ARGUMENTATION AS EPISTEMIC

Taking seriously Næss’s and Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson and Jacobs’s point that arguing has a justification-shaped dimension and a clarification-shaped dimension and implementing this point in a step-by-step analysis of the argumentative process requires that the reconstruction tool I will propose account indifferently for every step as a justifying step or as a clarifying step within an argumentative macro-structure. Research into argumentation has mainly been concerned with the justification-shaped dimension and, hence, with the justificatory or refutatory structure of argumentative premise(s)/conclusion complexes. With this type of analysis, even in a rather process-oriented approach such as Normative Pragmatics, it is almost impossible to avoid that the argumentation is analyzed ‘outcome first.’ Single contributions to the argumentative discussion are analyzed as to what they contribute (as a premise) to the justification or refutation of a contested standpoint (as a conclusion). Basically, therefore, the argumentation is considered as a yes-or-no affair. When it is over the arguers have determined whether – yes or no – the standpoint at issue is justified. A thing that rarely appears in argumentation theories is the possibility for the arguers to *learn* something during the argumentation. Interestingly, this epistemic interest argumentation may have is precisely what follows from the view that a large portion of argumentative discussion turns on being clearer about expressions or inferences. If some point was less clear before a certain step in the argumentative encounter, which belongs to its clarification-shaped dimension, and if this point is clearer after this step, then at least one of the arguers (that one to whom things were less clear) has learned something after this step.

The continued absence of the epistemic interest of argumentation from the vast majority of existing approaches is somewhat surprising insofar as learning and arguing are closely linked in the Western tradition of rationalism, in one of whose branches most of the existing argumentation theories are philosophically rooted. For one example, recall Jürgen Habermas’ (1981) Theory of communicative action. As a societal theory, Habermas’ work explains the evolution of Western societies as a rational-

ization by way of differentiation and institutionalization of different spheres of society: the sphere of observable phenomena or 'objective world,' institutionalized by science, the sphere of in-group norms and guidelines for action or 'social world,' institutionalized by law, and the sphere of private opinion and emotion or 'subjective world,' institutionalized by the arts. According to Habermas, any action performed within a social environment (where the action may be, among others, a situated linguistic utterance) is teleological with respect to the objective world, normative with respect to the social world, and expressive with respect to the subjective world. Hence, it raises three kinds of validity claims: the claim to be objectively true, the claim to be socially norm-conformative, and the claim to be subjectively authentic or truthful. A need for argumentation arises when it is doubtful, to at least one of the social actors, that the action or utterance is true, norm-conformative, and authentic. Then, its validity claims have to be 'redeemed' during communicative action, i.e., during a communication in which the 'world-relations' of the action or utterance are examined collaboratively and after which the action or utterance is either revealed to be true, norm-conformative, and authentic, or found to be false and/or norm-violating and/or biased. In both cases, by examining the world-relations of the action or utterance, the social actors determine consensually a definition of the situation having become problematic, and in both cases at least one of the social actors learns something: in the former case the doubter, in the latter case the actor/utterer of the contested action/utterance. The very possibility that social actors can learn something about the world-relations of actions or utterances is the basis of the possibility for these actions or utterances to be improved, and this latter possibility, in turn, is at the heart of any capacity of societies for rationalization.¹

Currently, two approaches to argumentation take its epistemic interest explicitly into account. On the one hand the epistemic approach of John Biro and Harvey Siegel (Biro and Siegel, 1992; Siegel and Biro, 1995), based on earlier work by John Biro and concerned mainly with fallacies; on the other hand Charles Arthur Willard's (1983, 1989) *Social Epistemics*. The former approach considers that argumentation has the purpose of warranting as yet unjustified beliefs on the basis of justified beliefs. The latter sees argumentation as a social interaction for testing, elaborating and examining consensually knowledge about the world. Neither of them, however, equips the analyst with tools for establishing how the process of arguing goes on step by step. Willard (1976) goes as far as saying that any diagramming to render the process should be avoided because it is necessarily a reduced view possibly altering the communicative phenomenon. Hence, analytic tools for rendering the single steps in the process of arguing need to be looked for outside the field of research into argumentation proper.

2. DISCOURSE OPERATIONS AND THEIR LINGUISTIC REFLEXES

I shall elaborate on the concept of 'discourse operations' developed by Richard Hirsch (1989, chap. 4) from a background of information theory and cognitive science. However, for reasons that arise from problems involved in the application of the information theoretical computer metaphor of cognitive processes to social action, I will have to adapt Hirsch's concept for my purposes. This section will sketch out Hirsch's version of the concept of discourse operations and point to the modifications I will have to do.

Hirsch conceives of arguing as an interactive problem solving activity carried out by collaborating interactors. When interactors feel that the information which they have at their disposal about a given subject is problematic, they start generating new information to handle the problem. Thus, the information state given at the outset is modified, and by evaluating all newly generated information as to whether it helps reach a less problematic information state, the arguers alter the general picture step by step and interactively in such a way as to arrive at an information state which is considered unproblematic. The interactive generation and immediate evaluation of information is called by Hirsch a 'discourse operation,' which has, accordingly, two phases and can be accounted for in terms of how an utterance reacts as an evaluation to a newly generated information state (1989, pp. 38–40). It may create a contrast or a complication, which conforms to doubting that the newly generated information state is promising as to arriving at an unproblematic picture (this would be the traditional opponent casting doubt on a proposition). It may consist of logic-like operations such as conjunction or conclusion; and it may be represented by semantic operations which help find a more adequate interpretation of information, such as precization or specification (this would be Næss' clarifying procedures as part of the arguing) (1989, pp. 59–74).

Hirsch's point in elaborating the concept of discourse operations is to account for various degrees of complexity of arguing. He thereby attempts to confirm his thesis that differing turn-taking conditions lead to different kinds of arguing (1989, Part II). He distinguishes between mechanistic, non-mechanistic, and organic turn-taking, exemplified respectively by a moderated TV discussion, in which turns are assigned to the discussants by the moderator (chap. 7), by a TV interview, in which the interviewees may organize the conversation themselves but do not need to and in which the interviewers have a privileged position (chap. 8), and by an informal discussion among students organizing the interaction themselves without external constraints (chap. 9). Hirsch's main results as to the determining influence of turn-taking conditions on kinds of arguing are the following. The less arguers need to organize the interaction themselves, the more embedding occurs in the discourse operations and argumentative

developments get increasingly complex: the generation or the evaluation phase of an operation, or both, may be constituted by a lower level discourse operation (a contrast that reacts evaluatively to an information state may consist of an information that is not only generated but comes with its own exemplification or precization). Furthermore, Hirsch is able to show that the more the complexity of an argumentative development, as displayed by discourse operations, increases, the more gesticulatory energy the interactors use. While developments of little complexity are usually accompanied only by eye contact or non-proxemic hand gestures, the introduction and completion of developments of considerable length and complexity is more often than not signaled by plain head or body movements and sometimes proxemic hand gestures (Hirsch, 1989, pp. 22–23; 1995, p. 112).

Because Hirsch uses the concept of discourse operation as a 'measure' for the complexity of argumentative developments which is at the service of a correlation with gesticulatory energy, he leaves somewhat unattended the potential of this concept for rendering information processing steps in the communicative process of arguing. This is mainly because his account of information processing starts at a computer metaphor of cognitive processes taken from cognitive science, where one of its major proponents is Philip Johnson-Laird.

Based on Kenneth Craik's (1943) suggestion to consider humans as information-processing systems receiving environmental inputs, processing them, and generating an output, Johnson-Laird (1983) conceives of environmental inputs as translations of external processes into mental models constructed from symbols, most of which are numbers and letters. These are processed, according to him, by generating new symbols through inferences, and the output is the implementation of these new symbols into external processes (or, at least, the insight that the mental models correspond to the external processes). While such an approach has value in other scientific branches, e.g., in artificial intelligence where it is used in the development of evolutive data bases in 'learning' systems, it creates a number of difficulties if applied in the humanities. They are mainly due to the fact that the information processor is supposed to be connected to the environment only through input and output routines. The processor, then, is conceived of as processing without any external stimulus other than those it has got with the input. It is, therefore, not a communicating individual, but a serially processing unit in a network and is determined by input, and determining output, information. This metaphor is inappropriate for the description of communicative (or, social) processes because external intervention and further input is always possible during the very phase of processing. A serial processor, on the other hand, has to interrupt the process and start it over again with the new information. Therefore, it is hard to account for the interactors' self-monitoring activities on the basis of the metaphor of computerized serial processing.

By introducing logic-like *and* semantic discourse operations Hirsch

goes beyond Craik's assumption to the effect that processing information involves exclusively inferences; Hirsch is therefore able to incorporate into his theory the notion of different problem solving strategies, i.e., in-depth processing or in-breadth processing. But he stays with Johnson-Laird's view that processing information takes place serially. For precisely this reason, he leaves the interactive potential of discourse operations as a tool for analysis unattended. In conversation, an interactor's reaction to a preceding contribution is likely to create emergent effects that can lead to – sometimes considerable – topic shifts. The concept of discourse operation can then explain how a topic shift processes information further by, e.g., a complication or a conclusion. Within the framework of cognitive science and information theory chosen by Hirsch, however, the potential for emergence of the information processing is limited by the solution specifications generated from the given information state and its position in the information network.

Such a view of cognition and of processing information is hardly compatible with conversational interaction. If processing took place exclusively serially, any processor (interactor) would have to wait for the preceding process or routine to be completed before processing its output further. The processor can then be assumed to receive all the required information with the input from the preceding processor. Interpretive processes during the interaction would therefore be unnecessary. In other words, the very opportunity for a clarification-shaped dimension of arguing would no longer arise because processors (interactors) need not elaborate 'naïve' reconstructions of what the preceding interactor meant to say. However, since interactions are always situated, the information that is processed further by a processor (interactor) is invariably more than the amount of output from the preceding process (turn). This is information such as the encyclopedic, practical, and linguistic knowledge of the subsequent interactors on which they rely to make sense of the preceding turns, and the analysis must do justice to these interpretive processes (Willard, 1983, pp. 40–48). Accordingly, it must be based on this 'naïve' reconstruction (Van Eemeren, Grootendorst, Jackson and Jacobs, 1993, pp. 92–94) and speak to the fact that communication, by its very nature, displays knowledge about subjects which is shared by the interactors and rules which are external to the communication they govern (Willard, 1989, pp. 42–66).

This supplementary 'background' information to which conversational processes are invariably linked without the information showing up plainly in the process proper is what distinguishes natural from computerized information processing. Unlike in the former, in the latter any information that is relevant for the processing has to be looked up somewhere in the information network (for instance, in a data base) and therefore shows up plainly in the process. Natural information processing is characterized by a certain amount of fuzziness that one would be ill-advised to try to clear up; maximum explicitness of information is very often not only unneces-

sary but, depending on the context at issue, even undesirable (see also Willard, 1983, pp. 1–24). The degree of desired or necessary preciseness of information is something interactors negotiate with respect to the interaction they are engaged in and with respect to the – individual or collaborative – interaction goals they are pursuing. This fuzziness or ‘dynamic error limits’ of natural information processing, which does not do any harm to the process, is just what cognitive approaches like Johnson-Laird’s tend to bypass by conceiving of knowledge and beliefs as a basically well-structured and static mental representation of reality. This difficulty is present also in Hirsch’s theory because his view of argumentative development by discourse operations stems mainly from Johnson-Laird’s concept of a procedural semantics.² Unlike referential procedural semantics, however, Johnson-Laird’s version does not relate linguistic expressions to referents in reality nor does it conceive of understanding as knowing how to verify whether the expression is true. In his procedural semantics the correlates of linguistic expressions are mental models (1988, p. 248), which are one out of three types of mental representations. They are structural analoga of referents in reality, the other two types of representations being propositional representations (i.e., sequences of symbols corresponding to natural language) and images (i.e., perceptive correlates of mental models) (1988, pp. 339–343; 1983, p. 165). Thanks to the concept of mental models the theory can model understanding as an activity involving the context of utterance. For only if the context of utterance, as reflected in a mental model, is taken into account, it is possible for a language user faced with a propositional representation to construct the ‘significance,’ i.e., the contextual meaning, of the proposition conveyed by the utterance (1983, chap. 11).

For two reasons it is not very promising to take over Hirsch’s concept of discourse operations, based on Johnson-Laird’s work, unmodified. Firstly, the context of utterance which makes it possible to construct the significance of a proposition through the correlation with a mental model is treated as an unproblematic given. The theory thereby neglects the fact that at times interactors have to negotiate this context interactively in order to make explicit what their respective presuppositions are (see, e.g., O’Keefe, 1995). The relation of propositional representations and mental models assumed by the theory, then, resembles the disambiguating transformations common in Montague semantics: the mental model controls the selection of one – the contextually correct one – out of several meanings which would be possible if no context were taken into account. This selection takes place as a process, understanding does not proceed as finding the correct model because of whatever communicative magic but as the process of constructing, elaborating and evaluating the model. The model is connected to many other mental models because it is always possible to check how adequate it is in the light of subsequent propositions (Johnson-Laird, 1983, pp. 246–247). However, the connections to other models do not allow for clarifying contextual utterances – as is needed for the analysis

and reconstruction of the clarification-shaped dimension of arguing –; they do allow for disambiguating single propositions that need no further clarification. In the same way as the context from which mental models are constructed is treated as an unproblematic given, the potential meanings of a proposition are a given and ‘wait for’ being selected contextually. As a consequence, if arguing occurs, in Johnson-Laird’s framework it cannot but be arguing about whether or not this-or-that significance has been the correct selection from the proposition’s potential meanings. Arguing is an exclusively propositional enterprise (1983, pp. 23–24, chap. 3). By considering contexts as well as potential meanings of propositions to be unproblematic givens, the theory eliminates the fact that utterances and their context condition each other.

These problems occur in Hirsch’s adaptation of the theoretical framework too. This is why the discourse operations, as he conceives of them, link information states (which resemble Johnson-Laird’s mental models), which are basically independent of the situation and the arguers. For my adaptation of it in the scope of a conversational approach to the process of arguing, I will make use of the concept of discourse operations, nonetheless, because it is likely to render what Normative Pragmatics assumes the process of arguing to be: the arguers’ co-operative step-by-step effort to sort out how they might overcome a communication problem (mainly, a conflict of opinion). This can be done, as does Hirsch, by assuming discourse operations to have paradigm reflexes on the surface of a text; e.g., the connectors *but* for a contrast, *therefore* for a conclusion, or *and* for a conjunction, etc. Still, the concept has to be taken over without its marked information theoretical implications. It is therefore necessary to give Hirsch’s concept a more ‘communicational’ shape; and I shall, consequently, start from the assumption that discourse operations, whose surface reflexes are connectors like *but* or *and*, do not link information states but utterances. That is to say that by choosing a certain connector an interactor links his contribution in a specific – contrasting, complicating, etc. – way, to the communication as it has developed to the point where he chooses this connector.

Figure 1 shows the last two sentences of the preceding paragraph as they are built up segment by segment with the help of connectors representing discourse operations which I felt were appropriate to develop my point about a ‘more communicational version’ of Hirsch’s model being necessary for my purposes.

The proposed way of putting the concept of discourse operations might be called a ‘pragmaticization’ of Jean-Claude Anscombre and Oswald Ducrot’s (1983; see Ducrot, 1993, Anscombre, Ducrot, García Negroni, Palma and Carel, 1995 and the thematic issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* 24 (1995)) structuralist Theory of argumentation in the *langue*. According to this theory, because of lexical and semantic properties of entities of the language system, Saussurean *langue*, sentences carry with them ‘implicit

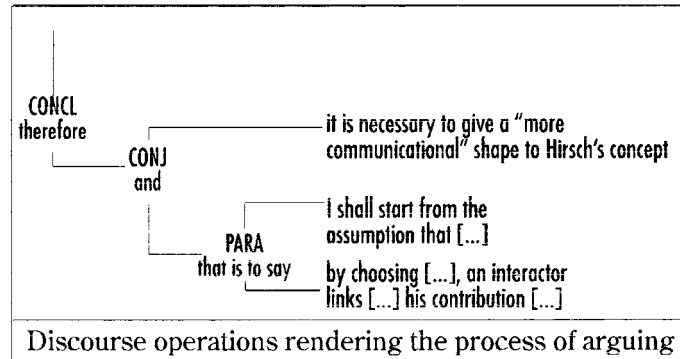


Figure 1.

conclusions' and hence have an 'argumentative orientation.' For instance,³ a sentence like, '*The movie is poorly directed,*' is more likely to argue for an implicit conclusion, '*It is poorly acted,*' than for its opposite, '*It is very well acted.*' Hence, the former conclusion has the same argumentative orientation as the sentence, and the latter has an opposite argumentative orientation. This is illustrated by the fact that, '*The movie is poorly directed and poorly acted,*' sounds o.k. (same orientation), and that, '*The movie is poorly directed and well acted,*' sounds somewhat odd (opposite orientation), whereas, '*The movie is poorly directed but well acted,*' sounds o.k. The connector *and*, then, reflects the identical, the connector *but* the opposite, argumentative orientation of two connected sentences.

This is in line with my point that the discourse operation reflected on the surface by *and* creates a conjunction, and that that reflected by *but* creates a contrast. As Anscombe and Ducrot assume, when the addressee of an utterance connects to this utterance his own, following contribution by means of a connector that reflects a conjunctive, complicative, etc., operation, then this would seem to suggest that the proposition conveyed by an utterance authorizes only certain pragmatically meaningful argumentative continuations – namely, the implicit conclusions it carries with it –, but others not. However, by locating the conceptual basis of the notion of implicit conclusion on the level of the *langue*, the language system, a relation between utterances and their implicit conclusions is assumed which is more systematic than is compatible with the notion of a dialogic organization of the conversation by the interactors themselves. Rather than a rule of grammar on the *langue* level, the choice of one out of a variety of meaningful continuations of the dialogue would seem to be up to the addressee/respondent. Whether the continuation the addressee has chosen is in fact an appropriate one may be subject to closer scrutiny.⁴ For another interactor may go on with a contrastive or complicative discourse operation; and this complication, in turn, may involve precizing or usage

declaring operations on lower hierarchical levels.⁵ In other words, what one interactor considers as a meaningful argumentative continuation may be considered by another one as odd or unacceptable. It is precisely here that the concepts of learning and arguing are intertwined. An interactor who has doubted some point, i.e., has continued the dialogue by a complicative or contrastive discourse operation, may retract his doubt after a couple of specifying or precizing steps through which he has learned more than he knew about the subject. After the complication, it is also possible that the dialogue develops further towards a slightly or considerably different topic by concluding and/or conjunctive and/or disjunctive operations because more than one or even all the interactors learn something about the subject. Let us see how this works with a few examples.

3. INTERSUBJECTIFICATION WORKS WITHOUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS

I have said that by the discourse operations which interactors create by reacting in a specific way to other interactors' preceding contributions, something individual becomes intersubjective. This intersubjectification may work easily, as I will show now to illustrate how the concept of discourse operations 'processing communication problems towards a solution' can account for the global dialectical and local step-by-step structure of argumentative encounters. The analysis to follow is displayed by Figure 2.

SITUATION: In the French Enlightenment philosopher Fontenelle's *New Dialogues of the Dead* (1686), Erasmus of Rotterdam reproaches Charles V. of Spain with the aristocratic privileges this latter would have, as son of a king, by mere chance without deserving them. Charles objects to this that Erasmus must not appeal to his knowledge either; for this he has got from the wise men who preceded him, and learning everything that these knew, would not, says Charles, be more difficult than keeping the fortune an aristocrat inherits from his ancestors. To which Erasmus replies:

ERASMUS: But let us not talk about knowledge, let us stay with intelligence; this quality in no way depends on chance.⁶

Erasmus connects his utterance to what precedes as a contrast (*but*) designed to inhibit Charles's equivalence of acquiring knowledge and keeping fortune. The contrast is, to look closer, a disjunction (*let us not – let us*) with its explication (*for*, which is unexpressed but can easily be reconstructed). In other words, Erasmus takes one aspect of the preceding conversation and contrasts it with an element of his knowledge and beliefs about the issue.

CHARLES: It does not depend on it? What! Doesn't intelligence consist in a particular formation of the brain, and is there less chance in having been born with a well-formed brain than in having been born the son of a king? You were a great genius, but ask all the wise men the reason why you were not stupid and imbecilic: almost nothing at all, a slight change in the arrangement of fibers.⁷

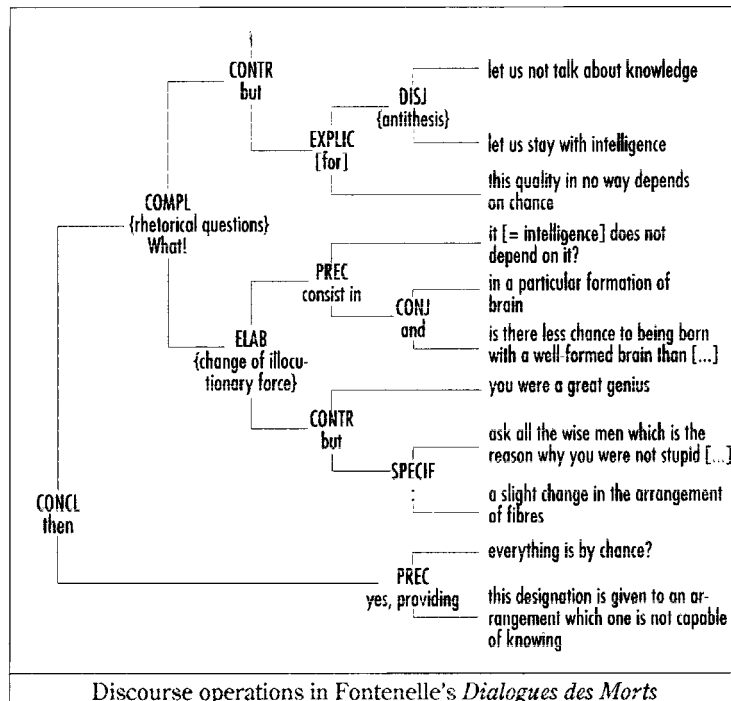


Figure 2.

By connecting rhetorical questions (recognizable above all by the negations) to the preceding utterance, Charles creates, on the dialectical level, a complication which, if successful, inhibits Erasmus's contrast and hence strengthens his own equivalence 'acquiring = keeping.' This complication, in turn, conjoins (*and*) a precization of what intelligence is (*consist in*) and the claim that a well-formed brain comes about as much by chance as an aristocratic birth. The complication proper relies on a contrast (*but*) which elaborates on what has just been said. In a sense, Charles does the same thing as Erasmus did before. The micro-structure of his contrast is identical to the one of Erasmus's previous contrast. Macro-structurally speaking, however, it not only inhibits Erasmus's contrast but it also leads the discussion to a topic shift: from aristocratic privileges to 17th century neurology.

Erasmus continues with a question: 'Tout est donc hasard? // Everything, then, is by chance?' That is, he fills in the 'yes' Charles's rhetorical questions suggest, and by a concluding discourse operation (*then*) he creates a slot in which Charles can fill in the henceforth intersubjective conclusion to be drawn from what precedes: 'Oui, pourvu qu'on donne ce nom à un ordre que l'on ne connaît point. // Yes, providing this designation is given

to an arrangement one is not capable of knowing.' (French spelling normalized; my translation.)

The fact that Erasmus does not go on doubting or discussing but creates a slot for Charles's conclusion reflects that the intersubjectification of Charles's point of view has succeeded without major problems. Although Erasmus seems to learn something that fundamentally reorganizes his pre-suppositions about being proud of privileges, material or intellectual, once he has learned it, the agreement is unproblematic; the problem has been resolved.

4. ELABORATE REPAIR NEEDED TO PROCESS DISAGREEMENT

It might have been that Erasmus had not created a slot for an intersubjectification of Charles's position. He might have asked for further clarification about how the brain is formed, how intelligence depends on a particular formation of the brain, etc. In that case, intersubjectification might have been possible as well, but it would have required much more collaborative effort.

For reasons of space, I cannot fully discuss here an instance of arguing in which the position held by one arguer at the outset or a position emerging during the arguing becomes intersubjective because of elaborate interactive examination of the acceptability of the position.⁸ Let me just point to some characteristics of such instances of arguing by illustrating rather than analyzing a portion of the *Nuclear Dialogues* in which David Weinberger offers a critique of the Reagan administration's policy of deterrence in 1980s. One dialogue is between two philosophers one of which, Emma, wears a pin reading 'BAN THE BOMB.' The other, Jennie, considers the slogan to be childish and simplistic, and disagrees that wearing it does any good opposing nuclear weapons.

Upon closer examination they discover that Emma is not even against all potential instances of use of nuclear weapons, which is why they shift to another, albeit related, topic, namely, what exactly Emma means when she says that she is against nukes. It turns out that Emma is against the policy of deploying nukes in Europe and threatening to use them. But this position, in turn, requires further examination; for now Emma's 'refined' position has it that, even though one should avoid using nuclear weapons as far as possible, there might be instances of legitimate use. This, however, is the position the 'atomic hawks' hold, which is why Emma and Jennie feel the need to turn to question where the differences are between the supporters of the policy of deterrence and their own position, which is that they are against this policy. It is only now, after one more topic shift, that they come to the position emerging from their discussion that 'being against' for them means that they are against producing and deploying more and more nukes although the number of nukes existing is largely

sufficient to deter military action by anybody in their right mind. That is to say that Jennie and Emma intersubjectify a position at the end of their discussion, but that without considerable topic shifts, precizations, specifications, etc. – in a word: without considerable interactive argumentative co-operation the intersubjectification probably would have been impossible.

To a certain extent, this discussion has the same characteristics as the one analyzed in the preceding section. However, here between the emergence and the succeeding intersubjectification of the relevant position, considerable topic shifts occur, and the collaborative effort will finally lead the discussants to intersubjectify a position which neither of them held at the beginning of the discussion. In Erasmus and Charles's discussion the intersubjectification follows immediately the emergence of the position stemming from Charles's precization of what intelligence is. In Emma and Jennie's discussion, on the other hand, precizations and complications 'lead the discussion astray.' That is, they cause considerable topic shifts, so that at the end the interactors are no longer really having the same discussion they had at the beginning. The preliminary steps, then, are in a sense 'dialectically worthless' because they are not immediately connected to the position emerging from the discussion and finally being agreed upon. Nonetheless, they may not be eliminated from the discussion if it is analyzed in a conversational perspective. For it is obvious that without these preliminaries that gave rise to the precizations and complications leading to topic shifts, the discussants would never have gone on to that part of their discussion in which intersubjectification finally was successful and, accordingly, the problem was resolved.

5. INTERSUBJECTIFICATION FAILS

The most important advantage of the processual reconstruction of arguing with the help of the step-by-step model I am proposing is that it can account not only for arguing that reaches its goal, i.e., arguing in which in the end the intersubjectification of a certain standpoint with respect to a contested position is possible. It can also account for arguing that does not reach this goal, i.e., arguing in which in the end no intersubjectification occurs. This is necessary to be able to model the argumentative process as an element of its own, quite independent of the outcome this process may have.

In Louis Armand baron of Lahontan's *Conversations of a Native and the Baron of Lahontan*, published in 1703, the author gives the Europeans a picture of a North American Native people whose chief, Adario, traveled to France and tells Lahontan throughout the conversations about his people's views on morals, politics, and ethics and about what the differences are of these views as compared to the European views.

Adario has just pointed to a gap that can be noticed between the religious imperatives Europeans use to preach and their own behavior which does more often than not deviate considerably from these imperatives. In other words, he creates a complication from two contradictory elements of the sum of what he knows about the issue. Lahontan concedes to what Adario has said:

I am unable to deny the contradiction you have noticed. But one has to take into account that humans sometimes commit sins despite the guidance of their conscience, and that there are learned people who lead a bad life. This may happen because of lack of attention or the power of their passions, because they have devoted themselves to worldly advantage: man, corrupted as he is, is driven towards evil in so many places and by an inclination so strong that, unless there is an absolute necessity, it is hard for him not to give in.⁹

Lahontan tries to inhibit the destructive power Adario's point would have for his attempts to bring him to a conversion to Christianity (see Figure 3). After having acknowledged the inconsistency to which Adario has alluded, he goes on with a contrastive discourse operation (*but*) in which an explication is given (*this may happen because of*) for the apparent contradiction. That is, Lahontan takes up an aspect of the preceding conversation and fits it into a contrast he creates from an element of his knowledge about the issue which Adario had not considered. Adario's answer to this, bringing about, once more, an element of his knowledge about the issue that was absent from Lahontan's reply, is a radical complication,

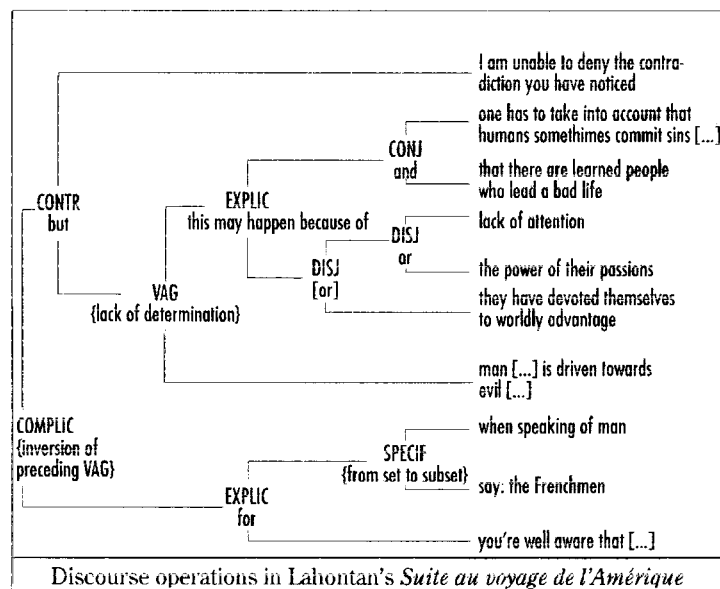


Figure 3.

which, in turn, inhibits Lahontan's contrast, thereby giving his previous point all its destructive power:

When speaking of man, say: the Frenchmen; for you're well aware of the fact that these passions, this striving for advantage and this corruption you are talking about, are unheard of amongst our people.¹⁰

By specifying that about which they should be talking and by explicating this specification, Adario claims that Lahontan is right perhaps as far as Europeans are concerned. But since he takes what Lahontan says to be pointless as to the present discussion, he is not prepared to process any of Lahontan's utterances. Therefore the intersubjectification of a standpoint with respect to a position, proposed by Lahontan through the discourse operations he has performed, is not possible. Accordingly, Lahontan's attempt to bring Adario to a conversion will fail, and the discussion will not lead to any dialectical conflict resolution worthy of the name.

6. CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN

The step-by-step analysis I have proposed for the process of arguing has yielded above all the following result: Categories and concepts of analysis which are applicable to the product of arguing, such as inferential connections or accepting or denying the justifiability of a position, are hardly adequate to an analysis of the process of arguing. For this process operates with more flexible communicative maneuvers. I have accounted for these maneuvers, on the basis of a reinterpretation of Richard Hirsch's model, as discourse operations, i.e., a specific argumentative processing of a communication problem realized by the interactors through, e.g., connectors or entire phrases used to link their own utterance continuing the communication to the preceding communication in a specific way intended for collaborative problem solving.

When utterances which interactors present as meaningful argumentative continuations of the dialogue are modeled in terms of discourse operations, this has the advantage that it is possible to account for at least two kinds of arguing. So far I have drawn a distinction roughly between arguing that succeeds and arguing that doesn't. It is more adequate, however, to speak of arguing in which positions that were not shared at first become intersubjective, and of arguing in which nothing becomes intersubjective. For if Charles V. succeeds in countering argumentatively Erasmus's accusation, this is because something completely new emerges from the discussion for Erasmus: people are intelligent or not by (neurological) chance. On the basis of this newly emerged position, having become intersubjective, an argumentative agreement is possible. But it might well have been that this new position would have remained as controversial as its predecessor was, and then argumentative agreement would have been impos-

sible. This kind of emergent arguing is therefore no warranty for an agreement being possible.

Likewise, if Adario and Lahontan do not agree on the merits of Christianity, this is because the position Lahontan proposes does not actually become intersubjective. For Adario's and Lahontan's presuppositions, the backgrounds that underly their communication are too different. Whereas Erasmus and Charles can match their communicative backgrounds to a certain extent to make agreement possible, this does not work for Lahontan and Adario. So it is not the absence of something emerging from the discussion for at least one of the participants that impedes agreement; it is, rather, that nothing emerges and that at the same time the backgrounds would have to be matched to a certain extent – which, in turn, is impossible as long as nothing new emerges. For if the communicative backgrounds of the arguers coincide sufficiently, then agreements are very possible without there emerging anything new from the discussion. This is the case, for instance, in forensic argumentation, proceeding from communicative backgrounds which are largely homologous for all the arguers.

The major conclusion to be drawn from my paper is the following: The analysis of the process of arguing is faced with different kinds of arguing which do not represent discriminate types of a strict classification but, rather, a continuum extending between two extreme cases. In one extreme case of arguing nothing at all becomes intersubjective and a position is justified or refuted on the basis of communicative backgrounds essentially identical for all the arguers. These backgrounds, then, in a sense acquire the status of an uncontested dogma. Therefore, I term this extreme case of arguing 'dogmatic.' Its characteristics are that rather few topic shifts occur and that the bulk of the discourse operations used are complications/contrasts and explications – which represent the 'classical' product analysis categories of casting doubt on a position and justifying the doubted position.

The other extreme case is what I term 'emergent arguing,' for in this type of arguing arguers make a co-operative and collaborative problem-solving effort to match their communicative backgrounds. Because of this, something new emerges from the discussion, which is usually plain because topic shifts occur, because, while arguing, arguers notice that they have to submit a certain point to closer scrutiny, etc. Consequently, in emergent arguing discourse operations like precization, specification, exemplification, and conclusion are more frequent than in dogmatic arguing.

Most of the actual arguing in colloquial speech is somewhere in between the extreme cases, and hence this continuous scale from dogmatic to emergent arguing provides only for a possibility to classify a given piece of discourse as more clearly a form of emergent or of dogmatic arguing. Still, neither of the extremities of the scale guarantees that one or the other of them makes arguing more likely to succeed. Neither of them is 'better' than the other. While scientific arguing usually aims at 'intersubjectifying' positions and therefore is more emergent, forensic arguing aims at winning

a case on the uncontested basis of the body of legislation and therefore is more dogmatic. Neither of them, however, is better than the other; for they obviously have different goals. Hence, as long as non-argumentative and extra-communicative features do not influence on the arguing to such an extent as to make it a pseudo-argumentation, the analysis of the ongoing argumentative process with the tool I have proposed allows for an account of how much the arguers' communicative backgrounds coincided, or of how prepared they were to start from a shared point of view. If dogmatic arguing succeeds, two interpretations are possible: Either there were no noteworthy differences between the arguers' respective communicative backgrounds, or those who accept an argumentative justification of a position accept at the same time all the presuppositions on which this rests. If emergent arguing succeeds, then the arguers felt that there were noteworthy differences between their respective communicative backgrounds, but they were prepared to examine more closely the point(s) at issue and to give up or modify part of their own communicative background in order to be able to arrive at a shared view of the position discussed.

NOTES

¹ This paragraph can be but an aperçu of Habermas' theory. For more detail, see especially (1981, Part One and Two). As to the connection of the concepts of learning, improvement, and rationalization see (1981, I, pp. 38–39).

² This is especially clear from a comparison between the definitions of the semantic discourse operations (Hirsch, 1989, pp. 61–70) and Johnson-Laird's discussion of deduction, induction, and probability (1988, pp. 217–253; see 1993, pp. xii–xv). Since I will take over neither of these concepts, I am not going to discuss this filiation in detail. The present note may suffice.

³ Example taken from Anscombe and Ducrot (1989, p. 73), which is one of their rare English papers. (It is, in fact, a translation of Anscombe and Ducrot, 1986). Rühl (1998) gives a brief overview over the concept of implicit conclusions. Other sources in English as to their theory are the presentation in *Fundamentals* (1996, chap. 11) and Snoeck Henkemans' (1995) critique of their analysis of *but* as an argumentative connector.

⁴ This is in line with Jackson and Jacobs's (1980, 1982) point that 'conversational argument' comes into being because an addressee has not performed the conventionally expected second pair part of an adjacency pair, thereby creating a communication problem needing repair. The advantage of speaking of an addressee choosing one out of a variety of possible meaningful continuations is that no 'structural preference for agreement' (1980, pp. 261–262) of adjacency pairs has to be assumed *a priori*, which is in a way an idealization making the analysis depart from a strict descriptive account of the interaction (for a detailed discussion of this point see Rühl, 1999, chap. 1).

⁵ I have given a detailed account as well as definitions of discourse operations elsewhere (Rühl, 1997, pp. 213–215).

⁶ ÉRAS[ME]. Mais ne parlons point de la science, tenons-nous-en à l'esprit; ce bien-là ne dépend aucunement du hasard.' (p. 109) – French spelling normalized. My translation.

⁷ CHAR[LES]. Il n'en dépend point? Quoi! l'esprit ne consiste-t-il pas dans une certaine conformation du cerveau, et le hasard est-il moindre, de naître avec un cerveau bien disposé, que de naître d'un père qui soit roi? Vous étiez un grand génie: mais demandez à tous les

philosophes à quoi il tenait que vous ne fussiez stupide et hébété; presque à rien, à une petite disposition de fibres' (pp. 109–110) – French spelling normalized. My translation.

⁸ I have proposed such an analysis elsewhere (Rühl, 1997, pp. 247–270). The example discussed there is a portion of the dialogue *De grammatico*, composed by Anselm of Canterbury around A.D. 1080 to deal with one of the favorite research topics of scholastic logic and semantics, namely, the logical status of the so-called paronyma, that is, simplifying considerably, of expressions which are adjectives but can be used as substantives, such as *grammaticus*. Anselm's actual problem, however, is not the morphological problem of derivation but the ontological implications this has in the perspective of the philosophy of early Scholasticism. For if there are expressions which can be adjectives and substantives as well, this would mean, in this perspective, that there are things which can be at the same time accidental (Aristotelian '*kategorouména*') and substantial (Aristotelian '*hypokeímena*'), with which scholastic metaphysics is not very at ease. For more details about the problem, see the commented editions of *De grammatico* provided by Henry (1964) and Galonnier (1986).

⁹ 'Je ne saurais nier la contradiction que tu as remarquée. Mais il faut considérer que les hommes pèchent quelquefois contre les lumières de leur conscience, et qu'il y a des gens bien instruits qui vivent mal. Cela peut arriver ou par le défaut d'attention, ou par la force de leurs passions, par leurs attachements aux intérêts temporels: l'homme corrompu comme il est, est emporté vers le mal par tant d'endroits, et par un penchant si fort, qu'à moins de nécessité absolue, il est difficile qu'il y renonce.' (pp. 819–820) – French spelling normalized. My translation.

¹⁰ 'Quand tu parles de l'homme, dis: l'homme français; car tu sais bien que ces passions, cet intérêt, et cette corruption, dont tu parles, ne sont pas connus chez nous.' (p. 820) – French spelling normalized. My translation.

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