

## CHAPTER 1

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### AND ALWAYS THE TWAIN SHALL MEET

In *Return to Reason*, Stephen Toulmin recently remarked that “in focusing attention on *rationality*, [...] academic writers have neglected to analyze the complementary concept of *reasonableness*” (2001, p. 2). We are charmed by the fact that in his endeavor to reconcile the ‘rational’ and the ‘reasonable’ Toulmin (2001, p. 24) refers to the Dutch, who “use the word *redelijk* to mark the ‘reasonable’ off from the ‘rational’ clearly” (unlike the Germans who seem to use *vernünftig* and *verständlich* “almost interchangeably”). Nevertheless we do not entirely agree with the simplifying way in which Toulmin associates ‘rationality’ with logic (or dialectic) and ‘reasonableness’ with rhetoric. In expressing his complaint, Toulmin certainly touches upon an issue that is of crucial concern to the study of argumentation, but in our view the situation argumentation theorists are confronted with is more complicated. This is in fact one of the reasons why we thought it useful to publish this volume.

Providing an illuminating analysis of what may count as reasonable argumentation is probably the most general goal all argumentation theorists have in common. The problem of how such an analysis can be achieved, however, is approached from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical angles, which are determined by different perspectives on argumentative discourse. Viewed historically, two main perspectives on argumentative discourse stand out: a *dialectical* perspective and a *rhetorical* perspective. However different they may be, both perspectives, but the dialectical perspective in particular, include a logical component of some sort. The influence of these perspectives, which originate both in Greek Antiquity, is still clearly detectable in how argumentative discourse is approached in virtually every modern contribution to argumentation theory. More strikingly, even the conceptual apparatus and the main theoretical insights developed from these perspectives in the faraway past still play an important role in most prominent modern approaches to the study of argumentation.

In spite of the general claims just made, it must be acknowledged that neither the dialectical perspective nor the rhetorical perspective is so clearly and univocally defined that we know exactly what we are talking about. The perceptions and descriptions of the two perspectives vary considerably over time. The same applies even more strongly to their mutual relationship and the way in which the one perspective may be subordinated to, combined with, or even integrated in, the other. As soon as we are interested in the precise role that each of these perspective can have in analyzing argumentative discourse, and judging its reasonableness, these differences start to matter. The present volume is therefore devoted to a clarification of the characteristics of dialectic and rhetoric, the relationship between these two perspectives and the function of both perspectives in the analysis of argumentative discourse — the clarification concerns the reported or professed views of different

authors on the matter, at different times in history. The final aim of offering such a clarification is in all cases to encourage a further exploration of the meaning insights taken from dialectic and rhetoric may have, by themselves or in combination, to present day argumentation analysis.

In a book that deals with the question what the study of dialectic and rhetoric can contribute, and has contributed, to the study of argumentation, it seems appropriate that the first chapter should focus on a notion that is central to both perspectives, the *enthumêma* or 'enthymeme.' In 'Reasonable Argument before Aristotle: The Roots of the Enthymeme,' J.A.E. Bons paints a picture that encourages us to see how "apt" this notion was to become a pivotal element in rhetorical and dialectical theorizing. He recounts that the verb *enthumeisthai*, "to think, consider," was used by Isocrates in the context of reasonable argumentation. But because Isocrates does not provide a definition, his use of this expression represents a "pre-reflective stage" in the development of *enthumêma* as a technical term. Alcidas indicates that the use of *enthumêmata* involves not only an act grounded in reason, but that taking account of feelings and emotions is relevant as well. According to Bons, a technical treatment of the enthymeme (*enthumêma*) in the context of types of proof is given for the first time in the *Rhetoric to Alexander*, which is attributed to Anaximenes of Lampsacus. According to the *Rhetoric to Alexander* the enthymeme, together with certain other types of argument, provides probable knowledge to the judges, as opposed to clear knowledge. The author seems to have made an attempt to systematize the existing practice of a reasonable argument on the basis of shared thoughts and feelings

Bons thinks that the term *enthumêma* has in non-technical works — in its pre-reflective stage — three distinctive features. First there is the factor of logic, "in that it refers to a mental operation, a line of thought, in which considerations of probability and reasonableness can play a part." Second, there is an element of "communality," "because the argument can draw from a stock of knowledge, based on individual experience and shared with others," so that it can serve as a topical device. This feature, by the way, can be found back in Aristotle's definition of the dialectical syllogism as drawing upon opinions accepted by others. Third, what is referred to is the thought or argument expressed in language, "as it appears in a formulated sentence or set of sentences."

Aristotle clearly positions rhetorical proof in the domain of reasonableness. For "rhetorical proof" he adopted the term *enthumêma*: "the enthymeme is a syllogism of a kind (*sullogismos tis*)." Even if the enthymeme, like the dialectical syllogism, is based on *endoxa* or propositions of good repute (accepted opinions), it is, according to Bons, the context in which they are used which separates the two. Dialectic and rhetoric, while being each other's "counterpart" (*antistrophos*), each have their separate domain: "demonstration is concerned with truth, rhetoric with likeness to truth, but both are discerned by one and the same faculty."

In 'Meeting in the House of Callias: An Historical Perspective on Rhetoric and Dialectic,' Erik C.W. Krabbe first sketches the history of rhetoric and dialectic as one of mutual closeness, apparent in Aristotle's characterization of rhetoric as a "counterpart of dialectic," as a history of two fields that, despite "a tradition of mutual anta-

gonism” and dialectic clearly taking primacy, were “very much akin.” Next, he further emphasizes the contextual separation that Bons has identified between rhetoric and dialectic. Although in Krabbe’s own view, both rhetoric and the dialectic of persuasion (the “persuasion dialogue”) share the primary goal of arriving at a shared opinion, or — more precisely — resolving a (supposed) dispute, Aristotle’s dialectic is not primarily a dialectic of persuasion. The primary purpose of dialectic in a “narrow” Aristotelian sense is, according to Krabbe, not to convince or to persuade, but “to attain at a truth.” In Aristotle’s view, persuasion belongs to rhetoric rather than to dialectic.

The actual practice of classical dialectic, however, turns out to have had more of the character of a persuasion dialogue than Aristotle suggested. It was, according to Krabbe, “closer to rhetorical practice than we might have thought.” In Krabbe’s opinion, the embedding of speeches in conversations, and of conversations in speeches, calls for an integration of the two theories. While maintaining a clear distinction between the goal of an activity and the aims of the participants engaged in that activity, it takes in his opinion in fact only one step further to see that persuasive dialectic and rhetoric are also at the theoretical level “intertwined.”

In ‘Rhetoric and Dialectic: Some Historical and Legal Perspectives,’ Hanns Hohmann rightly says that Aristotle emphasizes in the *Rhetoric* “that the function [of rhetoric as a discipline] is not to persuade but to see the available means of persuasion in each case.” Dialectic, which Cicero later treats as a tool for the rhetorician, is in the *Topics* first of all associated with attack and defense.

Hohmann criticizes the existing tendency to focus on the negative potentials of rhetoric and the positive aspects of dialectic: “Dialectic is seen as a rather pure and theoretically sound method aimed at a cooperative search for cognitive truth, rhetoric as a seriously tainted and practically compromised knack serving a competitive quest for persuasive success.” The dialectic as described in Aristotle’s *Topics* is a much more ambivalent pursuit. The *Topics* also teaches a method for winning disputes.

Insofar as it deals with enthymematic arguments, Aristotle sees rhetoric as a part of dialectic, and thus as theoretically subordinated to dialectic. But because, according to the *Topics*, dialectic relies on premises that are “accepted opinions” (*endoxa*), Hohmann concludes — unlike Bons — that dialectic is also a special case of rhetoric, and in some sense conceptually subordinated to rhetoric. In Hohmann’s view, we can observe the mutual dependence of dialectic and rhetoric on each other “nowhere more clearly than in Aristotle’s pioneering analysis of the rhetorical foundation of dialectical reasoning in the audience acceptance of its premises, and of the dialectical justification of rhetoric by the corrective interplay of opposing viewpoints.”

Much later, in Roman scholarship, Boethius claims, unlike Cicero before him, theoretical primacy for dialectic over rhetoric. He does so very decisively, but Hohmann finds his argument for this contention highly problematic. “When Boethius claims that the rhetorical topics derive their persuasiveness from the dialectical ones, he clearly overstates his case.” Very aptly, Hohmann draws our attention to Christoph Hegendorff, an author who explicitly addresses the relationship between

dialectic and rhetoric in the context of legal argumentation. Hegendorff puts an emphasis on the links rather than the differences between the two perspectives. Later works on legal argumentation, however, moved away from rhetoric and dialectic in favor of hermeneutics. Fortunately, as Hohmann observes, in the twentieth century a trend has set in to acknowledge again the "affinities" of argumentation, and legal argumentation in particular.

Hohmann thinks that an evaluation of arguments on the basis of dialectical rules, and the very application of such rules, will require discussions that lead us back onto rhetorical grounds. From the failure of efforts to establish either clear boundaries or unequivocal "conceptual or moral hierarchical relationships" between rhetoric and dialectic, he concludes that dialectical and rhetorical aspects of argumentation analysis should be treated as complementary.

'The Relation between Dialectic and Rhetoric in a Classical and a Modern Perspective' contains Michael Leff's considered views on the matter. Leff emphasizes the observation "that rhetorical argument, no matter how well constructed, cannot always succeed in achieving its end," i.e. persuading its audience because too many chance factors enter into the persuasive situation. It is also not the case that effectiveness is the only kind of normativity that enters in to rhetoric. Leff explains that in the pre-modern tradition there is a tendency toward a norm of "appropriateness." This norm refers to the capacity to adapt to changing local circumstances; it is "a norm of accommodation and flexibility, connected with *phronesis* or *prudentia*."

Leff observes that dialectic, "after several centuries of virtual exile from the academy," is once again emerging in the study of argumentation. In his opinion, dialectic must depend upon rhetoric "to close and define the situations in which it can operate." Somewhere there must be a "stopping point," a concession that emerges from agreements not secured through the inferential sequence. This is, according to Leff, precisely the point at which rhetoric comes into play, to provide a provisional, local closure. On the other hand, he claims, "once [rhetoric] sets the wheels of reason into motion," its effort to achieve "effective persuasion" must "be disciplined by dialectical rationality."

Leff reminds us of the fact that "the historical record" of dialectic and rhetoric is one of almost constant change as far as the identity, function, structure, and mutual relationship of these arts are concerned. Most certainly, the difference between the two does not consist of a simple contrast between a normative art of dialectic and a merely empirical art of rhetoric. Instead, four points of contrast seem to Leff to determine the difference between the two theoretical approaches. First, dialectic deals with general, abstract issues, rhetoric with specific, circumstantial issues. Second, dialectic considers the relationship of propositions to one another and follows norms of logical rationality, while rhetorical argumentation considers the relationship between propositions and situations and follows norms that refer to appropriate social relationships. Third, dialectic proceeds through question and answer, and the interlocutors seek to persuade one another; rhetoric proceeds through uninterrupted discourse, and speakers seek to persuade the audience. Fourth, dialectic employs unadorned, technical language, whereas rhetoric accommodates and embellishes language for persuasive purposes.

As the subtitle of this essay, 'Defining "Person" and "Human Life" in Constitutional Disputes over Abortion,' promises, in 'Evaluating Argumentative Discourse from a Rhetorical Perspective' Edward Schiappa gives an account of the way in which the definitions of 'person' and 'human life' have played a (most important) part in constitutional disputes over abortion in the United States. He thinks that treating the rhetorical approach to argumentative discourse by illustrating how it works in practice will be more effective in convincing future generations of graduate students of its merits than an abstract theoretical discussion of rhetoric and dialectic would. That is why he devotes his contribution for the most part to the case study.

The (modern) "rhetorical perspective" includes, according to Schiappa, "a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches." For some scholars in the United States "rhetorical studies" has even become a label coterminous with "cultural studies." The vast majority of American argumentation scholars were trained as rhetorical theorists and critics. This explains why they typically do not draw a firm distinction between "rhetoric" and "argument": "For the vast majority of American scholars, 'analysis of argumentative discourse' means 'rhetorical analysis'." Schiappa thinks that most theorists in the field of rhetoric and argumentation would agree that neither "rhetoric" nor "argument" is an objective thing but a scholarly label "that redescribe[s] texts, artifacts, and practices." Another remarkable observation he makes is that only a very tiny proportion of the papers on argumentation written from a rhetorical perspective pay any explicit attention to the evaluation of argumentative discourse.

Jean Goodwin focuses her discussion of the relation between rhetoric and dialectic on the subject of 'issues.' The design of issues has been a theme of general interest in the dialectical as well as the rhetorical tradition. Goodwin's essay 'Designing Issues' nicely captures the problems involved in "the *why*, the *what*, and some of the *how* of issues" from both perspectives. In her view, an extension of the classical rhetorical approach will offer the best possibilities for solving these problems. A dialectical approach seems to create more problems than it solves. Given that issues "need not be fully determinate" in advance and can be "narrow points but also broad terrains," dialectic fails to provide the required account of relative indeterminacy. And whereas issues "are not found but made," dialectic tends "to treat issues as *given*." Even if the standard dialectical model "provides some account of how issues arise once an argumentative discussion is started," it does not say "why, pragmatically speaking, anyone would find it worthwhile to start this sort of discussion at all."

The classical rhetorical account provided by the *stasis* system fares better. Although by itself, this "crown jewel of the Hellenistic rhetorical manual," cannot provide a full-blown theory either, it can at least be of help in *finding* the central issue of a case. In the end, what is needed, but is lacking in the *stasis* system, is an account of the normative pragmatics of in which issues are designed. In Goodwin's view, such an account is provided by Fred Kauffeld's rhetorical approach. With the help of "the preliminaries of a case study" of the 1991 U.S. congressional debate over initiating the Gulf War, she illustrates how Kauffeld's approach enables us to

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